EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND SELF-REPORTED PRACTICES ABOUT CIRCLE TIME

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ABSTRACT

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND SELF-REPORTED PRACTICES ABOUT CIRCLE TIME

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The aim of the study is to investigate in service early childhood teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices about circle time. In this study, explanatory sequential mixed method design which comprises quantitative part and qualitative part followed by each other was employed sequentially. Participants of the study were in service early childhood teachers who are working in six main districts of Ankara. In the first part of the study, *Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs and Self-reported Practices about Circle Time Survey* were administered to 502 participants. In the second part of the study, a semi-structured interview protocol named *Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs and Self-reported Practices about Circle Time Interview Protocol* was carried out with 22 volunteer early childhood teachers. Descriptive statistics was utilized for quantitative results while descriptive analysis was conducted via MAXQDA 2020 program for qualitative results of the study. Findings of the study revealed that teachers mostly do language and literacy activities especially by sharing feelings, ideas and experiences with members of the circle. Also, the reason why teachers prefer to conduct circle time in their classes is revealed as their own wish owing to the benefits of circle time.

Teachers' beliefs about the benefits of circle time were majorly social-emotional development oriented. Teachers reported their constraints to circle time process as needs of children, diversity in class, administration related issues, and time related issues. Considering findings of the study, issues such as high-quality education, valuing diversity, need for teacher trainings and resources are discussed.

Keywords: Circle time, preschool, early childhood education, early childhood teachers, teacher beliefs and practices

ÖZ

OKUL ÖNCESİ ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN GÜNE BAŞLAMA ZAMANI HAKKINDAKİ İNANIŞ VE UYGULAMALARI

MUMCUOĞLU, Ayşenur
Yüksek Lisans, Temel Eğitim, Okul Öncesi Eğitimi Bölümü
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Bu araştırmanın amacı, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çember zamanı ile ilgili inanışlarını ve uygulamaları incelemektir. Bu çalışmada nicel verilerin nitel veriler ile desteklendiği açıklayıcı sıralı karma desen kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın katılımcıları Ankara'nın 6 ilçesinde görev yapan okul öncesi öğretmenleridir. Araştırmanın ilk bölümünde 502 katılımcıya *Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Çember Zamanına İlişkin İnançları ve Uygulamaları Anketi* uygulanmıştır. Araştırmanın ikinci bölümünde ise, 22 gönüllü okul öncesi öğretmeni ile yarı yapılandırılmış *Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Çember Zamanına İlişkin İnançları Konulu Görüşme Protokolü* gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın nicel sonuçları için betimsel istatistik kullanılırken, nitel sonuçlar için MAXQDA 2020 programı ile betimsel analiz yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın bulguları, öğretmenlerin çember zamanında çoğunlukla dil etkinliklerini, özellikle çember üyeleri ile duygu, düşünce ve deneyimlerini paylaşarak yaptıklarını göstermiştir. Ayrıca araştırma bulguları öğretmenlerin çember zamanı uygulamalarının nedenin öğretmenlerin süreçten fayda sağlamış olmaları olduğunu göstermiştir. Katılımcıların çember zamanının faydaları hakkındaki inançları büyük ölçüde sosyal-duygusal gelişim odaklıdır. Ayrıca öğretmenler çember zamanı sürecini

engelleyen faktörleri çocukların ihtiyaçları, sınıftaki kültürel çeşitlilik, yönetimle ilgili konular ve zamanla ilgili konulara değinerek açıklamışlardır. Araştırmanın bulgularından hareketle kaliteli eğitim, farklılıklara değer verme, öğretmen eğitimlerine ve kaynaklara duyulan ihtiyaç gibi konular tartışılmıştır.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Çember zamanı, okul öncesi eğitimi, okul öncesi öğretmenleri, öğretmen inanış ve uygulamaları

To my precious, Emin MUMCUOĞLU

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AS: Associate of Science

BS: Bachelor of Science

MS: Master of Science

ECE: Early Childhood Education

CD: Child Development

FL: Foreign Language

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood experiences have profound effect on children's cognitive, social, language and physical skills, all of which sustains academic success later in their life (Bustamente et al., 2018; Culkin, 2000). As a concept for improving children's learning, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) proposed a framework about child development and learning in 1986 named as developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). While in 1997, DAP has been emphasized in terms of three knowledge of educators which are age appropriateness, cultural appropriateness and individual appropriateness by Bredekamp & Copple (1997), some principles were revised in 2009 (Kim, 2011). These arrangements in DAP principles include five main aspects which are supplying a caring environment for community of learners, planning the curriculum regarding essential goals, making assessments of children, enhancing children's learning and development and creating reciprocal relationships with parents (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Thereupon, for encouraging the development of children regarding developmentally appropriate practice, quality of instruction should be improved for supporting children to reach their own potential (Şahin, 2013). As components of early childhood education, developmentally appropriate, individualized programs have been established considering children's characteristics, a safe environment equipped with diversity of materials, parents and children who are being facilitated to participate in learning process and qualified and well-educated teachers, all of them being issues that construct the components of quality early childhood education (Morgan, 2019). Additionally, due to the fact that early childhood education is the pioneering element that shapes children's socio-emotional skills (Hemmeter et al., 2008), providing an environment where children have intimate relationships and are respected by others

becomes an indispensable element of high-quality early childhood education (Colker & Koralek, 2018; Morgan, 2019). The reason why early childhood education is an essential factor shaping socio-emotional skills might be related to children's interactions with people around them and to perceiving the world they are living by understanding their own place in this world during early years (Mindes, 2006).

Children start to conceive "Who am I?" during the first formative years. This is the time when children develop personalities (Melendez et al., 2000). Gradually, they become members of the community by finding out customs and rules to get involved in the society (e.g., peer groups) with the help of social-emotional skills they gained in early years (Mindes, 2006). Therefore, in order to promote positive effects of early childhood education on children's development, social emotional development should be taken into consideration seriously in these critical early years (Barnett, 2008) inasmuch as fostering unfolding of each child to develop effectively both as a social self and as an individual is early childhood education's fundamental purpose and mission (Melendez et al., 2000).

Development of children's socio-emotional skills is linked with interpersonal interactions, self-esteem and self-regulation (Bulotsky Shearer &Fantuzzo, 2011; Cooper et al., 2009; Hemmeter et al., 2008). As one of the factors facilitating socio-emotional skills, self-esteem is associated with children's academic success in a large number of research (Yalçın Tılfarlıoğlu & Özdinç Delbeseloğlugil, 2014; Wiggins et al., 1994). It is clarified that the more children take a positive attitude towards themselves the less complicacy they would face in their learning process (White, 1990). Researchers emphasized that providing children with opportunities for feeling themselves unique and important leads to success in school performance as well as a positive impact on their future life in workplace and personal life (Covington, 1989). Regarding these research findings, researchers and educators embarked on a quest for developing or improving some alternative systems to enhance self-esteem in schools (Suggs, 2019). One of the models that serves these advantages is circle time.

Circle time stems from a tradition that is related with the understanding that education is a social process which necessitates working together to understand the other's worlds (Mosley, 1988). This setting is person-centered where communication systems are well-developed and every person can have healthy relationships (Bulut, 2004). Circle time is used to promote positive relationships among individuals and in this process children and adults come together in order to discuss their feelings and emotions affecting them day-to-day in school or in another environment (Blake et al., 2007). It is stated by Curry and Bromfield (1994) and Mosley (2009) that circle time aims to improve potential of each individual specially by developing their social-emotional skills in a group environment where people care about each other. The reason behind this is, circle time is conducted in a child-centered, safe and caring environment. With the help of this intervention, children can practice various skills such as expressing themselves, solving problems within an environment where everybody's ideas are valued, and every member is eager to learn about each other's perspectives (Collins, 2013). In this way of activity, learning is experiential and children have opportunity to play games, work with small groups, doing role plays, singing songs, doing movement activities, hence versatile benefits of circle time. (Cefai et al., 2014).

In different kinds of areas circle time is used as a method. At first, circle time is a method applied for adults. As for teachers' training program as a staff development, circle time is utilized for having a feeling of community between adults, preparing an atmosphere for teachers to share their ideas easily. It is stated that teachers should feel like students before starting to teach, to be able to empathize with children (Bornstein & Bradley, 2007). So, their attendance in circle time process can make them more aware of possible views of children about circle time (Bornstein & Bradley, 2007). In another field, namely psychology, circle time is used for cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) which helps to create meaningful connections between feelings, emotions and behaviors which composes one's experiences. Studies have shown that circle time is beneficial for decreasing impulsive and aggressive behaviors with CBT (Canney, & Byrne, 2006). Finally, circle time is a method which is used for individuals with autism as a method for getting them integrated into daily routines, making them aware of the

changes in weather, increasing their interaction with people around them and boosting their attention span. It is stressed that when the planning accommodations are designed accordingly, circle time becomes an absolutely beneficial tool for people with autism (Barton et al., 2011). Furthermore, Jalongo & Isenberg (2000) also mentioned that circle time can be a tool for an inclusive environment for people with special needs in that it is the effective time for making each member of the circle feel valuable and listened.

The origins of the use of circle time in areas such as staff development, psychology, individuals with special needs and other areas are based on the humanistic tradition which explores the self, actions of the self in lifelong process and reciprocal communication with other people (Mary, 2014). Approximate origin of circle time is pointed as kindergartens which have Frobelian educational approach starting from 1800s extending to present years. After spreading from Frobelian kindergartens, circle time has rapidly become part of the routine of the schools since the beginning of the 1900s (Pryce, 2007). The reason why circle time became a part of the daily routines in 1900s is owing to early childhood teachers who implement circle time in their classrooms regularly.

The scope of circle time implemented at schools can be determined regarding both beliefs and practices of the teachers in that early childhood teachers are one of the core elements of educational systems (Kayange & Msiska, 2016; Fyssa et al., 2014). They are the main determinants that affect the quality of preschool education and the development of the child (MoNE, 2013). Thus, to grasp the effectiveness of activities on children's development, it is crucial to gather teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices in research for the analysis of the need for improvement, differences and deficiencies in circle time process for the reason that circle time has a broad range regarding its context. Yet the quality of the program which is applied in the classes are mostly dependent on teachers (Yıldız, 2019). Because teachers are one of the prominent factors effecting the quality of early childhood education programs, their beliefs and practices should be elaborated in order to receive information about the elements having an impact on teacher's educational programs. Tam (2012) mentions

that beliefs are one of the tools for reaching information about practices of teachers. Sakellariou & Rentzou (2012) and Kagan (1992) also explains that in order to learn about content of education, teachers' beliefs should be consulted. Richardson (1996) added that beliefs are the factors exerting a strong influence on the practices of teachers and practices also bear on beliefs of teachers in time. So, both beliefs and practices interact with each other and their combination can provide a whole picture about the study topic (Zheng, 2013). Therefore, to provide a comprehensive perspective, it is important to focus on both beliefs and self-reported practices of teachers about circle time in current study in order to provide more extensive research.

Early childhood teachers' beliefs about circle time includes their beliefs about benefits of circle time and the factors that hinder their circle time process. Regarding the teachers' beliefs about benefits of circle time, a study conducted with five Irish primary school classrooms by Collins (2013). In this study it is revealed that, teachers hold that circle time improves social and personal skills, self-confidence and self-esteem. It helps to give equal voice to every member of the classroom by enabling a positive atmosphere in the classroom. This research emphasized that circle time is beneficial both for children and teachers of the classroom now that it helps to create sense of safety. Moreover, in another research by Pace (2012) examining beliefs of teachers as well as students and parents revealed that they regard circle time beneficial because it promotes teacher student relations, increases the motivation, improves skills of listening each other and abates bullying behavior in classes.

On the other hand, while teachers have commonly positive beliefs about benefits of circle time, they also face some constraints to do circle time in their classes (Montie et al., 2006; Katz, 2014; Bredekamp, 2017). These constraints might cause teachers to minimize the time period allocated for circle time as well as hindering all circle time activities, leading the teacher not to do circle time in their classes. In the study conducted by Pace (2012), teachers articulated their beliefs about the factors hindering circle time as the time constraints on not only the activities but also circle time because they have excessively loaded curriculum for doing circle time effectively. Moreover, they explain that children have different kinds of attention span levels, so making the

circle time effective for each child might be challenging (Montie et al., 2006). Like in other research, Collins (2007) mentions another contraint to circle time which is number of children per class, because the effective learning decreases when there are more students than the optimum student capacity in the classes. Eventually, it turns out that there are some factors effecting the circle time negatively for teachers both who do circle time or intended to do circle time.

Secondly, self-reported practices of early childhood teachers regarding planning of circle time, context of circle time, facilitators which teachers get help during the process and types of activities in circle time are the main practices to be covered for having an idea about the scope of circle time. Regarding planning of circle time, according to Ebert & Culyer (2011), teacher of the class should make planning of the content, context and the way s/he teach as well as involving children into the planning process. On the other hand, context of circle time is mentioned in different research including the time period to do circle time and the shape that children take in this process. It is stated that in early childhood classrooms, circle time should be utilized regularly lasting about from 10-15 minutes to 30-40 minutes (Collins, 2007) and children are supposed to sit in circle shape diminishing hierarchy between each member of the class (Mosley, 2005). Moreover, when practices of teachers are examined during circle time process, it is revealed that some common activities are utilized as sharing feelings and emotions or materials, doing calendar time to make children aware of the days, weeks or months, reviewing schedule to plan the day with all members of the class, giving morning message as an attention gatherer of the day, doing language or math activities, singing and dancing, taking the roll for figuring out who are present that day and giving the message that each member has a value in the class (Zaghlawan, & Ostrosky, 2010; Bustamane et al., 2018; Collins, 2013; Seifert & Metz, 2017; Reich, 1994).

All in all, circle time is used in different areas such as staff development (Bornstein & Bradley, 2007), cognitive behavioral therapy (Canney, & Byrne, 2006), for individuals with special needs (Barton et al., 2011) as well as children attending early childhood institutions (MoNE, 2013). In circle time, children develop their socio-emotional skills

now that it offers an environment which is safe, where each member is listened and ideas are shared without hierarchy or boundaries (Mosley, 1988; Bromfield, 1994). Early childhood teachers have positive beliefs about circle time generally (Pace, 2012) but they have some constraints in the process as well (Collins, 2007). As for the circle time practices, teachers prefer different time periods, activities, seating shape or materials in circle time (Collins, 2007; Mosley, 2005).

1.1 Purpose of the Study

Children attending early childhood institutions are spending approximately 3 to 9 hours at school in a day differentiating from school to school. This time period includes educational program of the school and the activities which constitutes the program. When content of the activity times is examined, it can be seen that there are several studies about language activities such as book reading times, conversation among children and adults (Wasik et al., 2016). There are also studies about small group activities such as learning center times or free play times. However, rest of the hours being spent at school is still unexplored including circle time (Bustamante et al., 2018).

Research findings reveals that circle time mostly continues for 15-20 minutes (Chien et al., 2010). This time span might seem to be relatively brief, but it is utilized approximately every day in many preschool classrooms. That's to say, children are exposed to 45 hours of circle time totally, over 180 days in an academic year. In other words, this activity has an important role but little explored aspects in early childhood education studies (Bustamane et al., 2018).

Circle time seems to be a part of daily routine mostly implemented in preschools as well as in other levels of education with a content and structure without any certain age-range, culture and educational approach (Reich, 1993). One can witness in schools that children form a circle shape and communicate because circle time is accepted as a universal intervention with the purpose of creating a sensitive class environment (Sönmez & Ceylan, 2017). In many peer-reviewed articles, books and chapters,

inadequacy of research about circle time is stressed while there is evidence that in many preschools circle time is used as a daily routine with an ambiguous context (Zaghlawan & Ostrosky, 2011). That is to say, while circle time is regarded as a part of daily routine, context of the activities in circle time varies in different places (Reich, 1993).

This current research aims to make contribution about the scope of circle time. By scope of circle time, it is implied that in this research early childhood teacher's beliefs and self-reported practices about circle time will be elaborated by narrowing the gap which is expressed by research regarding need for more research in this frame (Zaghlawan & Ostrosky, 2010). Within this frame, early childhood teacher's beliefs about reasons to utilize circle time, benefits of circle time, constraints that hinder circle time process as well as their self-reported practices about planning and context of circle time, usage of facilitators, types of activities will be examined within the scope of Ankara province, Turkey. In order to achieve this aim, research questions to be focused on in this study are stated below;

1. What are the self-reported practices and beliefs of early childhood teachers about circle time?
    - 1.1. What are the self-reported practices of early childhood teachers in terms of; planning of circle time, context of circle time, facilitators used in circle time and types of activities conducted in circle time?
    - 1.2. What are the beliefs of early childhood teachers in terms of: the reasons to utilize circle time, benefits of circle time, constraints to circle time, teachers' beliefs about their own background information and need for resources and training about circle time?

1.2 Significance of the Study

Quality education in early years has pioneering, critical and long-lasting effects on cognitive, social emotional, language and other developmental domains as well as school readiness, future academic success, physical and psychological wellbeing of children (Culkin, 2000). Although quality education may seem to affect individuals in

short term, it ensures increasing number of well-educated individuals in society in long term. Thus, quality early childhood education has advantages both for individuals and society. Colker & Koralek (2018) and Morgan (2019) explain factors of quality early childhood education as follows; developmentally appropriateness of the education program, individualized program considering characteristics and differences of children, providing a safe environment equipped with variety of materials for children, active participation of children in process, adults having intimate relations and showing respect to children's ideas, including parents in educational process and qualified early childhood teachers who are well educated. As one of the factors of high-quality early childhood education, teachers have an important role in that preschool children need supportive interaction with adults to improve their capabilities (Jalongo et al., 2004). The more qualified early childhood teachers, the higher quality interactions among children and staff occurs. For the assessment of requirements for teacher trainings and quality of the instruction, early childhood teacher's way of interactions with children and content of the education are supposed to be evaluated (OECD, 2020). This may mean that current study which is elaborating early childhood teacher's self-reported practices about circle time can provide an insight for evaluating quality of instruction. In current study, teachers are primary resources of revealing context of circle time practices which are utilized at early childhood institutions. Accordingly, finding out how teachers utilize circle time in their classes gives clues about quality early childhood education both for stakeholders and researchers. That's why current study has significance on providing information about quality early childhood education in terms of circle time utilized at schools.

Furthermore, Glazzard (2016) explains now that there are wide range of experiences about circle time and their expertise are versatile, early childhood teachers may need resources or trainings about circle time. At this point, current study reveals the percentage of circle time utilization in specified sample size which means that number of teachers who utilize circle time and number of teachers who do not utilize circle time is uncovered. Thus, this study can provide a guideline or resource for teachers who do not utilize circle time in their classes on teachers' self-reported practices about planning of circle time, context of circle time, facilitators used in circle time and types

of activities since these teachers who do not utilize circle time might need for information and resources about how to do circle time. With this study, these teachers can form an opinion of process of planning circle time; what teachers consider while planning circle time; which materials, mediators or media tools early childhood teachers use in circle time; variety of activity types that can be utilized in circle time and teachers' practices about where, when, how and in which time period they prefer to utilize circle time with reasons. That's why, current study is significant for supplying a resource for teachers who are hesitative about utilizing circle time. Moreover, in this study, teachers are asked about constraints that hinder their circle time process. These constraints can be searched and these factors can be minimized by stakeholders. In consequence, this research can be a tool for learning about teacher's concerns about hinderances of circle time as well as improving quality early childhood education by compensating these constraints if possible.

Moreover, in comparison with commonly researched parts of the schedule like center time, outside play, mealtime and book reading, very few peer-reviewed study has examined content and quality of circle time in preschools (Zhang et al., 2015). In various research such as the ones by Bondy & Ketts (2001), Colao (2010), Mary (2014), Miller and Moran (2007), Duman (2009), Dickinson (2001), benefits of circle time for social emotional, language and cognitive domains were examined with children from different age groups. Considering activity types of circle time, Yıldız (2019), Akgün (2013) and Dinçkurt & Kesicioğlu (2020) conducted researches contributing to the field but in these researches only small number of participants involved in the process. Emilson and Johansson (2013) studied about comparison of boys' and girls' participation in circle time. Another study was conducted by (Bustamante et al., 2018) aimed to reveal content, prevalence of teacher and child talk in circle time, how children are engaged in the process. Regarding the studies conducted in circle time early childhood development, it is clear that there is need for researches which cover both beliefs and self-reported practices of early childhood teachers about circle time including the reason why they utilize circle time, their background information and need for trainings, constraints which may hinder the process, planning and context of circle time, usage of facilitators and types of

activities. Scarce body of research examined mentioned aspects of circle time which highlights that there is a worthy room for improvement for depicting a picture widely covering both practices and beliefs of teachers about circle time (Bustamane et al., 2018; Revell, 2004; Zaghlawan & Ostrosky, 2010). Accordingly, by conducting this study it is aimed to make a contribution to early childhood education field because researches implied that there is a gap which is need to be filled and obscure regarding circle time activities (Zaghlawan & Ostrosky, 2010). Not only in other countries, but also in Turkey, need for other researches about circle time is highlighted. Yıldız (2019) conducted a study for analyzing views of academicians, managers and teachers about circle time and daily evaluation process regarding MoNE 2013 program and it is stressed that other similar researches are needed for having more data about the subject for filling the gap.

Regarding these statements which are about the current gap in studies about context of activities of circle time, this research will be significant for literature not only because of the content, but also the methodology. This research is planned as an explanatory sequential mixed method, specifically aiming to reveal a certain part of early childhood teachers' circle time programs. This current research consists of two data collection tools, first of which includes a survey filled by high number of participants to get the answers of teachers by minimizing time consuming and reaching broad range of data, second of which includes small number of participants attended in interview process for getting detailed information and deepen the information gathered. Aside from getting a large amount of data with surveys, deepening the information with interview is believed to be unique for this research area.

Moreover, by conducting this research, first and basic questions about circle time will be answered limited to Ankara province of Turkey. These questions are stated as research questions of the study and with the help of answers to those questions, it will be a light for future researches for investigating some connections of circle time with different variables. So, this research will have a role of being a steppingstone for other researches by shedding light on the gap in the research area by putting forward a general picture of circle time event in preschools in Ankara province of Turkey.

1.3 Definitions of Key Terms

Circle time: Circle time is a regular event in which a group meets in a circle shape and each member of the circle speaks, interact, share and listen to others. Circle emphasizes the symbol of unity, highlighting that the group collaborates, and they support each other, and that every member has equal rights and responsibilities (Collins, 2011).

Circle time activity types: Types of activities commonly utilized in preschools which are sharing, calendar, reviewing the schedule, language-literacy and numeracy, morning message, singing and dancing, transition time, roll call (Bustamante et al., 2018).

In-service teachers: In-service teacher means that the teacher has graduated with certification, teaching students already (Obo, 2019).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In literature review part, there will be titles which are explained successively. These titles consist of theoretical background of the study, teacher beliefs and practices, early childhood education program in Turkey at first. Afterwards, definition of circle time, historical background of circle time, planning of circle time, context of circle time, types of activities in circle time, stages of circle time, rules of circle time, benefits of circle time, constraints to circle time, positions of children and children towards circle time and lastly teachers' background information and need for resources and education for teachers about circle time are defined respectively.

2.1 Theoretical Background of the Study

Theoretical background of this study is grounded on two theories which are Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. In both, firstly explanation for theories will be presented. Afterwards, connection between these theories and circle time will be provided.

According to humanistic psychologists, human behavior is motivated as parallel to people's seeking to satisfy a variety of needs. As one of the psychologists in the same league, Abraham Maslow identifies two types of needs of humanity which are called as deficiency needs (D-needs) and self-actualization needs (growth/ being/ B-needs). These needs are ordered from basic needs to satisfaction of desires because of differentiation between motivation from metamotivation (Thomas, 2000; Engler, 2014). According to Maslow (1987) motivation alludes to decreasing the tension by satisfying deficiency or lacking of a need while metamotivation refers to increasing, improving or enriching inherent potential for moving further from the current state.

Deficiency needs are explained as the things which causes illness in absence, prevention of illness in presence, curing the illness in improvement, preference instead of other satisfactions in case of choice and feeling of yearning consciously or unconsciously (Maslow, 1968). For instance, needs of food, warmth, shelter for protecting the body from harms, close relationships to have respect from others and feeling to be loved. When it comes to self-actualization needs, Maslow (1987) identifies these as the needs for someone to be aware of or reach his/her potential, being aware of talents and seeking for realizing a mission. Self-actualization needs are described as kind of needs which are the ways for person to accept his/her own knowledge and accomplishing the highest stage of their life.

Deficiency needs take precedence over self-actualization needs owing to human nature because they direct the human organism for seeking for deficiency needs to survive. So, when the deficiency needs are not supplied, human beings do not get motivated to fulfill self-actualization needs. Hierarchy of needs is proposed by Maslow (1943), regarding principle of needs order. In this order, there are physiological needs, safety, belonging and love, self-esteem and self-actualization needs (Figure 1).

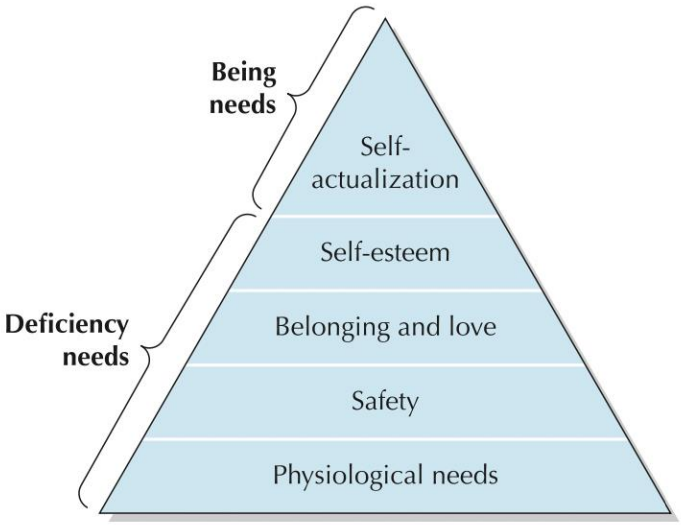

Figure 1 *Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*

Hierarchy of Needs are explained below in detail within the scope of related literature (Maslow; 1954; Thomas, 2000; Engler, 2014; Duane, 2015; Jalongo, Isenberg, 2000).

1. Physiological need*:* Strongest needs to survive or maintain a life. These needs can be exemplified as need for water, sleep, oxygen, sheltering. When these first and basic needs are not satisfied, then the individual cannot find motivation to skip further stages.

2. Safety need: These needs include requirements for a person to feel order, stability and living in an environment which is predictable. Especially, young children who need help in their lives prefer a structured and planned routine which are decided and cleared beforehand. Lacking a planned routine makes the child feel insecure and anxious towards his/her environment. Not only routines, but also individuals need safe environments where their possessions are protected. Otherwise, people get worried about safety of their belongings.

3. Belonging and love need: The individual whose physiological and safety needs are satisfied seeks for belonging and love. Each person in need of intimate relationships within his/her environment, feeling of belonging to a specific group like classmates, neighborhood, family even it is mentioned that possibility of meeting these needs is scarce in our mobile world.

4. Self-esteem need: There are two types of esteem needs first of which is need for self-respect from other people around and the second one is self-respect. Having enough self-esteem causes to be more competent, confident and independent while respect from others causes feeling of acceptance and appreciation. Unless these needs are met, then the person may feel inferior and discouraged to achieve something. Towards adulthood, need for appreciation from other people decreases while self-respect increases in time.

5. Self-actualization need: In order to reach the time for satisfying this need, previous needs should be met. These needs are hard to exemplify as each

individual has a unique way in self-actualization road in their life. So, self-actualization needs refer to the needs which lead a person to reach his/her fullest potential.

The connection between Maslow's hierarchy of needs and current study can be examined in three aspects which are safety needs, belonging and love needs and self-esteem needs. Three of these needs are regarded as deficiency needs which means that unless these needs are not supplied, an individual cannot get motivated for self-actualization.

First of the aspect which has connection with circle time is safety needs of children. In Maslow's theory, it is stated that a person can feel secure in an environment where routines are structured, planned and predictable which are informed beforehand. When a person does not have a predictable routine, s/he may feel anxious in the environment they live (Maslow, 1968). Regarding the similar points, Bornman et al., (2004) mentioned that circle time is a part of the day including a predictable and regular content and this regular routine makes children feel safe in class because children know that they will do circle time when they arrive at school, they have a routine called circle time and children have an idea about what is the content of circle time if they regularly utilize it. Moreover, one of the activity types in circle time is "scheduling" (Bustamante et al., 2018) where children and teacher sits together and discuss about the content of the activities that they will cover in that day. They make planning about what to do and how they do it in circle time which makes them less anxious about flow of the day. So, circle time might be a tool for providing safety need of children.

Second aspect which can be linked with circle time is belonging and love need of children. Maslow (1968) explains that after physiological and safety needs are satisfied, belonging and love need should be accomplished. In order to satisfy this need, a person necessitates close relationships with the people around them, they need to feel belonged to a group. Just as the Maslow mentions, Kriete and Davis (2014) explain that circle time is a tool for providing an environment where people feel sense of belonging to a group. Csak (2002) adds that children have rare opportunities to

express themselves in a group where each idea is valued, but in circle time, they feel as a part of the community which makes them feel loved and socially accepted. So, circle time provides an environment where children's need for belonging and love can be supported.

The third aspect related with circle time is self-esteem need. According to Maslow (1968), self-esteem can be improved in two ways which are being respected by other people around them and having self-respect to himself/herself. When the person is shown enough respect from other people, then s/he develops feeling of appreciation. When a person has self-respect, then s/he feels independent, competent and confident. At this point, connection between circle time and self-esteem need appears. Copple & Bredekamp (2008) explains that children's self-esteem develops with positive relationships with classroom members, in an environment where they are appreciated to make conversations without being judged. Furthermore, Revell (2004) mentions that circle time presents an environment where children learn more about their own personalities, choices, characteristics, which has an effect on self-esteem development.

Besides, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, there are some aspects in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory for supporting the theoretical framework of the study. In Sociocultural theory, Vygotsky mentions "human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.88). His statement mainly focuses on importance of social factors on children's development. He argues that adults facilitate children's learning by supporting them to achieve independence and by offering challenging experiences (Curtis, 2003). He also puts forward that not only adults, but also peers can extent children's experiences, knowledge and perception of the world because children do not live isolated from other people in their childhood and they will not be living isolated in their future life, either. Vygotsky explained that a child can attempt more complex tasks when they are supported by other people around them (Vygotsky, 1997). By emphasizing the importance of social interaction of children with people around them, he mentioned a term zone of proximal development (ZDP) which, he describes, "is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by

independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, 131). Clearly, it is highlighted that facilitating children's learning process is promoted with adult guidance or peer interaction. According to him, quality of the interactions of children with other people is also crucial because cooperative and supportive learning environments facilitate children to gain many skills which are expected of them in their future life (Curtis, 2003). At that point, with sociocultural theory, classroom teachers are given another role that they are not only expected to follow development of children but they also should offer an environment where children share their ideas, values, feelings and cooperate with each other since sociocultural perspective proposed that children's development should be facilitated with web of relationships including people around them (Edwards, 2009). At this point, circle time becomes apparent as a way for organizing an environment for children where they can share their ideas, feelings, emotions with each other without hesitating to be judged (Copple & Bredekamp, 2008). It is a safe environment where children are appreciated to share not only their thoughts but also their problems with their peers and teacher because circle time provides support of the people around them to handle their problems (Gutteridge & Smith, 2007; Collins, 2007). So, theoretical framework of the current study can be provided with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. The main reason why this theory corresponds with circle time is that while sociocultural theory highlights the importance of the social relationships with adults and peers to improve one's capabilities from one level to further level with zone of proximal development, circle time provides the atmosphere intended to cooperate with others, share thoughts and feelings in a welcoming environment.

2.2 Beliefs and Practices of Teachers

There are different types of definition of beliefs. Linares (1991) mentions that beliefs are built on experiences and emotions rather than logic and they are long lasting (as cited in Rodriguez-Sosa & Solis-Manrique, 2017). Richardson (1996) also mentions that beliefs are the factors effecting how a person sense the world, how they describe a kind of situation. He added that "beliefs are often defined as psychologically held

understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true" (p. 103). Moreover, Solis also explained, beliefs are personal truths being formed with experiences and they are judgmental like Linares' explanation. So, difference between belief and knowledge can be explained that while first one includes personal judgement and evaluation, second one means an objective fact which is not linked with feelings (Pajares, 1992).

Regarding the term 'beliefs', teacher beliefs is one type which is examined by researchers because teacher beliefs are one of the factors effecting practices at school (Tam, 2012). Kagan (1992) and Sakellariou & Rentzou (2012) also explain that beliefs are tools of presumptions for teacher's practices, learning environments and content of programs. Therefore, researcher consults beliefs of teachers in order to examine practices of teachers (Pajares, 1992; Kagan 1992). Not only beliefs have an impact on the practices of teachers, but also teacher's experiences and knowledge have an important effect on teacher's beliefs (Richardson, 1996). In other words, now that beliefs and practices of teachers interact with and affect each other, both of them can be elaborated to form a whole picture about one topic (Zheng, 2013).

One of the reasons why beliefs and practices are ways for organizing a whole picture is that beliefs cannot be observed directly but practices are one of the elements giving ideas about beliefs of teachers (Pajares, 1992). Although beliefs systems are regarded as resistant to change (Fullan, 2007), Zheng (2013) mentions that there are two types of beliefs, core and peripheral, and both interact with each other. Core beliefs are regarded as specific to personality traits and resistant to change and peripheral beliefs are regarded as kind of beliefs which tend to change in time (Green, 1971). In other words, beliefs of teachers should be considered as interrelated systems bearing on each other in time as well as affecting practices of individuals.

To conclude, it is advised for researchers that both beliefs and practices can provide effective implications to support teachers with education programs for areas need to be improved, to make teachers aware of their beliefs (Richardson,1996). Accordingly,

elaborating both practices and beliefs of teachers can make the research more comprehensive in terms of completing the whole picture about the study topic.

2.3 Early Childhood Education Program in Turkey and Place of Circle Time in Program

Current Ministry of National Education (MoNE) Early Childhood Education Program (2013) aims children attending preschool education institutions grow up healthy with rich learning experiences, reaching the highest level of their capabilities by supporting all developmental areas. It also aims to ensure children's school readiness, create a common educational environment for disadvantaged children and make them gain ability to speak Turkish correctly.

Early childhood education program is a developmental program including cognitive, language, motor, socio-emotional development and self-care skills. This program gives importance to developmentally appropriateness considering individual differences and needs of children. Turkish early childhood education program is also eclectic because there are some common points synthesized with Montessori, High Scope, Reggio Emilia and Waldorf approaches. Furthermore, Ministry of National Education Early Childhood Education Program (2013) is flexible, balanced, play-based and giving importance on creativeness, learning by doing, daily life experiences, cultural and universal norms, parent involvement, adaptation of the plans for children with special needs, etc.

Moreover, in this program, objectives and indicators for children are explained for each developmental areas which means that child is centered on in learning process instead of teacher centeredness. When objectives and indicators of socio-emotional development are examined, it can be seen that there are objectives related with communication skills of children, expressing both positive and negative emotions and feelings, following the rules of the community, asking for help when needed and willing to help when someone else needs and fulfils the responsibilities.

Furthermore, Turkish early childhood education program emphasizes that teachers should prepare an atmosphere for children where they feel secure, loved and respected. At this point, the most important element is consistent and safe relationship between teacher and children. Teacher should know about children's capabilities, needs and interests so that s/he can facilitate their learning by focusing on process instead of product as well as supporting children with small or whole group activities.

In Turkish early childhood education program, there are daily educational plans. In these plans, there are types of activities that will be covered on a certain day in general and there are plans for rest of the day which are constituted with morning circle time, free play time, and closing circle time. Process of morning meetings are described as follows in program.

> Teacher and the children sit in a circle in a suitable place in the classroom or garden. This process begins with the greeting with teacher and each other. Children who come to the class later are included in the process. In morning meeting teachers and children also identify those who did not come to school that day. Teacher directs the children to chat by asking questions about the weather conditions of that day, what day of the week it is, and what they experienced until they come to school. Teacher can talk about emotional state of the children that day, and exercises that support the healthy development of the body can be conducted. Activities such as singing, storytelling, finger games can be done. In addition, changes in the lives of children on those days can be discussed (birthday, birth of a sibling, staying with grandparents, guests coming to the house, illness of a family member, local or social events). As children gain experience with the process of starting the day, care should be taken to encourage them to choose topics to talk about (MoNE, 2013, p. 52).

All in all, Ministry of National Education Early Childhood Education Program (2013) is a developmental program giving importance to children's capabilities. It has other characteristics such as being flexible, based on playfulness and creativity, including objectives and indicators for each developmental domain. Furthermore, this program expects teachers to prepare an environment for children where children feel belonged, loved and respected within daily educational plans. One of the parts of daily educational plans where children need to communicate is circle time. Regarding the statements done in MoNE Early Childhood Educational Program (2013), in circle

time, children greet each other, they talk about their experiences and feelings, they can read stories or they can schedule the day.

2.4 Definition of Circle Time

Circle time is defined by various researchers with slight differences. One of these differences is about naming of it at first. In some studies circle time can be called as whole group, large group, class meeting or morning meeting time in literature (Bredekamp, 2017; Copple & Bredekamp, 2008). As well as differences in naming of circle time, there are various kinds of definitions regarding the content and context of circle time (Pryce, 2013).

Before citing other definitions of circle time, it would be beneficial to quote the following words of Dr. John Thacker from University of Exeter as a foreword of a book about circle time;

> Circle Time is an approach which aims to mobilize the power of the group experience for the benefit of the individual children in class ... where everyone is equal, everybody can be seen and heard, people can make eye contact, they can speak to one another more easily, there are no barriers such as tables or desks and everyone feels part of the group (Collins, 2007, p.1).

In other words, circle time is defined as a sincere atmosphere in which the spirit of being a group is developed, where each individual communicates comfortably with each other without being judged or hindered by hierarchy.

Sitting in a circle as a means of group communication is a process found in both traditional and modern cultures. Generally, this sitting style is preferred to avoid a hierarchy, to keep the environment informal, and as an arrangement where everyone can see and hear each other. This is defined and practiced as “circle time” in schools as part of seating arrangement education (Lang, 1998). It is a class activity process where children and teachers sit together in a circle, share their ideas, and include activities and games that provide social and emotional development in accordance with the curriculum (Collins, 2007; Lown, 2002; Yıldız, 2019).

According to Collins (2011), it is an event that is conducted regularly in which each member shares ideas, speaks and listens to each other while circular shape is the symbol of unity, indicating that each member of the circle is equal, so they have the same responsibilities. According to Kelly (1999) circle time is the first structured activity of the day when teachers and children sit in the carpet at the same level for discussing, sharing or communicating. In this activity, children share their feelings, gives voice to their views and listens to each other (Taylor, 2003). The reason why each individual sits in the circle in a carpet is to help each member of the circle to have eye contact and communicate effectively and to be in the same level without hierarchy. With these rules of the circle, teacher and students improve warm relationships (Wu, 2009).

As a group approach, circle time aims to develop social-emotional, behavioral skills and moral values. Each individual in circle makes contributions and this improves their understanding of appreciation of differences, respect for different values (Taylor, 2003). With the help of this opinion sharing time, isolation in class, anxiety to share beliefs or opinions reduce. When circle meetings are utilized regularly, children become strengthened emotionally and they can handle social problems more easily (Mosley, 2015). On the other hand, White (1990) stresses that circle time helps children to cope with peer pressure, it is beneficial for being welcoming for hardships and being a part of decision-making process, and it improves the ability of learning by mistakes.

2.5 Historical Background of Circle Time

As for clarifying "What is circle time?" delicately, we should answer "Where did circle time originate from?" which is a question proposed by Jenny Mosley (Mosley, 1996). In literature, it is explained that cooperative group activities and circle time have origins in humanistic tradition, and they are based on some principles as: awareness of self (exploring who I am), mastery (thinking about what to do in life) and interaction with others (knowing how to function in the world with other people) (Mary, 2014). In another resource, historical perspective of circle time is defined as dating

back to North American Indians who forms a circle to arrange the rules with a pipe or feather with the aim of regulating social order (Lang, 1998). According to Housego and Burns (1994) circle time tradition stems from the USA but according to Mosley (1996) origins of circle time cannot be clearly defined.

In 1880s, circle time emerged as a circular activity from pedagogy of Frobelian kindergarten. While examining the essentials of Frobel's approach as natural-romantic, being an individual in a circular event indicates an essential deep symbolic significance as communion feeling (Reich, 1993). Thus, Froebel is regarded as pioneer of development of circle time in Northern Europe (Sönmez & Ceylan, 2017). When it comes to 1900s, in the UK, circle time has popularity with the help of Jenny Mosley's studies (Wu, 2009). While there are some other researchers of Circle Time and textbook writers like Bliss and Tetley (2006), Curry and Bromfield (1994), Mortimer (1998); Jenny Mosley's studies are regarded as the most comprehensive and accepted worldwide (as cited in Miller & Moran, 2007).

There are kinds of circle time models which were defined by Lang (1998) arise in the USA, Netherlands, UK, Italy and Scandinavian countries in the late of 1900s. For example, it is described that there was an event called as 'magic circle' in California. On the other hand, Ballard wrote "a curriculum growth and human relations skills development" program in the early 1970s, which has parallel sides with Mosley model of circle time regarding aims and general outline of the program such has a talking ticket in process, just as speaking object in Mosley model of circle time (Collins, 2011).

In 2000s; an approach by Rimm-Kaufman and Chiu (2007) called as responsive classroom has arisen including values of being a community. They define responsive classroom as integrating academic and social learning together as strengthening relationships among community members as well as improving their academic skills. Responsive classroom approach includes circle time routines which are named as morning meetings in literature (Bredekamp, 2017; Copple & Bredekamp, 2008). It is defined that morning meetings are the part of schedule of the classroom which has a

regular and predictable content, giving a sense of safety for children (Bornman et al., 2004). On the other hand, "Morning meeting is an essential anchor for students." as well as establishing the routines of the school more smoothly and effectively (Giannantonio, 2011). Morning meetings are explained as the time when the students and teacher share their feelings and opinions with each other, engaging in a whole group activity and completing the morning message of the day which is used as a transition from daily life to academic learning (Bondy & Ketts, 2001). Morning meeting is resembled to a breakfast table in that in the breakfast table conversations among family members, children are interacting with each other at the very beginning of the day (Bondy & Ketts,2001).

2.6 Planning of Program and Planning of Circle Time

Planning the process before the activity time is one of the prominent ways of management in early education to meet the needs of children as well as attracting children's attention for effective learning. It is stated by researchers studying at University of Texas, Research and Development Center for teacher Education (Ebert & Culyer, 2011) that teachers who are sufficient at managing the classroom effectively are good planners all the time. Furthermore, Tokuhama-Espinosa (2014) asserts that one of the key elements of high-quality education is planning of learning process. There are two types of planning which are formal and informal ones, first of which includes lesson plans, activity plans proposed by school administration or developed by teacher of the classroom or another educator, second of which includes teacher's ideas on his/her mind about what and how to cover a subject on that day (MacDonald & Colville). About this issue, Morrison (2007) explains four steps which should be followed while planning daily flow which are; deciding objectives and indicators regarding the program, selecting developmentally appropriate activities and materials regarding children's choices and interests, defining the time to be allocated for the activity and deciding how to evaluate what children have learned after the process.

Not only for the educational process, but also for a successful circle time process, necessity of preparation and planning exists (McKitrick, 2014). Effective circle time can be utilized with quality circle time content by arranging setting beforehand and

engaging children into process. Before conducting circle time in class, the process should be planned just as the activities included in daily schedule which should be evaluated at the end (Gambino, 2019). On the other hand, Dowling (2005) highlights that planning of circle time is essential because when it is not carefully planned and prepared, organized with a large group, the adult is not trusted by children or if the adult does not care children's needs and concerns, circle time can become adrift.

In circle time, there are two ways of planning. First one contributes to children's developmental domains and the second one is related with teachable moments arising from the times when children have questions proposed to others during activity times, or any issues related with that time. In the early stages of circle time for children who are getting used to the process, content of the program necessitates to be planned in advance. While planning circle time children can be made participate in the process until they get used to routines (McKitrick, 2014). In due course, children start to come up with new ideas, questions or they may have the issues that should be discussed. While planning circle time, there are issues to be considered; children's interests, developmentally appropriateness, age of the child, special needs of children. Also, planning of the education includes three dimensions which are planning the context, deciding how to teach and what to teach (Ebert & Culyer, 2011). Therefore, while planning circle time, context such as the place of activity, duration of circle time; content such as types of the activities and the way to teach such as using teaching materials should be planned beforehand.

When it comes to origin of planning the content of circle time, Cefai et al. (2014) expresses that teacher should be included in planning of circle time routines and there can be a collaborative planning among other teachers. When teachers take initiatives on planning the process, then they gain competence and confidence about circle time process. Moreover Cremin (2002) and Pace (2012) expresses that apart from teachers' initiatives, children's interests and needs should be taken into consideration while planning circle time because when children enjoy to be a part of circle, then efficiency of the process increases.

In this context, researchers explain that planning daily process is essential for effective learning environments (Ebert & Culyer, 2011). As for daily process, they explain importance of planning for circle time as well (McKitrick, 2014). While planning circle time process, children's interests, ideas, developmentally appropriateness, children with special needs, teaching methods and environmental conditions should be considered (Ebert & Culyer, 2011). Moreover, children should be included in circle time planning and teacher should take into consideration children's needs so that children establish trust in teacher for effective circle time process (Dowling, 2005).

2.7 Context of Circle Time

Context of circle time consists of four items which are frequency of circle time, duration, seating place and seating plan in circle time. Each of these items are explained successively below.

As for frequency and duration of circle time, Collins (2007) explains that circle time should be conducted with regular occurrence at least once in a week but preferred to be utilized every day. Children who are in younger age may have sessions for 10-15 minutes while older ones' circle time lasts for 30-40 minutes (Collins, 2007). Approximate duration of circle time is among 15-20 minutes for early childhood years.

On the other hand, for depicting the boundaries of the circle, carpet or cushions might be used but it should be taken into consideration that each member of the circle is in the same level including teachers of the class (Bustamante et al., 2018; Seifert & Metz, 2016; Mosley, 2005; Mary, 2014). Seating plan of circle time is suggested as circle shape because it makes participants feel that they are the part of a whole, everyone is equal and there are no boundaries between participants of the circle (Mosley, 2005; Seifert & Metz, 2016; Mary, 2014).

In one research, gender of children is compared regarding their participation during circle time and in this research, seating plan of children are examined, as well. Emilson and Johansson (2013) studied six different groups of children between the ages of 1-3, 65 girls and 56 boys, and their teachers in their study, in which they investigated

whether the gender factor affects the interaction between children at circle time and context of circle time in Swedish and Norwegian kindergartens. The data were collected by video recordings, and circle time practices were recorded by obtaining the necessary consents from the administrators and families. 48 circle time routines were recorded reaching totally approximately 840 minutes. According to the results of the study, it was revealed that the children were given the opportunity to make their own choices and express their opinions in circle time by classroom teacher. In the process of circle time, children are expected to sit in a circle shape and supposed to obey circle time rules and structure. Also, it was revealed that teachers take initiative for children's decision-making process and they encourage children to make their own choices. So, research data showed that there should be more communicative action between children. On the other hand, it is seen that classroom teacher maintains the control during circle time which reveals that social order in classroom environment is highlighted. According to results of the study, during circle time process, there were differences among children's participation. Certain children were attending more in the process and the reasons might be gender issues, needs of children and competencies. Regarding the results, girls were more active participants in the circle time than the boys.

All in all, circle time is preferred to be utilized every day, processing about 10-15 minutes for young children and 30-40 minutes for older children. For making boundaries of circle, cushions or carpets can be used. Moreover, it is advised to sit in circle shape for diminishing boundaries and hierarchy among participants of circle.

2.8 Facilitators in Circle Time

Facilitators of circle time includes materials, mediators and media tools which are used by teachers and children during circle time. Each of these facilitators are explained in following parts.

Some materials might be used as a sign of beginning of circle time which are placed in the middle of the circle, so that children can figure out that it is time for circle

(Mosley, 2005). There might be other materials such as flashcards, pointers, calendars showing days, weeks, weathers, attendance materials designed by members of the class, board or other classroom supplies to support content of the circle time (Zaghlawan et al., 2010). Mosley (2006) also adds that there can be other materials such as toys, pictures of the classroom members, puppets, musical instruments, story books, emotion cards, clothes for dramatic play, or any kinds of daily life materials such as socks, spoons, chairs depending on the type of activity that they do.

For mediators, in order to facilitate circle time process, teachers are advised to use rhymes, riddles and finger games and the reason why is explained as evoking joy and encourage children to imagine. Nursery rhymes and songs also provides an environment where children can improve their language skills. In a book Rhyme play: playing with children and mother goose (Bennet, 2010, as cited in May, 2019), it is explained,

> Nursery rhymes are not simplified speech, in fact, the richness of the poems often lies in their fluid use of unfamiliar words and the delightful lilt of phrases. Speaking the rhymes, over and over again, stimulates language and sweeps your children into the fascinating world of "languaging". The wonderful imagery and patterns of sound present in nursery rhymes construct and interactive, verbal playground for children.

For media tools, teachers can use broad range of digital devices such as CD players, cameras, mobile devices, projectors, tablets, computers, interactive whiteboards and some applications used via internet (NAEYC, 2012). These media tools can be used for facilitating creativeness of children, encouragement of children for interaction with their peers and effectiveness of circle time process.

To sum up, facilitators of circle time are explained within materials, mediators and media tools. For materials, teacher can use a variety of materials such as calendars, flashcards, puppets, toys etc. For mediators, teachers can use rhymes, riddles or songs for including children in process. Lastly, teachers can use a lot of media tools such as computers, projectors, cameras for encouraging children to interact with other members of the circle time.

2.9 Types of Activities in Circle Time

As for the activity types in circle time, a series of researches and books are examined and it is deduced that some types of activities are commonly utilized in preschool or primary school level as follows (Zaghlawan, & Ostrosky, 2010; Bustamane et al., 2018; Collins, 2013; Seifert & Metz, 2017);

1. Sharing: Type of activity involves sharing ideas, sharing memories or stories with each other when children go around the circle.

2. Calendar: In many classrooms calendar time is composed of drawing children's attention to what day, which month which season of the year they are in. Generally, in preschools, the group designs or acquires a physically existing calendar where they can change the days, examine the month and seasons since it is hard to grasp abstract concept in those years. On the other hand, children who is responsible for the calendar called as 'weather watcher' goes to look from the window of the class and shares how is the weather that day which is a part of getting responsibilities and sharing the duties in circle time.

3. Reviewing the schedule: This activity is supposed to help children to grasp the plan of the day before they start to do any activity. In this part, teacher of the class may lay out the plan for orienting children to the day.

4. Language-literacy & numeracy: This activity type contains academic skills like counting, identifying numbers, working on pronunciation, letters, learning new vocabularies, as an activity for transition to primary years.

5. Morning message: Teacher of the class writes a short but meaningful message on the board and together with children they work on how to spell, how to write and read this word by examining it delicately. For example, teacher writes

‘congratulations!’ to the board and they make conversation about meaning, writing, spelling, pronunciation, first and last letters of the word together.

6. Singing and dancing: The content of the songs might be both academic (e.g., how is the weather song) or nonacademic (e.g., welcome song), behavior songs (e.g., brush your teeth song) as well as songs rising excitement of children (e.g., baby shark song).

7. Transition time: This is the activity that is used for switching activities or making preparations for the day without any structure or direction like organizing papers.

8. Roll call: This activity is performed to check who is absent and who is present in that day for being aware that each of the friend is a part of that group. Teacher can develop different kinds of creative activities for roll calling because expressing a message that ‘each of you has a special place in our class and you are an important part of the whole’ is crucial for implying feeling of communion.

Concerning the activity types mentioned above, researches related with types of activities in circle time are defined subsequently. In Turkey there is research conducted, named as “Analysis of Views of Teachers, Managers and Academicians on Efficient Use of Circle Time and Daily Evaluation Time in the MoNE 2013 Pre-School Education Program (Yıldız, 2019). Researcher compared the results of views of teachers, academicians and school managers, and it is depicted that three groups of them shared similar view that circle time is beneficial for children for making them feel freer. As for the mostly used activities in circle time, researcher reveals that greeting, roll call, talking about plan of the day, conversation about children’s out of school experiences and physical activities are the ones. This research is conducted with 10 teachers, 10 managers and academicians who are at least “Dr. Lecturer” at diverse universities, in Sakarya Province. Now that the results of the study cannot be

generalized to other preschool teachers and academicians, the researcher highlights that other similar research can be utilized in different parts of Turkey (Yıldız, 2019).

In another study conducted by Akgün (2013), it is aimed to supply information about circle time activities in French with the help of observations. While collecting data, researcher was non-participant observer of two groups of five years old children. Each of circle time routines lasted approximately 20-25 minutes. While observing the classes, researcher kept notes of teachers' and children's behaviors and words. Analysis of the data conducted descriptively. While analyzing the data, researcher divided results in three groups as preparations and rules of circle time, behaviors of teacher, and lastly scope of the routine. Result of the study showed that children sit in "U" shape in circle time and they are assigned roles for each day during circle time. On the other hand, teachers interfered in the circle time process as for gathering attention of children with verbal warnings. Also, types of activities conducted in circle time are explained; day planning, taking the roll, performing assigned roles, counting numbers, doing calendar time and show and tell activities.

In another study conducted by Dinçkurt & Kesicioğlu (2020), it is aimed to reveal practices of early childhood teacher's morning circle time and evaluation time routines with survey model. In the research process, circle time and daily evaluation time observation forms are used. Two different researchers collected data for 20 weeks by observing10 preschool teachers two times in a week. Totally 80 observations were conducted by researchers in public preschools in Giresun, Turkey. At the end of the research, it is revealed that in circle time, children do different activities such as greetings with each other, roll calling, singing songs, sharing experiences and feelings while they say goodbye to other friends, make reminders and give feedback for supporting positive behaviors of children. At the end of the study, researchers made suggestions about providing concrete examples about morning circle times and daily evaluation time both from Turkey and different countries by Turkish preschool teachers and academicians. They suggested that morning circle time and daily evaluation time should be applied with concrete materials, environment should be designed accordingly and different kinds of methods should be used to reveal children's feelings and emotions as in Reggio Emilia and High Scope approaches. On

the other hand, they suggested that there should be experimental researches about morning circle time and daily evaluation time to determine their effects on children.
Another study was conducted by Bustamente et al (2018) about types of activities conducted in circle time, prevalence of teacher and children talk during circle time, classroom quality and engagement of children especially in poverty. This study was conducted in an urban school in a mid-Atlantic city. In this study, 22 teachers working in the same public school was attended. Before intervention, researcher made a pretest for teachers for ensuring similarity between two different groups. In this same school, classrooms and teachers of them accepted to attend this study, were observed by videotaping in mornings, and these video recordings were coded later on for reaching information about child engagements, teacher and child talk and quality of instructions. After observation process, teachers were supplied a survey to be completed. As for measures of the study, researcher used Global Classroom Quality (CLASS) for teacher child interactions. Furthermore, researcher used instructional content coding scheme for deciding circle time activities. Another instrument used by researcher was teacher instructional talk and child talk coding scheme for deciding content and purpose of conversations. Results of the study showed that types of activities in circle time mostly includes morning message, calendar time, sharing time, literacy and numeracy activities, singing and dancing, transitions or noninstructional time from much percentages to less. On the other hand, study revealed that teacher talk is twice prevalent as child talk in educational process. Moreover, quality of classrooms was found to be low, approximately about 40%, and it is found that quality of classrooms is linked with teacher-child talk and child engagement in circle time.

2.10 Stages of Circle Time

Circle time activities should be planned and structured while teachers are supported to be flexible regarding their children's needs, capabilities or interests. Teacher may find their creative way in circle time but generally each circle time meeting has five steps as follows:

1. Meeting up: This is the beginning phase of circle time for warming up and preparing an environment for children to feel relaxed, feeling the joy of being a group, so children are encouraged to sit near each other. Because each group of children has unique from each other, the content of the meeting up activity is left to teacher who knows the features of the group well.

2. Warming up: In this part of the circle time, children are encouraged to listen to each other while waiting for their turns to speak. This phase is called as 'round'. In round, teacher starts with a sentence to be completed by each member of the circle. An example is completion of the sentence like 'The book of which I would like to be writer of it …' In this part a 'talking object' is used from child to child while talking with the purpose of giving message that the child holding the object is talking and everybody should listen to that friend without interrupting. Children have the right to not talk by saying 'pass' which means they should not be pushed to express their views.

3. Opening up: It is the stage that is the heart of the circle time in which children are encouraged to discuss, share, play by selected activities designed regarding their development. In this stage, activities should give an underlying message about belief in children's ability to succeed and having responsibility of their own choices. That's why, commonly used activity in this phase is role-play activities.

4. Cheering up: It is another important stage of circle time which help children come back from activity and appreciate group success and praise each other for their success and for their sharing.

5. Calming down: It is the sign of closing the circle for emphasizing that closure is succeeded together (Mary, 2014; Canney, & Byrne, 2006; Mosley, 2015).

2.11 Rules of Circle Time

According to Mosley (2015), all activities have some rules that are called as ‘golden rules’, being regarded as social values of the activities. These rules can be regulated with a group consensus (Wu, 2009). The rules of the circle time are defined as follows in ‘Quality Circle Time’ book;

- Should give signal if anybody wishes to speak
- We do not use any put-downs to other peers
- We do not interrupt anybody’s talk
- Everyone has right to ‘pass’ if does not choose to tell something
- If anybody says ‘pass’, s/he will have a second chance to speak at the end
- Not using ‘you’ words, using ‘I’ words instead not to make others feel guilty
- All the opinions are welcomed and respected
- Members of the circle suggest solutions to their problems
- People can help each other or refuse it in a polite manner.
- Teachers are facilitators, not the leaders of the circle (Collins, 2011; Collins, 2007; Lawrence, 2006; Yıldız, 2019).

2.12 Benefits of Circle Time

Under this heading, benefits of circle time are explained in terms of social emotional, language and cognitive development and school readiness of children. Benefits of circle time in terms of social emotional development is examined in terms of providing sense of belonging in a trustful environment, allowing children to express themselves without making judgements, enhancing self-esteem, improving peer relations, providing an environment where each member is equal (Suggs, 2019; Kriete & Davis, 2014; Miller et al., 2005; Bondy & Ketts, 2001; Coppe & Bredekamp, 2008; Collins, 2007). Benefits for language development are examined regarding improving mother language development by enhancing word knowledge (Duman, 2009; Mosley, 2005). Also, benefits about cognitive development are examined in terms of facilitating problem solving skills among children and improving academic knowledge (Yıldız, 2019; Cameron & Morrison, 2011). Lastly, benefits of circle time for school readiness

are explained regarding improving relationships within community, handling problems with people, persevering for accomplishing tasks and having a place and joining in a group and being aware of the rules of the society (Peth Pierce, 2000; Copple & Bredekamp, 2008). Also, related researches about each of the topics are provided.

2.12.1 Social Emotional Development

Regarding the benefits of circle time on children's socio-emotional development, there are numerous benefits that can be examined. First of all, circle time activities provide a respectful learning environment for classroom members as well as a trustful climate (Suggs, 2019). Kriete and Davis explains that circle time motivates children within two aspects; first of which is feeling as a significant individual and sense of belonging to a group as well as having fun which is a need for people (2014). Just as this explanation, Csak (2002) expresses that there are rare opportunities for children to share their ideas, feelings and experiences with others, so children are getting silenced and introverted, but encouraging children to talk with each other facilitates feeling as a special and wanted part of the community through social acceptance in circle time (Miller, Cable & Devereux, 2005; Bondy & Ketts, 2001; Colao, 2010; Giannantonio, 2011; Gutteridge & Smith, 2007; Suggs, 2019).

On the other hand, forming positive relationships with classroom members enhances children's self-esteem and confidence by providing a safe environment where it is appreciated to talk about their opinions and concerns individually (Copple & Bredekamp, 2008). In circle time children make practice of conversation with other people, listening to other's ideas, welcoming different opinions, waiting for other's turn to speak, agreeing or disagreeing with others' ideas with a respectful attitude and empathizing with others, all of which facilitate development of communication skills (Gutteridge & Smith, 2007; Leicester, 2006). In circle time, children gain skills of looking at alternative opinions and resolving differences as well as defining their own feelings and handling with them with support of a community (Collins, 2007). Circle time is the process for children to catch how to treat people without biases about color

rage, gender, disability issues or differences in a natural environment where it makes children feel secure and belonged (Bornman et al., 2004).

Moreover, in circle time, children get used to give equal values to individuals in a community by organizing a forum for more democratic decision-making process between peers (Leicester, 2006). In decision making process, children learn how to play an active role as an important contributor, and they feel valued (Collins, 2007). Children gain self-esteem which ensures them to have improved social and academic skills because in circle time, children learn more about themselves, their life, their choices and their specialties that can be developed (Revell, 2004). While gaining self-esteem, children avoid selfishness as they can also gain ability to recognize the thoughts of other friends as well as teachers (Bliss & Tetley, 2006).

As for the benefits of circle time on social emotional development of children, Bondy & Ketts (2001) conducted research with a teacher who has 20 third grade students in her class, for revealing effects of circle time on children. Researcher of the study conducted an interview with students. Participant of the interview explained that even when child or teacher has a problem outside of the school, they start the day with circle time with acceptance because they have fun and have happy time together. In this process they are getting ready for the rest of the day with warming up tasks. In this research process, participant mentions a new classmate entering the class in the middle of the semester, and with the help of circle time, child become a part of the family. On the other hand, study results indicated that, children become more responsible and assertive both in circle time and in other parts of the educational process. Regarding the success of circle time implementation process, classroom teacher highlights that teacher herself has a greater confidence on children's capabilities. Thus, not only children develop assertiveness, but also teacher's faith in children increases. With the help of better confidence on children, classroom teacher gives more opportunities for children to collaborate, gain independence or leadership. Regarding the classroom teachers' experiences children take more responsibilities and they have better social relations with other members of the class. The sentences of the researcher summarize her views about the effects of circle time: "All the academic knowledge in the world

will not help those who lack self-discipline, judgment, social interest, the ability to make good choices, and the sense of responsibility that enables them to act effectively in life".

Action research by Colao (2010) is conducted in order to reveal how circle time, called as morning meeting in the research itself, can be implemented for facilitating student's engagement, collaboration and creating sense of community with his own kindergarten classroom with 16 children. In data collection process, researcher used a journal for keeping records of progress and his own reflections which is an evaluation of the day as well as planning the other day's circle time. He made observations and used an observation checklist for two weeks. As another data collection tool, researcher made discussions with children during circle time process to get children's feedback for circle time process with questions prepared in advance. On the other hand, researcher did an interview with children in order to get children's opinions about being a student in that kindergarten regarding children's situations about feeling safe at school. Researcher recorded the answers in the journal during interviews. As last instrument, researcher used attitude scale for recording children's immediate emotions about the activities held in classroom. As an information, sample of the research includes six boys and ten girls, 2 of them adopted twins, 1 of them living in foster care house, one is born with cocaine addiction, 2 of them with learning disabilities as well as 2 of them showing violent behaviors severely. Colao (2010) utilized circle time from the beginning of the semester till the end. During the process, different implementations were added when children get used to routines. At the end of the circle time implementation in his class, Colao (2010) found that children gain sense of belonging, they feel more secure at school, and children gained classroom behavior regulation skills comparingly to beginning of the semester. Researcher who is the implementer of study explained that children feel at home after getting used to morning meetings regarding his findings.

A study by Collins (2013) was conducted for finding out what is happening in circle time activities in primary school classrooms in Ireland. Researcher did observations for 30-50 minutes each time, teacher journal analysis and interviews before and after

observations. Sample of the research includes five Irish primary school classrooms. According to results of the study, most of the teachers used Mosley model of circle time but there were differences regarding rules and process of circle time in classes that were observed. The aims of circle time utilization were considered under four headings regarding observations which are; improving social and personal skills, self-confidence and self-esteem development, giving equal voice to each child and lastly facilitating positive classroom atmosphere. On the other hand, according to results of the study, circle time was beneficial not only for children but also for teachers because it facilitated sense of safety in classroom, and teacher and children also communicated more easily. Researcher suggested giving more emphasis on activities related with improving self-esteem of children because in the classes, activities related with social and personal skills of children were focused majorly. On the other hand, researcher suggests that giving children equal voice is supported during circle time but advices or ideas of children should also be in use, they should be in application as well as just giving voice to share their ideas.

Another study conducted by Mary (2014) aimed to reveal role of cooperative games and circle time activities for improving peer relations positively. There were two French primary classrooms including 40 students who are among 7-11 years old in the study. Participants of the research intervened with personal, social and citizenship education (PSCE) which are lasted for 20-40 minutes weekly included in circle time process. Data was collected with semi structured individual interviews and with focus groups as for investigating children's and teacher's perceptions about circle time activities. On the other hand, as for investigating relationships between personal, social and citizenship education (PSCE) and children's self-esteem focus group interview is conducted with two teachers and 12 children after individual interviews. Results of the study showed that circle time activities improved sense of community, feeling of empathy for others and allowed more positive interactions among children as well as decreased rejection among peers. On the other hand, children reported that they changed their negative views about other friends, they get closer to each other with circle time because they communicated with all their friends.

In a study conducted by Miller and Moran (2007), effects of circle time on children's self-esteem, and difference between outcomes of circle time and efficacy-based approaches' effects on children were searched. In this research, three different groups' self-esteem were measured as pre and posttest. The first group included teachers who are experienced in circle time activities, second group included the ones who are tend to improve self-esteem in their classes but they have a favorite approach for develop children's belief in themselves. The last group included the teachers who are competent and experienced but they do not have a priority or application about enhancing children's self-esteem in their classes. 519 primary school children and 21 teachers of these children from 21 schools participated in this study. In the first group of teachers who utilize circle time, there were 8 teachers and 214 children; in the second group who utilize efficacy-based activities except for circle time, there were 7 teachers and 180 children; in the third one which is control group, there were 6 teachers and 125 children. During the study, two instruments were used which are Rosenberg's RSE and modified version of Tafarodi and Swann's self-liking and self-competence scale for measuring the self-esteem of participants. Both of the instruments were administered to children and their teachers, not only at the very beginning of the semester, but also towards the end of the year subsequently without any interference to groups. Results of the study showed that both self-efficacy and circle time groups have statistically significant high self-esteem scores while there is not such condition in control group. On the other hand, in circle time group, increase in self-worth is significantly high regarding two other groups who do not utilize circle time in their class. So, in this study, it is highlighted that circle time has an effect on children's self-worth positively.

In another study which is done with 20 preschool groups in the United Kingdom reveals that the effect of circle time can be explained as beneficial for improving learning and managing problematic behavior of children (Wood, 2001) while studies that are conducted in secondary schools reveals that both social and self-awareness of children rise as well as attitudes towards learning with circle time (Cefai et al., 2014).

Lastly, in a case study about whole school circle time approach which are done in Maltese primary school examined the views of 150 students from year 1 to year 6, 14 teachers and other staff members and parents of students (Pace, 2012). In results of this study, it is declared that students, parents and staff members have positive views about circle time because circle time helps for better student teacher relationship, it has benefits for social emotional development, increased motivation, more energetic and positive classroom atmosphere, improvement in listening and communication skills as well as less bullying behavior and more tendency to obey the rules of the school. On the other hand, in this study, teachers emphasized that time constraints and excessively loaded curriculum are hindrances for application of circle time more effectively (Pace, 2012).

All in all, these studies about effect of circle time on children's social emotional development revealed that it helps children creating feeling of community, improving peer collaboration, gaining more responsibility, feeling more secure at school, gaining classroom behavior regulation skills and feeling of empathy towards others, gaining self-worth, reducing rejection and negative thoughts among peers. Not only children, but also teachers indicated that they are much more aware of children's capabilities, they can give more responsibilities to children and teachers feel more secure like children at school with the help of circle time.

2.12.2 Language & Cognitive Development

As well as social skills of children, circle time is found to be beneficial for children's cognitive and language development. It is seen as teaching and learning strategy with well-planned and structured purposeful content enabling teachers developing children's problem-solving skills while trying to deal with both their own and other people's real-life situations (Mosley, 2005).

A study was conducted by Duman (2009) to determine effect of circle time activities on children's usage of concepts (written under the headings of categories in MoNE 2013 Early Childhood Education Program, e.g., geometrical shapes; circle, rectangle,

square) Research design is applied as experimental procedure and two different classrooms from the same school were included in the study. One of the classrooms was picked randomly as experiment group to apply 20 minutes of circle time regularly both in the morning and in the afternoon for one month period. In experimental group, there were 9 boys and 7 girls while in control group there were 8 boys and 8 girls. Control group was not exposed to any different interference while teachers of the control group were trained about circle time activities for 10 hours before they start to utilize circle time in their own classrooms. After the teacher of the experiment group complete training process, they started to utilize circle time in their classroom. On the other hand, in both of the classrooms, same concepts are selected randomly from MoNE Early childhood education program, 2013 and these concepts were covered in both classes' educational plans. While analyzing children's learning process who are in both control and experiment group, parents are provided with a list of target concepts for one whole week. Children who used concepts in three different situations are accepted as they have grasped the target concepts. Children's usage of concepts who are in control group was %22 while experiment group's usage of concepts was %20 before covering the concepts in daily educational program. Results of the study showed that, at the end of four-week period, achievement of children who are in control group was %60 while the other group of children had %80 success at the end of the circle time interference. Researcher mentioned that children in both groups learned target concepts to some extend but the ones who are exposed to circle time activities acquired more concepts by emphasizing the importance and need for new researches about effect of circle time on children's self-esteem, early literacy and physical development.

Also, circle time facilitates transitions to activity process in class. Teachers use circle time as an attention gatherer for children to make children get used to new words and concepts by reading books, singing songs, finger puppets as a warm-up to daily schedule of the class (Yıldız, 2019). Thus, children benefit from circle time when teacher orient children for upcoming learning process. It is expressed that when early childhood teachers make a transition to activities in advance by explaining the

rationale of the activity that will be held, children's knowledge of literacy and self-regulation are improved significantly (Cameron & Morrison, 2011).

Besides, during circle time, teachers' usage of challenging vocabulary and making conversation with these vocabularies improves children's language development (Dickinson, 2001). For instance; before the day of visit by a police officer to school, preschool teacher utilizes a circle time with whole class and he reminds children that police officer is coming tomorrow. She will be wearing her badge and a uniform in order to be identified by anyone. Also, teacher makes an explanation that police officer will be making a conversation about how to stay safe and how to protect ourselves from danger. She continues that they will be writing children's questions for police officer on the board before the expected visit. In this process, teacher supplied children to be ready for quest speaker, children informed about general content of the visit and they get familiar with some new words like uniform and identify (Bredekamp, 2017).

To sum up, circle time is found to be beneficial for language and cognitive development of children regarding different aspects. Children who utilize circle time in their classes grasp more concepts included in MoNE Early Childhood Education Program (2013) regarding the ones who do not utilize circle time and teachers use circle time as a transition to other activities and it helps them to improve self-regulation and literacy knowledge (Cameron & Morrison, 2011). On the other hand, using kinds of vocabularies in circle time helps children to grasp challenging words (Bredekamp, 2017).

2.12.3 School Readiness

Researchers identified that children should address and express their emotions appropriately, have healthy relationships both with their peers and adults, having persistency and perseverance towards difficult tasks to accomplish, should be good at handling social problems, joining in group activities by following the rules to be ready for school (Peth Pierce, 2000).

Circle time facilitate sharing experiences and feelings, welcoming a new friend, contributing views for growing the class plant while listening to other classmates, talking to other people and evaluate other ideas in their minds, cooperating with other friends and teachers, learning to take turns to speak, responding to questions appropriately all of which are skills that make them more ready for elementary school (Copple & Bredekamp, 2008). On the other hand, circle time provides various learning environments which can facilitate school readiness of children (Yıldız, 2019; Zaghlawan & Ostrosky, 2010). During circle time, activities are planned regarding related concepts of the week like shapes, seasons, weather, letters, numbers which are the part of academic learning process, so this process help children to be more familiar with these topics and their transition to elementary school is supported. (Zaghlawan & Ostrosky, 2010; Mosley, 2005).

2.13 Teachers' Background Information

According to Kaufmann & Wishmann (1999), researchers highlighted that many preschool teachers do not regard themselves as capable of meeting the needs of children regarding socio-emotional development or coping with challenging behaviors of children (as cited in Hemmeter et al., 2008). As one of the ways to decrease challenging behaviors of children, circle time practices is one of the clues for it. The more teachers are knowledgeable about circle time, the better outcomes of circle time practices can be reached. So, trainings should be offered for teachers who are enthusiastic about improving effectiveness of their circle time practices because if there is absence of knowing the aim of circle time deeply, it is hardly possible to achieve benefits of circle time comprehensively (Glazzard, 2016). Housego and Burns (1994) also have suggestions about need for trainings for teachers in order to deliver circle time effectively in class because teachers have wide range of expertise and experiences differentiating from each other (as cited in Glazzard, 2016). As one of the examples, Lang (1998) states that in their study, one of the participants explained that "If, as is quite likely, disclosure of a serious kind takes place in the circle, many teachers will not be equipped to handle it properly." (Lang, 1998, p.9). This expression

identifies that some of the teachers might need to be trained to deal with sensitive issues possible to happen at circle time.

2.14 Positions of Teachers and Children Towards Circle Time

In some researches positions of teachers and children towards circle time are investigated. These researches indicated that while some children are positive about circle time, there are some others who have negative answers, as well. Teachers who have positive positions proposed benefits of circle time as the reason (Lown, 2002), while children who have negative answers proposed the duration of circle time and content of it (Wiltz and Klein, 2001). These researches are summarized below.

In 2002 Lown has conducted a study about perceptions of teachers and children towards circle time. In this research process 13 primary and 2 secondary school teachers are involved from 8 different schools. Among all teachers, 9 of them responded the questionnaire. 18 questionnaires about children's perceptions were answered by children. As well as questionnaires, 3 interviews were conducted with 3 teachers to triangulate the data. 5-point Likert type scale was administered as well as yes-no questions in questionnaires. In the interviews, 10 questions were asked to teachers lasting approximately 45-60 minutes. Results of the study showed that teachers have positive positions about circle time and they are intended to continue to utilize circle time in their classes now that they witness benefits of circle time on children's social emotional development. Teachers argued that because children are better in expressing themselves, cooperating with others, listening to different ideas, taking turns to talk, understanding their own emotions and coping with difficult situations, they have positive perceptions about circle time. Moreover, the more teachers utilize circle time in their classes, the more positive ideas about circle time they have. Accordingly, teachers who are more experienced about utilizing circle time have more positive views about it. Compared to teacher's, children's perceptions were also positive and they find circle time valuable now that it provides an environment where children who are not socializing with each other in other activities are sharing their opinions and experiences.

In another study conducted by Sönmez and Ceylan (2017), it was aimed to determine well-being of children in relation to circle time activities as well as teachers' reactions towards children's low level of wellbeing during circle time. The research was conducted by observing 25 children, 14 of whom are girls while 11 of whom are boys going to a private preschool in Turkey. The observation process was conducted in two steps. In the first step, researchers observed how teachers do circle time regarding the process and the content. In the second step, researchers observed wellbeing and involvement of children in circle time process. In total, 5 different classes were observed for two times. Each observation process took 4 minutes. On the other hand, 5 teachers of these children were interviewed. Analysis of the data was done with content analysis. Results of the study showed that teachers determine wellbeing of children regarding their body language, gestures and expressions. Also, teachers think that children's involvement in circle time is linked with their own motivation and personal interests. If children choose not to attend circle time process, teachers prefer letting children leave the circle. On the other hand, teachers identified that link between involvement of children in circle time and their wellbeing is open to debate. Researchers also suggest that there is need for research about identifying relationship between children's wellbeing and involvement in school.

In contrast with positive outcomes of circle time, there is another research which reveals a different point of the process. Wiltz and Klein (2001) conducted a study by observing and making an interview with 122 preschool children from 4 high and 4 low quality schools. In this study children in high and low-quality programs measured by Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale as well as Classroom Perspectives Inventory Scale declared that some of the children do not like circle time due to it lasts for too long. But when it comes to comparison of children's responses in low quality and high-quality centers; children in low quality centers have three times more negative responses about circle time activities (25%) regarding the ones who are in high quality centers (8%). When the reason why children dislike circle time is conducted, it is revealed that circle time in low quality centers lasts for 30 to 40

minutes and they generally focus on memorization of rules, letters, numbers without making any link with other activities of the day.

2.15 Constraints to Circle Time

Teachers reported that there might be hindrances or concerns about utilizing circle time in their class. These hindrances are listed as follows;
First of all, younger children have limited attention span and they can get distracted easily (Montie et al., 2006). According to Katz (2014), now that children under 36 months may have difficulty in sitting quietly in a group and focusing on the task given in circle time, these children's preference is actively engaged in circle time instead of being a listener in a long process. To minimize distractions of young learners, it is suggested to get children involved into the process mentally and physically. They should have opportunity to express themselves as well as listening other's opinions to feel as a member of that community. On the other hand, teachers should be changing paces of activities regarding children's attention span such as engaging children in movement activity on a high note after book reading time (Bredekamp, 2017). At that point teacher should be alerted to figure out whether they are losing interest with children's cues like getting restless or looking around the class (Copple & Bredekamp, 2008).

On the other hand, teachers have concerns about class size and number of children and this situation might complicate classroom order and management. There should be fewer children at the very beginning of the circle time routines around 6. Afterwards, group size might be about 10-12 children when everyone gets familiar with the rules and concept of circle time (Collins, 2007). At that point circle time routines might be divided into two sections in crowded classroom until majority of the children get used to routines. On the other hand, teachers introduce the ground rules of circle time each time at the very beginning of the year but there might be necessity to remind rules occasionally (Collins, 2007; Mosley, 2005)

Also, teachers have concerns about handling with sensitive issues that should not be shared with whole class which might be a reason for children to have negative positions towards circle time. In circle time teachers are supposed to check whether the conversation have cues about giving information about other people's special life (Copple & Bredekamp, 2008)

Moreover, teachers become shy, anxious about talking to children with special needs in class and this situation is an obstacle for utilizing circle time. There should be an assistant teacher to support teacher to facilitate circle time effectively (Mosley, 2005). Not only for children with special needs, but also for children with behavioral problems there is need for an assistant teacher (Bustmante et. al, 2018) because another constraint on circle time process is hardships in managing children with behavioral problems. In relation to hindrances about children with behavioral problems, Zaghlawan and Ostrosky (2011) conducted a study in 8 classrooms. They found that the reason why circle time is challenging with young children is because of children with behavioral problems. The results of the study showed that type of activities may lead children to disruptive behaviors. If the activities are highly structured and not flexible, then children get started to lose their attention which is a signal for disruptive behaviors. Similarly, Collins and Mcgaha (2002) explained that if classroom teacher does not have a plan and strictly applying the same routine each day, then children may show behavioral problems such as noncompliance and leaving the circle.

Another issue hindering teachers' circle time process is about time constraints which can be examined as children's school arrival times and lack of time in daily routines. Dinçkurt & Kesicioğlu (2020) explains that one of the complaints of teachers is about instability of children's school arrival time which make circle time unproductive because of breaking ups with newcomers in the mornings. On the other hand, Cremin (2012) and Pace (2012) explains that inadequate time and overloaded curriculum push teachers to decrease circle time because of academic learning concerns of teachers.

Finally, in one research about circle time constraints, Straine and Smith (2016) conducted a non-experimental descriptive study with 24 third and fourth grade

teachers. Participants of the research joined in education about responsive classroom approach before research process. Researcher used classroom practices observation measure (CPOM) in order to observe teachers, and classroom teachers filled classroom practices frequency scale (CPFS) which are developed by Rim-Kaufmann et al. (2014). Also, student voice survey is used to examine student teacher relationships. Researcher made an interview with teachers for revealing the effectiveness of teachers' morning routines in the scope of responsive classroom approach, as well. There were 32 teachers attended the responsive classroom education but because 7 of them did not fill the survey, they were eliminated from the sample. During data collection process, researcher observed participant teachers about one hour and twenty minutes and participants filled out the student surveys at the beginning and end of the semester. Study results showed that as a type of activity of responsive classroom approach, circle time facilitate to build strong relationships with students. On the other hand, it is revealed that some of the teachers explained constraints which hinder effectiveness of their circle time practices which are linked to time constraints. In this research it is found that there is need for teacher trainings, resources and mentoring in advance to apply circle time within the scope of responsive classroom approach. Moreover, findings of the study highlighted that, colleagues should be witnessing each other's educational process by observing each other's applications, they should be sharing their resources, providing feedback to each other to improve their circle time activities as well as other responsive classroom practices.

2.16 Circle Time Studies in Turkish Context

Under this title, studies conducted in Turkey are compiled below. These researches are explained under the titles of related topics before in this research but in this title, studies especially conducted in Turkish context are compiled again. So, these researches were aforementioned before in literature review part.

In 2019, Yıldız conducted research about types of activities in circle time which is named "Analysis of Views of Teachers, Managers and Academicians on Efficient Use of Circle Time and Daily Evaluation Time in the MoNE 2013 Pre-School Education

Program" (Yıldız, 2019). Researchers colllected data from Sakarya province in Turkey from 10 teachers, academicians and 10 school managers for gathering their views about circle time. In this research, it is found that views of these three groups of participants were similar with each other. They explained that circle time is beneficial for making children feel free themselves. For the most utilized activities in circle time, researcher reveals that greeting, roll call, talking about plan of the day, conversation about children's out of school experiences and physical activities are the ones. As the results of the study cannot be generalized to other early childhood teachers and academicians, the researcher mentions that other similar research can be utilized in different parts of Turkey (Yıldız, 2019).

In another study conducted by Akgün in 2013, it is aimed to supply information about circle time activities in French with the help of observations progressing approximately 20-25 minutes. While collecting data, researcher was non-participant observer of two groups of five years old children. While observing the classes, researcher kept notes of teachers' and children's behaviors and words. While analyzing the data, researcher used a method by classifying the results in three groups as preparations and rules of circle time, behaviors of teacher, and lastly scope of the routine. Result of the study revealed that children sit in "U" shape in circle time and they are assigned roles for each day during circle time. Moreover, teachers interfered in the circle time process as for gathering attention of children with verbal warnings. Additionally, types of activities done in circle time are mentioned as; day planning, taking the roll, performing assigned roles, counting numbers, doing calendar time and show and tell activities.

Dinçkurt & Kesicioğlu (2020) conducted another study about practices of early childhood teacher's morning circle time and evaluation time routines with survey model. In this research, circle time and daily evaluation time observation forms are used for data collection. For 20 weeks, two researchers collected data by observing 10 preschool teachers two times in a week. Totally 80 observations were executed by researchers in public preschools in Giresun, Turkey. At the end of the research, it is concluded that in circle time, children do various activities like singing songs,

greetings with each other, sharing experiences and feelings, roll calling, while they say goodbye to other friends, make reminders and give feedback for supporting positive behaviors of children.

Different from the studies about types of activities in circle time and context of circle time, there are studies about benefits of circle time conducted in Turkey. A study was conducted by Duman (2009) to determine effect of circle time activities on children's usage of concepts. In this experimental design study two different classrooms from the same school took part. One of the classrooms was selected randomly as experiment group to apply 20 minutes of circle time regularly both in the morning and in the afternoon for one month period. In control group there were 8 boys and 8 girls while there were 9 boys and 7 girls in experimental group. Control group was not supplied any different interference while teachers of the control group were trained about circle time activities for 10 hours before they start to do circle time in their classes. After the teacher training process, the teachers started to utilize circle time in their classroom. Moreover, in both of the classrooms, same concepts are selected randomly from MoNE Early childhood education program, 2013 and these concepts were covered in both classes' educational curriculums. During analyzing children's learning process who are in both control and experiment group, parents are supplied with a list of target concepts for one whole week. Children who used concepts in three different situations are regarded as they have grasped the target concepts. Children's usage of concepts who are in control group was %22 while experiment group's usage of concepts was %20 before covering the concepts in daily educational program. Results revealed that, at the end of four-week period, achievement of children who are in control group was %60 while the other group of children had %80 success. Researcher explained that children in both groups learned target concepts to some extend but the ones who done circle time activities gained more concepts by highlighting the importance and need for new researches about effect of circle time on children's self-esteem, early literacy and physical development.

Morevoer, Sönmez and Ceylan (2017) conducted a study about well-being of children in relation to circle time activities as well as teachers' reactions towards children's low

level of wellbeing in circle time. The research was done by observing 25 children, 14 of whom are girls while 11 of whom are boys attending to a private preschool in Turkey. The observation process was composed of two steps. In the first one, researchers observed how teachers utilize circle time in terms of the process and the content. In the second step, researchers observed wellbeing and involvement of children in circle time. Totally, 5 different classes were observed for two times. Each observation process took 4 minutes. On the other hand, 5 teachers of these children were interviewed. Results of the study revealed teachers decide wellbeing of children considering their expressions, body language, gestures. Besides, teachers regard that children's involvement in circle time is related with their own motivation and personal interests. When a child chooses not to attend circle time process, teachers prefer letting children leave the circle. Additionally, teachers identified that link between involvement of children in circle time and their wellbeing can be elaborated more with other researches.

All in all, in Turkey there are 5 researches as far as is known. Three of these researches were conducted about types of activities and context of circle time while rest of two are about benefits of circle time. One of the researches is about benefits of circle time in terms of cognitive development while the other one is about social emotional development. These researches shed light on the current research in some aspects such as examining data gathered with observations, elaborating administrators and academicians views about circle time.

2.16 Circle Time in Different Approaches

When circle time is examined in terms of whether it is being utilized at schools of different approaches, it is revealed that each of them touches circle time in a part of the day or during education process.

As "The Montessori Method Scientific Pedagogy as Applied to the Child Education in The Children's Houses" book by Maria Montessori and her colleagues is revised for exploring the ideas in this approach, it is truly evidence that circle time is a

necessary part of the schedule, even this approach is known with its individualistic philosophy. Montessori clearly defines that "Morning circle should be carried out in both years of education as a usual and essential activity." (Montessori, George & Holmes, 2015).

In Waldorf approach, circle time is named for the time when children come together. In this process children's concentrations skills, language development and motor development are focused on. In circle time, children have storytelling, finger games, drama, singing and dancing times. It is aimed to improve children's listening and articulation skills (Yıldız, 2019).

As for Head Start Education, it is understood that some researches have been carried out especially in these types of schools because circle time is a part of the schedule of them. Research clarifies that in these schools, circle time is a daily activity which is carried out with teacher together with children in circular shape every morning for 15-20 minutes and content may vary like schedule, singing song, calendar activities as similar with circle time definition (Zaghlawan & Ostrosky, 2010).

When it comes to Reggio Emilia approach, there is a clear explanation of circle time event in one of the first books of this approach, but the name of the event is defined as "morning meetings". According to this approach, morning meetings are utilized for planning the day, reviewing what happened the previous day, discussion of activities etc. So, in Reggio Emilia resources, circle time is defined as an important part of the schedule, as well (Jaruszewicz, 1994).

Lastly, in High Scope approach, there is a greeting time at the beginning of the day for welcoming children and their families in a peaceful environment. With the regulations made for children in greeting times, transition from home to school environment is done smoothly. There is also a message board for children and families to remind the schedule of the day, important events to be shared in greeting time (Yıldız, 2019).

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This chapter includes methodological procedures of the study. Firstly, design of the study is explained, purpose of the study and research questions are covered immediately after. Then, sampling process and participants are introduced, instruments are explained, and data collection process is reported subsequently in detail. Afterwards, data analysis process is presented followed by trustworthiness of the study. Finally, ethical issues and researcher's motivation for the study are listed.

3.1 Design of the Study

Mixed methods research design was carried out in the current study. It is clarified as research having two datasets as qualitative and quantitative, two types of analysis as thematic and statistical by integrating or "mixing" components of each side (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015).

The roots of mixed methods research design dates back to 1950s even though it has been accepted in educational research field during the beginning of 2000s in academic journals (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Creswell highlights those early thoughts were signaling that all research methods had some weaknesses and biases which faded back through mixed method designs by neutralizing each form of data's weaknesses (2014). The reason why both methods are used in single study is argued as engaging both of them provides more comprehensive understanding of research problems by compensating each other's insufficiencies rather than using one of them (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

Creswell identifies three basic mixed method designs named as convergent parallel mixed method, explanatory sequential mixed method and exploratory sequential mixed method designs (2014). Types of designs are grouped regarding the words of "convergent" and "sequential", first of which implies the researcher is going through collecting, analyzing, and interpreting both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time by giving equal priority by merging the results, while second of which implies the researcher collected qualitative and quantitative data sequentially one after the other (Plano Clark et al., 2015). Out of these three types, explanatory sequential mixed method design mainly corresponds with purpose and nature of the current study. To explain more in detail, explanatory sequential mixed method comprises of two distinct phases, quantitative part which is followed by qualitative one for elaborating the results intensely (Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006). The rationale of using this design is the opportunity of explaining quantitative data by gathering participant's self-reported practices and beliefs deeply with qualitative data, which is a form of complementation of both method (Rossman & Wilson, 1985). Below, research process can be examined in figure 2.

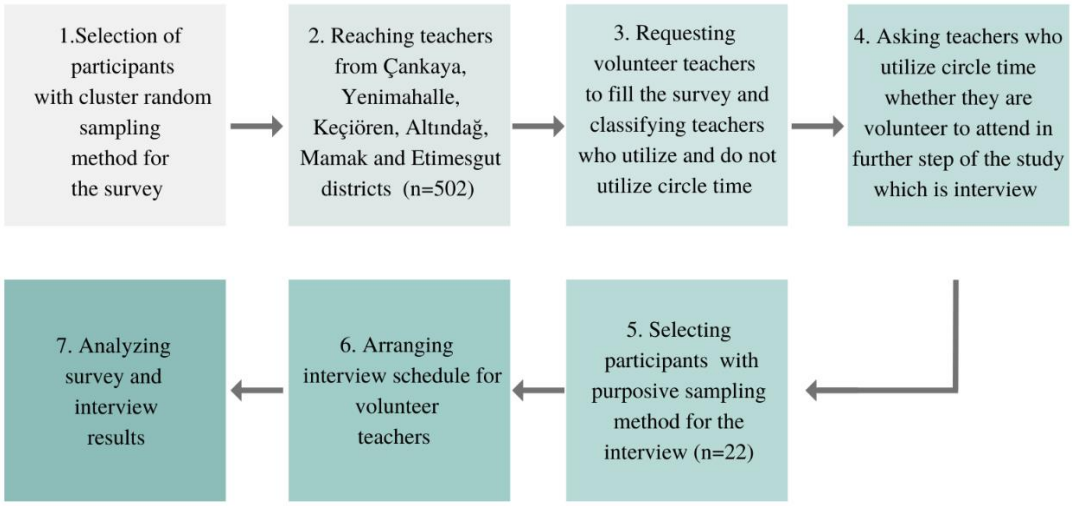

Figure 2 *Research process*

3.2 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

Purpose of this study was to examine in-service early childhood teacher's beliefs and self-reported practices about circle time in Turkey. The following research questions are addressed within the scope of this study.

1. What are the self-reported practices and beliefs of early childhood teachers about circle time?
    - 1.1. What are the self-reported practices of early childhood teachers in terms of; planning of circle time, context of circle time, facilitators used in circle time and types of activities conducted in circle time?
    - 1.2. What are the beliefs of early childhood teachers in terms of: the reasons to utilize circle time, benefits of circle time, constraints to circle time, their background information and need for resources and training about circle time?

3.3 Sampling and Participants

Participants are sources of information on the path to answering research questions, which means that how well the research questions are answered is linked with who provides the data mostly (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015). Based on this expression, participants of this study were selected as recommended for providing maximum variation in high number of people including different regions as much as possible for supplying heterogeneity of the data (Patton, 2015).

In the first part of the research which is survey, participants are selected from in-service early childhood teachers who are working in both public and private schools in 6 main districts of Ankara including Çankaya, Yenimahalle, Keçiören, Altındağ, Mamak and Etimesgut (N=502). The reason why selecting in-service teachers is to gather their own personal experiences and to provide the answers to the research questions in the most meaningful way.

As one of the types of random sampling methods, cluster sampling was used while constituting the first part of the research which is defined as selection of groups rather than individuals one by one (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). The rationale for choosing this method is that reaching the teachers working in the schools in the selected regions one by one would cause a waste of time and effort besides probability of recurrence of same schools. Therefore, the schools were selected as clusters and the teachers were reached with the help of school administrators.

In the second part of research which is interview, participants were eliminated from the first data set regarding their answers to one question in survey (N=22). This question was about whether the participant utilize circle time in her/his class or not. The teachers, who utilize circle time in their classes in survey, are asked whether they are volunteer to attend in the interview part of the study at the end of survey. So, 22 teachers who admit to attend interview part of the study are selected via survey results answered by 448 teachers regarding themselves as circle time utilizers. The aforementioned way of participant selection in this part is defined as purposive sampling which is defined as deliberate choice of participants regarding the qualities, knowledges or experiences they have, as a type of nonrandom sampling method (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016).

Below, demographic information of participants of quantitative part of study is provided in Table 1 while demographic information of participants of qualitative part of study is administered in Table 2 and Table 3.

With the following sentences, the information showed in table 1 will be explained in detail. As it is demonstrated in table, of the 502 participants, 13 of them have high school degree (2,6%), 63 of them have associates (12,5%), 377 of them has bachelor's degree (75,1%), 47 of them has master's degree (9,4%), and 2 of them has PhD degree (0,4%) as the smallest number of teachers, respectively. On the other hand, as it can be seen in the same table (3-1), age of participants has a distribution as follows; of the 502 participants, 53 of them stated that they are between 18-25 years (10,5%), 146 of them are between 26-33 (29%), 196 of them are between 34-41 years as the most

selected range (39%), 73 of them are between 42-49 years (14,5%) and 26 of them stated that they are above 50 years of age (5,1%) and lastly, eight of them did not indicate their ages (0,3).

When it comes to gender of the participants, it is clear that a great majority of them are females; of 502 participants, three of them stated they are male (0,5%), while 497 of them answered as females (99%), and two of them did not express it (0,3%).

Participants' majors are examined and it is seen that, of 502 teachers, 358 of them graduated from department of early childhood education (71,3%) while 126 of them graduated from child development (25%), and the 18 of them graduated from other departments (3,5%).

As it was stated beforehand, the participants are selected from Ankara province from 6 main districts. Among 502 participants, 106 of them are from Çankaya (21,1 %), 83 of them from Yenimahalle (16,5%), 90 of them from Keçiören (17,9%), 71 of them are from Altındağ (14,1%), 69 of them are from Mamak (13,7%), 71 of them are from Etimesgut (14,1 %), while 12 of them did not state their district (2,3%).

Type of schools that the teachers work were distributed as the follows; of 502 participants, 336 of them are from public schools (66,9%) while 166 of them are from private schools (33,1 %). It was aimed to balance type of schools at the beginning of the research, but it is revealed that a bunch of private ones had to suspend education because of while lots of them had to work with only one or two teachers because of very few numbers of children coming to school, due to coronavirus pandemic. That's why the number of teachers from private schools stayed at this range.

Of the 502 participants Years of teaching experience were as; 104 of them have 0-5 years of experience (20,7%), 150 of them have six to 11 years (29,8%), 152 of them have 12 to 17 years (30,2%), 48 of them have 18 to 23 years (9,5%), 31 of them have 24 to 29 years (6,1%), and 17 of them stated that they have more than 30 years of experience (3,3%).

The age group of children are described as follows; 10 teachers have children in their class among 2-3 years of age (2%), 60 participants have children among 3-4 years (12%), 168 of them have children among 4-5 years (33,5%) and 264 of them have children among 5-6 years in their classes (52,6%) as the major selected age range by all teachers.

When it comes to number of children for per class, of 502 participants, 33 of them stated that they have 3-5 children in their class (6,5%), 204 of them have 6-10 children (40,6%), 187 of them have 11-15 children (37,2%), 69 of them have 16-20 children (13,7%), 9 of them have 21-25 children in their class (1,7%).

Table 1 *Demographic Information about Participants of Quantitative Data*

Education Status	***f***	**%**
High School Graduate	13	2,6
Associate degree	63	12,5
Bachelor's Degree	377	75,1
Master's Degree	47	9,4
PhD Graduate	2	0,4
Missing	0	
Age of Participant	***f***	**%**
18-25	53	10,5
26-33	146	29
34-41	196	39
42-49	73	14,5
50-above	26	5,1
Missing	8	0,3
Gender	***f***	**%**
Male	3	0,5
Female	497	99
Missing	2	0,3
Department of Graduation	***f***	**%**
Early Childhood Education	358	71,3
Child Development	126	25
Other	18	3,5
Missing	0	
District	***f***	**%**
Çankaya	106	21,1

Table 1 *Demographic Information about Participants of Quantitative Data Cont'd*

Yenimahalle	83	16,5
Keçiören	90	17,9
Altındağ	71	14,1
Mamak	69	13,7
Etimesgut	71	14,1
Missing	12	2,3
Type of school	***f***	**%**
Public	336	66,9
Private	166	33,1
Missing	0	
Years of Experience	***f***	**%**
0-5	104	20,7
6-11	150	29,8
12-17	152	30,2
18-23	48	9,5
24-29	31	6,1
30-above	17	3,3
Missing	0	
Age Group of Children	***f***	**%**
24-36 months	10	2
36-48 months	60	12
48-60 months	168	33,5
60-72 months	264	52,6
Missing	0	
Number of Children in Class	***f***	**%**
3-5	33	6,5
6-10	204	40,6
11-15	187	37,2
16-20	69	13,7
21-25	9	1,7
Missing	0	

Demographic information of participants of qualitative study will be explained in detail with regards to the table 2. Ages of the participants ranges from 22 to 56. Of 22 participants, five of them are among 20 to 29 years of age, 12 of them among 30 to 39 years, four of them among 40 to 49 years and one of them is above 50. All the interview participants are female. Five participants have associates degree, 13 of them have bachelor's degree and 4 of them have master's degree. On the other hand, 14 of them have graduated from early childhood education department, seven of them from child

development, and one of them from department of foreign languages but she has been working as Early Childhood Teacher who teaches English to children for many years.

Table 2 *Demographic Information about Participants of Qualitative Data-1*

Participant	Age	Gender	Educational Status	Department of Graduation
T1	36	Female	MS	ECE
T2	35	Female	BS	ECE
T3	39	Female	BS	ECE
T4	32	Female	MS	ECE
T5	29	Female	MS	CD
T6	47	Female	BS	FL
T7	28	Female	BS	ECE
T8	36	Female	BS	ECE
T9	34	Female	BS	ECE
T10	47	Female	BS	ECE
T11	39	Female	MS	ECE
T12	22	Female	AS	CD
T13	37	Female	BS	ECE
T14	31	Female	BS	ECE
T15	56	Female	BS	CD
T16	34	Female	BS	ECE
T17	31	Female	BS	ECE
T18	41	Female	BS	ECE
T19	27	Female	AS	CD
T20	29	Female	AS	CD
T21	35	Female	AS	CD
T22	43	Female	AS	CD

*AS: Associate of Science
**BS: Bachelor of Science
***MS: Master of Science
****ECE: Early Childhood Education
*****CD: Child Development
******FL: Foreign Languages

Table 3 describes the demographic information of participants of qualitative part of the study. Regarding that table, 6 teachers are from Çankaya district, 4 of them from Yenimahalle, 2 of them from Keçiören, 3 of them from Altındağ, 5 of them from Mamak and 2 of them from Etimesgut. When it comes to school type, it is seen that 13 of them are working at public school and 9 of them from private ones. On the other hand, years of experience of teachers ranges from 5 to 27. 12 of them has 5 to 9 years

of experience, 9 of them has 10 to 19 years of experience and 2 of them has more than 20 years of experience.

Table 3 *Demographic Information about Participants of Qualitative Data-2*

Participant	District	School Type	Years of Experience	Age Group of Children	Number of Children in Class
T1	Çankaya	Public	9	60-72 month	8
T2	Çankaya	Public	12	48-60 month	15
T3	Çankaya	Private	9	60-72 month	19
T4	Çankaya	Private	8	36-48 month	16
T5	Çankaya	Private	8	48-60 month	15
T6	Çankaya	Private	22	60-72 month	18
T7	Yenimahalle	Public	7	60-72 month	13
T8	Yenimahalle	Public	14	60-72 month	7
T9	Yenimahalle	Public	10	60-72 month	10
T10	Yenimahalle	Public	13	60-72 month	15
T11	Keçiören	Public	10	60-72 month	13
T12	Keçiören	Private	5	36-48 month	8
T13	Altındağ	Public	9	48-60 month	10
T14	Altındağ	Public	9	48-60 month	13
T15	Altındağ	Public	27	48-60 month	13
T16	Mamak	Public	11	60-72 month	12
T17	Mamak	Public	6	60-72 month	18
T18	Mamak	Public	12	48-60 month	8
T19	Mamak	Private	5	36-48 month	15
T20	Mamak	Private	10	36-48 month	17
T21	Etimesgut	Private	6	24-36 month	16
T22	Etimesgut	Private	10	60-72 month	13

3.4 Instruments

In this study, for answering research questions about early childhood teacher's beliefs and self-reported practices about circle time, both quantitative (survey) and qualitative (interview protocol) instruments were applied. In this part, quantitative and qualitative data collection tools are explained in details.

3.4.1 Early Childhood Teacher's Beliefs and Self-Reported Practices about Circle Time Survey

In the first part of the study, related data was collected through a quantitative instrument which is developed by researcher herself named as *Early Childhood Teacher's Beliefs and Self-Reported Practices about Circle Time Survey*. During the process of developing survey, related literature was examined, and the core topics were determined on the basis of literature review (Bustamante, Hindman, Champagne, & Wasik, 2018; Collins, 2007; MoNE, 2013; Mosley, 2005; Nash & Lowe, 2004; Pryce, 2007). At first stage, combining the information about circle time in related literature, a survey with 47 items for teachers who utilize circle time was developed.

For ensuring content-related evidence of validity, first draft of the survey was submitted to four early childhood education teachers who are utilizing circle time in their class for evaluating the comprehensiveness of the questions. Moreover, this survey was offered for expert opinions of two academicians who are studying on early childhood education field for checking adequacy of correspondence between content and research questions of the study. Besides, for ensuring construct validity, survey was checked by another academician studying on assessment and evaluation in education field. After all expert opinions, necessary revisions are made. The revisions of first draft after expert opinions are listed as follows. Firstly, for circle time utilizers and non-utilizers, questions are oriented with one core question, with the help of the answers to which, participants are directed accordingly. Secondly questions related with context of circle time are expanded. Thirdly, some activity types are combined as one question for facilitating the participant's answers. Finally, some examples for items that might be misunderstood were added not to make participant confused while answering. After revisions are made regarding expert opinion, last version of survey consists of 55 items. It takes 10-15 minutes to complete the survey.

Early Childhood Teacher's Beliefs and Self-Reported Practices about Circle Time Survey consists of three parts. At the very beginning of the survey, ethical consent form and related information about researcher and advisor is supplied. Afterwards,

demographic information about participants' age, gender, educational status, major, district, school type, years of experience, age group of children and number of children in class were asked. After demographic information of teachers gathered in survey, teachers were asked whether they have ever heard about circle time or not and they asked about frequency of circle time routines that they utilize in their classes. The aim of these two questions were separating and orienting the teachers for related questions and eliminating the participants who do not utilize circle time in their classes. Teachers who utilize circle time in their classes are oriented to 1st and 2nd question groups.

In 1st and 2nd question groups, there are multiple choice, short answer and Likert type questions in survey. 5-point Likert type questions refer to always (5), sometimes (4), every once in a while (3), rarely (2), never (1) for questions related with practices and strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1) for questions related with beliefs of teachers. Below, table 4 represents the subcategories of Early Childhood Teacher's Beliefs and Self-Reported Practices Survey and related example items.

Table 4 *Example Items of Early Childhood Teacher's Beliefs and Self-Reported Practices about Circle Time Survey*

Main Categories	**Sub-categories**	**Example Items**
Self-reported Practices of Teachers	Planning of Circle Time	As the teacher of the class, I plan circle time according to objectives and indicators in our program. I cooperate with children while planning our activities of circle time.
	Context of Circle Time	We utilize circle time before breakfast. We utilize circle time about 11-20 minutes.
	Facilitators	Please select the materials below that you use during your circle time practice. (e.g., book, puppet, calendar.)

Table 4 *Example Items of Early Childhood Teacher's Beliefs and Self-Reported Practices about Circle Time Survey Cont'd*

		Please select the mediators below that you use during your circle time practice. (e.g., rhyme, questioning, singing song)
	Types of Activities	During circle time, we share our experiences and feelings. During circle time, we talk about weather, season, month, and days of the week.
Beliefs of teachers	Reason of Circle Time Practice	I utilize circle time because it is the necessity of our educational program
	Benefits of Circle Time	I find circle time as beneficial for children's social-emotional development. I find circle time beneficial for cognitive development of children.
	Teachers background information	I attended a kind of education, course, or seminar about circle time beforehand. I need kind of resources for improving my circle time practices.
	Constraints	I have a hard time practicing circle time because there are children who have behavioral problems in my class. I have a hard time practicing circle time because the age group of the children is not suitable for this routine.

3.4.2 Early Childhood Teacher's Beliefs and Self-Reported Practices about Circle Time Interview

In the second part of the study, related data was reached through an interview process which is developed by researcher herself called *Early Childhood Teachers Self-Reported Practices and Beliefs about Circle Time Interview* to support the information

gathered with survey data and get more information about research questions. According to Patton, interview is a necessary method to learn about behaviors, emotions, or how people express the world around them that we cannot observe (2015). Among three types of interview methods which are unstructured, semi-structured and structured, semi-structured interview method was used for this study. In the semi-structured interview process, there is an interview guide which has predetermined, flexible questions and the questions are parallel to the research questions of the study, as well (Merriam & Turan, 2018). Questions in this interview protocol were designed as flexible regarding the participant's answers by ensuring not getting out of study framework and questions asked during interview corresponded with research questions of the study.

Semi-structured interview protocol was formed based on related literature as the first draft. Afterwards, interview protocol was sent to four Early Childhood Teachers, two academicians who have PhD qualification in early childhood education and one academician who is studying in assessment and evaluation in education, as the same people as quantitative instrument. Based on the expert opinions received, semi-structured interview questions were rearranged. At this point, one question was rewritten by turning closed-ended questions into open-ended ones and one question overlapping omitted from the interview protocol.

Now that the participants of the interview were selected from the sample of survey data, same questions in demographic information part were not asked again. Instead of this process, researcher introduced with the participant to make her more relaxed before starting the main questions. In this interview there are two types of questions about self-reported practices and beliefs of teachers about circle time. Below in table 5 categories of the questions and the example questions are listed.

Table 5 *Example Questions of Early Childhood Teacher's Beliefs and Self-Reported Practices about Circle Time Interview Protocol*

Main Categories	**Sub-categories**	**Example Question**
Self-reported Practices of Teachers	Planning of Circle Time	What are the points that you consider while planning the content of your circle time activities?
	Types of Activities	Could you tell me about your one-day circle time routine in detail? Which types of activities do you utilize in circle time?
	Context of Circle Time	Could you tell me about your one-day circle time routine in detail? How long does it take to do circle time in your class?
	Facilitators of Circle Time	Could you tell me about your one-day circle time routine in detail? Which types of materials do you use in circle time?
Beliefs of teachers	Reason of Circle Time Practice	What is the reason behind of your circle time practice?
	Benefits of Circle Time	What do you think about benefits of circle time regarding developmental areas of children?
	Teachers background information	Have you ever attended a course or seminar during your high school/ graduate/ undergraduate years?
	Constraints	Are there any points that you have difficulty or that hinder you while practicing circle time?

3.4.3 Pilot Study of Early Childhood Teacher's Beliefs and Self-Reported Practices Survey and Interview Protocol

Firstly, pilot study of early childhood teacher's beliefs and self-reported practices survey was conducted. This pilot study was carried out for effectiveness and clarity verification of the questions with 184 early childhood teachers working on both private and public schools in Turkey during 2020-2021 fall semester. Early childhood teachers who read and accepted ethical consent form participated in pilot study. As a result of the pilot study, some question patterns were changed. For example, participants were expected to write materials that they use during circle time in the blank part by themselves, but at the end of pilot study, it is decided to change this type of question as multiple choice for optimal analysis process. Another change made in the pilot study was turning the 3-point Likert-type questions into 5-point Likert-type questions in order to get clearer answers.

Secondly, pilot study of early childhood teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices interview was utilized. Pilot study for interview was done for ensuring clarity and feasibility of the questions of interview with 3 early childhood teachers who are working on either private or public schools during 2020-2021 fall semester. Before starting the interview, permission was obtained from each of the participants to record the audio and their consent to participate was obtained. As a result of the pilot study, some alterations were made to the interview questions. These changes can be listed as follows. It was realized that asking the same questions both in survey and interview may make participants bored while giving the same answers, so some questions were omitted from interview schedule. To explain in more detail, these questions were dropped from the interview process when it was ensured that the same data was taken from the survey such as demographic information of teachers. So, pilot study facilitated the process to revise instrument for getting more comprehensive data. At the end of this process, interview protocol was consisted of 8 questions in total which lasts approximately 30-35 minutes with per teacher.

3.5 Data Collection

At the very beginning of data collection process, the first step was to get approval of METU Human Subjects Ethics Committee (Appendix A) together with the instruments and required documents. After obtaining the ethics committee permission, the research permission of the Ministry of National Education was applied (Appendix B) by completing necessary procedures.

After obtaining permission from Ministry of National Education, the schools in the Çankaya, Yenimahalle, Keçiören, Altındağ, Mamak and Etimesgut districts were contacted randomly through the school principals with the purpose of conducting first part of the study, i.e., the survey. Data collection process was during 2020-2021 Spring semester. Teachers were reached by calling school administrators by phone due to the fact that schools suspended face-to-face education due to coronavirus pandemic. While reaching the schools regarding their districts, it was tried to collect approximately similar percent of data from each district. The administrators who volunteered to deliver survey to their teachers were provided necessary permissions taken from METU Human Subjects Ethics Committee and Ministry of National Education. Subsequently early childhood teachers working on these schools were provided the consent form including necessary information about research process by ensuring that research process does not contain any points about private life of participants, and they have the right to withdraw from research whenever they wish. Additionally, consent form includes information both about survey process and about interview process. This information refers that participant who would volunteer to attend interview part were informed about voice recording and data storage process by assuring the participants that no one outside the scope of the study could access the data. It was approximately 10-15 minutes for a participant to fill out the survey. At the end of the survey, participants were asked whether they want to be volunteer to attend second part of the study which was interview.

In the second part of the study, early childhood teachers who filled out the survey beforehand, and given their contact information were reached via e-mail or phone

calling. Appointments were made to meet with the participants available during that process. Regarding the scheduled appointments, participants were sent zoom conference links. At the very beginning of the interview, verbal consent of the participants was also obtained for the audio recording. Interview process was about 30-35 minutes.

3.6 Data Analysis

In this research, beliefs and self-reported practices of early childhood teachers were investigated with survey data and interview schedule. As aforementioned in 'design of the study' part, this research is conducted within the scope of explanatory sequential mixed method which refers to sequence of data collection from quantitative part to qualitative part of the study. Fraenkel et al. explained that in explanatory sequential mixed method designs, data analysis process is conducted separately from each other, and results of qualitative analysis expands the results of quantitative analysis process (2012). As clarified, data analysis was performed with this method in this study as well.

At first, demographic information of participants was analyzed with percentages and frequencies both for quantitative and qualitative data. Afterwards, Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs and Self-Reported Practices Survey was analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics. At last, interview results were transcribed for analysis of data separately. All transcriptions were uploaded to MAXQDA 2020 Program which is used for qualitative data analysis for conducting the coding process via this program. Coding is explained as dividing the data set regarding related literature to meaningful parts by labelling these parts as codes, and categories and themes are formed with grouping the codes (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019). For ensuring intercoder reliability of the study, related segments were coded both by researcher and a second coder independently.

3.7 Trustworthiness of the Study

In this part, the process carried out to ensure the validity and reliability of the study and permissions and ethics will be explained below.

3.7.1 Validity

"Validity refers to the degree to which evidence supports any inferences a researcher makes based on the data he or she collects using a particular instrument" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 148). Thus, it is highlighted that instruments are supposed to measure in the frame of that instrument's scope (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). For ensuring content related evidence of validity of the instruments, not only survey but also interview protocol, was submitted to 4 early childhood teachers working in the field, 2 academicians studying on early childhood education field having PhD qualification and 1 academician studying on assessment and evaluation in education for expert opinion. With the help of feedbacks taken from the experts, instruments were rearranged for the last versions. Besides, another method used for validity was member checking which is conducted for confirmation of transcriptions of interviewees by themselves to be sure that their transcriptions do not have any misconceptions (Punch, 1998).

3.7.2 Reliability

According to Punch, "Reliability is a central concept in measurement, and it basically means consistency" (1998, p.98), meaning that reliability is a requirement that should be supplied in any research. For supplying reliability, one of the methods is intercoder agreement which is defined as ensuring stability of responses between different coders for one research data (Creswell, 2007). Aforementioned in research analysis part, coding process is conducted both by researcher and a second coder who have PhD qualification in Early Childhood Education field separately from each other for the same group of data. Intercoder agreement among 85 to 90% range is accepted as

consistent (Miles et al., 2014). Intercoder reliability results was 83% before consensus between coders.

3.7.3 Ethical Considerations

Before starting to collect data for this research, necessary permissions are taken from METU Ethical Council first (see Appendix A). After getting this permission, next permission is taken from Ministry of National Education (see Appendix B). With these permissions, school administrations are contacted and content of the study is explained by presenting necessary permissions. When both school administration and teachers working at school accepted, teachers are provided instruments to collect data. All participants are ensured that their identities will be protected and will not be shared with nobody else as Fraenkel et al. stated (2012).

3.8 Researcher's Motivation for the Study

As an Early Childhood Teacher, I have worked in two different kindergartens for two years. Both of the schools were schools of the same institutions which means that their monthly plan, their teaching philosophy, materials used in the classes are mostly the same. Even in these schools, activity context of circle time has varied, teachers' selections to apply circle time or not was changing. This was a question in my mind; Should circle time be utilized in early years? How should a circle time be conducted?

While I was teaching to children in 2, 3 and 5 years old in different time periods as a part of the program, I was utilizing circle time every day. In my first year of teaching, my students were 2 years old and as a teacher who tries to know children's capabilities, I preferred to choose singing and puppetry activities because their attention span was short and I was trying to attract them. Each week we were changing the songs to be learned according to the program of the school. Towards the end of the semester, most of the children has already learned a lot of concepts like counting the numbers, saying the colors, greeting each other, daily routines, how to brush our teeth etc. with the help

of circle time. It was the first time that I witnessed the power of circle time with children.

When I was teaching 3 years old children, their attention span was longer and the activities were varying accordingly. For example, I let them to select the songs by themselves, they were choosing the book to be read. Sometimes they were getting the book and telling stories to others, we were talking about the activities we would apply that day or if we have any party or ceremony, we were announcing what we would do. On the other hand, in circle time, we were doing another activity which is called "show and tell". In this activity children were bringing a material to explain the purpose and usage of that material to other friends which is a basic level of giving speech in a topic in crowd. I observed that, children who were shy and did not want to tell anything at the beginning, became expressive in time with courage. This experience increased my curiosity about searching about circle time.

In 5-year-old children class, our circle time was longer because when we start to sing a song or dance with a song, there were always other songs to be listened to for children or when we start to read a book, they had a lot of questions to be shared with other friends. Children were rolling the call by themselves now that they got used to be a group, they were making the circle and they were bringing the books by themselves. In this class I observed the process how they learned to listen to each other, how they gain respect for other people.

In all age groups of children, I prefer to guide children to be circle shape now that when we sit in circle, not only I could observe all children but also, I arrange an environment where all children can see each other without boundaries and communicate easily. I do not prefer to make U shape in circle time because I wanted to be a part of the group instead of being the leader. We used to utilize circle time by sitting on the carpet or on the cushions regarding the games that we would play that day.

Moreover, while planning circle time routines, I take the program of the school as the guide of the topics that we would cover but sometimes children insist to sing the same song or play the same games like pop-corn game for many days. In these situations, I let children to play the same game and sing the same songs for days in order not to make them discouraged until the time they get bored. During circle time activities, we used some materials like balls for signing the one who has the turn to talk, we use show and tell materials, we had flashcards to cover the calendar time, we used flashcards with pictures for learning English words as a second language, as well. Most of the time, we get help from media tools in circle time. We opened songs online for children, we danced and played finger games while singing songs.

Moreover, we had a material that we add one more eye on every day while taking the roll to check who is absent or present that day. This material was a giant puppet that we designed together with children and each day; children came to class put one more eye on it. At 100th day of the school, we attended the 100th day party with our puppet that we complete during circle time every day. With the help of this puppet, I could give children floor to maintain circle time by themselves, I could let children to talk with each other, children learn to wait for their turns and some children come earlier to class not to miss circle time just because of adding one more eye on it.

As the teacher of the class, I could observe benefits of circle time both on my own class and on other children at the school. When we attend 100th day of the school party, each class shared their circle time games or puppets with us because the main idea of this party was to make orientation of children to school easier and give voice to children. During this party, we observed each classes' circle time activities for this day and I admired my colleagues and other children's works. There were the ones who feed a hungry puppet for 100 days, there was a class who complete a game in each circle time including taking the roll, book sharing time like a track game. At this point I realized how circle time can include a broad spectrum aiming to improve kinds of developmental domains.

During my teaching experience, I started to wonder how much I do know about circle time, what was the source of this knowledge about circle time and I realized that I was just exposed to talk of my colleagues' circle time routines and I learned some songs from internet and I have just started to apply it by adding some activities regarding children's needs and interests.

Regarding all my colleagues' different ideas and applications of circle time, I requested one of my colleagues to observe her circle time process and she broadened my horizon because she increased my interest in this process with her numerous activities for making circle time in a fun way as well as leaving more questions in my mind to decide the extend of circle time content.

In conclusion, all these experiences led me to investigate this subject deeply. I started to do research about this activity to deepen my knowledge and make beneficial studies for education field. In this context I grouped my research questions and I make literature review to understand which kinds of researches was conducted about this topic and when I realized the need for more research about this subject, I broadened by research questions by taking into consideration not only my teaching experience but also need for research in literature.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter, there will be two sections. The first section will be the findings of the first research question which is elaborating *self- reported practices* of Early Childhood Teachers about circle time in terms of; planning of circle time, context of circle time, facilitators used in circle time and types of activities in circle time. The second part will be providing the findings of second research question which is answering *beliefs* of Early Childhood Teachers about circle time in terms of; benefits of circle time, constraints to circle time, their background information and need for resources and training for teachers.

While answering these two research questions, results obtained from *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices and Beliefs about Circle Time Survey* will be administered at first. After this part, results obtained from *Early Childhood Teachers Self-Reported Practices and Beliefs about Circle Time Interview Protocol* will be provided. After giving both survey and interview results for each topic, a synthesis of both instruments will be provided for broadening the quantitative results along with qualitative ones. Summary of findings order is organized as in figure 3.

1.Findings of Self-Reported Practices of Early Childhood Educators about Circle Time

Self-Reported Practices of Early Childhood Educators in terms of; Planning of Circle Time

- Quantitative (Survey) Findings about Planning of Circle Time
- Qualitative (Interview) Findings about Planning of Circle Time
- Synthesis of Quantitative (Survey) and Qualitative (Interview) Findings

Self-Reported Practices of Early Childhood Educators in terms of; Context of Circle Time

- Quantitative (Survey) Findings about Context of Circle Time
- Qualitative (Interview) Findings about Context of Circle Time
- Synthesis of Quantitative (Survey) and Qualitative (Interview) Findings

Self-Reported Practices of Early Childhood Educators in terms of: Facilitators Used in Circle Time

- Quantitative (Survey) Findings about Facilitators Used in Circle Time
- Qualitative (Interview) Findings about Facilitators Used in Circle Time
- Synthesis of Quantitative (Survey) and Qualitative (Interview) Findings

Self-Reported Practices of Early Childhood Educators in terms of: Types of Activities in Circle Time

- Quantitative (Survey) Findings about Types of Activities in Circle Time
- Qualitative (Interview) Findings about Types of Activities in Circle Time
- Synthesis of Quantitative (Survey) and Qualitative (Interview) Findings

Figure 3 *Findings Order Summary*

2.Findings of Beliefs of Early Childhood Educators about Circle Time

Beliefs of Early Childhood Educators about Circle Time in terms of: Reasons to Utilize Circle Time

- Quantitative (Survey) Findings about Reasons to Utilize Circle Time
- Qualitative (Interview) Findings about Reasons to Utilize Circle Time
- Synthesis of Quantitative (Survey) and Qualitative (Interview) Findings

Beliefs of Early Childhood Educators about Circle Time in terms of: Benefits of Circle Time

- Quantitative (Survey) Findings about Benefits of Circle Time
- Qualitative (Interview) Findings about Benefits of Circle Time
- Synthesis of Quantitative (Survey) and Qualitative (Interview) Findings

Beliefs of Early Childhood Educators about Circle Time in terms of: Constraints on Circle Time

- Quantitative (Survey) Findings about Constraints on Circle Time
- Qualitative (Interview) Findings about Constraints on Circle Time
- Synthesis of Quantitative (Survey) and Qualitative (Interview) Findings

Beliefs of Early Childhood Educators about Circle Time in Terms of: Background Information of Teachers and Need for Resources and Training for Teachers

- Quantitative (Survey) Findings about Background Information of Teachers and Need for Resources and Training for Teachers
- Qualitative (Interview) Findings about Background Information of Teachers and Need for Resources and Training for Teachers
- Synthesis of Quantitative (Survey) and Qualitative (Interview) Findings

Figure 4 *Findings Order Summary Cont'd*

4.1 Findings of Self-Reported Practices of Early Childhood Teachers about Circle Time

Under this title, self-reported practices of Early Childhood Teachers in terms of; planning of circle time, context of circle time, facilitators of circle time, types of

activities in circle time are explained. Firstly, answers of *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices and Beliefs about Circle Time Survey* under 'quantitative results' subtitles will be given. In pursuit of quantitative results, answers given for *Early Childhood Teachers Self-Reported Practices and Beliefs about Circle Time Interview Protocol* will be administered under 'qualitative results' subtitles separately for each category. Before explaining each qualitative results of the study, an overall table for interview protocol is supplied below in table 6. In this table, themes, categories and codes can be examined from a general perspective. While explaining each codes, example quotation from participants will be given in related parts.

Table 6 *Qualitative results summary*

Themes	**Categories**	**Codes**
Teachers' Self-reported Practices about Circle Time	Planning of circle time	Program originated (n=2) Children originated (n=6) Teacher originated (n=1) Teacher-cum-children-cum-program originated (n=12)
	Context of circle time	Frequency: - Twice a day (n=1) - Every day (n=16) - Every other day (n=4)
		Duration: - 5-10 minutes (n=3) - 11-20 minutes (n=9) - 21-30 minutes (n=6) - 31-40 minutes (n=1)
		Time period: - Before breakfast (n=5) - After breakfast (n=7) - During daily educational activities (n=3) - Before leaving the school (n=4)
		Place of circle time: - On carpet (n=6) - On cushions (n=8) - On chairs (n=4)
		Seating plan of circle time: - Depends (n=1) - U shape (n=6) - Circle Shape (n=9)

Table 6 *Qualitative results summary Cont'd*

	Facilitators of circle time	Materials: - Books (n=9) - Puppets (n=2) - Cards (n=5) - Photos (n=2)
		Mediators: - Questioning (n=11) - Rhymes (n=3) - Riddles (n=3) - Singing songs (n=9) - Finger games (n=3) - Puppetry (n=2)
		Media tools: - Internet (n=3) - Computer (n=3) -
	Types of activities in circle time	Science activity (n=2) Music & rhythm (n=3) Games (n=6) Closing circle time (n=7) Assigning roles (n=5) Math activity (n=4) Taking the roll (n=2) Scheduling (n=9) Calendar time (n=8) Movement activity: - Gymnastic (n=1) - Dancing (n=3) Language/Literacy activity: - Getting to know each other (n=3) - Sharing experiences-feelings (n=21) - Story time (n=9)
Teachers' Beliefs about Circle time	Reasons to utilize cirlce time	Administrative expectation (n=2) Necessity of the program (n=3) Own wish due to benefits (n=20)
	Benefits of circle time: - Benefits for teacher (n=2)	
	- Benefits for children	Holistic development (n=3)
		Language development: - Native language improvement (n=5)

Table 6 *Qualitative results summary Cont'd*

	Cognitive development: - Learning second language (n=2) - Facilitating learning (n=6)
	Social emotional development: -Social interaction related concepts - Peer interaction (n=12) - Feeling of community (n=7) - Empathetic skills (n=2) - Respecting for others' ideas (n=6) -Self-related concepts - Self-expression (n=17) - Self -esteem (n=8) - Self-regulation (n=5)
Constraints to circle time	Needs of children: - Priority of children's choices (n=5) - Age group of children (n=8) - Children with behavioral problems (n=9) - Children with special needs (n=7) - Necessity for updates over time (n=6) - Self-care needs of children (n=1)
	Time related issues: - Time Pressures (n=2) - Instability of school arrival time (n=3)
	Administration related issues - Need for assistance (n=3) - Number of children (n=12) - Physical conditions (n=5)
	Diversity: - Diversity in culture (n=3) - Diversity in developmental characteristics of children (n=5) - Diversity in language (n=4)
Teachers' beliefs about their background information about circle time and need for resources and trainings	Collaborative learning among teachers (n=6) Informed during undergraduate years (n=6) No previous training (n=14)

4.1.1 Self-Reported Practices of Early Childhood Teachers in terms of; Planning of Circle Time

Early childhood teachers answer for questions related with planning of circle time are provided below. Teachers answers for survey questions and interview questions will be given, then synthesis of both results will be done in the later part.

4.1.1.1 Quantitative Results of Planning of Circle Time

Early childhood teachers are asked about whether or how often they plan their circle time process in terms of regarding objectives and indicators, cooperating with children, planning circle time for children with special needs or not. More than half of early childhood teachers indicate that they plan their circle time process step by step before starting to the routine (M=3,53, 54%) while high number of teachers highlight that they plan circle time routines regarding objectives and indicators in their program (M=3,84, 71%), almost three fourth of them express that they plan their circle time by cooperating with children in class (M=3,99, 71%), and more than half of the teachers states that their circle time process is planned for children with special needs, as well (M=4,34, 69%), as can be examined in table 7.

Table 7 *Descriptive Statistics for Early Childhood Teachers' Planning of Circle Time*

Planning of Circle Time		**Always**		**Frequently**		**Sometimes**		**Seldom**		**Never**	
	M	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
I plan circle time process step by step in advance.	3,53	70	16%	168	38%	139	31%	57	13%	8	2%
I plan circle time content regarding objectives and indicators in our program.	3,84	111	25%	204	46%	84	19%	35	8%	9	2%
I plan circle time activities by cooperating with children.	3,99	154	34%	167	37%	92	21%	26	6%	4	1%
Our circle time is planned for children with special needs, as well.	4,34	151	34%	157	35%	89	20%	37	8%	7	2%

4.1.1.2 Qualitative Results of Planning of Circle Time

For reaching this answer, early childhood teachers were asked "*What are the points that you consider while planning the content of your circle time activities?".* With the help of this question, it is aimed to get deeper answers about the tendency of the teachers that they consider while they are making the planning of circle time routines. After getting all of the answers of interviewees, it is revealed that teachers were explaining their base of circle time planning under four headings which are "program originated, children originated, teacher originated and teacher-cum-children-cum-program originated" as stated in table 8.

Table 8 *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Planning of Circle Time*

Category	Codes	Quotation from participants
Planning of Circle Time	Program originated (n=2)	…In this process, as teacher of the class, I determine which picture book to choose in advance, regarding the topic of the day. This is how I plan the circle time (T10).
	Children originated (n=6)	It has always been the students who managed the process, there is no strict program that the preschool teachers should follow (T17).
	Teacher originated (n=1)	…I'm a bit of a prescriptive teacher, so I want others to listen while someone is talking. I intervene when the rules are not followed and when there is a dialogue of the deaf (T16).
	Teacher-cum-children-cum-program originated (n=12)	…Since we set out from the interests of children, there is the child at the core, the school has a theme yes, but we have children who shape it. The process progresses in this way, but as I said, the school does not stipulate that you will definitely do it this week. We attach importance to it, and it works very well in this process (T5).

4.1.1.2.1 Program Originated

Teachers (n=2) indicated that they plan their circle time process regarding the program that they follow. These teachers said content of circle time varies in terms of topic of

the day or special days and weeks. Teachers expressed they use classroom resources in parallel to content of the schedule. For example, they choose the story books from classroom library according to content determined in daily flow. In relation to this, T10 mention that

> We used to define circle time as story time activity. In this process, as teacher of the class, I determine which picture book to choose in advance, regarding the topic of the day. This is how I plan the circle time.

One of the participants (T4), explained the reason of connecting the program with circle time content with following sentences:

> … we do circle time in a way that connects to the activities, we do it in parallel with the activities in order that it does not stay in the air.

4.1.1.2.2 Children Originated

Several teachers (n=6) stated that they take children's ideas, interests or needs into account while planning circle time. They said that when classroom teacher only decides the content of circle time, the process may become boring for children. According to teachers, even if teacher plan a circle time with various activities, if the child does not pay attention, they start to lose their attention. That's why they give importance to include children in the process. T17 expressed herself how she decides on planning regarding children's choices with following sentences:

> It has always been the students who managed the process, there is no strict program that the preschool teachers should follow. Therefore, it is more enjoyable for them and me to carry out the process according to their speed, their wishes, needs and interests. So, I direct them to the process as they wish.

Teachers also mention that children do not give their attention in circle time, when the process is only directed by teachers. As a result, benefits such as improving socio-emotional skills may not be reached. Therefore, they highlighted the child's opinion should be taken when deciding on the content. As an example, T19 stated that:

> First of all, I listen to what children want to tell, I do not prevent to express themselves because letting them to talk improves their communication skills with each other. They are directing me to see what we will do today, they themselves direct the process.

4.1.1.2.3 Teacher Originated

One of the participants (n=1) stated that she makes the plan of circle time as a teacher of the class herself. From the beginning, teacher puts forward some questions and allow children to ask their own questions in their minds. She lets children to get their answers in circle time. But, when children start to not obey the rules or respect others, then she warns children in case of commotion. Within this scope T16 expressed that:

> Sometimes they don't follow the rules. I'm a bit of a prescriptive teacher, so I want others to listen while someone is talking. I intervene when the rules are not followed and when there is a dialogue of the deaf.

So, T16 emphasized that she mainly the person who manage the circle time process especially when children lose their attention and they talk with each other in circle time.

4.1.1.2.4 Teacher-cum-children-cum Program Originated

Majority of the interviewees (n=12) explained that they plan their circle time routines by considering not only their own choices but also regarding the necessities of the program and children's interests, needs and wishes. Teachers expressed that the children are taking the role while processing circle time routines as well as teacher. They mention that they have a program to be followed in general aspects but they shape the program by centering the child. Sometimes teachers decide the themes or topics of the program before starting the activities with their colleagues or school administration, but during the application of the program, they regard children's needs and interests again. So, even teacher and program constitute the basic themes at first, children reshape the circle time process finally. Additionally, teachers have a common saying that early childhood education program is not strictly designed. It evolves in development process as well as during application. So, teachers highlight that program, teachers or children alone are not the factor determining circle time plan.
In that sense T5 explained that:

> Our school generally specify themes for us, we do group meetings as colleagues. That is the teacher plays an active role at this process. Since we set out from the interests of children, there is the child at the core, the school has

> a theme yes, but we have children who shape it. The process progresses in this way, but as I said, the school does not stipulate that you will definitely do it this week. We attach importance to it, and it works very well in this process**.**

As another expression of T1, planning of circle time considering both program, teacher and children is below:

> I can say that I constitute the program regarding children. I do not think it is right to go to school unprepared. While preparing the program, I must have a program in my mind that needs to be processed. When there are children who do not participate in program, I ask to them what should we do. I can say that the needs and wishes of the children are taken into consideration and based on the subject of the program, I cannot follow a very strict schedule, whatever needs to be processed that day is given in a way.

4.1.1.3 Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

In this part, teachers' way of planning circle time process will be elaborated regarding whether they make planning program, children, teacher originated or they take into consideration each of them. Findings gathered from *Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Survey and Interview*, planning of their circle time routines were found to be majorly complementary with each other. In survey, teachers explained that they mostly plan their circle time routines by cooperating with children. So, participants reported that as classroom teachers, they do not plan circle time on their own. Children are included in the process of planning. They also stated that they take objectives and indicators in their program in the process of planning. Similar with survey findings, teachers explained that their circle time plan is prepared both regarding children, program and teacher at the same time in interview results, as well. They detailed their planning process as they make a plan regarding program with general aspects but children themselves are reshaping the process of circle time according to their needs and interests. So, teachers take role as guiding children instead of leading the circle time. According to teachers, children are centered in planning of circle time process. On the other hand, high number of teachers explained that their circle time plan is appropriate for children with special needs in survey findings. But when it comes to interview results, while explaining the process of planning circle time for children with special needs, teachers did not specifically give information about this issue. But teachers mentioned they have hardships in utilizing circle time when

there are children with special needs in their class, especially when there is no assistant teacher in class. So, they reported that they plan their circle time regarding children with special needs but in practice, they may have hardship while utilizing. This interview result is coded under ‘constraints to circle time’ category.

4.1.2 Self-Reported Practices of Early Childhood Teachers in terms of; Context of Circle Time

Early childhood teachers’ answers for questions related with context of circle time are provided below. Firstly, teachers’ answer for survey questions and interview questions will be supplied, then synthesis of both results will be done in the later part. In this part of the study, questions related with context of circle time includes frequency, duration, time period of circle time, place of activities and seating plan in both survey and interview results.

4.1.2.1 Quantitative Results of Context of Circle Time

Participants of the study are asked about context of circle time in terms of frequency, duration, time period, place of activities and seating plan in circle time. As for frequency of circle time activities of early childhood teachers, out of 502 participants, 15 (%3) of them explained that they utilize circle time at least twice a day, 291 (%58) of them utilize every day, 70 (%13,9) of them utilize every other day, 49 (%9,8) of them utilize at least once a week, 23 (%4,6) of them utilize once every two weeks and lastly 54 (%10,8) of them expressed that they never utilize circle time in their class. When it is considered to divide teachers as circle time utilizers and non-utilizers, it is seen that 448 of teachers utilize circle time in their class as total (90%) but the frequency of circle time varies. Regarding the answers of teachers, it is clear that 306 of them utilize circle time at least once in a day (61%) as can be seen in table 9.

Table 9 *Descriptive Statistics for Early Childhood Teachers' Circle Time Practice Frequencies*

Frequency	**f**	**%**
Twice a day	15	3%
Everyday	291	58%
Every other day	70	14%
At least once a week	49	10%
Every two weeks	23	5%
Never	54	11%

Study findings reveals that more than half of the early childhood teachers utilize circle time in 11-20 minutes of duration (54%). One to fourth of them indicates that their circle time process happens in 5-10 minutes of period (25%) while less than a quarter of teachers states their circle time process is more than 20 minutes (21%) as can be seen in table 10.

Table 10 *Descriptive Statistics for Early Childhood Teachers' Duration of Circle Time*

Duration of circle time	**f**	**%**
5-10 min.	113	25%
11-20 min.	244	54%
21-30 min.	70	16%
31-40 min.	12	3%
41+ min.	9	2%

As for time period of early childhood teachers' circle time utilization, number of teachers who utilize circle time always before breakfast is more than one to fourth of them (M=2,39, 31%) while number of teachers utilize circle time always immediately after breakfast is as the same per cent (M=2,52, 31%). When it comes to teachers who utilize circle time during daily educational activities, most of the teachers indicates that they sometimes do circle time in that process (M=2,29, 32%) and regarding the ones who utilize circle time before leaving the school, most of them express that sometimes they do circle time in that process (M=2,21, 26%) as stated in table 11.

Table 11 *Descriptive Statistics for Early Childhood Teachers' Time Period of Circle Time*

Time period	M	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
We utilize circle time before breakfast.	2,39	140	31%	80	18%	39	9%
We utilize circle time immediately after breakfast.	2,52	140	31%	87	19%	14	3%
We utilize circle time during daily educational activities.	2,29	89	20%	144	32%	16	4%
We utilize circle time before leaving the school.	2,21	82	18%	118	26%	34	8%

When it comes to place of circle time practice, it seems that teachers are not inclined in one direction. Teachers who utilize circle time on chairs, on cushions and on carpet are majorly selected that they sometimes practice circle time on these places in similar per cents. So, teachers use chairs during circle time sometimes (M=2,31, 42%), they use cushions during circle time sometimes (M=2,29, 39%) and they sometimes use carpet during circle time (M=2,3, 40%) as can be examined in table 12.

Table 12 *Descriptive Statistics for Early Childhood Teachers' Place of Circle Time Practice*

Place of activities	M	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
We utilize circle time on chairs.	2,31	127	28%	189	42%	21	5%
We utilize circle time on cushions.	2,29	104	23%	176	39%	18	4%
We utilize circle time on carpet.	2,3	109	24%	180	40%	17	4%

Out of 448 teachers, more than three quarters of them reported that when they sit, they form circle shape (M=4,05, 78%) in circle time. Less than a quarter of teachers, %21, reported they sometimes form circle shape. Only %2 of participants mentioned that

they seldomly or never sit in circle shape in this process as can be examined in table 13.

Table 13 *Descriptive Statistics for Seating Plan of Circle Time*

Seating Plan in Circle Time	M	Always		Frequently		Sometimes		Seldom		Never	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
In circle time, we sit like a circle shape.	4,05	135	30%	213	48%	92	21%	7	2%	1	0%

4.1.2.2 Qualitative Results of Context of Circle Time

Early childhood teachers' answer to interview questions related with context of circle time are provided below. Under context of circle time there are 5 subtitles which are frequency, duration, time period, place of activities and seating plan of teachers. Each of them is explained with their codes related to them.

4.1.2.2.1 Frequency of Circle Time

To reach the information about frequency of circle time participants were asked the following question: *"Could you tell me about your one-day circle time routines in detail?"* Based on the answers given by teachers about how often they utilize circle time, codes were arranged under 3 headings as "twice a day, every day and every other day" as stated in table 14.

Table 14 *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Frequency of Circle Time*

Category	Codes	Quotation from participants
Frequency of Circle Time	Twice a day (n=1)	We can do the circle time several times a day... Sometimes, it depends on the situation and the day, the topics we want to cover… (T6)
	Every day (n=16)	It's already a routine circle time for us, this is how we start every day, the children themselves remind us when we don't start or skip circle time process (T14).

Table 14 *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Frequency of Circle Time Cont'd*

	Every other day (n=4)	This is a routine for our class. We used to do circle time on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. We give one day break (T3).

4.1.2.2.1.1 Twice a Day

Only one of the participants (n=1) explained that they may do circle time more than once because there are kinds of purposes of circle time. They do it in the mornings to schedule the day, they may prefer to do it while starting activities or they may do it as an evaluation time when there are disagreements among children. T6 explained the reason why they do circle time several times with these sentences:

> We can do the circle time several times a day, I was doing it a few times beforehand but I realized we can use it with many purposes. Sometimes, it depends on the situation and the day, the topics we want to cover. We can use it in mornings because make preparations for the day, sometimes when there is a problem among children we sit in circle and talk about the problem.

4.1.2.2.1.2 Everyday

Many of the teachers (n=16) explained they do circle time every day. Some of them explained that even if there may be changes about the time period, they are delicate about utilizing circle time every day because when children get used to do circle time as a routine, they remind teacher they should do circle time.

T14 explained that

> It's already a routine circle time for us, this is how we start every day, the children themselves remind us when we don't start or skip circle time process.

T5 also explained that time period may change, but they give importance to do circle time every day even in a short period. She said these sentences:

> Sometimes I do it at the beginning of the day, sometimes I do it at the end of the day. I draw it on the board or I prepare it in the form of a presentation about what we will learn, even if it is 5 minutes.

4.1.2.2.1.3 Every other Day

Some teachers (n=4) explained they prefer to do circle time every other day. When they do circle time every day in their class, children start to get bored of circle time. Teachers also added that they change the frequency of circle time not to make children bored, and they also change content of circle time for different days. T8 explained the reason with these sentences:

> If we always go on the same routine, it gets boring after a while. They know, but if we change places or do different activities, it will be better. I don't do circle time on some days. Every two days we do circle time.

T3 also mentioned that

> This is a routine for our class. We used to do circle time on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. We give one day break.

4.1.2.2.2 Duration of Circle Time

To reach the information from teachers about duration of circle time the following question was asked: *"Could you tell me about your one-day circle time routines in detail?".* Based on the answers given by teachers about duration of circle time, codes were arranged under 4 headings which are "5-10, 11-20, 21-30 and 31-40 minutes" as stated in table 15. Teachers explained only duration of their circle time routines. The content of this process is examined under other questions. That's why teachers' answers are clear and short. Therefore, their answers are presented following one paragraph.

Table 15 *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Duration of Circle Time*

Category	Codes	Quotation from participants
Duration of Circle Time	5-10 minutes (n=3)	We do circle time every day in mornings but it does not last long. There are very young children in my class. I cannot make them sit for long times (T1).
	11-20 minutes (n=9)	Our circle time takes about 15-20 minutes, when you make it longer, children start to look around…(T4).
	21-30 minutes (n=6)	We do circle time about 30 minutes. I want each child to express his/her opinions (T11).
	31-40 minutes (n=1)	Our circle time lasts about 30-45 minutes. We do a number of activities in circle time…(T3).

Teachers (n=3) explained that they do circle time about 5-10 minutes. One of the teachers in this group explained her students are about 36 months and their attention span is really short. That's why they cannot continue for longer times. Majority of the teachers (n=9) explained their circle time process lasts for 11-20 minutes approximately. These teachers said that when it takes more time, children start to be bored. So, they prefer to do it without making children distracted. There are also many teachers (n=6) who do circle time about 21-30 minutes. These teachers explained the reason that they prefer to share children's experiences and feelings, they take all children's opinions. That's why it takes about 30 minutes. Finally, only one of them (n=1) said, their circle time last for 31-40 minutes. She explained they are doing various activities. That's why circle time takes longer in their class.

T1 explained that their circle time lasts about 5-10 minutes as follows:

> We do circle time every day in mornings but it does not last long. There are very young children in my class. I cannot make them sit for long times.

T4 mentioned they do circle time about 11-20 minutes with the following sentences:

> Our circle time takes about 15-20 minutes, when you make it longer, children start to look around. They do not focus on what you say.

T11 explained the reason why they do circle time about 21-30 minutes as mentioned below:

> We do circle time about 30 minutes. I want each child to express his/her opinions.

4.1.2.2.3.1 Before Breakfast

T3 mentioned the duration with the following sentences:

> Our circle time lasts about 30-45 minutes. We do a number of activities in circle time. Even when they only answer one question it takes 10 minutes.

4.1.2.2.3 Time Period of Circle Time

To gather the information from teachers about time period of circle time the following question was asked: *"Could you tell me about your one-day circle time routines in detail?".* Based on the answers given by teachers about duration of circle time, codes were arranged under 4 headings as "before breakfast, after breakfast, during daily educational activities and before leaving the school" as stated in table 16.

Table 16 *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Time Period of Circle Time*

Category	Codes	Quotation from participants
Time Period of Circle Time	Before breakfast (n=5)	We do it before going to breakfast because we aim to make our spare time beneficial for children. We talk about children's ideas about topic of the day. We talk about our daily plan (T7).
	After breakfast (n=7)	After children come to our school, we have breakfast at 9 o'clock and the children know that no matter what happens at 9.30, … circle time is done (T4).
	During daily educational activities (n=3)	Sometimes we do circle time at different times during the day. For example, I use the activity as a transition period, we sit with the children, I talk about what activity they want to shift to… (T2).
	Before leaving the school (n=4)	I use the circle time not only as a morning routine but also as an assessment of my day, we form a circle and end the day in the same way (T17).

A number of teachers (n=5) reported that they do circle time before breakfast. They mentioned that they get prepared for the day in circle time. That's why they do it before breakfast to make use of the time well.

T7 said that:

> We do it before going to breakfast because we aim to make our spare time beneficial for children. We talk about children's ideas about topic of the day. We talk about our daily plan.

4.1.2.2.3.2 After Breakfast

Majority of teachers (n=7) said they do circle time after breakfast because children are at school already when time for breakfast is about to finish. T4 also added that children knows that when they are leaving breakfast table, they are about to start circle time.

T4 explained that

> After children come to our school, we have breakfast at 9 o'clock and the children know that no matter what happens at 9.30, whether it is a branch lesson or they are going to garden, circle time is done.

4.1.2.2.3.3 During Daily Educational Activities

Teachers (n=3) explained that they do circle time during their other activities in their learning process, as well. The reason behind this is they get benefit from circle time in different areas. T2 explained this with these sentences:

> Sometimes we do circle time at different times during the day. For example, I use the activity as a transition period, we sit with the children, I talk about what activity they want to shift to, whatever the topic of the day, I get the ideas of the children, everyone says what they want to say.

4.1.2.2.3.4 Before Leaving the School

Some teachers (n=4) said that they do circle time before leaving the school. But these teachers also mentioned that this process is not only done when children about to go home. They do circle time both during the day or in the morning as well as before children leave the school as a daily assessment.

T17 stated that

> I use the circle time not only as a morning routine but also as an assessment of my day, we form a circle and end the day in the same way.

4.1.2.2.4 Place of Circle Time

For reaching the information about place of circle time, teachers were asked *"Could you tell me about your one-day circle time routines in detail?"*. Based on the answers given by teachers about duration of circle time, codes were grouped as 3 parts which are "on carpet, on cushions and on chairs" as stated in table 17.

Table *17 Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Place of Circle Time*

Category	Codes	Quotation from participants
Place of Circle Time	On carpet (n=6)	I sit directly on the floor because it becomes completely messy when you try to make a circle shape with chairs (T13).
	On cushions (n=8)	I make children sit on their cushions and make sure they sit comfortably. I want them to feel more comfortable when we do circle time for a long time (T19).
	On chairs (n=4)	I make children sit on their cushions and make sure they sit comfortably. I want them to feel more comfortable when we do circle time for a long time (T16).

Now that this question is asked for completing the general picture of self-reported practices of circle time, the answers will be collected under one paragraph. Some teachers (n=6) explained they use carpet to sit during circle time. The reason is explained as it helps children to be aware of circle shape that they should be fit in. On the other hand, majority of them (n=8) explained they use cushions in circle time. They mentioned their aim is to make children more comfortable. Some others (n=4) expressed that they use chairs to do circle time. They said they find it useful for making children sit properly and using chairs prevents children to get tired.

T13 explained that they use carpet in circle time with these sentences:

> I sit directly on the floor because it becomes completely messy when you try to make a circle shape with chairs.

T19 mentioned that they prefer to use cushions by saying:

> I make children sit on their cushions and make sure they sit comfortably. I want them to feel more comfortable when we do circle time for a long time.

T16 also explained they use chairs with these words:

> I prefer to do circle time using chairs because preschool children sometimes get tired quickly. I can't predict how long the circle time will last.

4.1.2.2.5 Seating Plan of Circle Time

To reach the information from teachers about seating plan during circle time this question was asked *"Do you have a specific seating plan in circle time process, can you explain the reason why?"* under the main question of *"Could you tell me about your one-day circle time routine in detail?".* Based on the answers given by teachers, codes were arranged under 3 headings which are "depends, U shape and circle shape" as stated in table 18.

Table 18 *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Seating Plan of Circle Time*

Category	Codes	Quotation from participants
Seating Plan of Circle Time	Depends (n=1)	…It sometimes depends on the activity. When there is a large space, everyone can fit in, it is important for each student to see each other's faces, so we create a circle shape (T6).
	U Shape (n=6)	I'm sitting in a U shape with my children in the group meeting and in the story time. As a teacher, I am more interested in children, I am more involved in their games, I observe and feel their processes, being able to

Table 18 *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Seating Plan of Circle Time Cont'd*

		make eye contact with each of them during the circle and being able to see them all at a glance (T13).
	Circle Shape (n=9)	We usually do our circle time by creating a circle shape, I believe this is more appropriate. Now that there is such a thing in the form of a circle, it shows that everyone is equal, so it seems more correct to me (T22).

4.1.2.2.5.1 Depends

Only one of the participants (n=1) stated that seating plan of children during circle time changes regarding the situations. Regarding physical environment of the class, children's age group, type of the activities in circle time, seating plan of children varies. So, teacher may prefer U shape or circle shape considering the situation.

At that point T6 stated that:

> It depends on the situation. For example, some classes do not have enough space, some classes are younger, some classes are older, some children have behavioral problems, the teacher decides it herself according to the situation of the class. It sometimes depends on the activity. When there is a large space, everyone can fit in, it is important for each student to see each other's faces, so we create a circle shape.

4.1.2.2.5.2 U Shape

A number of teachers (n=6) stated that they sit like U shape during circle time. They explained the reason of preferring this seating plan as having eye contact with each member of the class easily. They state that sitting in U shape helps teachers to manage classroom in a better way because they can observe children one by one and they can get interested with children more easily.

T13 explained the reason why she prefers U shape during circle time process as follows:

> I'm sitting in a U shape with my children in the group meeting and in the story time. As a teacher, I am more interested in children, I am more involved in their games, I observe and feel their processes, being able to make eye contact with each of them during the circle and being able to see them all at a glance.

P9 stated similar reasons regarding classroom management issue with these sentences:

> My classroom management skills are sufficient, I make eye contact, sit in a half moon shape, all the kids see me, and they see each other too I don't have any trouble with those issues.

4.1.2.2.5.3 Circle Shape

Majority of the interviewees (n=9) explained that they prefer to sit in circle shape. The reason for choosing circle shape as seating plan is explained by teachers as giving equal chance for each member of the circle. They stated that it is essential to hear from all participants including children who are shy or have a trouble, so circle shape helps them to be aware of these children.

As an example, following statements of T1 is indicated:

> I try to make the circle time in the form of a circle so that every child must do something, when I will teach, I want to do the circle time so that no one will be left behind, for example, an introverted child, a child who does not speak, a child who does not want to hear his voice.

Similarly, T22 stated the importance of equality of circle time participants with this seating plan with these sentences:

> We usually do our circle time by creating a circle shape, I believe this is more appropriate. Now that there is such a thing in the form of a circle, it shows that everyone is equal, so it seems more correct to me.

4.1.2.3 Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Context of circle time is examined with *Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs and Practices about Circle Time Survey* and *Interview* questions. In survey part of the study, teachers are asked about frequency, duration, time period, place of circle time and seating plan. After gathering this information, they are asked about details of this

information in interview questions. In survey results, teachers mentioned that they utilize circle time at least once in a day, or every other day. Similar to survey results, majority of teachers also explained they do circle time every day in interview results. They explained the reason as when they utilize circle time every day, then they can get benefit from it. For example, they do schedule each day and this is a routine for them. Also, they added that children remind teacher to do circle time when teachers forget to do it. When it comes to duration, majority of them explained in survey that they do about 11-20 minutes of circle time. As parallel to survey finding, majority of them explained they do circle time about 11-20 minutes because when this duration gets longer, children start to get distracted. As for time period of circle time, they explained preferring to do circle time before or after breakfast, or during the day and sometimes before leaving the school. The findings were mostly similar in survey but in interview part, majority of teachers explained they do circle time after breakfast because they wait for all children to arrive at school in mornings. Teachers also mentioned their place of activities changing among cushions, chairs and carpet both in survey and interview. But in interview, teachers added they prefer carpet because it helps children to form circle shape, they may prefer cushions to make children more comfortable and they may prefer chairs not to make them tired. Moreover, in survey results, teachers explained that they utilize circle time by seating in circle shape. In parallel to survey findings, majority of teachers also mentioned that they prefer to sit in circle shape but there are teachers who prefer to take U shape, as well. They explained the reason why they prefer circle shape as giving sign of equality among each member of the class.

4.1.3 Self-Reported Practices of Early Childhood Teachers in terms of: Facilitators Used in Circle Time

In this part of the research, facilitators used in circle time are asked to teachers including types of materials like books, cards; types of mediators such as tales, finger games; and types of media tools like speaker, computer etc. This type of question is answered by teachers by selecting more than one choice if they want.

4.1.3.1 Quantitative Results of Facilitators Used in Circle Time

For facilitators, types of materials, mediators and media tools used during circle time are asked to early childhood teachers as multiple-choice questions for letting teachers to select more than one choice, percentages for each item are considered regarding total of the participants. Regarding this issue, teachers use books at first place during circle time (80%), puppets secondly (71%), cards thirdly (66%), musical instruments (60%), toys (57%) and ball (51%) respectively. The rest of the materials are selected by less than half of the participants. Related information can be seen in table 19.

Table 19 *Descriptive Statistics for Materials Used During Circle Time by Early Childhood Teachers*

Types of materials used during circle time	**f**	**%**
Book	345	80%
Puppet	308	71%
Cards	287	66%
Musical instrument	261	60%
Toys	247	57%
Ball	223	51%
Photos	211	49%
Chalkboard	191	44%
Paper	138	32%
Pencil	116	27%
Construction materials	89	20%
Calendar	77	18%

When it comes to mediator techniques used during circle time, most of the teachers selected singing at first (87%). They stated that they asked a very high rate of questioning (80%) secondly. Thirdly, three quarters of teachers indicate that they include finger games in circle time (75%). Afterwards, many of the teachers use rhymes in circle time process (64%), while more than half of them use riddles as mediator (55%). The rest of the mediators are used less than half of the participants as can be examined in table 20.

Table 20 *Descriptive Statistics for Mediators Used During Circle Time by Early Childhood Teachers*

Types of mediators used during circle time	**f**	**%**
Singing	387	87%
Questioning	360	80%
Finger game	336	75%
Rhymes	285	64%
Riddles	246	55%
Tales	214	48%
Puppetry	208	47%

Participants use media tools during circle time as follows; they use computer at highest ratio (66%), they use speaker as second (58%) and thirdly, teachers indicate they use internet in a high amount (56%) as covered in table 21 Rest of the media tools are selected by less than half of the participants.

Table 21 *Descriptive Statistics for Media Tools Used During Circle Time by Early Childhood Teachers*

Types of media tools used during circle time	**f**	**%**
Computer	268	66%
Speaker	233	58%
Internet	227	56%
Projector	167	41%
Phone	127	32%
Smart Board	82	20%

4.1.3.2 Qualitative Results of Facilitators Used in Circle Time

Under this title, early childhood teachers' self-reported practices about facilitators used in circle time are gathered. Within this scope, materials, mediators and media tools are explained under 3 different titles. Now that the teacher's answers to these questions are clear and short, each title will be explained in one paragraph for each.

4.1.3.2.1 Qualitative Results of Facilitators Used in Circle Time in Terms of Types of Materials

Types of materials explained by teachers during interview are explained below with table 22. Teachers' explanations about this issue are provided under the table by grouping them as "books, puppets, cards and photos".

Table 22 *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Types of Materials*

Category	Codes	Quotation from participants
Types of Materials Used in Circle Time	Books (n=9)	When the children finish their breakfast, they get ready for circle time individually. First of all, we go to a book corner. They get one book from there. Regarding their wishes, we make conversations about these books (T10).
	Puppets (n=2)	Sometimes we use puppets to attract children's attention. They are small kids and when I get puppets on my hand, they look at me directly (T7).
	Cards (n=5)	In the classroom, we have routine cards, …We use these cards in circle time to cover the daily flow (T20).
	Photos (n=2)	There are different children, we have a lot of photos about these children, the children examine the photos, and we have conversations about those photos. This is an activity that we do more specifically for our circle time to know more about each other (T6).

Majority of teachers (n=9) explained that they use books in circle time because they do language-literacy activities frequently. Some of them (n=2) also mentioned they use puppets in circle time to attract children's attention while some of them (n=5) use cards in circle time. Teachers explained they use cards to arrange their daily routines while scheduling the day. There were also teachers who explained they use photos in circle time. They use photos of class members to make activities to know more about their personalities.

T10 explained that they use books in circle time with these sentences:

> When the children finish their breakfast, they get ready for circle time individually. First of all, we go to a book corner. They get one book from there. Regarding their wishes, we make conversations about these books.

T7 explained they use puppets:

> Sometimes we use puppets to attract children's attention. They are small kids and when I get puppets on my hand, they look at me directly.

T20 explained they use cards in circle time with these sentences:

> In the classroom, we have routine cards, the children are aware of the routine, there are a few pictures on these cards, and in those pictures, there is breakfast time in the first, then there is the circle time, after the circle time there is the activity time. We use these cards in circle time to cover the daily flow.

T6 mentioned they use photos in circle time by saying

> There are different children, we have a lot of photos about these children, the children examine the photos, and we have conversations about those photos. This is an activity that we do more specifically for our circle time to know more about each other.

4.1.3.2.2 Qualitative Results of Facilitators Used in Circle Time in Terms of Types of Mediators

Teachers' answers about types of mediators they used in circle time are reached and these answers are grouped as "questioning, riddles, finger games, rhymes, singing songs and puppetry" in table 23. While giving answers, teachers might have expressed more than one mediator type at the same time.

Table 23 *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Types of Mediators*

Category	Codes	Quotation from participants
Types of Mediators Used in Circle Time	Questioning (n=11)	As a teacher, I start the circle over time by asking questions and asking open-ended questions, then the children have questions and I take their questions (T16).
	Rhymes (n=3) Riddles (n=3) Singing songs (n=9)	It is an important experience of mine within 10 years of teaching; if a child is distracted, you will never be able to be listened. The first rule is rhymes, riddles and songs. Attracting children's attention. …, I always sing a song right away, or I say a rhyme, child's reaction changes all of a sudden, you become the focus of everyone (T9).
	Finger games (n=3) Puppetry (n=2)	But while I am playing finger games and puppetry or singing songs, I keep children active where I am sitting. I can manage the class well…(T21).

Most of the teachers (n=11) explained they use questioning in circle time. They mentioned that while they are starting circle time or during circle time, they ask questions to children. They are asking about children's experiences, feelings, ideas. On the other hand, there were teachers (n=3) who mentioned that they use rhymes and riddles to attract children's attention as well as managing the classroom. Three of them (n=3) also expressed they play finger games to gather children's attention again. Furthermore, a lot of teachers (n=9) reported they sing songs during circle time. While singing songs they aim to teach children concepts such as days of the week, seasons, numbers etc. Lastly there are teachers (n=2) who explained they play puppetry games to keep children active, especially if their children are younger.

T16 explained how they use questioning in circle time with these sentences:

> As a teacher, I start the circle over time by asking questions and asking open-ended questions, then the children have questions and I take their questions.

T9 mentioned how they use rhymes, riddles and songs in her explanation:

> It is an important experience of mine within 10 years of teaching; if a child is distracted, you will never be able to be listened. The first rule is rhymes, riddles and songs. Attracting children's attention. Sometimes the teacher shouts "You're shouting a lot!" also raising his voice to children. Instead, I always sing

a song right away, or I say a rhyme, child's reaction changes all of a sudden, you become the focus of everyone.

T21 also explained the reason why they use finger games and puppetry like that:

> But while I am playing finger games and puppetry or singing songs, I keep children active where I am sitting. I can manage the class well. But when we continue in an educational and didactic way, I frankly observe that children get bored when we work with teaching-oriented system.

4.1.3.2.3 Qualitative Results of Facilitators Used in Circle Time in Terms of Media Tools

Teachers' answers about types of media they used in circle time are collected and grouped in table 24 as "internet and computer".

Table 24 *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Types of Media*

Category	Codes	Quotation from participants
Types of Media Tools Used in Circle Time	Internet (n=3) Computer (n=3)	… I am looking for videos on YouTube, I am trying to ensure that children find answers to their questions among themselves, or sometimes we just search for songs that we like and we just sing a song all together (T3).

As for media tools used in circle time, teachers (n=3) stated they use computer or internet. The number of teachers who mentioned internet and computer were the same. These teachers explained that when children have a question in their mind, they consult resources from internet. They make research about the answers together with children. Besides, they may use computer for searching songs that they will sing together.

T3 explained how they use media tools in their class during circle time:

> For example, today we have a topic and I guide children according to their answers to my questions about the topic. Answers are sought to these questions throughout the day, experiments are carried out. I am looking for videos on YouTube, I am trying to ensure that children find answers to their questions among themselves, or sometimes we just search for songs that we like and we just sing a song all together.

4.1.3.3 Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Facilitators of circle time is examined with *Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Survey* and *Interview* questions. There were three main types of facilitators mentioned in this study. These are materials, mediators and media tools used in circle time. Teachers' answers for materials used in circle time for survey and interview were nearly parallel. In survey results, teachers explained they use books, puppets, cards, musical instruments, toys, balls, photos, chalkboard, paper, pencil, construction materials and calendar respectively. When it comes to interview results teachers mentioned they use books, cards, photos and puppets in circle time. So, the results were similar but there were other kinds of materials mentioned in survey study. Moreover, in survey teachers expressed that they sing songs, ask questions, play finger games, says rhymes, riddles and tales and they do puppetry with children in order. When interview results are examined, teachers mostly mentioned they ask questions and sing songs as parallel to survey findings. They also mentioned they say riddles and rhymes, they play finger games as they stated in survey part of the study. During interview, teachers also added that using mediators helps children to actively involved, teacher can attract children's attention and manage the class more easily in this way. Lastly, teachers are asked about media tools they use in circle time and they answered that they use computer, speaker, internet, projector, phone and smart board. In interview, teachers mentioned they use computers and internet to search for children's questions and singing songs all together. All in all, teachers have similar answers in survey and interview questions but survey answers were more comprehensive in terms of types of facilitators.

4.1.4 Self-Reported Practices of Early Childhood Teachers in terms of: Types of Activities in Circle Time

Types of activities in circle time are asked in survey questions at first. After gathering the answer about this issue, teachers are requested to give details about their activity processes, how they do these activities. The other types of activities are asked in the

interview process. Both survey and interview findings are subsequently given below. At the end of these results, synthesis of both results is supplied.

4.1.4.1 Quantitative Results of Types of Activities in Circle Time

Of the 448 Early Childhood Teachers, much more than three to fourth of them indicated that they share ideas, feelings or experiences during circle time as the most frequent type of activity according to results (M=4,56, 94%). On the other hand about three quarters of them expressed that they share books, toys or materials (M=4,04, 71%), more than three to fourth of teachers highlighted that they talk about the weather, seasons, month or the day during circle time routine (M=4,18, 77%), more than three quarters of teachers expressed that they talk about schedule of the day (M=4,27, 81%), slightly more than half of teachers take the roll during circle time, a less preferred item than other options respectively (M=3,47, 55%), more than three-quarters of teachers seem to engage in language development activities during circle time (M=4,13, 79%). It is also revealed that a little more than half of the teachers do math activities during the circle time, which is a less practiced activity than the others comparingly (M=3,43, 51%), more than three quarters of teachers reported that they sing or listen songs during circle time (M=4,16, 79%), more than half of the participants expressed that they dance during circle time (M=3,65, 56%), more than two to fourth of teachers indicated that they do activities to improve gross motor skills during circle time (M=3,83, 65%), more than a half of the teachers expressed that they do activities specific to their own classroom (M=3,65, 58%), lastly more than three quarters of teachers reported that they remember school rules during circle time (M=4,19, 79%). Findings about activity types in circle time are shown in table 25.

Table 25 *Descriptive Statistics for Types of Activities Conducted During Circle Time by Early Childhood Teachers*

Types of Activities in Circle Time	**M**	**Always**		**Frequently**		**Sometimes**		**Seldom**		**Never**	
		f	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
In circle time we share our ideas, feelings or experiences.	4,56	279	62%	145	32%	22	5%	2	0%	0	0%
In circle time, we share books, toys or materials.	4,04	184	41%	135	30%	105	23%	15	3%	9	2%
In circle time we talk about the weather, the seasons, the month or the day.	4,18	207	46%	140	31%	82	18%	14	3%	5	1%
In circle time we talk about schedule of the day.	4,27	237	53%	127	28%	61	14%	14	3%	9	2%
In circle time, we take the roll.	3,47	137	31%	106	24%	99	22%	47	10%	57	13%
In circle time, we do activities that support language development. (Ex: Sentence completion, reading story)	4,13	186	42%	165	37%	78	17%	11	2%	8	2%
In circle time, we do math activities. (For example: Sorting and comparing materials)	3,43	97	22%	132	29%	129	29%	48	11%	42	9%
In circle time, we sing songs or listen songs.	4,16	199	44%	156	35%	71	16%	14	3%	8	2%
In circle time, we dance.	3,65	118	26%	136	30%	136	30%	36	8%	22	5%
In circle time, we do activities that improve gross motor skills. (Ex: Morning sports)	3,83	149	33%	142	32%	115	26%	20	4%	22	5%

Table 25 *Descriptive Statistics for Types of Activities Conducted During Circle Time by Early Childhood Teachers Cont'd*

In circle time, we play games or do activities specific to our classroom. (Ex: 100 days event)	3,65	118	26%	144	32%	124	28%	36	8%	26	6%
In circle time we remember the school rules. (Ex: Asking for the right to speak)	4,19	201	45%	153	34%	80	18%	9	2%	5	1%

4.1.4.2 Qualitative Results of Types of Activities in Circle Time

Early childhood teachers were asked about the types of activities that they held during circle time with this general question: "*Could you tell me about your one-day circle time routine in detail?".* The reason why offering such a general question is not to limit teachers and letting them to express their natural order. While getting the answers and organizing all of them, 11 codes which are "science activity, music and rhythm, games, closing circle time, assigning roles, math activity, taking the roll, scheduling, calendar time, movement activity, language and literacy activity, and 7 subcodes which are gymnastics, dancing under movement activities, getting to know each other, sharing experiences and feelings, story time under language and literacy activities are formed and these are demonstrated in table 26. Each item is explained in the following parts.

Table 26 *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Activity Types of Circle Time*

Category	**Codes**	**Quotation from participants**
Activity Types in Circle Time	Science activity (n=2)	We have a sheet, a sheet with a bear. Sometimes we lay on it to do science. Circle time is not necessarily a time for us to read a story or listen to music, but we also do experiments, we make toast, we squeeze orange juice, we make jam (T11).
	Music & rhythm (n=3)	…apart from these, we sing songs that can be parallel to our subjects (T3).

Table 26 *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Activity Types of Circle Time Cont'd*

Games (n=6)	We have a game called 'How are you today?'. We play it to get their attention because I am a small group teacher, about 36 months of age children. We have another game called 'Knock the door'. By playing this game, we are getting ready to do circle time (T12).
Closing circle time (n=7)	At circle time, we usually make the evaluation of that day…(T9).
Assigning roles (n=5)	We also have the line leader implementation in our class…The person who is line leader sticks our routine cards to that place so that everybody can see the daily plan (T4).
Math activity (n=4)	…Apart from these, we were counting down, we were counting forward during circle time process (T7).
Taking the roll (n=2)	Frankly, a conversation starts with my direction first. In our daily routine, we take our roll call to see who has come, who has not come (T17).
Scheduling (n=9)	We talk about what we will do on the day in question in other words, we talk about what activities we will do. I talk about our plan that day… (T20)
Calendar time (n=8)	There are a few songs that children enjoy singing, they are about days of the week and with the help of this song, they have memorized the days (T20).
Movement activity:	
- Gymnastic (n=1)	We have a morning exercise after breakfast, which is an activity we do during the circle time (T12).

Table 26 *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Activity Types of Circle Time Cont'd*

	- Dancing (n=3)	If we are sitting on cushions, it is necessary to add an active game after it and regain the attention of the children. If we've managed to get their attention, we're finally reading our story (T10).
Language/Literacy activity:		
	- Getting to know each other (n=3)	...We used to introduce ourselves during this process, we do this in the first semesters when the school is opened (T3).
	- Sharing experiences-feelings (n=21)	We ask questions about children's experiences now that they need to talk with each other. They are individuals who have feelings, emotions…(T22).
	- Story time (n=9)	I tell stories, it's absolutely a routine every day in my circle time, because storytelling encourages children to listen… (T11)

4.1.4.2.1 Science Activity

There were teachers who expressed that they do science activities during circle time (n=2). Teachers explained they not only do language literacy activities, but also science experiments in circle time. They added that content of the activities may vary but they include science. Only one of the teachers' explanations is given because the other participant T21 only expressed that they do activities about colors.

T11 clarifies that how she conducts science activity in circle time with following sentences:

> We have a sheet, a sheet with a bear. Sometimes we lay on it to do science. Circle time is not necessarily a time for us to read a story or listen to music, but we also do experiments, we make toast, we squeeze orange juice, we make jam.

4.1.4.2.2 Music and Rhythm

Some of the teachers mention that they do music and rhythm activities in circle time (n=3). They explained that they sing songs, do rhythm activities, and they learn new songs as parallel to their schedule.

T3 reported that:

> …apart from these, we sing songs that can be parallel to our subjects.

Similarly, T11 explained how she does this type of activity in circle time with following sentences:

> In circle time, we play rhythm games, we play games with songs, we repeat all the songs we have learned, and if we are going to learn a new song, we only make an introduction of it. If we are going to do a rhythm practice, I do it in circle time.

4.1.4.2.3 Games

A group of Early Childhood Teachers reflected that they play games during circle time (n=6). Teachers stated they have some aims while playing games in circle time such as attention gathering or releasing energy. They have some games especially as a starter of circle time for making children become aware that it is time to do circle. Especially teachers who have children among 36 months in their class expressed that they get benefit from games in circle time to keep children involved. So, they use some games as a sign for children to get their attention. Moreover, they may play games to make children active after children do passive activities such as reading books, sharing experiences and feelings by sitting on the floor. So, they play games to release children's energy. Teachers who play games in circle time expressed that they have variety of games created by themselves or by children. These games exemplified by teachers aims to involve children into the process as teachers stated.

In relation to this activity type, T1 identified one example for this activity as:

> There are games we play in circle time. We often play games to get kids moving and actively involved after quiet activities, otherwise they can get bored easily. For example, we have a newspaper game. Imagine a newspaper, I turn on the music, they sit in a circle everyone has their own big newspaper, every child

> dances outside while the music is playing, when the music stops, everyone gathers on their own newspaper, they fold the newspaper into 2 again and thus we get a constantly shrinking area. Finally, they are trying to stand on that tiny piece. They put their hands on the ground but one foot is standing there, trying to stay balanced.

T12 also stated that

> We have a game called 'How are you today?'. We play it to get their attention because I am a small group teacher, about 36 months of age children. We have another game called 'Knock the door'. By playing this game, we are getting ready to do circle time.

4.1.4.2.4 Closing circle time

Even it is not a type of circle time activity, some of the teachers (n=7) explained their closing circle time routines under the interview question about types of activities. In order to analyze these, their answers are grouped as one of the types. Teachers who explained closing circle time as another type of activity mentioned they make evaluation of the day at the end. In closing circle time, they talk about what they learned, how they feel and why. They sometimes document the incidents and feelings to see the negative and positive issues happened that day.

T5 explained how she does closing circle time in her class with these sentences:

> We ask questions such as what made you happy today, what did you learn today. We have a short conversation to focus on the positives rather than the negatives. In fact, there might be a negativity comes from children like this made me happy, but this also made me unhappy. At the end of the day, we have a board where we write our feelings, we hang these pictures there to see what happened that day.

Similarly, another interviewee T9 explained:

> At circle time, we usually make the evaluation of that day. What we did during the day, what we were affected by what we paid attention to, what caught our attention are some of the issues asked to the children one by one and their answers are received.

4.1.4.2.5 Assigning roles

A group of teachers (n=5) expressed that they give some roles to children in their class during circle time. While assigning roles, teachers may use some materials to show the duties and the children who are in charge of these duties for that day. By assigning each child a role, everybody becomes aware of their duties. The children might be in charge of opening curtains, distributing classroom materials to children, watering the flowers or they may have tasks special to their classroom. Except for assigning specific roles, there are teachers who explained how they give responsibilities to children to maintain circle time. They said that, if children get used to circle time process, classroom teacher may give floor to children to sustain circle time by themselves. They added that it might take 3-4 months for children to be able to do circle time on their own.

T3 mention how they assign roles to children with these sentences:

> We have one student in charge of the calendar every day, that student marks both the days and the months in our calendar made of natural materials. We have a board where we assign roles to children during the circle time. There are pictures of certain tasks on that board, and there are pictures of children as well. For example, every day we slide the photos upwards to see the pictures illustrating opening the curtains, giving water to the flowers, and it shows the given task and the child to do that task every day.

Likewise, T4 made conversation about this issue:

> We also have the line leader implementation in our class. Duties of line leader are to guide the teacher, to distribute paper napkins to his friends and to stick those routine cards in circle time. I made our routine cards in such a way that they able to hold metal on the wall. The person who is line leader sticks our routine cards to that place so that everybody can see the daily plan.

4.1.4.2.6 Movement Activity

There are two subcodes under this code which are gymnastics and dancing. These are separated from each other regarding teachers' expressions.

4.3.4.2.6.1. Gymnastics

One of the participants (n=1) indicated that they do gymnastics during circle time. T12 explained it with these sentences:

> We have a morning exercise after breakfast, which is an activity we do during the circle time.

4.3.4.2.6.2. Dancing

There were teachers (n=3) who stated dancing as one of the activities of their circle time routines. Teachers who allow children dance in circle time reported that they aim to release children's energies with such activities after inactive ones. They expressed that in order to gather children's motivation again, they should make children energetic. On the other hand, teachers reported that they may dance with children when they are lack of planning for the next activity. At that point they have time to think for coming activity which makes teachers relaxed.

T4 expressed who she conducts the process:

> Apart from that, if the activity after the circle time is a calm activity, I wake the children up in the last 5-10 minutes and activate them with music. One of the famous instructors used to say, "If a teacher does not have a schedule, then what she does is very important, that's where teaching comes into play." This 5-minute break and activating the children save other activities so much.

Additionally, T10 mentioned the same issue with these words:

> If we are sitting on cushions, it is necessary to add an active game after it and regain the attention of the children. If we've managed to get their attention, we're finally reading our story.

4.1.4.2.7 Math Activity

Some teachers (n=4) stated that they do math activities during circle time. These teachers especially emphasized that they do counting in circle time, counting down, counting forward, by twos or by fives. They also mentioned that they do counting after children get used to regular circle time process. So, teachers add math activities in their circle time plan after children get used to the process.

T3 mention this issue in following sentences:

> Of course, the practice of making circle time at the end of the year changes according to the beginning of the year. Towards the end of the year, I add math activities, for example, counting by twos, counting by fives, and we add them to our circle time format

T7 also indicated that they do math activities similarly:

> …Apart from these, we were counting down, we were counting forward during circle time process.

4.1.4.2.8 Language-Literacy Activity

Language-literacy activity was another type of activity mentioned by teachers. There are three subcodes under language-literacy activities which are getting to know each other, sharing experiences and feelings and story time subsequently. These subcodes are explained one by one below.

4.1.4.2.8.1 Getting to Know Each Other

Some of the teachers (n=3) expressed that they get to know each other during circle time as an activity. Teachers also reported that they guide children to introduce themselves to each other during beginning of the semester generally. The reason for making this activity at the beginning of the year is explained as the suitable atmosphere of circle time to get to know each other. Furthermore, teachers mentioned that while children introduce themselves to each other, they aim to give the message that each child is a part of a whole with unique characteristics. Even they regularly organize activities especially for knowing each other more. While doing this activity they may use children's photos and members of the circle make conversations about each other. T3 expressed the time when they especially do such an activity:

> This is a routine for me, for example, we used to do our circle time routine in English on Monday, Wednesday, Friday in the same way. We used to introduce ourselves during this process, we do this in the first semesters when the school is opened.

T6 mentioned about how they use materials while they aim to know more each other. She also explained the underlying message that they want to know in this activity with these sentences:

> …we have a lot of photos of our children. they examine each other's photos, and we have conversations about those photos. This is an activity that we do more specifically for our circle time. Our goal in this activity is usually to convey the message that we are all different from each other, like different things, and in these ways, we try to learn more about each other. At the same time, we are trying to give the message that we are all equal. It is an activity we are trying to do regularly but we are just waiting for the right time.

4.1.4.2.8.2 Sharing Experiences and Feelings

A vast majority of teachers mentioned (n=21) the activities they do related with sharing experiences and feelings in circle time. They reported that most of the time they start circle time by asking about how they feel that day, if anything interesting happened the previous day, if they want to talk about something they experienced or not. While they are talking about these issues, they aim to make children communicate with each other because children learn more efficiently by interacting with their peers rather than listening to teachers, they reported. As an example, T22 mentions the reason why she guides children to talk with each other with these sentences:

> We ask questions about children's experiences now that they need to talk with each other. They are individuals who have feelings, emotions or the things they want to explain just like us and they learn more while talking with each other instead of our didactic teaching methods.

Likewise, T17 explained the content of this activity by mentioning type of questions they ask to each other:

> … I ask questions like "How do you feel today, what was different for you today?". Conversation process depends on the answer they give to these questions. For example, if the child says that he is very happy, I immediately ask what makes him happy. There are also dialogues between his friends. I ask whether what makes him happy will make another child happy. This is a conversation that they shape.

Sometimes they talk about the topic that they will cover that day. So, teachers may check children's background knowledge in circle time about a topic that they plan to cover in the upcoming activities. T2 gave an example how they use circle time as a warming up for next activities with these sentences:

> Let's say one day I'm going to talk about planets. We make a circle right away, we sit down, I get the thoughts of the children on the subject, I try to direct them to my activity by getting their ideas or trying to know about their knowledge on that topic.

Moreover, one of the teachers mention a different aspect of this activity types. She explained that they talk about children's feelings or experiences like other teachers. But she added that they check as teachers whether the content of the conversation is related with child's private life or not. So, she highlighted that they eliminate the contents which should not be shared within a community. T6 explained this issue with these sentences:

> When we start, of course, everyone says hello to each other, we try to get a feeling of how they are, at first, we ask the children if they have experienced a very important moment or event. Sometimes children want to tell something, and we need to make sure that it is something proper to share with everyone or something that we need to talk to one to one, we confirm it first and then the children in the classroom can explain what happened.

4.1.4.2.8.3 Story Time

In circle time, many teachers (n=9) do story time with children. A lot of teachers reported that they read stories in circle time regularly. These books might be about the topic that they want to cover, about an incident they experienced. They stated that the reason why they read books in circle time is that it improves children's listening skills. Especially at the beginning of the semester, there are children having problems with focusing on listening. But teachers mention that the children enhance their skills with regular story time sessions.

T11 states how they process this activity and how children's listening skills improves with these sentences:

> I tell stories, it's absolutely a routine every day in my circle time, because storytelling encourages children to listen. There are also children who don't know how to listen. There are many children who are listening without making eye contact right now, especially screen addicts, but it is very important to follow the story, and to make them listen to yourself in the process. So, story time helps us a lot to decrease this problem.

On the other hand, teachers mentioned that they do story time but they develop a variety of activities related with that book. They talk about different words that they learn in the book. They make brainstorming about the meanings. They added that they may read one book several times because they realize different aspects of the book with children each time. Indeed, as they claim, this story time helps teachers giving clues to children about activities they plan to conduct during the day. They may do art activities or puppetry with regard to the content of the book. So, they diversify the story time process by adding other kinds of activities.

T20 mention how they make story time and how they do various activities related with the content of the book with these words:

> Usually, the books we read are the same book for one week. We do activities related to the book, if there are various ideas in it, we do an activity about it, we do brainstorm, we draw pictures or make puppets about this subject. For example, we saw the word "amazed" in a book we read, and we discussed what the word "amazed" might mean. I think we consume everything very quickly, in books as well. I realized that children actually don't fully understand when we read and pass them, they want to read the book many times that they love, and I realized that in fact, they notice something new every time they read.

Additionally, most of the teachers explained that they have a confusion about naming circle time because they called circle time as story time. They sit in circle shape and almost every day they do story time. Thus, when teachers were asked about types of activities they do in circle time, their answers showed that they use the names circle time and story time interchangeably. For example, T10 said that

> Previously, we used to define circle time as story time or Turkish language activity.

Also, T11 explained

> I never pass over story time in my daily routine. Actually, circle time is story time for me.

As related with this confusion, T8 added that

> I cannot explain what you called circle time. But if you are talking about the process before story time, we talk about the book that we will read.

4.1.4.2.9 Taking the Roll

Two of the participants (n=2) expressed that they take the roll during circle time. While taking the roll, teachers and children are checking who is absent and who is present that day. According to their reports, teachers use different ways to take the roll which they developed specially for their class. They use materials which shows children's names and they ask whether that person is at the class.

T4 said how they are doing this process differently than classical understanding with these sentences:

> We definitely take attendance in circle time, but as teacher, we do not have these classic notebooks in our hand. We make attendance bars with our children. For example, with tongue sticks, or children paint a different color of paper for each child. I choose one and I ask if a specific person is there, they say, "I am here, teacher."

Another participant T17 said that:

> Frankly, a conversation starts with my direction first. In our daily routine, we take our roll call to see who has come, who has not come.

4.1.4.2.10 Scheduling

A number of teachers (n=9) stated that they do schedule of the day which means they plan the daily flow during the circle time. Teachers reported that they make conversations about the activities they plan to do that day, but sometimes they make some changes regarding children's answers to questions asked about the topic of the day. So, in scheduling process children can have an active role. For example, T3 explained that she makes regulations on the process considering the questions in children's minds. They make some searches from the internet or they do some experiments to find the answers of children's questions. Furthermore, teachers mentioned their routine cards or other kinds of materials showing types of activities they would conduct that day. There are pictures illustrating the process that they will do. So, children can be aware of the plan of the day because they are being informed about the schedule by covering the routine cards in circle time.

In that sense, T20 mentioned the process as:

> We talk about what we will do on the day in question in other words, we talk about what activities we will do. I talk about our plan that day. We already have routine cards in our class, the children are aware of the routine. There are some pictures on these cards and the first of those pictures has breakfast time, then there is the circle time, after the circle time there is the time for learning centers, after this, there is the activity hour. So, the children already know what will happen in which order, it is very comforting for them to be aware of these processes.

On the other hand, teachers explained they give importance to scheduling process now that children worry about what to do during the day. They stated that it is their right to know about their own days. They added that their anxiety during orientation period during first weeks of the school is high. Therefore, teachers aim to make children less worried about what will happen next and when the time for going home will come.

T4 explained how they conduct this process in a detailed way with these words:

> Other than that, the thing I care about most is children don't like uncertainty at all, this uncertainty doesn't make them feel good. Especially in the first two or three months of the school, we determine our day with our daily routine cards. When they first sit down at the circle time, they want to know what we are going to do that day. In fact, these are very simple things to implement. But the things that make the teacher's life easier actually save our day. Otherwise, the child will come to us all the time and cry and cannot relax. It shouldn't be up to you to inform children about the whole day. Schedule should be shared every day; you have to give him the plan of the day somehow.

4.1.4.2.11 Calendar Time

As the last type of activities, teachers (n=8) expressed that they do calendar time with children in circle time. In this process, they talk about the weather conditions. They have a conversation about the weather that day and some teachers explained children may observe it through the window to see how is the weather. Moreover, they also talk about which day, month or year they are in at that specific time. Some teachers also reported that they sing some songs about days of the week or weather conditions and they added that children learnt names of the week with these songs. They can even guess which day it is the following day after getting used to calendar time.
T20 said how they use songs in this process:

> There are a few songs that children enjoy singing, they are about days of the week and with the help of this song, they have memorized the days.

T4 explained the calendar time process with following sentences:

> We're talking about the weather. Surely, I ask the children and I get answers from them about the weather. "How do you think the weather is? Did you feel the wind on the way, will it rain? Let's take a look at the clouds." Are the questions I ask them−to name a few.

On the other hand, T5 stated when calendar time is done each day, children may get bored. That's why does not ask about the days and the weather every day. She aims to make children familiar with the time. She expects children to follow days by themselves.

> Although I don't do it very often, I ask which month, year, season and day we are in. In this way, I try to create time awareness. But when they do it every day, they get bored, so I try not to do it often, I leave a few days gap to see if they follow.

4.1.4.3 Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Participants explained types of activities they do in circle time with *Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs' and Self-Reported Practices Survey* and *Interview.* In survey part of the study, teachers mentioned they share their ideas, feelings and experiences of children majorly. They also reported that they schedule the day, sing songs, talk about school rules, do calendar time or language activities, and children share their toys or other materials with each other most of the time. They also mentioned that they take the roll, doing math activities and dancing less frequently than the other activities in survey results. Similar to the findings gathered from survey, teachers also mentioned that they majorly do activities about sharing children's experiences and feelings in interview part. They added that they do story time, scheduling and calendar time mostly. Accordingly, most frequently conducted activities in circle time were parallel both in survey and interview results. Apart from these, teachers added in interview that they play games, assign roles for children, do movement activities in similar frequency in survey results. Except from the activity types asked in survey, teachers added two types of other activities in the interview process. First of them was science activity. They gave details about how they do science in circle time in the interview part.

Second of them was closing circle time. Teachers mentioned that they do evaluation of the day in circle time and they gave details about how they perform this process. Furthermore, in the interview process, teachers explained the reasons why they do these types of activities. Thus, the reasons why they prefer these activities are explained in detail in the interview part. They mentioned they share experiences and feelings aiming to make children communicate with each other more and prepare an environment where each member of the circle knows how to listen to others and how to express themselves. Besides, they said they prefer playing games to gather children's attention and make them more actively involved. Moreover, they stated that the reason why they assign roles to children is that it helps gaining children responsibility in class and make them aware of their duties. Teachers added that they do story time because it enhances children's listening skills. Lastly, they explained the reason for scheduling the day as making children clear about the plan of the day. So, teachers aim to make children less anxious about what to do and when to do it. All in all, survey results are compatible with interview results and teachers gave details about content and reasons of these activity types in the interview process.

4.2 Findings of Beliefs of Early Childhood Teachers about Circle Time

Under this title, beliefs of early childhood teachers in terms of; their reasons to utilize circle time, benefits of circle time, constraints to circle time and their background information and need for resources and trainings about circle time are explained. First of all, answers to *Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices and Beliefs about Circle Time Survey* under 'quantitative results' subtitles will be given. Accompanying with quantitative results, answers given for *Early Childhood Teachers Self-Reported Practices and Beliefs about Circle Time Interview Protocol* will be supplied under 'qualitative results' subtitles separately for each term. Among these two instruments, only answers of teachers related with beliefs about circle time will be covered under this title.

4.2.1 Beliefs of Early Childhood Teachers about Circle Time in terms of: Reasons to Utilize Circle Time

Teachers are asked for their reasons to utilize circle time in survey questions within a general frame. Quantitative results of the answers will be provided in further sections as well as the qualitative results accordingly.

4.2.1.1 Quantitative Results of Reasons to Utilize Circle Time

Teachers are asked about the reason why they utilize circle time regularly. It is revealed that more than three quarters of participants agreed that they utilize circle time because it is necessary for their daily educational program (M=3,83, 81%) as can be seen in table 27.

Table 27 *Descriptive Statistics for Reasons of Circle Time Routine of Early Childhood Teachers*

Reason of Circle Time Routine		**Strongly Agree**		**Agree**		**Undecided**		**Disagree**		**Strongly Disagree**	
	M	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**f**	**%**
I utilize circle time now that it is the necessity of our daily educational program.	3,83	214	49%	140	32%	22	5%	27	6%	38	9%

4.2.1.2 Qualitative Results of Reasons to Utilize Circle Time

In this part, teachers were asked *"What is the reason behind your circle time practice?"* with the aim of getting beliefs of teachers about whether they utilize circle time as a necessity or rule of the school they are working, or it is their own wish to implement, or there is another reason behind it. By considering all of the answers of the participants, the reasons of the teachers for utilizing circle time are divided as three codes which are "administrative expectation, necessity of the program and own wish due to benefits" as stated in table 28.

Table 28 *Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs about Reason of Utilizing Circle Time*

Category	Codes	Quotation from participants
Reason of Utilizing Circle Time	Administrative expectation (n=2)	So, this is what our school administration expects from us… (T21).
	Necessity of the program (n=3)	The circle time is already a necessity of the program. When we received training, we were taught that such a thing should be in the program so we give importance to doing it regularly every day (T15).
	Own wish due to benefits (n=20)	This circle time practice is purely the acquisition of my years of experiences…The need to come together in circle time arose because I benefit from it... (T1)

4.2.1.2.1 Administrative Expectation

Some of the teachers (n=2) expressed that there are some expectations from school administration. The school may not be strictly asking teachers to apply circle time but they reported that administration has that kind of expectation from teachers.

In that sense, T5 explained the reason why they do circle time with these sentences:

> In our school, there is no dynamic like you should definitely do this, it is left to the teacher's choice because there is a very intense progressing educational process in our school. That's why they don't tell the teacher what to do, but we include the circle time in a way because the culture of my school feeds us in this way and expects it from us.

As another point of view, T21 explained that they have a routine in their school and for each kind of activity, they allocated some time regularly. Circle time is one of these activities. She explained it with these sentences:

> So, this is what our school administration expects from us; we always start the day with gymnastics. After that, we have our time for activities of the day as the productive time of the day, between 10.00 and 12.00−it is time for circle and storytelling.

4.2.1.2.2 Necessity of the Program

Some teachers (n=3) stated that they utilize circle time since it is the necessity of their educational program. They are not expected to utilize circle time by school

administration. They have a program and to meet the requirements of the program, they do circle time in their classes. They added that they are not controlled by others in their educational process, so they know what they should do in their classes and they apply it.

T4 explained this issue:

> In fact, the administration does not particularly expect a certain approach from us. She trusts us so much that she believes we know what we need to and are going to do. We already have program development experts. We all upload all the plans and programs to the online platforms; everyone can look at it from there. Nobody orders anyone that a certain task must be done on a specific day.

On the other hand, T15 touched on this issue with these sentences:

> The circle time is already a necessity of the program. When we received training, we were taught that such a thing should be in the program so we give importance to doing it regularly every day.

4.2.1.2.3 Own Wish Due to Benefits

Majority of the teachers (n=20) stated that circle time routine is their own wish, and this is because they realize some beneficial sides of it. Most of the teachers mentioned that their years of experience thought them that they get benefit from circle time. They added that checking each member of the class about their feelings is important. They witnessed that children need to come together to feel that they are valuable. Some of them explained that for making introverted children more talkative and for knowing about children's experiences, they find circle time useful and this is the main reason why they do it regularly.

At that point T6 said that:

> I think circle time activities have been practiced by teachers since long ago in our school, because when I started in 2003, everyone was doing circle time, since they knew that this coming together as a class is very valuable. We ask each other's well-being with circle time; we check each other actually or check if there is anything important.

Within the same point, T1 expressed that:

> This circle time practice is purely the acquisition of my years of experiences. The needs of the children are obviously various. There are introvert ones, the excluded ones. The need to come together in circle time arose because I benefit from it. Therefore, I started to use the circle time more. As I said, circle time is indispensable for me.

4.2.1.3 Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Teachers are asked about reasons why they utilize circle time with *Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs' and Practices about Circle Time Survey* and *Interview.* Results of survey and interview were not different from each other. There were other reasons to utilize circle time added by teachers in the interview part of the study which are not included in the survey. In survey part, they are asked about whether they do circle time only because it is the necessity of their daily educational program. Majority of teachers answered that it is the necessity of their education program. In the interview, there were teachers who explained the reason as the necessity of program as in survey. But teachers mostly mentioned that the main reason of circle time is about benefits that they experience. Approximately all of them touched that they utilize circle time due to its numerous benefits for children such as becoming together as a class, knowing each other's personalities more, developing their communication skills. They, indeed, preferred to do circle time regularly by witnessing the benefits within years of experience. In addition, there were teachers who expressed school administration is expecting teachers to utilize circle time but they added that it is ultimately their own choice to implement it or not.

4.2.2 Beliefs of Early Childhood Teachers about Circle Time in terms of: Benefits of Circle Time

Under this title, findings of the survey results about benefits of circle time are given followed by the findings of the interview results about the same issue. In survey, teachers are asked about benefits of circle time in terms of developmental domains of children. With the interview results, the reasons behind teachers' beliefs are examined. At the end of both findings, synthesis of results is provided.

4.2.2.1 Quantitative Results of Benefits of Circle Time

Beliefs of early childhood teachers about benefits of circle time are searched in terms of benefits for socio-emotional, cognitive, language development and peer and teacher-student relations. Regarding these results, it can be concluded that the teachers who utilize circle time in their class mostly find circle time beneficial for various aspects of development. It can be seen that more than three quarters of teachers agreed on they find circle time beneficial for social emotional development of children (M=4,96, 78%). Additionally, nearly all of them agreed that they find circle time beneficial for cognitive development of children (M=4,95, 94%). More than half of the teachers agreed that they regard circle time useful for language development of children (M=4,94, 71%). Slightly more than three quarters of teachers agreed that they find circle time beneficial for strengthening peer relations (M=4,91, 77%). Finally, more than four fifths of teachers agreed that they consider circle time useful for student teacher relations (M=4,95, 81%). Results can be examined in table 29.

Table 29 *Descriptive Statistics for Benefits of Circle Time Routine of Early Childhood Teachers*

Benefits of Circle Time Routine		**Strongly Agree**		**Agree**		**Undecided**		**Disagree**		**Strongly Disagree**	
	M	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**f**	**%**
I find circle time beneficial for the social and emotional development of children.	4,96	135	30%	213	48%	92	21%	7	2%	1	0%
I find circle time beneficial for cognitive development of children.	4,95	279	62%	145	32%	22	5%	2	0%	0	0%
I find circle time beneficial for language development of children.	4,94	184	41%	135	30%	105	23%	15	3%	9	2%
I find circle time beneficial in terms of strengthening peer relations.	4,91	207	46%	140	31%	82	18%	14	3%	5	1%

Table 29 *Descriptive Statistics for Benefits of Circle Time Routine of Early Childhood Teachers Cont'd*

I find circle time beneficial in terms of strengthening teacher-student relations.	4,95	237	53%	127	28%	61	14%	14	3%	9	2%

4.2.2.2 Qualitative Results of Benefits of Circle Time

Teachers are asked *"What do you think about benefits of circle time regarding developmental areas of children?"* for getting the answer during interview. After examining the interview results, the answers of the teachers are organized as in table 30 below which are divided into two sub-categories as "benefits for children and benefits for teacher". Benefits for children are also divided into codes which are "holistic development, language development, cognitive development and social emotional development". These codes have other sub-codes related to them.

Table 30 *Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs about Benefits of Circle Time*

Category	**Sub-categories**	**Codes**	**Quotation from participants**
Benefits of circle time	Benefits for teacher (n=2)		As a teacher, you actually see how you will organize a day and you trust yourself with the circle time… (T6)
	Benefits for children	Holistic development (n=3)	Frankly, I think that children's development is supported in many areas in circle time (T21).
		Language development: - Native language improvement (n=5)	I also found it very useful in terms of language development. Children can control their voices and gestures more… (T12)
		Cognitive development: - Learning second language (n=2)	…But since I have children who do not speak Turkish, they also learn a word or two of Turkish, which is why I find circle time useful during this conversation process (T15).

Table 30 *Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs about Benefits of Circle Time Cont'd*

	- Facilitating learning (n=6)	I think it is equally beneficial for cognitive development because it increases attention span… (T20)
Social emotional development:		
-Social interaction related concepts		
	- Peer interaction (n=12)	I give a lot of importance to peer learning because children learn better with each other.. (T4)
	- Feeling of community (n=7)	Outside the school, children learn to say "Me first". But in circle time we improve their community feeling, we aim children to internalize "we" concept … (T11)
	- Empathetic skills (n=2)	We ask children questions that improve their empathetic skills...In circle time, we talk about what the children would do if something like this happened to them (T8).
	- Respecting for others' ideas (n=6)	…I mostly like to do circle time because children express themselves freely and they see different kinds of opinions (T14).
-Self-related concepts		
	- Self-expression (n=17)	I think every teacher should do circle routines all the time…Why? Because the child expresses herself there (T11).
	- Self -esteem (n=8)	Children who used to be more reserved when speaking in circle time are gradually developing self-confidence and becoming more open… (T11)
	- Self-regulation (n=5)	You teach the children organizing skills at the same time…It also improves organizational skills and day planning skills (T6).

4.2.2.2.1 Benefits for Teacher

Except from benefits for children, some participants (n=2) touched that it is not only useful for children's development, but also for teachers own teaching process. They mentioned that teachers get considerable benefits from circle time while scheduling the day. With the help of this process, they can be more confident about their teaching process for they know what to do. Moreover, teachers explained they have a chance to make a self-evaluation. They ask some questions to children and they can evaluate whether intended gains and indicators are achieved or not. Furthermore, they become aware of children's needs and interests with the help of conversations covered during circle time.

At that point, T6 stated the benefits of circle time for herself with these sentences:

> As a teacher, you actually see how you will organize a day and you trust yourself with the circle time. For example, writing the plan on the board also helps me as a teacher to see what we would do next.

On the other hand, T14 said that:

> I can evaluate what children have learned and how much they have learned, and how much I have been able to cover the topic with circle time. Children expresses a wide variety of questions and answers, then I think that means the child needs this information too. I observe it, and in my next plan I focus on what the child needs. For example, let's say I talk about plants, but the child comes with a very different topic. For example, he says, "What would happen if the plants were always in the dark, teacher?" Then, I think of an activity for this topic. The children guide me, as well.

4.2.2.2.2 Benefits for Children

Under this category there are 2 sub-categories which are benefits for teacher, and benefits for children. Benefits for children includes 4 main codes which are holistic, language, cognitive and social emotional development, having a number of subcodes under related ones. At that point, each subcode will be defined with participants' transcriptions by expressing main and sub codes in order.

4.2.2.2.2.1 Holistic Development

Some teachers (n=3) explained that circle time has a variety of benefits that cannot be specifically pointed for one developmental area. They reported they do various kinds of activities. So, specifying benefits of circle time only for one or two developmental areas may not be sufficient.

In this aspect T6 stated that:

> Actually, this is an activity that covers many areas. For example, sometimes you start with a song, you finish with a game they want to play. You count the numbers, examine the clouds, so we can say that benefits of circle time are a mixture of all development areas.

Also, T12 and T21 made statements below in order:

> I think it has a lot of benefits, it has benefits in each developmental area.

> Frankly, I think that children's development is supported in many areas in circle time.

4.2.2.2.2.2 Language Development

Under language development code, there is one subcode which is mother language improvement. In this code, teachers who expressed circle time benefits for children's development in their own language are explained.

4.2.2.2.2.2.1 Native Language Improvement

Some of the teachers (n=5) expressed that with the help of circle time routines, children started to use their native language in a more appropriate way. According to their reports, in circle time everyone has the right to speak and they should listen to every member at the same time, children develop their conversational skills. They learn to express themselves with more clear sentences in time. On the other hand, there might be some children who have speech disorders. With the help of circle time, these children improve their articulation in time, according to teachers.

Some teachers expressed how circle time affected children for using language in better way as T12 said:

> I also found it very useful in terms of language development. Children can control their voices and gestures more. We provide the classroom dynamic in that way; I think that children can express themselves by using language skills thanks to circle time practices.

T20 stated how she witnessed the child's improvement in articulation with these sentences:

> For example, I have a child who has speech disorder, he only sings circle time songs, his mother is very surprised at this situation, the child can join us in circle time songs when he normally cannot even say the most basic words. Therefore, I think it has a great contribution to language development.

4.2.2.2.2.3 Cognitive Development

Under this code, there are two subcodes which are learning a second language and facilitating learning. So, benefits of circle time for cognitive development are examined in these aspects.

4.2.2.2.2.3.1 Learning Second Language

Benefits of circle time for learning second language was mentioned by teachers (n=2) especially by those who have foreign students in their class and the ones who work in schools which has a second language program. They explained how children learn basic words of another language with the help of circle time because in this process children talk about their feelings, they introduce themselves, they do calendar time and other activities. Therefore, children have time to make practice in another language.

At this point T3 said:

> This is a routine for me, for example, we do our circle time routine in English on Monday, Wednesday, Friday in the same way. In this process, we introduce ourselves, we do this in the first semesters when the school opens, after reminding the names of others, we ask the day on that day. We talk about what was the previous day. This is something we do to improve children's English memory a bit more.

Additionally, T15 expressed that circle time is beneficial for her children while learning Turkish language, because these children are from another country, Turkish is a second language for them.

> …But since I have children who do not speak Turkish, they also learn a word or two of Turkish, which is why I find circle time useful during this conversation process.

4.2.2.2.2.3.2 Facilitating Learning

Facilitating learning process was mentioned by some teachers (n=6) as a beneficial aspect of circle time. They explained that circle time is beneficial for improving children's attention span because children are expected to join in activities they do, and they are expected to follow the process, as well. In this way, they get used to pay attention to the activities. On the other hand, teachers expressed that some information such as weather conditions cannot be taught to children in math activities. But they can be learned in circle time. Teachers added that in circle time, children are exchanging their information which leads them to develop thinking skills.

T20 identified how it facilitates learning with these sentences:

> I think it is equally beneficial for cognitive development because it increases attention span. The child must constantly pay attention to participate, and there is a whole set of rules to follow in the process for which he needs to make an effort to pay attention at the circle time.

In addition, T7 touched on the same issue by expressing:

> For example, you cannot do an art activity related to the days of the week, you cannot do a game activity, but I taught the children the days of the week, in circle time. For example, we were working on this topic one day of the week in circle time, and they all learned. I usually try to give in the circle time what I cannot give in math or art activities.

4.2.2.2.2.4 Social Emotional Development

Under the social emotional development code, there are two subcodes which are 'social interaction related concepts' and 'self-related concepts'. The first one means that children develop their skills in terms of the aspects related with people around

him/her while the second one means that improvement in child's social emotional development provides benefits for only the child's own well-being.

4.2.2.2.2.4.1 Social Interaction Related Concepts

There are four subcodes under social interaction related concepts which are "peer interaction, feeling of community, empathetic skills, respecting for others". Each of them explained subsequently below.

4.2.2.2.2.4.1.1 Peer Interaction

Majority of teachers (n=12) expressed that circle time has positive effects on children regarding peer interactions in class. They stated that during circle time, each member of the class comes together and they share their ideas. This process improves their interaction with peers because there might be excluded or introvert children. According to their reports coming together as class and providing an atmosphere for interaction makes these introverted or excluded children more included. In this way, children learn how to value diversity in circle time. They added that while communicating in circle time, children have more knowledge about their peers' life and personalities, making their friendship flourish. Moreover, children are expected to interact with other people apart from their family members, teachers and best friends. This situation teaches them how to get in touch with other people around them. Some teachers added that they have a role as a member of the circle just as children without ruling them which makes the process more child-oriented. They let children have conversation with each other which helps them improve their social skills more as T4 explained:

> I give a lot of importance to peer learning because children learn better with each other. My opinion doesn't matter there. I think the biggest mistake of parents is to dictate an opinion. But this circle time has versatile benefits. The time passed like a debate. I say to children, "Your friend said this. What do you think about it? Do you agree with him on this? Therefore, he learns his friend's opinion and he learn that there are also different opinions. Very valuable time…

Below, there is a statement of T1 as an example of how each member of the circle is included in the process and how they facilitate valuing diversity in class:

> Thanks to the circle time, children become able to communicate with the excluded children. Do not get it wrong, but there are also children who are financially deficient in our region. They might be usually the excluded children by other peers. During the circle times, I especially ask questions that will make them shine. In this way we include them even more. There were children who did not even hold others' hands, but they got used to doing it during the circle time.

4.2.2.2.2.4.2 Feeling of Community

A number of teachers (n=7) stated that circle time is beneficial for increasing feeling of community. They mentioned that circle time is specifically develops community feeling because there are scarce time periods which can offer children to come together. During other times such as learning center, children play with a smaller number of children. But in circle time, everyone has a chance to feel that they are the member of a group.

At that point T13 mention that:

> While children are playing in the learning centers, they prefer individual games, but they are more together during the circle time. In fact, during the circle time, children go through a process both individually and as a group. This is one of their most important features, I think group spirit develops in children with the help of circle time.

Teachers also mentioned that in their daily life, children get used to look from their own perspective, they are even becoming self-oriented people because they are one and only child of their families. But in circle time children learn that there are other people around them and they take their role as a member of a group, hence a feeling of community.

T11 expressed her opinions on this issue with these sentences:

> Outside the school, children learn to say "Me first". But in circle time we improve their community feeling, we aim children to internalize "we" concept. So, every teacher should be doing circle time…

Furthermore, teachers added that as a class, they have some agreements made by themselves at the beginning of the semester as a whole class. They put forward their opinions, and they decide on their own rules, so they make compromise about

classroom rules. When there are problems related with not obeying the compromises they made, they come together and discuss about the reason for it. So, according to the teachers, children learn to be a part of the community in this way because they are facing with their decisions which are made in a democratic environment. When they have problems with it, they have a chance to make arguments on it.

T6 expressed this point with these sentences below:

> Finally, I would like to add that the circle time is actually a form of unity, because you make the decisions together. We make agreements with the children, there are times when we must look back at those agreements. For example, we say, we have reached an agreement with you about this issue, but now I see that our agreement is not being followed, do you think there is a mistake in our agreement, or do we not adapt to the agreement? This is important because kids are growing up and they will be a part of society soon, so they have to learn the rules of society. If there is a point that children do not want, they have the right to oppose it. If it's something they don't want to do, we can say let's try your option, so we try it and see what happens. In other words, we are trying to offer a more democratic environment to children by ensuring them being a part of our community.

4.2.2.2.2.4.3 Empathetic Skills

Teachers (n=2) reported that circle time also beneficial for improving children's empathetic skills. Teachers may ask children some questions about how they would feel if they were the other person. These conversations might take place while reading a book or might ocuur during the times when children do not respect to other friends' expressions.

Related with this issue, T1 expressed that:

> When I started circle time and ask a question to a child, children didn't listen to their friend speaking. Then I started to manage it with instructions. I would say "How would you feel if your friends don't listen to you when it is your turn?" Within time, they started to empathize with each other.

Similarly, another participant (T8) explained how they facilitate empathetic skills among children with these words:

> We ask children questions that improve their empathetic skills. For example, imagine that there is an issue in the book, something unlucky happened to a character. In circle time, we talk about what the children would do if something like this happened to them.

4.2.2.2.2.4.4 Respecting for Others' Ideas

A group of teachers (n=6) mention that circle time improves children's respect for other people's ideas. They explained that children are tend to interact with the same people, so they have scarce information about the other friends they do not come together with frequently. In circle time, they learn to be in the same line with people who have different ideas, different personalities. Teachers expressed that; circle time lets children look from different perspectives because it is the time when each idea is valuable. They learn to respect these different ideas because their own ideas are respected, as well. Teachers also added that seeing and evaluating various kinds of ideas in circle time is valuable, it is not something that we should hesitate, it is something that make the ideas richer.

T14 explained this issue with these sentences:

> When children's ideas conflict with those of their peers', I like it so much. I mostly like to do circle time because children express themselves freely and they see different kinds of opinions.

Differently from other participants, T4 explains that since adults have also tendency to spend time with the similar ideologies with theirs, they should do circle time to learn about different people's ideas by showing respect. At that point T4 shared her ideas with these sentences:

> This is very important to me−there can be many different opinions about a subject, and the child can learn it in the circle time. After the first 3 months, children's closest friends begin to form, and the same children always play with each other. This means that children only know their close friends. The same goes for us adults. When choosing a friend, we give importance to their life perspective first, and we attach importance to being in the same thought, and we start to spend time together and we see that we always spend time with the same people. That's exactly why I think adults should do circle time, too. I know what my closest friends will say about what subject because I know them, but I don't know the thoughts of many teachers at my school, I wonder what they think, so the children get to know each other much better at circle time. An opinion against the person develops, a broader perspective develops. Perhaps these children will rule us in the future, and I do not want a child with only one view to rule me.

4.2.2.2.2.4.2 Self-related Concepts

There are three subcodes under ‘self-related concepts’ which are self-expression, self-esteem and self-regulation of children. Each of the subcodes are given explanations in order.

4.2.2.2.2.4.2.1 Self-expression

Self-expression is the most mentioned topic among participants (n=17). Teachers expressed that one of the benefits of circle time is improving children’s self-expression skills. They reported that circle time is essential for children because they have the need to express themselves a lot. According to teachers, the children should be listened to by others around them and circle time is an atmosphere where children’s need to be listened is supplied. Some teachers have expressions that children should not be thought didactically always, there should be times for letting them to verbalize their feelings and emotions. They added that they get to know about the personalities of children, their families’ attitudes, their experiences while children express themselves as stated by T11 below:

> I think every teacher should do circle routines all the time. There should not be constant education on the table or with a lot of toys. In fact, you know the child very well during the circle time. Why? Because the child expresses herself there. There the child remains without toys, without material, she just sits on the mat and talks about herself. It is very important for her to talk about herself by being involved in something you have told. For example, let's say we are talking about the concept of love. The child suddenly begins to tell us about her mother’s love for her father and/or vice versa. While the child is talking about herself there, you get to know her family and the child. You have ideas about parent attitudes.

Likewise, T7 touches on the issue that children might get shy when teacher wants to talk to the child one to one, but in circle time, children feel freer to explain their experiences. She commented on this issue that:

> …the children give us clues from their own lives. For example, they say “Do you know what happened yesterday?” and then they start to tell a story. Actually, I think it's a bit like group therapy. If you talk to the child alone, the

child will be shy, if he does not speak, he will be ashamed. However, within the group, he/she can share information about himself/herself with us.

4.2.2.2.2.4.2.2 Self-esteem

A group of teachers (n=8) mention that circle time has benefits for children's self-esteem. Teachers expressed that the ones who seems introvert started to put their opinions forward in time with the help of circle time. The reason behind this is explained as circle time, providing an environment where children feel confident about stating their emotions. Teachers added that having no boundaries between the members of the circle also promotes higher self-esteem in children because nobody stays out of the circle and everyone is welcomed.

At this point T17 said:

> It has a huge impact on their self-confidence, because the child thinks, "Yes, I am here too," and has an opinion on something or he becomes an extroverted child. I bring up the subject that he will be interested in, creating a warmer environment, because it is an environment away from the chairs, away from the classroom environment, where we only talk, and all the children participate. Maybe he can't answer a question at an event, but I regard it as a time for involving all children in circle time.

On the other hand, T11 stated that:

> Children who used to be more reserved when speaking in circle time are gradually developing self-confidence and becoming more open. Some children show up themselves by acting, some hesitantly reveal themselves.

4.2.2.2.2.4.2.3 Self-regulation

Apart from other items, some of the teachers (n=5) expressed that child develop self-regulation skills with the help of circle time. They explained that children get used to the circle routines when they utilize it regularly which helps children to have an idea about the schedule of the day. Being informed about the flow of the day makes children to regulate themselves accordingly. Thus, teachers said that children know when they should make preparation for next activities. Furthermore, they stated that having a routine like circle time bring children organizational skills because they get used to plan their day at the beginning which I think an essential habit or their future life.

T10 touched on this issue with these sentences:

> For example, they learned in the process that when we started the first circle time, they should not go to the toilet at that time, and that they should come after washing hands and going to the toilet. They learn that it is essential that they must meet their needs before the circle time at the end of the term.

T6 stated some sentences about self-regulation of children below:

> You teach the children organizing skills at the same time, you say, "Yes, this is our plan. We will focus on this, this is our direction, these are our goals," so I can't say that this circle time only affects language development. It also improves organizational skills and day planning skills.

4.2.2.3 Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Teachers are asked about benefits of circle time with *Early Childhood Teachers Beliefs and Self-Reported Practices Survey* and *Interview*. Both survey and interview results were compatible with each other. In survey, teachers reported they find circle time beneficial for children's development in many areas. They agreed that circle time is beneficial for children's social emotional development at first, then they find it beneficial for cognitive and language development. They also reported it is beneficial for strengthening peer relations and teacher-student relations. In the interview, majority of teachers explained benefits of circle time on children's social emotional development in terms of peer interaction, feeling of community, empathetic skills, respecting for others' ideas, self-expression, self-esteem and self-regulation. Among these, the most mentioned benefits in the interview were peer interaction and self-expression. Therefore, even teachers' answers were parallel with each other in both the survey and the interview results. They explained details of these benefits and they touched different aspects of social emotional development. Apart from these, teachers reported both in the survey and the interview that circle time is beneficial for cognitive development. In the interview part, they also stated that children improve their process of learning a second language as well as their learning process being facilitated. So, they specified how circle time benefits children's cognitive development. Different from survey questions, teachers added that circle time is not only beneficial for children, but also beneficial for classroom teachers because teachers have chance to make self-evaluation about how much children reached the objectives and indicators and they realize children's interests and feelings with the help of circle time. There were also teachers who explained that they cannot differentiate the developmental

areas which circle time is beneficial for since there are various benefits of circle time. In other words, these teachers gave another finding different from survey results. All in all, results of the survey and the interview questions about benefits of circle time were parallel with each other, and teachers elaborated these benefits by making additions.

4.2.3 Beliefs of Early Childhood Teachers about Circle Time in terms of: Constraints to Circle Time

Teachers' beliefs about constraints to circle time are examined with survey questions at first. Afterwards, teachers are requested to give details about the reason of these constraints as well as the other constraints which are not included in survey questions. After delivering each finding, synthesis of the results will be given.

4.2.3.1 Quantitative Results of Constraints to Circle Time

Constraints that decrease circle time efficiency of early childhood teachers are searched in terms of physical conditions in class, heavy schedule, number of children, age group of children, children with behavioral problems or special needs, instability of meeting time of children and need for assistant teacher in class. Regarding the results, it is inferred that more than half of the teachers indicated that physical conditions of their classroom are suitable for circle time (M=2,21, 61%). Likewise, more than half of them expressed that the program that they must follow is not very busy as an constraint oncircle time (M=2,25, 60%). Approximately, three quarters of them indicated that the number of children in their class is not too high to utilize circle time (M=1,94, 72%). Exactly three quarters of them pointed out that age group of their class is suitable for circle time (M=1,75, 75%). On the other hand, as the most disagreed item in comparison with the other ones, slightly more than half of the teachers stated that having children with behavioral problems in their class is not an constraint oncircle time (M=2,41, 58%). More than half of the teachers said that having children with special needs in class is not an constraint ontheir circle time process (M=2,13, 65%). More than half of them again explained that irregularity of meeting

time in the morning is not an constraint oncircle time (M=2,16, 64%). Lastly, more than half of them expressed that they do not need assistance in circle time process (M=2,27, 63%). Constraints to circle time explained by teachers can be seen in table 31.

Table 31 *Descriptive Statistics for Constraints to Circle Time Routines of Early Childhood Teachers*

Constraints		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	M	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
There are no suitable physical conditions in my classroom.	2,21	20	4%	104	23%	34	8%	62	14%	211	47%
The program I must follow is very busy.	2,25	33	7%	76	17%	54	12%	76	17%	194	43%
There are too many students in my class.	1,94	24	5%	59	13%	34	8%	70	16%	249	56%
The age group of my class is not suitable for circle time.	1,75	19	4%	39	9%	39	9%	56	13%	278	62%
There are children with behavioral problems in my class.	2,41	52	12%	84	19%	36	8%	81	18%	179	40%
There are children with special needs in my class.	2,13	47	10%	63	14%	35	8%	43	10%	245	55%
The meeting time of the children in the morning is not in any particular order.	2,16	50	11%	55	12%	39	9%	56	13%	228	51%
I need someone to assist in circle time process.	2,27	55	12%	66	15%	33	7%	65	15%	213	48%

4.2.3.2. Qualitative Results of Constraints to Circle Time

Early childhood teachers were asked "*Are there any points that you have difficulty or hinder you while practicing circle time?"* to learn about the hindrances to their circle time routines. With the help of all answers came from participants, the codes are

formed as “needs of children, time related issues, administration related issues and diversity” and these codes have other subcodes related to them as stated in table 32 below.

Table 32 *Early Childhood Teachers’ Beliefs about Constraints to Circle Time*

Category	**Codes**	**Quotation from participants**
Constraints to Circle Time	Needs of children:	
	- Priority of children's choices (n=5)	One point that I have difficulty in is that the children do not want to join sometimes… (T6).
	- Age group of children (n=8)	Sometimes there can be problems with the age group, and after a certain period of time children can make sense of things, especially in the 3-year-old group (T4).
	- Children with behavioral problems (n=9)	Children with behavioral problems affect our process a lot… (T20)
	- Children with special needs (n=7)	I've worked with many different types of inclusion students, and each of them has different hardships for circle time process…(T16)
	- Necessity for updates over time (n=6)	I don't always do the same thing. Repeating the same things all the time becomes very boring for children… (T18).
	- Self-care needs of children (n=1)	Distraction occurs only when the children need go to the toilet and we have to wait for the students to come… (T11)

Table 32 *Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs about Constraints to Circle Time Cont'd*

Time related issues		
	- Time Pressures (n=2)	Sometimes we have a time constraint because I wait for all the kids to come to school in the mornings and then I start to do circle time (T2).
	- Instability of school arrival time (n=3)	We can't do circle time when they first come in the morning, because none of the children comes early, some come late. We have to evaluate that time as playtime (T15).
Administration related issues		
	- Need for assistance (n=3)	We don't usually have assistant teachers either. You also train with 20-25 children, but you can't give as much attention as you want to each child (T13).
	- Number of children (n=12)	There is a big difference between doing circle time with 25 students and doing circle time with 12 students…I think that the number of children in the class should be reduced (T11).
	- Physical conditions (n=5)	… the physical conditions are not suitable. For example, we do not have enough chairs, we do not have enough toys…(T10).
Diversity		
	- Diversity in culture (n=3)	We also have difficulties in adapting to school with children with different family cultures, and we usually have problems with them in circle time, as well (T1).
	- Diversity in developmental characteristics of children (n=5)	In addition, we find it very difficult when children who are in the same class with too many months age gap among each other, because the development of children is very different from each other…(T4)
	- Diversity in language (n=4)	I have a language problem. I try to use body language more when communicating with children. After a certain time, I have to learn some words of their language. Some children come from Syria; they speak Arabic... (T14)

4.2.3.2.1. Needs of Children

Under ‘needs of children’ code, there are six subcodes related with it. They are priority of children’s choices, age group of children, children with behavioral problems, children with special needs, requiring updates in time and self-care needs of children. Each subcode is explained subsequently below.

4.2.3.2.1.1. Priority of Children's Choices

Some teachers (n=5) expressed that sometimes children might prefer another type of activity or game instead of circle time as one of the constraints to circle time. They mention that when children prefer to play another game or do another activity, teachers offer choices to children about changing order of the activities and circle time. If children prefer to play another game before circle time, they play that game but then they do circle time again. These teachers who stated the same situation added that they do not push children to do circle time when they are not willing to do it. They put forward children’s priority in types of activities as an constraint but they also mention their solution for this constraint.

At that point T6 stated this issue by adding how she found a solution:

> One point that I have difficulty in is that the children do not want to join sometimes. We have an activity type called as “me time” when children make their own choices. In this activity children do whatever they want to do, whatever they want to research, whatever they want to prepare. When they are in me time, it can be too long for them. At this point it can be difficult for them to come to the circle time, because the children do not want to leave me time and switch to circle time or another activity, but when we change the order of these, we do the circle time first and then do the me time, the problem disappears.

Similarly, T14 expressed that:

> Sometimes this can happen; children always want to play the same game, and then we can't move on to a new topic. In these cases, I say, first of all, let's move on to a new topic and then play the game you want again. For example, there is a dinosaur game, they want to play it all the time, but I must teach another song. So, I give them an option to see which one to do first, and we do both.

4.2.3.2.1.2. Age Group of Children

Several teachers (n=8) explained that age group of children might become a hinderance for circle time. Especially teachers stated that age group might be an constraint when children are among 36 months of age. They explained the reason as attention span of younger children are shorter when compared to the children about 60 months of age. They added that types of activities in circle time change regarding age group because younger children need more time for completing easier tasks which might be a hinderance related with time. When it comes to the older children, they can accomplish more activities in shorter time but teachers said that even their children are younger, they try to do circle time for making them used to this routine. At that point T7 explained the reason why she continued to do circle time in her 3-year-old class with these words:

> Actually, there were times I had difficulty in utilizing circle time but I did not give up. We continued to do it, otherwise children would regress. So, we had to work more to make children get used to circle time.

At this point T17 mention the reason why it is hard to do circle time in younger age group:

> It is very easy to apply circle time in the 5-year-old group, but it is very difficult to apply it in the younger age group because their attention span is very short. My group is now 3 years old, and it is very difficult to practice circle time in this group.

T4 also stated similar issues with these words:

> Sometimes there can be problems with the age group, and after a certain period of time children can make sense of things, especially in the 3-year-old group.

4.2.3.2.1.3. Children with Behavioral Problems

There were a group of teachers (n=9) who expressed children with behavioral problems affect circle time process negatively. Most of them mentioned children with behavioral problems need one adult who can pay attention especially that child otherwise classroom atmosphere might be chaotic. When there is only one teacher at the class, they have difficulty in handling up calming the child with behavioral problem and trying to keep going on circle time. There were teachers who offer their solutions for these problems. One of the teachers (T9) explained that they try to

separate children who are prone to trouble if there is more than one child in circle time. Another participant (T3) explained that when there is a child with behavioral problems, one of the teachers in the class sits near that child to be able to decrease possible problems. Furthermore, T20 explained how she handles with this situation by ignoring the child without taking it personally.

Regarding children with behavioral problems T17 made these statements about how this situation decreases the efficiency of the process:

> I have a student with a behavioral problem, it's too early to say, but his violence towards his friends is at a very high level. Maybe it is only 1 or 2 minutes when the student sits in place. At other times, he's always on the move. Right now, this kid is mostly sabotaging my activities. In this case, we cannot get much efficiency from circle time.

On the other hand, T20 expressed that:

> Children with behavioral problems affect our process a lot. I have noticed this more in recent years, but especially I say that it is necessary to set aside the ego in teaching and motherhood. If you start to take it personally, after a while you label the child. In these cases, ignoring always works. Of course, as human beings, sometimes we cannot ignore it and we must warn. Sometimes children with this behavior problem hinder me. I think it is necessary to give a task to those children and wait.

4.2.3.2.1.4. Children with Special Needs

There were several teachers (n=7) who said that children with special needs might need more time to be cared and thought. They explained teachers should make some changes in time to keep those children included in circle time process, otherwise it is difficult to keep circle time effective. One of the teachers (T7) said that they had an inclusion child in their class. It was hard for that child to sit for long times. That's why she found some games that can keep children active in circle time. This was how she continued to do circle time. T7 said these sentences:

> I had a child with special needs once. He wasn't sitting at all in a circle. That's why I also made a train and that boy joined us. We had a lot of fun, then we started playing games in the form of trains, like the 1st and 2nd swapping places, 3 swapping places, we did a math activity here again in the circle. But of course, I couldn't do that after a while, they got bored. I had to try something new.

T16 also stated the reason why having a child with special needs might have some hardships in circle time:

> I've worked with many different types of inclusion students, and each of them has different hardships for circle time process. Inclusion children can become easily distracted but we try to make them included in circle time.

4.2.3.2.1.5. Necessity for Updates over Time

Several teachers (n=6) mention that children might get bored when each time, the same activities or conversations are done. That's why content of circle time needs to be updated over time. Teachers explained that when children start to get bored of the routines in circle time, they change the way of activity. At that point they get ideas of children before making changes in the routine. Furthermore, they also mentioned that teachers also get disinterested in circle time when they do the same activities again and again. Therefore, not only for children, but also for teachers, updates in the content of circle time are needed.

As examples, T19 stated how she changed the attendance chart that they do every day into a free picture board which is more appealing for children:

> I change the process in time. We had a weather chart and an attendance chart before. After a certain period of time, children do not want this. When children don't want it, you will remove it so that you can put something different in its place. As teachers, we should always be open to children's ideas. For example, we removed this attendance chart and replaced it with a free picture board. The children became more productive after a while. The child who wants to paint in the circle time colours a painting there and tells us about it. The children liked this activity very much, they became more productive because the children want to tell us about their work.

On the other hand, T18 mention that:

> I don't always do the same thing. Repeating the same things all the time becomes very boring for children, I myself also get bored in such situations. We can change the process so that it is not boring.

4.2.3.2.1.6 Self-care Needs of Children

Only one of the participants (n=1) explained that the self-care needs of children might interrupt the process of circle time. She also added how she found solution for this situation by guiding children to supply their needs before starting to do circle time. T11 expressed herself with these words:

> Distraction occurs only when the children need go to the toilet and we have to wait for the students to come. That's why when we pass to circle time, after all the children go to the toilet and drink their water, then it goes very well.

4.2.3.2.2 Time Related Issues

Under this code, there are two subcodes which are time pressures and instability of school arrival time of the children. Each subcode is explained below with related examples. Time pressures refers to lack of time or not having enough time to do an effective circle time routine while instability of school arrival time means that children's time to come to school varies. This makes teachers' circle time plan inconsistent when there are children who come in the middle of the circle time.

4.2.3.2.2.1 Time Pressures

Teachers (n=2) expressed that another constraint on circle time is time pressures. The reason of time pressure might be about waiting all children to arrive at school to start circle time which cause to lose time and it might be about the school's educational process. This might be about other courses which children has to start at the very beginning of the day, according to teachers reports. T4 explains that when children start the day skipping circle time, she cannot know about children's problems, feelings or moods at all. That's why she says they should start the day with circle time to be aware of child's situation before starting to teaching them.

T2 expressed the reason of time constraint with following sentences:

> Sometimes we have a time constraint because I wait for all the kids to come to school in the mornings and then I start to do circle time.

Also, T4 explained time constraint problem that she faced because of French course starting at the beginning of the day, she adds how she solved the problem with administration with these words:

> Our school teach in French and French teacher think that the first thing and the most important thing for children to do is to learn French. But it is something I do not prefer that they start French lessons directly, because I do not know how that child feels when s/he comes in the morning. He comes to breakfast, just sitting, not eating, he looks unhappy. I need to contact him with my questions. When children immediately start French lesson, again he become unhappy. I cannot reach him. I don't know what happened. That's why I fought so hard. Our administrators and we solved this issue in a way that I have to take 5-10 minutes from breakfast and take the children out of the classroom to make circle time so that we can talk, so that the children do not immediately start the French lesson.

4.2.3.2.2.2 Instability of School Arrival Time

Some teachers (n=3) stated that because the children come in different times to school in the mornings, they might have time related problems in circle time routine. Teachers explained they wait for all children to be in class to do circle time otherwise there are interruptions. Therefore, they use the time when children arrive school as play time or breakfast time.

Related with this issue, T17 explained why instability of children's school arrival time is an constraint for them with these sentences:

> It is necessary to do the circle time after the first arrival at school, before breakfast. However, not everyone comes at the same time. Even half an hour later the children are still coming. That's why we have playtime after the children come to school to wait for the children to gather before they have breakfast. Then we move on to the circle time.

On the other hand, T15 said that:

> We can't do circle time when they first come in the morning, because none of the children comes early, some come late. We have to evaluate that time as playtime.

4.2.3.2.3 Administration Related Issues

Under this code, there are three subcodes which are need for assistance, number of children and physical conditions of the class as stated by teachers.

4.2.3.2.3.1 Need for Assistance

Some teachers (n=3) expressed that they need assistance during circle time because of several issues such as number of children at class or having children with special needs. They stated that when the there is only one teacher in the class, it is challenging to do circle time and managing the class. T13 explained the reason why they need assistant teacher with these words:

> We don't usually have assistant teachers either. You also train with 20-25 children, but you can't give as much attention as you want to each child.

In addition, T16 said that:

> Sometimes our class size is over 20 and we have difficulties because we have inclusion students, as well. We need an assistant teacher; however, there is no such person. I have difficulties in these situations.

4.2.3.2.3.2 Number of Children

This issue is one of the most mentioned ones among constraints to circle time (n=12). Teachers explained that when there is a lot of children at class, children who are the first in the row gets bored while listening to the children towards the end of the rows. Then the child who is bored starts to disturb others which is a hindrance for implementing an effective circle time process. According to teachers, if there are less children in class, all children can explain themselves better and all members of the circle can be listened by others. Furthermore, they explained that when number of the class is higher than it should be, then teachers cannot spare enough time for each children's questions and answers which make the process less beneficial. Expressions of teachers are given below. T10 explained the number of children they have in their class and the outcomes of high number of children for circle time with these sentences:

> When the number of children is too high, the student does not have a turn in circle time conversations, and when there is no turn, that process becomes

> boring for the other audience. We report this to the school administration, but it is directly proportional to the population of the current environment. We say that we should not exceed 15 children, but we sometimes go up to 25-30. 25 is still good number, we work with 30-35 children sometimes.

while, T11 expressed that:

> There is a big difference between doing circle time with 25 students and doing circle time with 12 students. You want to get all students to talk at the time of the circle. When there are 25 students, there is a problem between the first speaker and the child who speaks in the 25th row. The child who speaks first does not want to listen, He gets bored, because he listened to 24 people. Therefore, I think that the number of children in the class should be reduced.

4.2.3.2.3.3 Physical Conditions

Some teachers (n=5) expressed that due to physical conditions in their class, they have hard time to do circle time. They mean by physical conditions, materials in the class such as enough desks, toys, puppets, cards, pictures because they stated when there is lack of materials children get bored of conversations after some time. Moreover, they added that it is a misconception when the classroom space is large, there is a suitable environment for education. There is need for other materials to gather children's attention.

T10 mentioned this issue with these words:

> Our classroom is very big for 32 children, but the physical conditions are not suitable. For example, we do not have enough chairs, we do not have enough toys. Our school is recently built, but the size of the classroom space does not mean that quality education will be provided. It doesn't make sense to pile up a lot of children there, but of course we are teachers, even if we complain, unfortunately we have to manage.

Similarly, T7 said that:

> I was working at a school in Ankara, but there was no material in the classroom. There were only chairs and desks. In the class of 15 people, there is one carpet, but we did not have a chance to sit on the floor in the middle. So, I did the circle time once, I did secondly, and I did not do the third. Because it does not progress, because there is no material. What can we do? After a while, the children get bored of talking.

4.2.3.2.4 Diversity

Under this code, there are three subcodes which are diversity in culture, diversity in developmental characteristics of children and diversity in language. These subcodes are the constraints hindering circle time as well.

4.2.3.2.4.1 Diversity in Culture

Several teachers (n=3) mention that cultural differences might be a constraint on circle time process from time to time. One of the teachers, T21, gave an example about children who grow up and live with their grandmothers and they mentioned that these children may have difficulty in getting used to school rules. She added that a child should start school from the age of 2 to be able to orient to school flow.

As for the statements of teachers, T1 said that:

> We also have difficulties in adapting to school with children with different family cultures, and we usually have problems with them in circle time, as well.

Similarly, T21 expressed that:

> I am also very uncomfortable with this situation generally; It is difficult to communicate with children who grow up with grandmother culture. I think a child should be going to kindergarten at the age of 2, to get used to that system. The child should be aware of that system. These situations really affect me.

4.2.3.2.4.2 Diversity in Developmental Dharacteristics of Children

Some teachers (n=5) expressed that, there might be children in various developmental characteristics in the same class. By expressing diversity in developmental characteristics of children, difference between children's capabilities because of the gap among themselves regarding month of birth is referred. Teachers mentioned that when there are children who have about 10 months age gap between each other, then these children might have different attention span. So, attendance of these children in circle time varies. If there are children who join circle time activities attentively, while the other child who is younger trying to jump or run, children who listens well are distracted easily.

At this point T4 expressed that:

> In addition, we find it very difficult when children who are in the same class with too many months age gap among each other, because the development of children is very different from each other. Even if there is an 8–10-month difference between them, it is a problem. In such situations, while an activity is very easy for a child and is funny for him, another child may not understand anything, so we have difficulties.

On the other hand, T21 said these sentences regarding this issue:

> There is no clarity in the age group of children. There is a 24-month-old child in my class, and there is also a 33-month-old child. The 33-month-old sits very nicely and listens to me and responds, while the 24-month-old tries to run. Other children say, "Look, he's running." After hearing that sentence, I frankly have a hard time keeping other students in their place.

4.2.3.2.4.3. Diversity in Language

A group of teachers (n=4) said that there is diversity in children's native language which is a hinderance for their circle time. They say if foreign children do not know any Turkish words, then it is impossible for them to attend circle time because they do circle time all in Turkish. Moreover, there are teachers who said the majority of the class consists of foreign children. Thus, teachers may have to learn basic words from these children's languages to communicate. One of the teachers expressed how she solved this problem briefly. As she claims, she gets help from a child who knows both Turkish and other language, so that child is making translation among teacher and foreign students. But even if there are some solutions for this situation, it is still so hard for them to arrange an environment where each member of the class attends circle time effectively as teachers said. Here are some expressions of teachers. T15 said that:

> I have 2 Turkish children in my class, the others are Afghan, so they have difficulty in speaking Turkish language. Some of them speak Persian, some Arabic, some speak a language we do not know at all, some learn Turkish well because the children who have come before spend time here. So, our circle time is a bit troublesome. For example, when we read a story, the child cannot understand the rhyme or finger play of the story we read, because he does not know the language.

As well as this explanation, T14 said that:

> I have a language problem. I try to use body language more when communicating with children. After a certain time, I have to learn some words of their language. Some children come from Syria; they speak Arabic. But I

have an advantage this year. I have a student who speaks both Turkish and Arabic. Thanks to him, I can communicate more easily, but when the child does not come, I may become helpless because foreign nationals are in the majority in the class. There are 6-7 Turkish students. I have 9-10 Syrian students. Actually, I kind of feel sorry for Turkish students because I am a single teacher, trying to find a middle ground, but it is not efficient. Turkish students expect different things from me, but it's really hard to handle both at the same time.

4.2.3.3. Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Teachers are asked about constraints to their circle time with *Early Childhood Teachers Beliefs and Self-Reported Practices Survey* and *Interview.* The answers of teachers to survey and interview were similar but there are some aspects which are added in the interview process. In the survey, teachers mostly mentioned children with behavioral problems hinder their circle time process. Afterwards needs for assistance, time restrictions, physical conditions of the class, instability of children's school arrival time, children with special needs, number of children in class and age group of children comes respectively. So, teachers mentioned that children with behavioral problems and need for assistance are the main contraints on circle time while number of children and age group of children are less mentioned factors in survey results. When it comes to the interview, teachers mentioned the same factors again but they did not emphasize the same issues as in the survey. To explain more, different than survey, they emphasized number of children in their class is mostly impeding factor for circle time in interview part of the study. They explained when the number of children is high in class, they cannot make an efficient circle time because they cannot ask specific questions to each child. They cannot show enough concern because they need to be interested in each child at the same level. On the other hand, they stated high number of children in class causes children to get bored in circle time. Except for number of children in class, teachers also mentioned in the interview that children with behavioral problems impede their circle time majorly. Both factors were mentioned in the survey and the interview but teachers elaborated on these two issues more in interview part of the study. Moreover, there were constraints added by teachers during interview which are not asked in survey. These are priority of children's choices, requiring updates in time, self-care needs of children, diversity in culture, diversity in

language and diversity in developmental characteristics of children. Consequently, teachers detailed the constraints with interview questions and they made these factors clear by expanding them.

4.2.4 Beliefs of Early Childhood Teachers in terms of: Their Background Information and Need for Resources and Training about Circle Time

Teachers' beliefs about their background information about circle time and need for training and resources to improve their circle time routines are asked to participants. After reaching a general finding with the help of survey, teachers are also asked for the way they gathered information about circle time in interview questions. Synthesis of both survey and interview results is provided below.

4.2.4.1 Quantitative Results of Teachers' Background Information and Need for Resources and Training for Teachers

502 early childhood teachers responded to these questions in total; 462 of them, indicated they have heard about the term "circle time" or "time to start the day" (92%). On the other hand, above three quarters, 390 of them highlighted that they have not taken classes or attended a seminar about circle time beforehand (78%) as can be seen in table 33.

Table 33 *Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' background information of Early Childhood Teachers about Circle Time*

Teachers' background information	**Yes**		**No**	
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**
Have you ever heard of the term "circle time" or "time to start the day"?	462	92%	39	8%
Have you taken classes, courses, or attended a seminar about circle time?	112	22%	390	78%

As for the need for training and resources of Early Childhood Teachers about circle time, more than three quarters of the teachers agreed on they need various trainings to improve their circle time practices (M=4,13, 81%) while more than four fifths of them agreed that they need various resources to improve their circle time practices (M=4,31, 88%) which is described below in table 34.

Table 34 *Descriptive Statistics for Need for Training and Resources of Early Childhood Teachers about Circle Time*

Need for training and resources		Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	M	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
I need various trainings to improve my circle time practices.	4,13	205	46%	154	35%	36	8%	29	7%	17	0,04
I need various resources to improve my circle time practices.	4,31	232	52%	160	36%	25	6%	8	2%	17	0,04

4.2.4.2 Qualitative Results of Teachers' Background Information and Need for Resources and Training for Teachers

Based on the answers given by the teachers to the question, "*Have you ever attended a course or seminar during your high school/ graduate/ undergraduate years?"* during the interview, the answers were collected and analyzed under three codes which are "collaborative learning among teachers, informed during undergraduate years and no previous learning" as stated in table 35.

Table 35 *Early Childhood Teacher's Beliefs about Background Information of Them about Circle Time*

Category	Codes	Quotation from participants
Teachers' background information	Collaborative learning among teachers (n=6)	I learned about the circle time at a school where I work. Our training coordinator there taught me circle time…In this respect, I started to do it in my class. (T19)
	Informed during undergraduate years (n=6)	I graduated as a child development and education teacher… I think we've had enough training, for my time (T15).

Table 35 *Early Childhood Teacher's Beliefs about Background Information of Them about Circle Time Cont'd*

No previous training (n=14)	We were not given any information. I did my own research, it works very well on social media, I really followed some teachers' posts on this subject, but if there was any training, I would like to attend (T7).

4.2.4.2.1 Collaborative Learning among Teachers

Several teachers (n=6) expressed that they learned about circle time from other colleagues during the years, but they did not get any education during their undergraduate years about circle time. Their circle time knowledge improved with the help of the people in their working place such as coordinators, other colleagues or their internship teacher. These teachers explained that by observing children's attitudes or realizing benefits of circle time, they decided to implement it in their classes regularly.

At this point, T19 expressed how she learnt about circle time with these sentences:

> I learned about the circle time at a school where I work. Our training coordinator there taught me circle time. He said it's up to you to choose to do it every day. I loved it; the kids had a great time. I provide them an environment where they feel productive with circle time. In this respect, I started to do it in my class.

Likewise, T17 stated how she learnt circle time from her internship teacher by saying that:

> I did an internship at the university's kindergarten. My teacher there used to make the children sit in a circle every day and take attendance. So, I thought I should do circle time and I made a connection by observing children. Based on the sources I read, I decided to do circle time. but I don't remember anything like circle time while I was studying at university.

4.2.4.2.2 Informed during Undergraduate Years

Many teachers (n=6) stated that they were informed about circle time during courses in their undergraduate years and with the help of this knowledge they improved their

circle time routines. They stated that, they had a chance to apply activity types and circle time during their courses which help them to be prepared about the circle time routines when they start to work as teachers. Connected to this issue, T15 stated that:

> I graduated as a child development and education teacher, I was a high school teacher, so naturally we took each of these activity processes as a separate lesson, because we had to transfer and train them to our high school students, That's why. We covered the full content of it. I think we've had enough training, for my time.

Similarly, T4 expressed that:

> In our lessons, our teacher used to teach us everything, everything that we could encounter in the preschool institution. For example, 2 people would be parents. One person would be a teacher and he would say "You will solve this problem as if you are the teacher now." He also had the circle time done. They made us trial of every situation.

4.2.4.2.3 No Previous Training

Majority of the teachers (n=14) expressed that they have no information, and they did not have any collaborative learning with teachers working at the same school about circle time which means that these teachers have developed their own way in time. They stated that they do research about circle time from different kinds of resources including social media. There were teachers who said that they did not attend any training about circle time such as T22. They continued that they decided the content according to their experiences in years. They evaluated what is more beneficial and they decided to make circle time as one of the routines in their classes.

As for the examples, T7 stated that:

> We were not given any information. I did my own research, it works very well on social media, I really followed some teachers' posts on this subject, but if there was any training, I would like to attend.

T22 also added that:

> I did not receive any education about circle time, or I was not involved in any research or seminar. In my undergraduate years, nobody told us what to do in circle time. We generally created our circle time according to our own plans. Topics to be discussed were our own choice.

Additionally, T14 stated that:

> In our time, there was no special explanation about the circle time. Teachers experience this process as they apply the program and realize what is more

advantageous and what is more beneficial. I always realized when I should make changes in my program in this way.

4.2.4.3 Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Teachers are asked about their background information about circle time and need for resources and trainings to improve their circle time processes. In the survey, a great majority of teachers explained they have heard about circle time but most of them reported they have not taken any courses or attended a seminar or a course about circle time. They also mentioned that they need trainings and resources to improve their circle time practices. As in the survey results, majority of teachers also explained in the interview that they have never attended a course or seminar about circle time beforehand. These teachers added that if there were any training about circle time, they would like to attend it. Except for this information, teachers also added that they learned how to do circle time with collaborative learning among colleagues. So, they applied what they learnt from their colleagues. There were also teachers who expressed they were informed about circle time during their undergraduate years in the interview part of the study. But in the survey results, great majority expressed they did not attend such an education.

4.3 Key Findings of the Study

Key findings of the study gathered by *Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Survey* and *Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Interview* are administered below. In this part of the study, key findings are examined under eight subtitles. These are key findings about self-reported practices and beliefs of early childhood teachers. Self-reported practices are explained in terms of; planning of circle time, context of circle time, facilitators used in circle time, types of activities in circle time while beliefs of teachers are examined in terms of; the reason why they utilize circle time, benefits of circle time, constraints to circle time and their background information and need for resources and trainings about circle time.

4.3.1 Self-Reported Practices of Early Childhood Teachers Regarding Planning of Circle Time Routines

Early Childhood Teachers expressed that their planning of circle time is done regarding teacher role, children's choices and interests, program, and all of them. Compared to the others, majority of teachers indicated that they concern both the program, their own way of teaching and children's choices and interests. Teachers who take into consideration only the program while utilizing circle time said that they make connection between program and circle time process. Teachers who regard only children's choices and interests expressed that they let children manage circle time process without a strict plan while indicating that they find this way enjoyable. Teachers who take program, child and teacher role into consideration explained that they regard program on the base but with the help of teachers' meetings, content of the program is determined. On the other hand, while applying that program, children's beliefs and interests are considered. Therefore, they balanced these three components.

4.3.2 Self-Reported Practices of Early Childhood Teachers Regarding the Context of Their Circle Time Routines in terms of Frequency, Duration, Time Period, Place of Activities and Seating Plan

Most of the teachers reported that they do circle time every day, they spend approximately 11-20 minutes in circle time because when they keep it longer, children get bored. Teachers who have smaller kids in their class prefer to keep circle time shorter. Moreover, teachers generally prefer to utilize circle time after breakfast because during breakfast time, all children arrive at school. So, teachers include all children in circle time. Furthermore, teachers may prefer to sit on cushions, chairs or carpet during circle time. Teachers use carpets because they find carpets useful for children to make a whole shape easily. Some teachers use cushions or chairs for children's comfort. Lastly majority of the teachers explained that they prefer circle shape seating plan while utilizing circle time in their class. The reason why most of the teachers use circle shape as a seating plan is explained that it helps demonstrating equity between peers, giving the same opportunities to all children, and feeling as a

whole group. Teachers who use U shape as a seating plan expressed that, it is more convenient to make eye contact, being interested to children's processes and ensuring classroom management.

4.3.3 Self-Reported Practices of Early Childhood Teachers Regarding the Facilitators They Use in Circle Time in Terms of Materials, Mediators and Media Tools

Most of the teachers explained they use books mostly, they also use cards, puppets, musical instruments frequently. Teachers mentioned that they ask questions and sing songs more compared to other types of mediators. They also play finger games, they say rhymes and riddles or sing songs, they do puppetry shows. Teachers added that they aim to make children included in circle time with these facilitators. Furthermore, teachers explained the media tools they use as computer, the internet at first, and they added they may use speaker, phone and smart board. They explained they use the internet sources to find answers of children's questions, they make research about their questions.

4.3.4 Self-Reported Practices of Early Childhood Teachers Regarding the Types of Activities in Their Circle Time Routines

Early childhood teachers revealed that, they do 11 types of main activities in their circle time process. These main activity types are science activity, music & rhythm, games, closing circle time, assigning roles, movement activity, math activity, language/literacy activity, taking the roll, scheduling and calendar time. The major activity that teachers utilize in their circle time routines is sharing experiences and feelings as a subtype of language and literacy activities. Teachers explained that in this activity process, they use questioning for reaching children's ideas and experiences. Early childhood teachers explained that they are scheduling the day during circle time and this activity organizes not only children, but also teachers' day. It is revealed that, the activities that are done less in comparison to the other ones are movement activities, science activities and taking the roll by early childhood teachers. Some

teachers expressed that they play games in circle time to make the process more active for children. These games might be organized by children or by teachers. Some early childhood teachers said that they assign roles to children and while doing this, they use some visuals to make the duties of the day clearer for children. There were teachers expressing that they do math activities in circle time, but they may prefer to apply it towards the end of the semester. Some teachers explained that they do calendar time with children by talking about the weather, days, months, or seasons. As circle time activities, some teachers stated that they do evaluation of the day sometimes. In this process, they evaluate whether children could reach the objectives and indicators and if it is needed, they might do other types of activities regarding the same topics.

4.3.5 Beliefs of Early Childhood Teachers about the Reason Why They Utilize Circle Time Routines in Their Own Classes

When the interview results of teachers are examined, it is seen that there are three main reasons why early childhood teachers utilize circle time in their class as administrative expectation, necessity of the program and their own wish. Teachers who utilize circle time because of administrative expectations expressed that the administration does not push them to do circle time, it might depend on the dynamic of the classroom but as an educational perspective of the school, teachers are supposed to do circle time. Teachers who utilize circle time because it is the necessity of the program said that they are agreed on utilizing circle time with school already and they find it beneficial for children's development. Majority of teachers said that they utilize circle time because it is only their own choice and there are not external factors pushing them to do circle time. In years of experiences, they witnessed benefits of it and they make circle time as a routine. They explained that the reason why they find it beneficial is that checking each other's wellbeing each day as class supports to be a unity as a class. On the other hand, some teachers said that the situations necessitated to apply circle time to make introverted children turn into extroverted ones and improve their social emotional development.

4.3.6 Beliefs of Early Childhood Teachers about the Benefits of Circle Time Routines

Interview results revealed early childhood teachers think that circle time is useful for children's cognitive development, language development, social emotional development. On the other hand, there are teachers who think that it is beneficial for different kinds of areas and there are also the ones who think there are benefits of circle time for teachers, as well. They explained benefits of circle time for teachers as it provides them an environment where they can evaluate how much children reached the intended objectives and indicators and they make self-evaluation about their teaching. Teachers who mentioned benefits for children explained that it helps to increase attention span of children regarding cognitive development because there is a process that needs to be followed. On the other hand, they said that some objectives that cannot be given with other activities, can be gained with circle time. Another benefit was developing native language because it is said that children are getting more sufficient in expressing themselves to other people with circle time. Teachers explained that circle time is useful for making children who are not close to each other know their friends better with conversations between them. Some teachers hold that children feel themselves as a part of the community with circle time by supplying a democratic environment where children make compromises, express their ideas and think about the outcomes of their behaviors.

4.3.7 Beliefs of Early Childhood Teachers about Their Background Information Regarding the Need for Training and Resources for Improving Their Circle Time Practices

There were three groups of teachers who explained their background information about circle time. First group of the teachers explained that they obtained information from their colleagues who works at the same school as them. Second group explained they gained information during their educational process in the undergraduate years. Last group of teachers said they were not informed about circle time beforehand, so they developed their own way. The number of teachers who mentioned they are

knowledgeable about circle time with the help of their background information were dramatically less than teachers who explained they did not attend any courses about circle time and they need resources and trainings to enhance their circle time routines.

4.3.8 Beliefs of Early Childhood Teachers about Constraints That Decrease The Efficiency of Their Circle Time Routines

When the answers of teachers are examined, it is seen that there are three main titles for constraints which are needs of children, time related issues and administration related issues. The teachers who expressed needs of children hinder circle time process indicated that the children with behavioral disorders, special needs, teachers' needs for change over time, self-care needs and age group of them are the related factors. Some teachers indicated that there is no regular time period for meetings in the mornings for children, that's why doing morning circle time might be challenging for them. Most of the teachers expressed that there are constraints that are related to administrative issues which are diversity in culture and in language capabilities of children, number of children, need for assistance and physical conditions. The major topic expressed in interviews were problems about number of children in class because the more children in the class, the less quality in educational process can be conducted, early childhood teachers said.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, summary of the study is presented at first. Afterwards, early childhood teachers' self-reported practices and beliefs in terms of circle time are discussed in depth as well as implications regarding the findings of the study. Lastly, recommendations for further studies are made.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The aim of the study was to explore in service early childhood teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices about circle time. In this study, explanatory sequential mixed method design which comprises quantitative part and qualitative part followed by each other sequentially was employed to elaborate the results intensively.

Participants of the study were in service early childhood teachers who are working at both private and public schools in 6 main districts of Ankara. In the first part of the study, *Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs and Self-reported Practices Survey* were administered to 502 participants. In the second part of the study, a semi-structured interview protocol was carried out with 22 volunteer early childhood teachers who accepted to attend the next part of the study after completing the survey. Once the data collection process was completed, descriptive statistics was utilized for quantitative results while descriptive analysis was conducted by using MAXQDA 2020 program for qualitative results of the study.

5.2 Discussion of the Findings

Discussion of the findings constitutes of two main parts which are about self-reported practices and beliefs of early childhood teachers about circle time. Each part has other sub-headings as explained in following parts.

5.2.1 Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Circle Time

Early childhood teacher's self-reported practices about circle time were examined under four main headings which are about planning of circle time, context of circle time, facilitators of circle time and types of activities in circle time.

5.2.1.1 Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Planning of Circle Time

In literature, planning of the daily program is suggested for teachers to have effective classroom management strategies by Ebert and Culyer (2011). Furthermore, McKitrick (2014) and Gambino (2019) also explained that for an effective circle time process, necessary preparations and planning should be conducted by teachers. According to Morrison (2007), classroom teacher should take into consideration objectives and indicators of the program and developmentally appropriate activities for children regarding children's interests, needs and choices while planning learning process. In conformity with literature, participants of this study explained that they give importance to objectives and indicators of the program, they consider children's capabilities, interests and choices during planning of circle time. They also allow children to be at the center of the planning process because they consider children's needs and interests. This finding may show that participants of the current study are knowledgeable about how they should plan circle time process and which aspects they should consider because their self-reported practices seem to be similar with related researches.

Ebert and Culyer (2011) stated that planning of learning process should be arranged regarding interests of children, developmentally appropriateness of children and lastly children with special needs in class. As it is explained above, findings of the current study revealed that the teachers take into consideration developmentally appropriateness and interests of children while planning the program but their beliefs and practices with respect to planning and children with special needs is a concern to concentrate on. Parallel with literature, participants of the study explained that their circle time plan is appropriate for children with special needs especially. When this finding is considered, it can be said that teachers who attended this study take into consideration needs of children with special needs for circle time. In this context, it can be inferred that participants of this study have information about what they are expected for planning circle time regarding children with special needs.

As the last point about planning of circle time, According to Culkin (2000), quality early childhood education has critical role on children's development regarding all domains and for their future life. Not only for children, but also for society, quality early childhood education is essential for increasing well educated individuals in society. In this context, Tokuhama-Espinosa (2014) mentions that planning is one of the prominent elements of high-quality education because if classroom teacher attaches importance to planning process, it is more probable to have an effective learning atmosphere. When findings of this study are considered, it is seen that participants plan their circle time routines before they start to conduct process. Also, they take into consideration the factors such as developmentally appropriateness of the content and regarding children's interests and ideas while planning. Therefore, as Tokuhama-Espinose (2014) mentioned, it can be inferred that participants of this study do practices about planning of circle time which are necessary for high quality early childhood education.

5.2.1.2 Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Context of Circle Time

Context of circle time includes the terms frequency, time period, duration, seating place and seating plan which are preferred. Frequency refers to how many times circle time is utilized in a class during a day or in a week; time period refers to whether they utilize circle time before breakfast, after breakfast or in another time period of the day; duration refers to how long circle time takes to utilize; seating place refers to whether teachers ask children to sit in carpets, chairs, cushions or somewhere else and seating shape refers to choice of sitting in circle, U shape or in another seating shape.

First of all, Collins (2007) explains that if it is aimed to have children gain a habit of circle time, then frequency of circle time should be at least once in a week. It means that when circle time is utilized about every two weeks, it is not accepted as regular circle time utilization in a class. When findings about this issue are examined, it is seen that participants of the study explained they do circle time at least once in a day or they do circle time every other day. This finding shows that teachers' practices about frequency of circle time coincides with literature. The reason why early childhood teachers utilize circle time in expected frequency might be about their experiences in time because they explained that for benefiting from circle time, they do it as a routine in their class.

Secondly, Collins (2007) mentions that duration of circle time should be approximately 10-15 minutes for children in young ages while it can process about 30-40 minutes for older children. Also, in a study conducted by Wiltz and Klein (2001), 122 preschool children were interviewed from 4 low-quality and 4 high-quality schools. Results of the study showed that children do not like circle time when it lasts too long. It is also revealed that children from low-quality schools have more negative responses about circle time (25%) compared to children from high-quality schools (8%). The reason behind negative responses about circle time is found that it lasts about 30-40 minutes, content includes memorization of rules, numbers or letters in low-quality learning centers. Thus, regarding Wilts and Klein's study (2001), circle

time duration about 30-40 minutes is linked with low quality education. When findings of the study examined, it is seen that majority of teachers utilize circle time about 10-20 minutes as stated in literature but there are high number of teachers who stated they do circle time about 5-10 minutes and there are small number of teachers who do circle time about 30-40 minutes. Regarding this finding, it can be deduced that teachers who implements 5-10 minutes of circle time might be dealing with constraints such as excessive number of children or need for an assistant teacher in class for better classroom management. In the findings of current study, it is also found that teachers need an assistant teacher during their circle time process because classroom management might be challenging for teachers especially when there are high number of children in class or when there are children with special needs. It may mean that in contrast to Wilts and Klein's study (2001) which highlighted the link between low-quality education and long duration of circle time, findings of the current study showed that participants do not have quality learning environments such as need for assistant teacher, high number of children in class. So, for providing the teachers with an environment to do circle time for expected duration, they should be provided necessary opportunities by stakeholders because doing circle time shorter than expected may not mean that teachers give low-quality education, but it may mean that they do not have quality learning environments provided for them. Another factor which may cause teachers to utilize circle time shorter than expected can be about lack of knowledge or resource about the content of circle time. In the findings of current study, it is revealed that teachers need for trainings and resources to improve their circle time practices. It is also found that a vast majority of teachers have not attended a course or seminar about circle time, so they improved their own circle time routines. Thus, current study findings support that there are possible reasons why teachers might be processing circle time shorter than expected. It means that if teachers are in need of information or resources about the content of circle time such as types of activities that they can do, then they may have difficulty in keeping circle time longer. This result might be linked with need for information of teachers about circle time. All in all, teachers can be supported with professional trainings and resources about circle time activities.

Thirdly, regarding the period of circle time, when it is searched in literature, there was not any study encountered about this topic as far as is known. Findings revealed that teachers do circle time before breakfast, after breakfast during the day or before leaving the school but the majority of them explained they utilize circle time immediately after breakfast. The reason why teachers prefer to do circle time immediately after breakfast might be linked with one constraint they encounter, which is instability of children's arrival at school. When teachers utilize circle time before breakfast, some of children would not be arrived at school yet and they cannot attend circle time. When teachers prefer to do circle time during the day, it might be irrational to plan the daily flow in the middle of the day. In consequence, this finding may show us that participants of the study consider children's attendance as well as benefiting them from circle time at the beginning of the day.

When it comes to place and seating plan during circle time, in researches about this issue, it is highlighted that the place where to make the circle does not matter, it can be done both in chairs, carpet and cushions (Mosley, 2005). Findings of the current study was parallel in literature in general because teachers mentioned that they use both cushions and chairs as well as carpet during circle time and it depends on the types of activities that they do or children's wishes. This finding shows that teachers act flexibly according to the children's situation or activity types that they do. Flexibility is one of the characteristics of Ministry of Education Early Childhood Program (MoNE, 2013) and it shows that teachers arrange their daily flow regarding program's characteristics.

Lastly, regarding literature, seating plan should be considered in circle time because each member of the group should feel the equality between all participants not only among children but also among teachers and children within circle shape (Mosley, 2005; Seifert & Metz, 2016; Mary, 2014). Therefore, it is essential to indicate that there is no hierarchy, everyone is equal, hence feeling of communion (Wu, 2009; (Mosley, 2005). Findings of the study revealed that there were participants who prefer sitting in circle shape while there were the ones who prefer U shape. Participants who prefer U shape explained that it helps them to make eye contact with children better

and they can control the process more easily while teachers who prefer sitting in circle shape mentioned it helps them to make children feel their ideas are valued and each member is equal. This finding may reveal that there are teachers who are aware of the meaning of circle shape and that's why they use this way of seating plan. Nevertheless, teacher training can be beneficial for teachers because sitting in U shape may indicate that teacher is the ruling person in circle time and s/he directs what children will do in process which is not among the aims of circle time (Wu, 2009).

5.2.1.3 Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Facilitators of Circle Time

Participants of the study explained their usage of facilitators such as materials, mediators and media tools. According to Zaghlawan et al. (2010), early childhood teachers may use different kind of materials such as flashcards, calendars, pointers or other materials that are designed by members of the class. Mosley (2007) also adds that there can be various materials that can be used such as story books, emotion cards, chairs, musical instruments, puppets, pictures of the classroom members, clothes for dramatic play, media tools like CD player or any kind of materials depending on the activity type in circle time. When findings of the study are examined, it can be seen that frequently used materials are books, puppets, cards, balls, musical instruments and toys while there are other materials such as photos, pencils or construction materials which are used less frequently in circle time. It can be said that finding of the study and literature is parallel with each other because both literature and participants of the study mentioned diversity of the materials that can be used in circle time. When the findings gathered from teachers is examined, it is revealed that books are the most used materials in circle time by vast majority of teachers. This finding may mean that, majority of participants read stories in circle time. It might be linked with lacking materials to be used in circle time or associating circle time content with book reading times mostly. So, classrooms can be supported in terms of diversity of materials and teachers can be supported in terms of resources and information about circle time.

For mediators used in circle time Bennet (2010, as cited in May, 2019) explains that using rhymes, riddles and songs makes children encouraged to imagine, it evokes joy

and children's articulation skills improves. Children learns to play and have fun with words and this situation makes children more involved in process. When answers of teachers are examined, they responded that they sing songs, ask questions, play finger games. As Bennet (2010) also mentioned, teachers explained that when they use mediators in circle time, their classroom management is better, they can gather children's attention easier and children become more involved in circle time process. This finding may show that participants of the study consult mediators for gathering attention of children to circle time, so teachers might be supported with additional resources including songs, rhymes, riddles and finger games which can be used in circle time process. Additionally, it can be said that these mediators do not necessitate any materials, they can only use their voices and bodies for using mediators in circle time. It can be inferred that these ideas about using mediators can be useful for teachers who do not utilize circle time because of inadequate materials in their class.

5.2.1.4 Early Childhood Teachers' Self-Reported Practices about Types of Activities in Circle Time

Types of activities that can be conducted in circle time are examined by various researchers (Zaghlawan, & Ostrosky, 2010; Bustamane et al., 2018; Collins, 2013; Seifert & Metz, 2017). It is explained there are various kinds of activity types such as sharing experiences, feelings and materials, talking about the calendar regarding weather conditions, what day or month they are in, reviewing schedule by planning daily flow, doing language activities such as book reading, learning about sounds and letters, doing numeracy activities, giving morning message for improving children's articulation, singing and dancing, rolling the call or any other activities special to the class. When participants of the study are asked about which types of activities they do in circle time, they answered as music, movement, language literacy, math, roll taking, scheduling and calendar times activities. Regarding the activity types, a great majority of teachers explained they do language activities such as getting to know each other, sharing experiences and feelings and story time. This finding is in parallel to some extent with the study conducted by Yıldız (2019) which found that the most conducted activities are sharing out of school experiences, conversation as well as greeting, roll

calling and scheduling. At this point, it might be inferred that teachers tend to make language activities such as sharing experiences and feelings in circle time. This can be related with teacher's need for resources and trainings about circle time content because in addition to language activities, there are diverse type of activities that can be conducted in circle time. On the other hand, when the similar type of activity is continuously done in circle time, children may start to get distracted and bored of circle time. Therefore, content needs variation and when teachers are supported about resources and trainings, teachers can guide children for varying activity types.

Moreover, Akgün (2013) made a study about types of activities in France by observing two groups of children. Findings of the study showed that children mostly do schedule, roll calling, calendar time, assigning roles, numeracy activities and show and tell in circle time. Regarding findings of the current study, there is an inconsistency between Akgün's study (2013) results and research findings because in the current study, teachers expressed that they do language activities such as sharing experiences and feelings, getting to know each other and story time. Inconsistency between the results might be about the context of the research because there might be differences among educational approaches and programs, perspectives of teachers or children's choices about circle time activities in France. Also, participants of Akgün's (2013) study are children in two classes at the same school. It may lead participants to conduct similar circle time routines because teachers who are working at the same school may affect each other about their educational program and it may lead them to do similar activities.

Moreover, there are kinds of activities which are not included in literature but participants of current study expressed. These activities are science activities, games and assigning roles. Participants explained they do science activities by doing some experiments in circle shape and children can examine the process clearly thanks to the seating shape and each of the participant has a chance to express his/her own ideas. Teachers also explained that they use different kinds of materials like a sheet as a sign of starting circle time. By this way, children get used to the process of doing science activity in their minds because when they see the sheet is on the floor, then they figure

out that it is time for circle. This finding may show that participant teachers of the study are knowledgeable about quality early childhood education since Colker & Koralek (2018) and Morgan (2019) explains that providing an environment where children are actively involved in learning process, showing respect to children's ideas is one of the prominent factors of quality early childhood education. By regarding teachers' answers, it can be seen that they attach importance to children's active participation and expression of their ideas in science activities, that's why they prefer doing experiments in circle time.

On the other hand, teachers explained they play games in circle time and they explained three reasons for this, which are providing children a time for releasing energy after inactive activities, necessitating chances of circle time activities and allowing children to play games as whole class for providing sense of belonging. When related literature searched, it is seen that Kats (2008) mentions that types of activities needed to be varied over time otherwise children may get bored of doing the same routines every day. Therefore, it can be said that teachers are experienced and knowledgeable about the necessity of changing content of circle time and they take into consideration children's needs about releasing energies. Teachers also related playing games with providing a sense of belonging to a group because when children play games as a whole class, they develop feeling of belonging. Regarding this issue, Kriete and Davis (2014) explain that circle time is an effective time period for developing feeling of belonging among peers in parallel to participants' expressions. In consequence, it may be deduced that teachers are knowledgeable about how to provide an environment for evoking sense of belonging with the help of circle time.

5.2.2 Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs about Circle Time

Early childhood teacher's beliefs about circle time were examined under three headings which are teachers' beliefs about benefits of circle time, reasons of utilization and constraints which may hinder circle time process.

5.2.2.1 Teachers Beliefs about Benefits of Circle Time

Participants of the study articulated their beliefs about benefits of circle time which are divided into two main headings: benefits for teachers and benefits for children. While benefits for teachers explained by few participants, benefits of circle time for children have a broader context which are examined as benefits for cognitive, language, social emotional development and these benefits will be elaborated successively below.

First of all, participants of the study expressed that not only for children but also for teachers, circle time has some benefits. Benefits of circle time for teachers are expressed that it lets teachers organize their day and it helps to know what are the tasks to be completed that day which makes them gain more confidence in themselves. Teachers indicated that with the help of circle time, they can evaluate the needs of children and their interests by knowing more about them, as well. Parallel to participants' beliefs, Duman (2009) also indicates that circle time contributes to developing teaching strategies which make teachers to gain self-confidence. Additionally, Lown (2002) argues that the process makes teachers become aware of their children's personalities, needs, the hardships they are facing. Moreover, Pace (2012) added that circle time enhances pupil-teacher relationships which helps teachers to know more about their children. Accordingly, findings of the current study about beliefs of teachers in terms of the benefits of circle time for teachers are corresponding with each other. This finding may indicate that participants not only consider benefits of circle time on behalf of children but also on behalf of themselves. The reason why teachers find circle time beneficial in terms of some aspects might be linked with teacher's own experiences and inferences in years of teaching about gaining confidence in themselves, being able to evaluate children's needs and interests and becoming more familiar with children's personalities because circle time provides an environment where everybody shares their ideas without being judged with intimate relationships, so teachers have chance to learn more information about children (Bulut, 2004).

Secondly, almost all of the participants drew attention to benefits of circle time for social emotional development of children in terms of improving peer interaction, feeling of community, empathetic skills, respecting other people's ideas, expressing themselves, self-esteem and self-regulation. These aspects of circle time benefits for children are discussed below.

Firstly, children who are shy or having difficulties in expressing themselves benefit from circle time through sharing thoughts and feelings in a positive environment as children have an active role in their learning process (Leach & Lewis, 2013; Collins, 2011; Pace, 2012; MoNE, 2013; Bondy & Ketts, 2001; Colao, 2010). These statements are in agreement with findings of current study which explains that with the help of circle time, social emotional development improves because children who are excluded in the class have more tendency to make interactions with their peers now that process itself cause socialization. In addition, results are in accordance with a circle time project conducted with 300 primary school children explained by Mosley (2009) through which children showed enhanced communication and collaboration with their peers. The reason why literature and research findings correspond with each other might be linked with quality early childhood education which is delivered by participants of the study because providing children an environment for interaction with others in a safe place is one of the indicators of quality education (Colker & Koralek, 2018).

In literature, Bulut (2004), Akgün (2013), Suggs (2019), Kriete & Davis (2014), Csak (2002), Colao (2010) indicate that circle time provides children with a safe and respectful environment where children tend to create sense of belonging to a group, friendships are built by trusting each other, eliminating put-downs and feeling unconditional positive regard. Mosley (1996) also states that it enhances sense of being a team and she adds that it develops children's moral values, communication skills and self-esteem. Parallel to literature, most of the participants of the study stated that circle time helps children learn to be a part of the community while setting the rules by themselves and obeying those rules as a part of that group. This finding may show that experiences that are gathered by teachers and children may cause them to utilize circle

time in their classes regularly. Besides, it can be also deduced that benefits of circle time are mentioned within similar aspects from the origins of circle time up to this day. As mentioned in history of circle time part, in 1880s, circle time was regarded as a symbol of communion feeling where each member of the group participates and sense of community is developed in it (Reich, 1993). Thus, regarding circle time as a community symbol has continuation in todays' world as can be seen in teacher's explanations.

Moreover, participants explained that children develop empathetic skills in circle time because they have opportunities to think about different kinds of situations a person has and the feelings that they might have and participants expressed that it is a process where each idea is valuable and members of the group learn to respect each other. Gutteridge & Smith (2007), Leicester (2006), Rogers (1970) and Mosley (2009) indicate that children develop empathetic skills by welcoming different kinds of opinions which is another beneficial factor of circle time which shows that results are parallel with literature. One of the participants of the study explained the reason why circle time enhances empathetic skills in children might be because teachers guide children to think about the actions happening at the story content, children have the opportunity to think about the character and the situation. Similarly, children talk about their friend's actions and they tell how they would think or behave if they were their friends. So, teachers' guidance for children about thinking on other's positions may lead children to improve empathetic skills which shows importance of the way of practices of teachers in class.

In conformity with literature nearly all participants expressed that circle time facilitates children to respect different opinions. They also stated in interview part of the study that after a period of time, children tend to have close relationships with the same friends which causes to be familiar with the same thoughts and ideas. But in circle time, they learn to hear about other people's opinions and make critics with a respectful attitude because each member of the group gains social acceptance. In literature (Suggs, 2019; Bornman, Collins & Maines, 2004; Gutteridge & Smith, 2007; Leicester, 2006; Cefai et. al, 2014) it is also mentioned that circle time facilitates

children to respect for various ideas. Moreover, teachers explained that not only for children's relationships, but also for adults, having circle time is important to broaden our perspectives, parallel to Mosley (2009), because as the adults, we tend to have a group of friends who has the similar ideologies, life styles which leads us to see similar type of personalities. But having circle time makes adults, as well as children, richer in terms of ideas, knowledges and ideologies. Regarding this issue, it may be concluded that circle time can be a tool for encouraging children for respecting and valuing diversity. As Morgan (2017) stated that children develop sense of identity as well as exploring ideas, personalities, ideologies of people around them by developing a sense of acceptance from an early age and early years has opportunity for ensuring this atmosphere. Valuing diversity can be triggered by supporting children's reflective practices by challenging prejudices as well as assumptions related with race, religion, gender, culture and ideologies of individuals. With the help of regular practices in learning environments designed regarding valuing diversity, children can be supported about respecting others by developing tolerance to diversities (Connolly & Kelly, 2002). With the help of early opportunities for children about developing respect towards richness in class, children become more tolerant adults when they grow up, which means that it is an investment in broader context for future. Derman- Sparks and Olsen Edwards (2010) add that it is not enough to talk with children about differences because children already capable of noticing differences. The main point is to provide children to explore and learn more about each other in class. By providing an environment for children to learn more about each other, focusing on appreciating differences and valuing diversity is essential. At that point, it can be related that circle time is the place where it is advised by researchers to give opportunity for children to learn more about each other by valuing diversity and respecting other people around them.

Moreover, as for benefits of circle time, Ministry of National Education Early Childhood Education Program (2013) emphasizes the need for circle time for children who have hardships in expressing themselves. Burcu & Ceylan (2017) express similarly that children who are shy or having difficulties in self-expression skills benefit from circle time because the premise of circle time is developing a climate

where each individual feel valued. Similarly, the current research participants mentioned that one of the benefits of circle time is its contribution to children's self-expression skills. Compared to other benefits of circle time, participants mentioned its contribution to self-expression skills in a very high number. The reason behind the number of participants who mentioned the benefits of circle time on children's self-expression skills is that this skill can be visibly evaluated. When there is a child who has hardships to express him/herself, classroom teacher has the chance to observe the improvement of the child during the process because circle time is a routinized process applied in regular times of the day. For example, one of the participants explained that they visibly observe the difference between beginning of the semester and the end of the semester regarding children's self-expression skills. She added that the ones who have hard time expressing themselves at the beginning of the year and whose voices are hesitative become able to express themselves in a very comfortable way towards the end of the year. This finding may reveal that teachers participated in this study are knowledgeable about benefits of circle time about children's self-expression skills and this may be outcome of teacher's experiences that they face in their classes.

Another point that is mentioned in literature about benefits of circle time on children's social emotional development is self-esteem improvement (Sönmez & Ceylan, 2017; Collins & Kavanagh, 2013; Miller & Moran, 2007; Leach & Lewis, 2013; Pace, 2012; Duman, 2009; Galbraith & Alexander, 2005). In a study, it is stressed out that in order to take advantage of circle time for self-esteem development, classroom teachers should not be dominating the process because when the activity processes are strictly organized for children and children are asked closed-ended questions, then children do not have the chance to display their inner self and their potential (Collins & Kavanagh, 2013). Parallel to literature, teachers participated in this study mentioned that circle time is beneficial for children's self-esteem regarding their experiences. They also added that the main reason why circle time is beneficial for self-esteem development is that children are appreciated to express their own feelings, concerns or ideas in circle time process. Besides, children have the opportunity to practice and experience about how to communicate with others which helps them to gain more trust in themselves. Regarding these findings, it can be inferred that participants of this study may have

tendency towards utilizing circle time without leading the process, and they may let children show their inner self. Galbraith & Alexander (2005) and Miller & Moran (2007) represent that one of the stepping stone of building self-esteem on children is letting them express themselves to indicate that their ideas are worthy. Therefore, in order to improve children's self-esteem, they should be provided opportunities for improving their self-expression skills. But when results of current study are examined, it can be seen that number of teachers who explained benefits of circle time on self-expression skills are much higher than the number of teachers who mentioned benefits of circle time on children's self-esteem skills. In literature, however, as Galbraith & Alexander (2005) and Miller & Moran (2007) mentioned, self-expression skills are improved in accordance with self-esteem of children. This finding may show that participants of this study may not establish a connection between self-esteem and self-expression skills of children.

Another point mentioned about benefits of circle time is self-regulation skills of children. Barton (2013) explained the effects of circle time on self-regulation skills as providing opportunities for children to follow daily schedules, participate in group activities, be aware of the routines of the day. Moreover, Bulut (2004) also expressed that, children develop self-discipline in circle time since they organize their daily flow at the beginning of the routines and they have an idea about what their tasks that they will accomplish for that day are. This situation makes them clear about their tasks that they are expected to fulfill. These explanations of researchers overlap with the expression of participants because teachers also mentioned that children learn to plan their days and routines, they gain organizational skills both in their educational process and their future life with the help of circle time. This finding may show that participants of the study are knowledgeable about benefits of circle time for children's self-regulation skills but even if teachers' explanations and literature are in parallel with each other, the number of participants who mentioned benefits of circle time on children's self-regulation skills were less compared to other benefits explained. The reason behind the number of participants articulated self-regulation skills is less might be about the process of gaining this behavior. At this point, Lysaght (2015) explains that to assess whether a child has an improvement on self-regulation, there should be

a duration for assessment, each child might have a different reference point which should be improved and the gap between the reference and improvement should be taken into consideration. Thus, this might be the reason why the number of participants mentioned this issue is less compared to other benefits of circle time.

As well as benefits of circle time on children's social emotional development, there are benefits for cognitive development of children. Regarding benefits of circle time on children's cognitive development, Mosley (2005) proposes that children's problem-solving skills are facilitated when children are exposed to real life situations in circle time but process should be planned well and content should be purposeful. Moreover, Duman (2009) conducted an experimental study. They found out that children who regularly attend circle time in their classes are much better at concept knowledge compared to the ones who does not attend circle time. As stated in literature, participants of current study also mentioned that circle time improves children's cognitive development. In interview results, teachers added that even if children do not accomplish product base activities in circle time, they learn about new concepts each day just similarly with Duman's (2009) research findings. Considering research findings and literature, it might be inferred that participants of the study have tendency towards exposing children to real life situations in circle time and content and plan of circle time are based on problem solving. In addition, in the interview part of the study, participants mentioned that, children whose mother language is not Turkish made a good progress in learning Turkish words with the help of circle time. Furthermore, they stated that circle time was the most effective time for foreign children to learn basic words to help them express themselves because in other times of the day, foreign children does not have that much chance to make interactions with others. As learning second language improves with interaction better, circle time is invaluable for these children according to participants of current study. Parallel to expressions of participants, Coppock (2007) and Doveston (2007) mentioned that circle time facilitates learning second language not only for children but also for adults. Bredekamp (2017) also added that children become familiar with expression of basic words of a foreign language in regularly conducted circle time. In conformity with literature, participants of the study who are working at schools having second language

program explained in interviews that children learn how to talk about their feelings, how to get in contact with other people by introducing themselves, they learn new words of another language in circle time. Regarding research findings and literature, it can be said that, teachers who attended current study may utilize circle time as a routine of their class because they explained how they get benefit from circle time in terms of learning second language in their classes.

Furthermore, findings of the study indicate that teachers have beliefs about benefits of circle time on children's language development and their content of circle time activities are rich in aspects improving language development such as rhymes, riddles, stories, finger games. Teachers also mentioned in interview that children learn challenging vocabularies in circle time because they talk about new information they learned, they talk about their experiences, feelings, they learn new songs, read different kinds of books, they have peer interaction at class so there is an information transition between teacher and children. Parallel with participants' expressions Dickinson (2001) mentioned that with the help of peer interaction at class, children's language development is facilitated. Moreover, Yıldız (2019) added that children learn new vocabularies in circle time when they have an environment to make conversations about different concepts. On the basis of research findings and literature, it can be inferred that teachers guide children to make conversations with each other, they make appropriate activities for improving language development of children which shows that teachers are knowledgeable about benefits of circle time in terms of language development.

Last point that is mentioned in literature is benefits of circle time for children's school readiness skills. But when it is asked to participants of the study, there were not any explanation about school readiness of children directly in research findings. According to Peth Pierce (2000), children who have the ability to expres his/her emotions, have good relationships with other people, deal with social problems, and who do not have difficulty in following the rules and have perseverance to duties are better in school readiness skills. When the expectation from children who have school readiness is examined, it can be seen that even if the participants did not articulate 'school

readiness' directly and clearly, content of the explanations is related with school readiness skills already because Copple & Bredekamp (2008), Yıldız, (2019), Zaghlawan & Ostrosky (2010), Mosley (2005) explains that sharing experiences and feelings, making cooperation with peers, having interactions with other people, communication skills are some indicators of school readiness skills of children. Thus, even if participants of the study mention these benefits separately, indicating school readiness skills might be more comprehensive, that's why they may not have articulated this concept separately.

5.2.2.2 Teachers Beliefs about Reasons of Utilizing Circle Time

Participants of the study asserted three reasons about circle time utilization which are administrative expectation, necessity of the program and their own wish due to benefits.

First of all, the number of teachers who expressed that they utilize circle time due to its benefits were in majority regarding other reasons they mentioned. Teachers said that in years of experience they witnessed the improvements on children so they regard circle time as a part of routine. Lown (2002) also stated the same issue by highlighting the teachers' experiences about benefits of circle time is one of the reasons why they regard circle time as a part of their daily routines. When the reason of utilization is searched in literature, there were not a kind of expression directly about this issue. Nevertheless, when beliefs of teachers about benefits of circle time is searched, there are a number of researches indicating benefits for socio emotional (Leach & Lewis, 2013; Collins, 2011; Pace, 2012; MoNE, 2013; Bondy & Ketts, 2001; Colao, 2010), cognitive (Coppock, 2007; Doveston, 2007; Duman 2009), language development (Yıldız, 2019; Dickinson, 2001) and school readiness skills (Copple & Bredekamp; 2008, Yıldız, 2019; Zaghlawan & Ostrosky, 2010; Mosley, 2005) as described under the previous title. Regarding the studies about benefits of circle time and findings of current study, it may be shown that, witnessing various benefits of circle time leads teachers to utilize circle time in their class. This finding might be related with regular practices of circle time in classes because in order to observe benefits of one

implementation, there should be a duration to observe and evaluate the end results. It may show that participants of the study are prone to utilize circle time regularly in their classes for reaching the benefits of it. Regarding findings and current literature, it may also be said that, participants of this study mentioned that they utilize circle time regarding benefits even they are not strictly scheduled to do circle time by Ministry of National Education Program (2013). This may show how much dedicated participants of the study to teaching profession which is a factor that can give information about quality early childhood education because Colker & Koralek (2018) and Morgan (2019) mention that providing an environment for children where they have intimate relationships with their peers and teachers, where people care and respect each other are factors expected for quality early childhood education. Moreover, Jalongo et al (2004) mentions that children need supportive interactive environments for facilitating their capabilities in quality early childhood education. Thus, regarding study findings and literature, it might be said that participants of this study might be providing children an environment for quality education.

When it comes to administrative expectation, which means the reason of circle time utilization is linked with authority of school, there are participants who have this belief. However, even if the school administration pushes teachers to do circle time in their classes, classroom teacher may not do it if the classroom atmosphere is not appropriate to utilize circle time. As Cefai et al. (2014) mentions, for gaining efficiency from circle time, classroom teacher should arrange the process regarding the needs and interests of children. Accordingly, when teachers are pushed to utilize circle time, they might be hindered in terms of considering needs and interests of children which may cause decreasing efficiency of the circle time.

Another point expressed as a reason for circle time utilization is the necessity of the program. When early childhood education program is considered, there is a part for circle time routines indicating the benefits (MoNE, 2013). Teachers participated in the current study also expressed that they are thought about circle time in their professional development and they learned the necessity of doing circle time, but there is not a strict rule to do it. They added that by observing the benefits of circle time, they get used to

do it as a routine in the interview part of the study. As the teacher's expressions examined, it is deduced that even the program necessitates circle time, unless teachers do not observe benefits of it, they may not utilize circle time in their classes.

5.2.2.3 Teachers Beliefs about Constraints for Circle Time

One of the constraints hindering process of circle time is about physical conditions of classroom. Regarding this issue, Zaghlawan and Ostrosky (2010) explain that there should be a carpet to make a semi-circle or whole circle to help each individual to see each other, an attendance board can be helpful for following the process, some cards delineating the classroom rules, showing some information for calendar time like seasons, days of the week, weather conditions etc. Teacher of the class might need these materials for circle time to make the process more exciting but on the other hand, Bustamante et all. (2018) expresses types of activities in circle time are versatile like singing songs, playing games, sharing experiences and feelings, taking the roll, dancing, reading book etc. Therefore, when classroom teacher plans circle time, there are some kinds of activities that can be done without essential materials such as singing songs, book reading, dancing. However, having a carpet where every member of the class can fit in is important because Mosley (2009) expresses that to give the feeling of community, unity, each member of the class should have a place at circle especially by sitting in circle shape on the carpet for eliminating the hierarchy and having more intimate environment where everybody can see or talk with each other.

In relation to this issue, participants of the study mentioned physical factors hindering process of circle time. Firstly, constraints about administrative issues mean these factors can only be regulated by stakeholders who have the authority to change the classroom qualities. One of the factors is having appropriate physical conditions for utilizing circle time. Teachers who talked about negative physical conditions on effectiveness of circle time indicated that they do not have enough materials at their classes such as toys or carpets. At this point teachers seem to need information and resources about how to utilize circle time by using songs, finger games, having conversations with each other or dancing without necessitating materials. On the other

hand, teachers might be lacking materials for increasing quality of circle time process. In relation to this issue, Karademir & Akman (2021) conducted a case study about quality early childhood education. This research was conducted in Muş, Turkey with 6 preschool teachers and 5 administrators who are working at 4 public primary schools and 6 preschool teachers and 4 administrators who are working at 4 public preschools. Thus, participants of the study were 12 preschool teachers and 9 administrators. Within this study, a semi-structured interview was conducted and answers of participants were analyzed with inductive content analysis. Results of the study revealed that participants explained factors of quality education as happiness of children, teacher quality, following new approaches in the field, having assistant teachers in class, having quality materials in class and physical conditions, providing educations for families, collaboration among school and families, administrative support and facilitating children's whole developmental domains. Accordingly, as stated by Karademir & Akman (2021), physical condition of the class is one of the main factors effecting quality early childhood education. Explanations of the participants of current study about constraints to circle time as lacking materials in their classes may mean that these teachers need support for quality education in their classes.

Another point highlighted by many participants is having high number of children in their classes. Teachers especially stated having circle time with 20 children or above differs from having circle time with less children because children who waits for other's turn gets bored in time and children in the first rows get bored while listening to others. Teachers added that the efficiency of the process gets lower when circle time is conducted with high number of children. Cefai et. al has similar explanations about necessity of conducting circle time with a group of children where each member of the circle can be listened by others. Additionally, according to Collins (2007), for managing classroom order and hindering behavioral problems related with getting bored, there should be about 10-12 children in class approximately. Moreover, it is said that at the beginning of the semester children should be made up of groups with about 6 children, after each group get used to circle time process and the rules, then groups come together and makes circle time all together (Mosley, 2005; Collins, 2007). Findings of the study may reveal that teachers aim to give voice to each member

of the circle which is another indicator of quality early childhood education and need for improving the quality in early learning environments. In relation to this, Bustamente et al (2018) conducted research about prevalence of teacher and child talk in circle time and relation of it with quality instruction. 22 early childhood teachers who are working at public schools attended this study and they are observed during mornings and they filled a survey. In the study Global Classroom Quality (CLASS) and instructional content coding scheme was used. Results of the study revealed that teacher talk was twice more than child talk in educational process and quality of classrooms were found about %40 which is a low percentage. Researchers mentioned that less teacher child talk caused lower quality education results. This research findings might be linked with current study because participants of the current study mentioned that high number of children at class cause them not to give voice to each child during circle time which make process less efficient. Thus, as Bustamente et al (2018) mentioned, less child talk in circle time which is caused by high number of children in class may cause lower quality education.

Another point indicated by participants is the need for assistance for children who have behavioral problems, special needs and for classes with high number of children. In alignment with participants, Mosley (2005) also indicates that for sustaining concentration of children, making children with special needs or behavioral problems included in process, there should be one assistant teacher for supporting classroom teacher. Besides, having one assistant teacher at the class is needed for better management and this situation makes classroom teacher more confident about sustaining the process. As stated above, some teachers have concerns about number of children at class, having children with behavioral problems and special needs but it is also stated that assistant teacher makes process easier for integrating these children into process. That's why having an assistant teacher at class might decrease other related constraints which can increase the frequency and quality of circle time utilization. Related with this issue, Gök and Erbaş (2011) made a study about early childhood teacher's views and suggestions about inclusion children at preschools. In this study, researchers made a semi-structured interview with 10 teachers who are working at Nevşehir, Turkey. In this study, researchers found out answers for

educational background of teachers about inclusion children, teacher's expectations and suggestions about inclusive education and some other aspects. Results of this study revealed that reasons of problems that teachers face are about lack of background education about inclusive education, poor physical conditions of classrooms and need for assistant teacher for inclusive children in their classes. Another study was conducted by Zic Ralic, Cvıtkovıc, Zyta & Cwırynkalo (2020) examining teachers' opinions about quality of inclusive education. In this study, 173 teachers from Poland and 139 teachers from Croatia completed a scale about Quality Indicators for Inclusion. Findings of this study revealed that teachers gave lowest rating score for teaching assistant support provided for them which means teachers need for an assistant teacher for quality inclusion in their classes. In consequence, these studies support findings of current study about need for assistant teacher for children with special needs.

On the other hand, children have diversity on their specialties such as their language, culture and capabilities. Participants of the study indicated that having children in different languages makes the process very difficult because they have hardships in expressing themselves even in basic words. Teachers also added in interview that because expressing oneself is one of the key components of circle time, having difficulty in expressive language makes the process less effective. Another diversity factor expressed by participants is cultural differences such as children growing with grandparents. This point is expressed that these children may have difficulty in adapting to circle time rules by participants. According to Connolly & Kelly (2002), within the process of regular circle time utilization, children's prejudices or ideas about different languages, cultures, genders, races and religions can change which is an indicator of valuing diversity at class. Derman-Sparks and Olsen Edwards (2010) also mention that for teaching children to value and respect diversity in class, it is not enough to talk only about differences, some applications should be done including children from different regions, cultures, languages etc. This may mean that participant teachers may not have tendency to conduct circle time with children from various languages or cultures which can decrease both frequency and quality of circle time. On the other hand, teachers also explained that having children in different capabilities

makes circle time process tough. By expressing different capabilities, teachers meant that having children from different ages at the same class or having a broad range in children's capabilities makes the process more difficult. In early years development, children's capabilities differ from each other even in few months, that's why when children have 10 months difference in their ages, arranging the content of circle time becomes more difficult. Montie et al. (2006) stresses that younger children have less attention span and they may get distracted in a short time, which means that they have less attention span regarding other members of the class because of their developmental levels. In this situation, classroom teacher may have hardships in keeping all children alert during circle time when they have children who have age gaps with each other.

As other constraints mentioned by participants are related with time. One of the factors is about instability of children's school arrival time which is parallel to literature. Participants of the study expressed that they have hardships in utilizing circle time in the morning because some children come to class in time while some of them comes later which distracts the others' attention during the process. Even though teachers expressed that they should do circle time before starting other activities, it is hard for them to make a whole circle with each member of the class at the beginning of the day. Dinçkurt and Kesicioğlu (2020) and Yıldız (2019) identified that the biggest problem in utilizing circle time regularly is about children's school arrival time because even teachers make predictions about having circle time on time each day at the beginning of the semester, they had to do circle time in some days when most of the children arrive at school on time. It may mean that because teachers regard instability of children's arrival at school as an constraint for circle time, they make changes among time period for circle time. It may mean that teachers are knowledgeable about and benefiting from flexibility characteristics of MoNE (2013) Early Childhood Education Program that allows teachers to make changes in program regarding conditions.

Another point which is expressed by participants about time related issues is linked to time constraints that teachers have. Participants indicated that because of overloaded curriculum, teachers might have limited time to do circle time in their classes. This

finding is parallel with literature. Straine and Smith (2016) made a study with early childhood teachers about effectiveness of circle time regarding teacher's beliefs with an interview. Results of the study showed that time constraints are one of the main problems that teachers have and this problem hinders teachers to utilize circle time regularly. Additionally, Cefai et al. (2014) expressed that one of the complaints of teachers is lacking time which causes them to diminish the time that they allocate for circle time for sparing time for academic learning. Yet, there are other studies which indicates contribution of circle time to academic learning process with the help of better listening skills, more attention span, improved school readiness skills (Copple & Bredekamp, 2008; Yıldız, 2019). Thus, putting pressure on children's academic learning process and aiming to have better results by restricting children's circle time process may not lead to have better academic results because circle time itself enables children to develop in academic skills, as well.

Apart from time related issues, teachers explained other factors related with children's needs. One constraint that they mentioned is priority in children's choices which means that children sometimes may prefer to have another activity instead of circle time. In literature, the reason of children's choices explained regarding different aspects. Bustmante et. al. (2018) explained since content may direct children to memorization when teacher makes the same routine each day, children may not prefer to attend in circle time. Especially Beneke, Ostrosky & Katz (2008) identifies calendar time including days of the week, months of the year makes children get bored if teacher of the class uses the same methods each day. At that point participants of the study advices to differentiate the process even if the general aim is similar each day. For doing these, teacher can make some changes in order of the routines such as taking the free play time before circle time according to children's moods and energy level because teacher should observe children each day and regarding their interests, they should rearrange the routines as well as enriching the content (Copple & Bredekamp, 2008). This finding may mean that participants of the study have similar beliefs about constraints related with children's needs with literature because teachers necessitate changing content in time. Regarding teachers' statements, it might also be deduced that they are knowledgeable how to deal with this constraint.

Another factor which hinders teachers' circle time process is age group of children. Age group of children differs from diversity in children's capabilities. While 'diversity in children's capabilities' mentions that having children from different age ranges at the same class and having difficulty in reaching and facilitating these children with the same methods, 'age group of children' means that circle time with children who are 2 years old differs from children who are 4 years old because of their age-related commonalities. Participants of the study expressed the reason why age group may hinder circle time process is that having circle time in 2 or 3 years of age children is harder compared to 4-5 years old children, because younger children have less attention span and managing the process might be more challenging as expressed similarly by Montie, Xiang & Schweinhart, (2006). In a book called Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Education Programs written by Copple & Bredekamp (2008), developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) is basically explained by two main items. First one mentions that a teacher should be aware of children's capabilities and enable them to reach challenging and achievable goals. Second one explains that all activities or other teaching practices should be planned concerning children's developmental status and age, uniqueness and cultural differences. In relation to DAP, Huffman & Speer (2000) conducted research about academic performance of kindergarten and first grade children. In this research 113 children who are attending 28 urban schools were examined. Researchers used subscales derived from Woodcock-Johnson Test of Achievement and Assessment Profile for Early Childhood Programs as instruments. Results of the study showed that children who are educated in classes covering DAP were significantly more successful regarding letter or word identification, calculation and applied problems. At that point, as Copple & Bredekamp (2008) and Huffman & Speer (2000) mentioned, teachers should consider DAP while preparing teaching practices. So, teachers may need to be supported with resources including circle time activities both planned for children among 2 years to 6 years because children's capabilities vary in different ages.

The other factor teachers expressed as a constraint on circle time process is behavioral problems of children. Participants highlighted those children who distract other

friends' attention makes circle time process hard to manage, so they have to keep the duration shorten than intended. As parallel to research findings Zaghlawan and Ostrosky (2011) found that behavioral problems of children are one of the factors impeding circle time. When they search about the reason of behavioral problems, they found that highly structured activities may lead children to disrupt. Additionally, Collins and Macgaha (2002) elaborated some reasons of behavioral problems in circle time and they mentioned that lack of flexibility, planning and sensible expectations from teachers might result in behavioral problems among children such as unwillingness to attend circle time, leaving, aggression. For minimizing children's disruptive behaviors, teacher can avoid from keeping children sit through in long periods, repetitive activities which may lead them to memorize the content and get distracted in a short time (Bustamante et al, 2018). This finding can show that participants of the study may need trainings or resources about how to cope with children with behavioral problems in circle time.

Moreover, one constraint on circle time process proposed by participants of the study is having a child with special needs in their classes. In interview part of the study, teachers mentioned difficulties about arranging level of the activities appropriate for child with special needs as well as managing the process. They continued that these children might have difficulty in paying their attention and teachers confront with problems at that point. When it comes to literature about this issue, to the extent our research, there is not any outcome of a study indicating that children with special needs hinders circle time process but on the other side, there are studies about how to decrease teachers' classroom management problems in classes with children with special needs (Mosley, 2005). It is mentioned that there is need for assistant teacher for these classes to help teacher to manage the process more easily (Mosley, 2005). As mentioned beforehand, Gök and Erbaş (2011) conducted a study about children with special needs with 10 preschool teachers. In this study, participants explained that they demand for assistant teachers and they need teacher trainings about children with special needs. Parallel to Gök and Erbaş's study (2011), another study made by Zic Ralic, Cvıtkovıc, Zyta & Cwırynkalo (2020) with 312 teachers revealed that, teachers need assistant teachers for better quality education for children with special needs.

Additionally, Sharma (2016) conducted a systematic literature review of researches about teaching assistants in inclusive classrooms. In this research, it is highlighted that teaching assistants has various roles which are supportive for teachers, assistant teachers can improve children's cognitive and social skills only when they are trained and supervised effectively. These findings may show that, children with special needs can join circle time but teachers may need for assistant teachers which might be provided by stakeholders for increasing quality of circle time.

As the last-mentioned constraint on circle time by participants, children's self-care needs during the process cause interruptions such as needs to go to toilet, drinking water. This topic is mentioned only by one participant. The reason behind this might be about teacher's beliefs about benefits of circle time because teachers also identified that circle time helps to improve children's self-regulation skills in alignment with literature (Barton et al., 2013). Additionally, Bulut (2004) also explained, children's self-discipline improves with the help of regular routines. They grasp their tasks to accomplish in that day so the clearness about the time of circle makes children regulate when to supply their self-care needs in long term process. Additionally, Tominey and McClelland (2011) conducted research about circle time games to improve behavioral self-regulation in early years. 65 preschool children attended this research and children divided into two groups as treatment and control group. Children in treatment group are participated in 16 playgroup sessions. Results of the study showed that, children in the treatment group who are assigned circle time games have more self-regulation gains, they have better letter-word identification compared to the children who are in the control group. This, then, may mean that utilizing circle time not regularly may lead children to be less capable of regulating self-care needs during circle time process.

As the last point to be discussed, findings of the current study and theoretical background of the study will be elaborated. At this point, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Vygotsky's Socio-cultural Theory will be examined subsequently. First of all, it is mentioned that there are three points in relation with Maslow's theory and circle time which are safety needs, belonging and love need and self-esteem need. Considering findings of current study, it can be seen that majority of participants

regularly utilize circle time in their classes. Therefore, it may be inferred that teachers attended this study may tend to satisfy children's safety love and belonging and self-esteem need because researches indicate that circle time is beneficial for children's safety (Bornman, Collins & Maines, 2004), love and belonging (Kriete and Davis, 2014) and self-esteem need (Revell, 2004). As Maslow (1968) explains, these three needs are considered as deficiency needs which means lacking these needs may cause various problems both physically and psychologically. On the other hand, meeting these needs encourages individuals to satisfy further needs which are self-actualization or being needs for facilitating somebody to reach his/her fullest potential. In this context, it may be inferred that supplying children's deficiency needs through circle time may lead or rotate children to fulfil their fullest potential in their life. As for Vygotsky's Socio-cultural theory, it is mentioned that people can gather information about the environment or the world they are in via interactions with people around them (Vygotsky, 1978). Considering the findings of the current study, it is clear that the majority of participants provide an environment for children to interact with their peers within circle time process. Therefore, children might be provided an environment where they can make sense of the world they are living in via circle time. Moreover, Vygotsky (1978) added that, adults should be offering challenging experiences for children to facilitate them to become more capable individuals. He also explained when children are in interaction with more capable peers or adults, their actual development improves. At this point the capable person should take the guidance from the child with control in order to make the child facilitate to complete the tasks by him/herself in time. Results of the current study reveals that, in circle time children develop social skills such as asking for permission before talking, knowing their friend's personalities, valuing diversities in class, developing self-regulation such as supplying their self-care needs before starting the circle time process as well as indicating that children are in a democratic environment in circle time which is utilized by the majority of teachers. Thus, as Vygotsky said, providing an environment for children where they can interact with others improve children's development (Vygotsky, 1978). Findings of the current study also shows that a vast majority of teachers did not mention that they let children manage circle time by themselves which means that teachers utilize circle time instead of allowing children to administrate the

process. So, it might be deduced that teachers may tend to manage circle time by themselves as teachers which may not cause children to overcome challenging experiences. Furthermore, when types of activities in circle time are examined, it might be seen that teachers tend to do similar activities in circle time. It may mean that children might be facing up with less challenging experiences in circle time process. In the light of all this information, it can clearly be stated that teachers might need professional trainings about how to provide challenges in circle time for children.

5.2.2.4 Teachers' Beliefs about Their Background Information and Need for Resources and Trainings about Circle Time

Results of the current study revealed that a great majority of teachers explained that they have heard about circle time beforehand while a vast majority of them mentioned they have not taken a course or a seminar about circle time. Furthermore, a great deal of early childhood teachers put forward they need various trainings and resources to improve their circle time practices. Participant teachers also added that they learn how to utilize circle time by collaborative learning among their colleagues as well. When literature is examined, it is seen Housego & Burns (1994) insisted that teachers need for trainings in order to deliver circle time effectively. They also mentioned that because teachers have wide range of expertise and experiences differentiating from each other, they need trainings. When time period of this statement is examined, it can be seen that it was about 1990s. So, it can be deduced that necessity for teacher trainings and resources is still continues. On the other hand, considering teachers have wide range of expertise from each other as Housego & Burns (1994) stated, their collaborative learning might make the circle time content and methods richer. So, it might be said that teachers turn disadvantage of resource and training needs into advantage by learning new ways and methods related to circle time from each other. Moreover Kaufmann & Wishmann (1999) explained that many early childhood teachers do not regard themselves as capable of meeting needs of children regarding socio-emotional development or coping with challenging behaviors of children (as cited in Hemmeter, Santos & Ostrosky, 2008). As one of the ways to decrease challenging behaviors of children, circle time practices is one of the clues for it. The

more teachers are knowledgeable about circle time, the better outcomes of circle time practices can be reached. So, trainings should be offered for teachers who are willing about increasing effectiveness of their circle time practices because if there is absence of knowing the aim of circle time deeply, it is hardly possible to achieve benefits of circle time comprehensively (Glazzard, 2016).

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improves. At this point the capable person should take the guidance from the child with control in order make the child facilitate to complete the tasks by him/herself in time. Results of the current study reveals that, in circle time children develop social skills such as asking for permission before talking, knowing their friend's personalities, valuing diversities in class, developing self-regulation such as supplying their self-care needs before starting the circle time process as well as giving signal that children are in a democratic environment in circle time which is utilized by majority of teachers. So, as Vygotsky said, providing an environment for children where they can interact with others improve children's development (Vygotsky, 1978). Findings of the current study also shows that a vast majority of teachers did not mention that they let children to process circle time by themselves which means that teachers utilize circle time instead of allowing children to administrate the process. So, it might be deduced that teachers may tend to process circle time by themselves as teachers which may not cause children to overcome challenging experiences. Furthermore, when types of activities in circle time are examined, it might be seen that teachers are tend to do similar activities in circle time. It may mean that children might be facing up with less challenging experiences in circle time process. So, teachers might need professional trainings about how to provide challenges in circle time for children.

5.3 Conclusion and Implications

Even there are studies about circle time in various fields, studies which takes early childhood education at the center are rare. This current study provides data about beliefs and self-reported practices of early childhood teachers about circle time. There are conclusions which are drawn from study findings.

The first conclusion is about beliefs of teachers about benefits of circle time. Early childhood teachers seem to have positive beliefs about benefits; there were not any participants who expressed negative sides of circle time. When the literature is examined, there might be some constraints which are related with leading children to memorization while applying regular routines. It is important to be aware of the constraints because if teachers know about the possible outcomes of circle time when applied with the same method and content each day, then children might not gain

advantage. At that point, teachers may be supported with teacher trainings to enrich the content and methods used.

Another conclusion is about teachers' self-reported practices about types of activities in circle time. When the literature about this topic is examined, it can be seen that there are numerous activity types that can be done in circle time. But majority of teachers utilize activities related with sharing experiences and feelings or story time. This situation might be associated with pre-service and in-service teacher training. Teachers may be supported about content of the activities and they can enrich the process to make circle time more efficient both for teacher and children with the help of pre-service and in-service teacher trainings. At that point, pre-service teachers can be supported with the help of undergraduate course programs. As the decision makers, there can be courses including content of circle time, the ways to utilize circle time, the reason why teachers can do circle time, the materials or mediators that can be used in circle time, history of circle time and philosophy of circle time can be elaborated at universities where teacher candidates are being educated. For example, as one of the topics, circle time can be covered within the scope of Curriculum in Early Childhood Education Course because as it is mentioned before, circle time is a routine which is explained in Minisrty of National Education Early Childhood Education Program. So, circle time should be covered and emphasized just like learning centers, outdoor play areas etc. Moreover, for making candidate teachers realize the importance of circle time in early childhood education, they can also do circle time in educational process as a training. For example, pre service teachers can come together to make circle time at the beginning of the day as the members of a community. So, they can internalize the importance of circle time before making children do circle time. Teachers themselves can witness its benefits and they can realize the aspects which need improvements. Additionally, pre-service teachers can be informed about how they can utilize circle time in their practicums because they have chance to make activities at kindergartens before graduated. So, they can make practice about how to vary the content of circle time before becoming teachers.

On the other hand, study showed that early childhood teachers have a variety of facilitators that they use during circle time such as mediators, media tools and materials. Even in the related studies, there were no such kinds of materials used mentioned. Thus, it seemed that early childhood teachers have an important role on creating their own ways to utilize circle time by varying the materials used. While there are teachers who use different kinds of materials to enrich circle time, there are also a group of them who explains constraints that hinder their process. Some constraints explained are related with stakeholders such as number of children, lack of materials, need for assistant teacher. These are kinds of constraints that can be regulated by authorities. Therefore, these factors can be taken into consideration for ensuring a better learning environment. Furthermore, in the current research, it is seen that quality early childhood education provided by participants has some aspects to be considered. For quality education, program should be developmentally appropriate, children should be provided a safe environment where variety of materials placed, allowing children to participate in process, having teachers or adults who respect for children's ideas and wishes, and having qualified teachers who have enough trainings and information. In order to ensure these factors of quality education, teachers should be provided necessary professional trainings about circle time and their classrooms should be supplied with variety of materials as well as improving physical conditions for more quality circle time. At that point stakeholders as decision makers should take into considerations of teachers' constraints on circle time. They can provide in-service trainings for teachers, they can provide necessary materials to schools, they can especially provide assistant teachers which is highlighted by participants frequently. As for the school administrators, they can try to arrange number of children in classes regarding classroom capacities because participants explains that when the number of children increases more than it should be, then the quality of teaching decreases.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Studies

Findings of this study raised essential recommendations for further studies. Recommendations for future studies consist of sample group, instruments and research design and content.

First of all, recommendations about research design are presented. Even though the current research includes both quantitative and qualitative part which are survey and interview, having one more instrument which is observation would enrich the data. Research design has been planned as triangulation of survey, interview and observation in order to strengthen the data at the beginning of the research but due to Coronavirus pandemic, the schools are shut down for months. This situation hindered to collect data from schools which would enrich the data regarding validity and reliability of the study. Due to this hindrance, observation process was emitted from the study and only survey and interview was applied. At that point teachers' beliefs and practices were recorded as self-reports. So, for further studies, observation of early childhood teacher's circle time activities might be beneficial. While observing the children during circle time, children's interactions with each other, children's improvements in terms of social emotional development and teacher guidance could be observed in order to evaluate teacher's expressions about effect of circle time in terms of social emotional development. In addition to social emotional development, children's cognitive skills, gross motor and fine motor skills, language skills could also be observed in order to examine whether these areas are supported in circle time. Moreover, a longitudinal study can be conducted for examining long term results of the circle time on both teachers, children and families. This may give clues about how to enrich professional trainings about circle time as well as involving parents into process. On the other hand, regarding the effect of circle time on children's development, an experimental study can be useful for evaluating the teacher's self-reported practices about the benefits of circle time with another context.

As a second recommendation, participants of the study can be extended. In this process, in addition to in-service teachers, there might be children and parents as participants. Children can share their own beliefs and practices about circle time because children are in the center of education and getting children's beliefs can gives clues about how to enrich teacher trainings. As for parents, they can be included in the process about evaluating their beliefs about effects of circle time on their child's development on each domain. Now that parents are another component of education,

they can supply different perspectives about how to enrich the content of circle time and how to include parents into the process by taking their views and expectations. As another factor, there can be pre-service teachers as participants because they have the fresh information about content of teacher training and they can be consulted about information gathered about circle time during undergraduate years.

As the last point, even though the beliefs of the participants in terms of benefits of circle time about social and emotional development have intensified, considering that different types of activities are applied in circle time, it can be said that the teachers are unconsciously aware of the circle time's benefits for the whole child development. Studies for increasing teacher awareness about circle time, therefore, can be conducted.

5.5 Limitations

First limitation of the current study is about generalizability of the findings because of the number of participants. Although there are a number of participants both in survey (N=502) and interview (N=22), research findings cannot be generalized for large populations. Having a more representative sample including greater number of participants can give more generalizable results.

On the other hand, as another data collection procedure, observation could make the data richer because data collection process with interview and survey supplied self-reported practices and beliefs of teachers. In addition to these instruments, observation could give cleared answers of practices of teachers in real time situations.

Lastly, in order to make participants volunteer for attending in *Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs' and Self-reported Practices about Circle Time Survey*, survey questions are designed clearly and it is aimed to keep questions short for keeping participants interested in questions until the end of survey. For reaching this aim, some questions might have limited participants in survey study such as "I plan my circle time regarding objectives and indicators of the program.". This question may lead

teachers to be directed to answer that they plan circle time regarding objectives in indicators of the program. This is another limitation of the study about instruments used.

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APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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16 HAZİRAN 2020

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Dr.Öğrt.Üyesi Hasibe Özlen DEMİRCAN

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız **Ayşenur MUMCUOĞLU'nun "Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Çember Zamanı Hakkındaki Görüşleri ve Uygulamalarının İncelenmesi"** başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve **180 ODTU 2020** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.

Prof.Dr. Mine MIŞIRLISOY
Başkan

Prof. Dr. Tolga CAN
Üye

Doç.Dr. Pınar KAYGAN
Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ali Emre TURGUT
Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şerife SEVİNÇ
Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ
Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Süreyya Özcan KABASAKAL
Üye

B. APPROVAL OF THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

T.C.
ANKARA VALİLİĞİ
Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : E-14588481-605.99-24873535 29.04.2021
Konu : Araştırma İzni

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİNE
(Öğrenci İşleri Daire Başkanlığı)

İlgi: a) MEB Yenilik ve Eğitim Teknolojileri Genel Müdürlüğünün 2020/2 sayılı Genelgesi.
b) Bila tarihli ve 299 sayılı yazınız.

Üniversiteniz Temel Eğitim Anabilim Dalı Okul Öncesi Eğitimi yüksek lisans öğrencisi Ayşenur MUMCUOĞLU'nun **"Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Çember Zamanı Hakkındaki Görüşleri ve Uygulamalarının İncelenmesi"** konulu çalışması kapsamında İlimiz merkez ilçelerine bağlı anaokulları ve anasınıflarında uygulama yapma talebi ilgi (a) Genelge çerçevesinde incelenmiştir.

Yapılan inceleme sonucunda, söz konusu araştırmanın Müdürlüğümüzde muhafaza edilen ölçme araçlarının; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası, Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu ile Türk Milli Eğitiminin genel amaçlarına uygun olarak, ilgili yasal düzenlemelerde belirtilen ilke, esas ve amaçlara aykırılık teşkil etmeyecek, eğitim-öğretim faaliyetlerini aksatmayacak şekilde okul ve kurum yöneticilerinin sorumluluğunda, gönüllülük esasına göre uygulanması Müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmüştür.

Bilgilerinizi ve gereğini rica ederim.

Turan AKPINAR
Vali a.
Milli Eğitim Müdürü

Ek: Uygulama Araçları

Dağıtım:
Gereği: Bilgi:
ODTÜ 9 Merkez İlçe

C. EARLY CHILDHOOD TEARCHER'S BELIEFS AND SELF-REPORTED PRACTICES SURVEY

ONLINE ANKET ÖRNEĞİ VE GÖRÜŞME SORULARI

Anket linki:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdL59q3LZK9-mf3dBuALGdTbXk03iX6l9jS9oyusr8ONHExmA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerine Yönelik Çember Zamanı Anketi

Değerli katılımcı,
Bu araştırma, ODTÜ Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği Bölümü Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Ayşenur Mumcuoğlu tarafından Dr. Öğr. Üye. Hasibe Özlen Demircan danışmanlığında yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Araştırma koşulları ile ilgili sizi bilgilendirmek adına bu form hazırlanmıştır. Yürütülecek olan araştırmanın amacı okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çember zamanı uygulamaları hakkındaki görüşlerini incelemektir.

Bu çalışmaya katılmayı kabul etmeniz durumunda araştırmanın ilk aşamasında çember zamanına ilişkin öğretmen görüş ve uygulamaları anketini doldurmanız istenecektir. Anketin yaklaşık çözüm süresi 5-10 dk arasındadır.

Çalışmaya katılmanız tamamıyla gönüllülük esaslı olup, kişisel bilgileriniz istenmeyecektir. Ayrıca vereceğiniz cevaplar sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecek ve bilimsel çalışmalarda kimlik bilgileri paylaşılmadan kullanılacaktır. Çalışma içeriğinde özel hayata ve kişisel bilgilerinize dair sorular içermemektedir. Herhangi bir durumda araştırmaya devam etmv istememeniz durumda araştırmadan çekilebilirsiniz.

Çalışma hakkında detaylı bilgi edinmek isterseniz Ayşenur Mumcuoğlu (E-posta: aysenurm@metu.edu.tr) ile iletişime geçebilirsiniz.

* Gerekli

1. Öğrenim durumunuz nedir? *

- ◯ Lise
- ◯ Ön lisans
- ◯ Lisans
- ◯ Yüksek lisans
- ◯ Doktora

2. Yaşınız kaçtır?

Yanıtınız

3. Cinsiyetiniz nedir?

- ◯ Kadın
- ◯ Erkek

4. Mezun olduğunuz bölüm nedir?

- ◯ Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği
- ◯ Çocuk Gelişimi ve Eğitimi
- ◯ Çocuk Gelişimi
- ◯ Anaokulu Öğretmenliği
- ◯ Diğer:

5. Ankara'nın hangi ilçesinde öğretmenlik yapıyorsunuz?

- ◯ Çankaya
- ◯ Yenimahalle
- ◯ Mamak
- ◯ Keçiören
- ◯ Altındağ
- ◯ Diğer:

6. Çalıştığınız kurum türü nedir? *

- ◯ Devlet Kurumu
- ◯ Özel Kurum

7. Kaç yıldır öğretmenlik yapmaktasınız? *

Yanıtınız

8. Eğitim verdiğiniz grubun yaş aralığı nedir? *

- ◯ 24-36 ay (2+)
- ◯ 36-48 ay (3+)
- ◯ 48-60 ay (4+)
- ◯ 60-72 ay (5+)

9. Sınıf mevcudunuz kaçtır? *

Yanıtınız

10. Daha önce "çember zamanı" veya "güne başlama zamanı" kavramını duydunuz mu?

- ◯ Evet
- ◯ Hayır

11. Çember zamanı hakkında ders, kurs vs. aldınız mı veya bir seminere katıldınız mı? *

- ◯ Evet
- ◯ Hayır

12. Sınıfınızda çember zamanı uygulama sıklığınız nedir? *

- ◯ Hiçbir zaman
- ◯ İki haftada bir kez
- ◯ Haftada bir kez
- ◯ İki günde bir
- ◯ Her gün
- ◯ Günde iki kez

13. Çember zamanını aşağıdaki zaman dilimlerinden hangisinde uygularsınız? (Birden fazla seçenek işaretleyebilirsiniz)

	Her zaman	Ara sıra	Hiçbir zaman
Kahvaltıdan önce	◯	◯	◯
Kahvaltıdan hemen sonra	◯	◯	◯
Günlük eğitim sürecinde	◯	◯	◯
Okuldan ayrılmadan önce	◯	◯	◯

14. Çember zamanınız ortalama kaç dakika sürer? *

Yanıtınız

15. Çember zamanını aşağıda belirtilen alanlarda hangi sıklıkta uygularsınız?

	Her zaman	Ara sıra	Hiçbir zaman
Sandalyeler üzerinde	○	○	○
Minderler üzerinde	○	○	○
Halı üzerinde	○	○	○

16. Çember zamanında kullandığınız materyaller varsa seçiniz.

- [ ] Kitap
- [ ] Kukla
- [ ] Kartlar
- [ ] Fotoğraf
- [ ] Kalem
- [ ] Kağıt
- [ ] Top
- [ ] Müzik aletleri
- [ ] Takvim
- [ ] Oyuncak
- [ ] Oyuncak
- [ ] Yapı malzemeleri
- [ ] Yazı tahtası
- [ ] Diğer:

17. Çember zamanında kullandığınız teknolojik aletler ve kaynaklar varsa seçiniz.

- [ ] Bilgisayar
- [ ] Projeksiyon cihazı
- [ ] Akıllı tahta
- [ ] Hoparlör
- [ ] Telefon
- [ ] İnternet
- [ ] Diğer:

18. Çember zamanında çocukların dikkatini toplamak amaçlı kullandığınız yöntem veya teknikler varsa seçiniz.

- [ ] Şarkı
- [ ] Masal
- [ ] Parmak oyunu
- [ ] Kukla gösterisi
- [ ] Tekerleme
- [ ] Bilmece
- [ ] Soru-cevap
- [ ] Diğer:

19. Aşağıda bulunan soruları numaralandırılmış alana göre her soru için yalnızca bir seçenek işaretleyecek şekilde cevaplayınız. *

	Kesinlikle katılıyorum	Kısmen katılıyorum	Kararsızım	Kısmen katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
Çember zamanını çocukların sosyal duygulsal gelişimine faydalı bulurum.	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanını çocukların öğrenme süreçleri için faydalı bulurum.	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanını çocukların dil gelişimi için faydalı bulurum.	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanını akran ilişkilerini güçlendirmesi bakımından faydalı bulurum.	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanını öğretmen öğrenci ilişkilerini güçlendirmesi bakımından faydalı bulurum.	○	○	○	○	○

20. Aşağıda bulunan soruları numaralandırılmış alana göre her soru için yalnızca bir seçenek işaretleyecek şekilde cevaplayınız. *

	Her zaman	Sıklıkla	Ara sıra	Nadiren	Hiçbir zaman
Çember zamanında çember şekli oluştururuz.	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanında fikirlerimizi, duygularımızı veya deneyimlerimizi paylaşırız.	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanında kitap, oyuncak, materyal vs. paylaşırız.	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanında hava durumu, mevsimler,ay veya gün hakkında konuşuruz.	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanında o günkü planımız hakkında konuşuruz.	○	○	○	○	○

Çember zamanında yoklama alırız.	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanında dil gelişimini destekleyen etkinlikler yaparız. (Örn: Cümle tamamlama, hikaye okuma)	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanında matematik etkinlikleri yaparız. (Örn: Materyaller ile sıralama, karşılaştırma yapma)	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanında şarkı söyleme veya dinleme etkinliği yaparız.	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanında dans ederiz.	○	○	○	○	○

Çember zamanında kaba motor becerilerini geliştirici etkinlikler yaparız. (Örn: Sabah sporu)	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanında sınıfımıza özgü oyunlar oynar veya etkinlikler yaparız. (örn: 100 gün etkinliği)	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanında okul kurallarını hatırlarız. (Örn: Konuşmak için söz hakkı istemek)	○	○	○	○	○

21. Aşağıda bulunan soruları numaralandırılmış alana göre her soru için yalnızca bir seçenek işaretleyecek şekilde cevaplayınız.

	Kesinlikle katılıyorum	Kısmen katılıyorum	Kararsızım	Kısmen katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
Çember zamanını günlük eğitim akışının gerekliliği olduğu için uygularım.	○	○	○	○	○

Çember zamanı uygulamalarımı geliştirmek için çeşitli eğitimlere ihtiyaç duyarım.	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanı uygulamalarımı geliştirmek için çeşitli kaynaklara ihtiyaç duyarım.	○	○	○	○	○
Çember zamanı sürecinde keyif aldığını düşündüğüm öğrenci sayım, keyif almadığını düşündüğüm öğrenci sayımdan fazladır.	○	○	○	○	○
Bir öğretmen olarak çember zamanı sürecinden keyif alırım.	○	○	○	○	○
Bir öğretmen olarak çember zamanı etkinliğini uygulamakta zorluk yaşarım.	○	○	○	○	○

22. Çember zamanı uygulamakta zorluk çekiyorum, çünkü:

	Kesinlikle katılıyorum	Kısmen katılıyorum	Kararsızım	Kısmen katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
Sınıfımda uygun fiziki şartlar bulunmuyor.	○	○	○	○	○

Takip etmem gereken program çok yoğun.	○	○	○	○	○
Sınıfımda bulunan öğrenci sayısı çok fazla.	○	○	○	○	○
Sınıfımın yaş grubu çember zamanı için uygun değil.	○	○	○	○	○
Sınıfımda davranış problemleri gösteren çocuk/lar var.	○	○	○	○	○
Sınıfımda özel gereksinimli çocuk/lar var.	○	○	○	○	○
Sabah çocukların toplanma saati belirli bir düzende değil.	○	○	○	○	○
Süreçte yardımcı olacak bir kişiye ihtiyaç duyuyorum.	○	○	○	○	○

D. EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND SELF REPORTED PRACTICES ABOUT CIRCLE TIME INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

OKUL ÖNCESİ ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN ÇEMBER ZAMANINA İLİŞKİN İNANIŞ VE UYGULAMALARI GÖRÜŞME PROTOKOLÜ

1. Okulunuzda uyguladığınız bir günlük çember zamanı rutininizi anlatır mısınız?
2. Çember zamanı sürecinde ne tür etkinlikler uygularsınız?
3. Çember zamanı uygulama sıklığınız ve uygulama süreniz nedir?
4. Çember zamanını gün içerisinde hangi zaman diliminde uygularsınız? Bir sebebi var mı?
5. Çember zamanını mekân olarak nerede uygulamayı tercih edersiniz? Bir sebebi var mı?
6. Çember zamanı sürecinde kullandığınız materyaller var mı?
7. Çember zamanı sürecinde kullandığınız teknolojik aletler veya medya unsurları var mı?
8. Çember zamanı sürecinde kullandığınız çocukların dikkatini çekmek amacı ile kullandığınız yöntemler var mı?
9. Çember zamanı uygulama sebebinizi kısaca anlatır mısınız?
10. Çember zamanının çocukların gelişimi açısından ne gibi katkıları olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?
11. Çember zamanı etkinlikleriniz önceden planlanmış mıdır, süreç içerisinde mi içeriği belirlersiniz?
12. Çember zamanı etkinliklerini ve temayı belirleyen faktör/ler nedir?
13. Çember zamanı uygulamasında zorlandığınız veya yardıma ihtiyaç duyduğunuz noktalar var mı? Zorlandığınız noktaların sebeplerinde bahseder misiniz?

14. Lisans eğitimi sürecinizde veya öğretmenlik sürecinde çember zamanı hakkında herhangi bir eğitime veya seminere katıldınız mı? Bu konuda kaynak veya eğitim ihtiyacı hissediyor musunuz?

E. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Erken çocukluk deneyimlerinin, çocukların fen, okuryazarlık, matematik, dil ve sosyal becerileri üzerinde büyük bir etkisi vardır (Bustamente vd., 2018; Culkin, 2000). Erken çocukluk eğitiminin bileşenleri olarak, gelişimsel olarak uygun programlar, çocukların özellikleri dikkate alınarak geliştirilen bireyselleştirilmiş programlar, güvenli ve çeşitli materyallerle donatılmış bir ortam, öğrenme sürecine katılımı sağlanan ebeveynler ve çocuklar, nitelikli ve iyi eğitimli öğretmenler, kaliteli erken çocukluk eğitiminin bileşenlerini oluşturan faktörler olarak kabul edilmektedir (Morgan, 2019). Ayrıca, çocukların yakın ilişkiler içinde olduğu ve başkaları tarafından saygı gördüğü bir ortam sağlamak, kaliteli erken çocukluk eğitiminin bir başka unsurudur (Colker ve Koralek, 2018; Morgan, 2019) çünkü erken çocukluk eğitimi çocukların sosyal-duygusal becerilerini şekillendiren en temel unsurdur (Hemmeter vd., 2008).

Çocuklar yaşamlarının ilk yıllarında "Ben kimim?" sorusuna cevap bulmaya çalışırlar. Bu, süreç çocukların kişisel benliklerini geliştirdiği zamandır (Melendez, Beck & Fletcher, 2000). İlk yıllarda kazandıkları sosyal-duygusal becerilerin sayesinde içinde bulundukları toplumun kültürü ve uymaları gereken kuralları öğrenerek zamanla o toplumun bir parçası haline gelirler (Mindes, 2006). Bu nedenle, erken çocukluk eğitiminin çocukların gelişimi üzerindeki olumlu etkilerini artırmak için, bu kritik ilk yıllarda sosyal duygusal gelişim desteklenmelidir (Barnett, 2008),

Çocukların sosyal-duygusal becerilerinin gelişimi, kişilerarası etkileşimler, öz saygı ve çocukların öz düzenlemeleri ile bağlantılıdır (Bulotsky Shearer ve Fantuzzo, 2011; Cooper, Masi ve Vick, 2009; Hemmeter vd., 2008). Araştırmacılar, çocuklara kendilerini biricik ve önemli hissetmeleri için fırsatlar sağlamanın, okuldaki başarılarının yanı sıra gelecekteki iş ve özel yaşamları üzerinde de olumlu etki yarattığını vurgulamışlardır (Covington, 1989). Araştırmacılar ve eğitimciler, okullarda benlik saygısını artırmak için bazı alternatif sistemler geliştirme veya

iyileştirme arayışına girmişlerdir (Suggs, 2019). Bu faydalara hizmet eden modellerden biri de çember zamanıdır.

Çember zamanı, eğitimin bireylerin yaşayışlarını anlamak için birlikte çalışmayı gerektiren sosyal bir süreç olduğunu vurgulayan bir anlayıştan ortaya çıkmıştır (Mosley,1988). Bu ortam, kişiler arası iletişimin geliştirildiği ve her insanın sağlıklı ilişkiler kurabileceği birey merkezli bir ortamdır (Bulut, 2004). Çember zamanı, bireyler arasında olumlu ilişkileri teşvik etmek için kullanılır ve bu süreçte çocuklar ve yetişkinler, duygularını günlük olarak okulda veya başka bir ortamda tartışmak için bir araya gelirler (Blake vd., 2007). Curry ve Bromfield (1994) ve Mosley (2009) çember zamanının, bireylerin birbirini önemsediği bir grup ortamında özellikle sosyal-duygusal becerilerini geliştirerek kişisel potansiyellerini geliştirmeyi amaçladığını belirtmiştir. Bunun nedeni, çember zamanının çocuk merkezli, güvenli ve ilgili bir ortamda yürütülmesidir. Bu süreç sayesinde çocuklar, herkesin fikirlerine değer verilen, çemberin her üyesinin bir diğerinin bakış açısını dinlediği bir ortamda kendilerini ifade etme, problem çözme gibi becerilerini geliştirebilirler (Collins, 2013). Bu süreçte öğrenme deneyimseldir ve çocuklar oyun oynama, küçük gruplarla çalışma, rol canlandırma, şarkı söyleme, hareket etkinlikleri yapma fırsatına sahiptir, bu nedenle çember zamanının faydaları çok yönlüdür (Cefai vd., 2014).

Farklı alanlarda bir yöntem olarak çember zamanı kullanılır. Bir personel eğitimi olarak çember zamanı, yetişkinler arasında bir topluluk hissi yaratmak, öğretmenlerin birbirleri ile fikirlerini paylaşacakları bir atmosfer hazırlamak için öğretmen yetiştirme program olarak kullanılır. Öğretmenlerin çocuklarla empati kurabilmeleri için öğretmeye başlamadan önce kendilerini öğrenci gibi hissetmeleri gerektiği belirtilmektedir. Psikoloji alanında ise, çember zamanı, kişinin deneyimlerini oluşturan duygular ve davranışlar arasında anlamlı bağlantılar oluşturmaya yardımcı olan bilişsel davranışçı terapide (BDT) kullanılır. Çalışmalar, BDT ile yapılan çember zamanının dürtüsel ve saldırgan davranışları azaltmak için faydalı olduğunu göstermiştir (Canney ve Byrne, 2006). Son olarak, çember zamanı, otizmli bireyleri günlük rutinlere alıştırmak, hava durumundaki değişikliklerden onları haberdar etmek, çevrelerindeki insanlarla etkileşimlerini sağlamak ve dikkat sürelerini artırmak için

kullanılan bir yöntemdir. Jalongo ve Isenberg (2000) de çember zamanının özel gereksinimli bireyler için kapsayıcı bir araç olabileceğini, çünkü çemberin her bir üyesini değerli ve dinlendiğini hissettirmek için etkili bir süreç olduğunu belirtmişlerdir.

Çember zamanının personel eğitimi, psikoloji, özel gereksinimli bireyler gibi alanlarda ve diğer alanlarda kullanımının kökenleri, benliği, benliğin yaşam boyu süren eylemlerini ve diğer insanlarla karşılıklı iletişimini araştıran hümanist geleneğe dayanmaktadır (Mary, 2014). Çember zamanının yaklaşık kökeni, 1800'lerden başlayarak günümüze kadar uzanan Frobelian eğitim anlayışına sahip anaokulları olarak işaret edilmektedir. 1900'lerde çember zamanının günlük rutinlerin bir parçası haline gelmesinin nedeni, sınıflarında çember zamanını düzenli olarak uygulayan okul öncesi öğretmenleridir.

Okullarda uygulanan çember zamanının kapsamı, eğitim sistemlerinin temel unsurlarından biri olan okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin hem inançları hem de uygulamaları değerlendirilerek belirlenebilir (Kayange ve Msiska, 2016; Fyssa, Vlachou ve Avramidis, 2014). Öğretmenler okul öncesi eğitimin kalitesini ve çocuğun gelişimini belirleyici temel faktörlerdir (MEB, 2013). Bu nedenle, etkinliklerin çocukların gelişimi üzerindeki etkinliğini kavramak için, çember zamanını iyileştirme gereksinimi, uygulamalardaki farklılıklar ve eksiklikleri analiz etmek için yapılan araştırmalarda öğretmenlerin inançlarının ve uygulamalarının bir araya getirilmesi büyük önem taşımaktadır çünkü çember zamanının kapsamı ne kadar geniş olsa da uygulanan programın kalitesi çoğunlukla öğretmenlere bağlıdır (Yıldız, 2019). Öğretmenler, okul öncesi eğitim programlarının kalitesini etkileyen en önemli faktörlerden biri olduğundan, eğitim programlarını etkileyen faktörler hakkında bilgi sahibi olmak için öğretmenlerin inançları ve uygulamaları detaylandırılmalıdır. Tam (2012) inançların öğretmenlerin uygulamaları hakkında bilgiye ulaşma araçlarından biri olduğunu belirtmektedir. Sakellarou ve Rentzou (2012) ve Kagan (1992) da eğitimin içeriği hakkında bilgi edinmek için öğretmenlerin inançlarına başvurulması gerektiğini açıklamaktadır. Richardson (1996), inançların öğretmenlerin uygulamalarını etkileyen faktörler olduğunu ve uygulamaların zamanla öğretmenlerin

inançlarını da etkilediğini eklemiştir. Dolayısıyla hem inançlar hem de uygulamalar birbirleriyle etkileşim halindedir ve bunların birleşimi çalışma kapsamı için bütün bir resim sağlayabilir (Zheng, 2013). Bu nedenle mevcut çalışmada çember zamanı ile ilgili öğretmenlerin hem inançlarına hem de uygulamalarına odaklanmak oldukça önemlidir.

Çalışmanın Amacı

Okul öncesi kurumlarında eğitim gören çocuklar okulda uzun zaman geçirmektedirler. Bu süre, okulun eğitim programını ve programı oluşturan etkinlikleri kapsamaktadır. Etkinlik süreçlerinin içeriği incelendiğinde kitap okuma saatleri ve çeşitli dil etkinlikleriyle ilgili çeşitli çalışmaların olduğu görülmektedir (Wasik, Hindman ve Snell, 2016). Ayrıca öğrenme merkezi veya serbest oyun zamanı gibi küçük grup etkinlikleriyle ilgili çalışmalar da literatürde bulunmaktadır. Ancak, çember zamanı gibi okulda geçirilen saatlerin diğer kısmı ile alakalı yeterince çalışmaya rastlanmamıştır (Bustamane, Hindman, Champagne &Wasik, 2018).

Araştırma bulguları, çember zamanının çoğunlukla 15-20 dakika sürdüğünü ortaya koymaktadır (Chien, Howes, Burchinal, Pianta, Ritchie, Bryant & Barbarin, 2010). Bu zaman aralığı kısa görünse de birçok okulda hemen her gün uygulandığından dolayı çocuklar bir eğitim-öğretin yılında 180 günden fazla yaklaşık 45 saat boyunca çember zamanı sürecine dahil olmaktadırlar. Fakat bu süre zarfı göz önüne alındığında, yapılan araştırmaların oldukça kısıtlı olduğu görülmüştür (Bustamane ve diğerleri, 2018).
Bu araştırma, çember zamanının kapsamı hakkında alan yazına katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Çember zamanının kapsamı bağlamında okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çember zamanına ilişkin inançlarının ve uygulamalarının araştırılması hedeflenmektedir (Zaghlawan ve Ostrosky, 2010). Bu çerçevede okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin inançları çember zamanı uygulama nedenleri, çember zamanının yararları, çember zamanını engelleyen unsurlar ve öğretmenlerin geçmiş bilgi ve deneyimleri, çember zamanı hakkında kaynak veya eğitim ihtiyaçları başlıkları altında incelenirken, öğretmenlerin uygulamaları ise çember zamanının planlanması, çember

zamanının bağlamı, süreçte kullanılan yöntemler ve uygulanan etkinlik çeşitleri konularını altında Ankara ili, Türkiye kapsamında incelenecektir.

Çalışmanın amacına ulaşmak için odaklanılacak olan araştırma soruları aşağıda belirtilmiştir;

1. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çember zamanı hakkındaki uygulamaları ve inançları nelerdir?

1.1. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çember zamanının planlanması, bağlamı, çember zamanında kullanılan metotlar ve çember zamanında yapılan aktivite türleri açısından uygulamaları nelerdir?

1.2. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çember zamanı uygulama nedenleri, çember zamanının faydaları, çember zamanı yapmalarındaki engeller, öğretmenlerin çember zamanı hakkında geçmiş bilgileri, eğitim ve kaynak ihtiyaçları açısından inanışları nelerdir?

Çalışmanın Önemi

Okul öncesi dönemde kaliteli eğitimin bilişsel, sosyal duygusal, dil ve diğer gelişim alanlarının yanı sıra okula hazır bulunuşluk, akademik başarı, çocukların fiziksel ve psikolojik iyi oluşları üzerinde uzun vadeli ve önemli etkileri vardır (Culkin, 2000). Kaliteli eğitim, kısa vadede sadece bireyleri etkiliyor gibi görünse de uzun vadede toplumda iyi eğitimli bireylerin sayısının artmasını sağlar. Dolayısıyla kaliteli okul öncesi eğitiminin hem bireyler hem de toplum için avantajları vardır. Colker & Koralek (2018) ve Morgan (2019) kaliteli okul öncesi eğitim unsurlarını şu şekilde açıklamaktadır; eğitim programının gelişimsel olarak uygunluğu, çocukların farklılıklarını dikkate alan bireyselleştirilmiş program, çeşitli materyallerle donatılmış güvenli bir ortam, çocukların sürece aktif katılımı, yetişkinlerin çocuklar ile yakın ilişkiler içinde olması ve çocukların fikirlerine saygı duyması, ebeveynlerin eğitim sürecine dahil edilmesi ve eğitimli nitelikli okul öncesi öğretmenleri. Kaliteli okul öncesi eğitimi üzerinde öğretmenlerin önemli bir etkisi vardır çünkü okul öncesi çocuklarının potansiyellerini geliştirmek için yetişkinlerle etkileşime ihtiyaçları vardır (Jalongo vd., 2004). Öğretmen eğitimi gereksinimlerinin ve eğitimin kalitesinin

değerlendirilmesi için okul öncesi öğretmeninin çocuklarla etkileşim biçimi ve eğitimin içeriğinin değerlendirilmesi gerekmektedir (OECD, 2020). Bundan dolayı, mevcut çalışma okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çember zamanı hakkındaki uygulamalarını detaylandırması bakımından, eğitim kalitesini değerlendirmek için fikir sağlamaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, öğretmenlerin sınıflarında çember zamanını nasıl uyguladıklarını araştırmak hem eğitim paydaşları hem de araştırmacılar için kaliteli erken çocukluk eğitimi hakkında ipuçları vermektedir. Bu nedenle mevcut çalışma, okullarda uygulanan çember zamanı kapsamında kaliteli okul öncesi eğitimi hakkında bilgi vermesi açısından önem taşımaktadır.

Ayrıca Glazzard (2016), çember zamanı sürecinin çok çeşitli olduğunu ve okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin daire zamanı hakkında kaynaklara veya eğitimlere ihtiyaç duyabileceğini açıklamaktadır. Bu noktada, mevcut çalışma, belirli örneklem kapsamında çember zamanının okullarda uygulanma yüzdesini ortaya koymaktadır, yani çember zamanını uygulayan ve uygulamayan öğretmen sayısı ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Bundan dolayı mevcut çalışma, çember zamanı uygulamayan öğretmenler için kaynak oluşturması bakımından önemlidir.

Ek olarak, okul öncesi programının öğrenme merkezleri, serbest oyun zamanı, kitap okuma saati gibi alan yazında yaygın olarak araştırılan kısımları ile karşılaştırıldığında, çok az sayıda çalışma, okul öncesi kurumlarında çember zamanının içeriğini ve kalitesini incelemiştir (Zhang vd., 2015). Bu nedenle, bu çalışma ile okul öncesi eğitimi alanına katkı sağlanması amaçlanmaktadır, çünkü araştırmalar çember zamanı kapsamı ve içeriği alan yazında eksiklikler olduğunu vurgulamaktadır (Zaghlawan ve Ostrosky, 2010).

Mevcut araştırma sadece içerik açısından değil aynı zamanda araştırma deseni açısından da literatürde önemli bir yere sahip olacaktır. Bu araştırmada, özellikle okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çember zamanı programlarını açıklamayı amaçlayan açıklayıcı sıralı karma yöntem kullanılmıştır. Mevcut araştırmada iki veri toplama aracı kullanılmıştır; birincisi, çok sayıda öğretmenin katılımını gerektiren öğretmenlerin çember zamanı hakkındaki inanç ve uygulamaları konularına ilişkin anket, ikincisi ise

anket sorularına cevap vermiş olan az sayıda katılımcı ile yapılmış görüşme sürecidir. Katılımcıların bir kısmı ile görüşme yapılmasının amacı elde edilen cevapları derinleştirmektir ki bu alan yazına mühim bir katkı sağlayacaktır.

YÖNTEM

Araştırma Yöntemi

Mevcut çalışmada karma yöntem araştırma deseni kullanılmıştır. Karma yöntem çalışmalarında nitel ve nicel olmak üzere iki veri setine, her iki verinin bileşenlerini entegre ederek tematik ve istatistiksel olmak üzere iki tür veri analizi yapılmaktadır (Plano Clark vd., 2015).

Creswell, yakınsayan paralel karma yöntem, açıklayıcı sıralı karma yöntem ve keşfedici sıralı karma yöntem (2014) olarak adlandırılan üç temel karma yöntem tanımlar. Bu yöntemler "yakınsayan" ve "sıralı" sözcüklerine göre gruplandırılmış olup, ilki araştırmacının verileri bir araya getirerek, her iki veri grubuna da eşit öncelik vererek hem nitel hem de nicel verileri aynı anda toplama, analiz etme ve yorumlama sürecinden geçtiğini ima eder, ikincisi ise araştırmacının nitel ve nicel verileri birbiri ardına sıralı olarak topladığı anlamına gelir (Plano Clark vd., 2015). Bu üç türden açıklayıcı sıralı karma yöntem tasarımı, mevcut çalışmanın amacına ve doğasına uygundur. Yani, açıklayıcı sıralı karma yöntem, sonuçları derin bir şekilde detaylandırmak için nicel kısmı izleyen nitel kısım olmak üzere iki farklı aşamadan oluşur (Ivankova vd., 2006). Bu desenin kullanılmasının gerekçesi, katılımcıların uygulama ve inanışlarını nitel ve nicel verileri bir araya getirerek kapsamlı bir şekilde açıklayabilme fırsatıdır (Rossman ve Wilson, 1985).

Katılımcılar

Araştırmanın anket kısmı olan ilk bölümünde, katılımcılar Ankara'nın Çankaya, Yenimahalle, Keçiören, Altındağ, Mamak ve Etimesgut olmak üzere 6 ana ilçesinde hem devlet hem de özel okullarda görev yapan okul öncesi öğretmenlerinden

seçilmiştir (N=502). Hizmet veren öğretmenlerin seçilmesinin nedeni, kendi deneyimlerinden yola çıkarak araştırma sorularına en anlamlı şekilde cevap verebilmeleridir.

Tesadüfi örnekleme yöntemlerinden biri olan küme örneklemesi, bireylerin tek tek seçilmesinden ziyade grupların seçilmesi olarak tanımlanan araştırmanın anket bölümünde kullanılmıştır (Fraenkel vd., 2012). Bu yöntemin seçilmesinin gerekçesi, seçilen bölgelerdeki okullarda görev yapan öğretmenlere tek tek ulaşılması, aynı okulların tekrarlanma olasılığının yanı sıra zaman ve emek açısından daha uygulanabilir olmasıdır. Bu nedenle okullar küme olarak seçilmiş ve öğretmenlere okul yöneticileri vasıtasıyla ulaşılmıştır.

Araştırmanın ikinci bölümü olan görüşmede, katılımcılar ankette yer alan bir soruya (N=22) verdikleri yanıtlara ilişkin ilk veri setinden elenmiştir. Bu soru, katılımcının kendi sınıfında çember amanı uygulayıp uygulamaması ile alakalıdır. Çember zamanı uygulayan öğretmenlere, anketin sonunda araştırmanın görüşme kısmına katılmaya gönüllü olup olmadıkları sorulmuştur. Böylece, çalışmanın görüşme kısmına katılmayı kabul eden 22 öğretmen, kendilerini çember zamanı uygulayıcısı olarak tanımlayan 448 öğretmenin yanıtladığı anket sonuçlarıyla seçilmiştir. Bu bölümde bahsi geçen katılımcı seçim yolu, tesadüfi olmayan örnekleme yönteminin bir türü olarak katılımcıların sahip oldukları nitelik, bilgi veya deneyimlere göre bilinçli olarak seçilmesi olarak tanımlanan amaçlı örnekleme olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Etikan, Musa ve Alkassim, 2016).

Veri Toplama Araçları

Araştırmanın ilk bölümünde ilgili veriler, araştırmacının kendisi tarafından geliştirilen Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Çember Zamanına İlişkin İnançları ve Uygulamaları adlı anket ile toplanmıştır. Anket geliştirme sürecinde ilgili literatür taranmış ve literatür taramasına dayalı olarak ana başlıklar belirlenmiştir (Bustamante vd., 2018; Collins, 2007; MEB, 2013; Mosley, 2005; Nash ve Lowe, 2004; Pryce, 2007). Anketin içerik geçerliğini sağlamak ve soruların kapsamlılığını değerlendirmek amacı ile anket

sınıflarında çember zamanını uygulayan dört okul öncesi öğretmenine sunulmuştur. Öte yandan bu anket, çalışmanın içerik ve araştırma soruları arasındaki uyumun yeterliliğini kontrol etmek için okul öncesi eğitimi alanında çalışan iki akademisyenin uzman görüşüne sunulmuştur. Ayrıca, yapı geçerliğini sağlamak için eğitim alanında ölçme ve değerlendirme üzerine çalışan başka bir akademisyen tarafından anket kontrol edilmiştir. Uzman görüşüne ilişkin revizyonlar yapıldıktan sonra anketin son hali 55 maddeden oluşmaktadır. Bahsi geçen anket 3 ana soru grubundan oluşmaktadır. 1. soru grubunda katılımcıların demografik bilgileri alınmıştır. Bu soru grubunun en sonunda öğretmenlere ne sıklıkta çember zamanı uyguladıkları sorularak, hiçbir zaman uygulamadığını beyan eden öğretmenler anketin sonuna yönlendirilmiştir. Böylece anketin diğer soru gruplarını yalnızca çember zamanı uygulayan öğretmenlerin cevaplaması hedeflenmiştir. 2. Soru grubunda katılımcıların çember zamanına ilişkin uygulamaları sorulmuş, 3. grupta ise katılımcıların çember zamanına ilişkin inanışları hakkında sorular yöneltilmiştir. Anket likert tipi sorular içermekte olup, bu ankete katılmak 10-15 dakika sürmektedir.

Araştırmanın ikinci bölümünde, anket verilerinden elde edilen veriyi desteklemek ve araştırma hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinmek için araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Çember Zamanına İlişkin Uygulamaları ve İnançları adlı görüşme protokolü uygulanmıştır. Patton'a göre görüşme, davranışları, duyguları veya insanların gözlemleyemediğimiz çevrelerindeki dünyayı nasıl ifade ettiklerini öğrenmek için gerekli bir yöntemdir (2015).

İlk olarak ilgili literatüre dayalı olarak yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme protokolü oluşturulmuştur. Daha sonra, dört okul öncesi öğretmenine, okul öncesi eğitiminde doktora yeterliliğine sahip iki akademisyen ve eğitimde ölçme ve değerlendirme alanında eğitim veren bir akademisyene görüşme protokolü sunulmuştur. Alınan uzman görüşleri doğrultusunda yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme soruları yeniden düzenlenmiştir. Bu noktada kapalı uçlu sorular açık uçlu hale getirilerek bir soru yeniden yazılmış ve tekrarlayan bir soru görüşme protokolünden çıkarılmıştır.

Pilot Çalışma

İlk olarak, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çember zamanına ilişkin inançları ve uygulamaları anketinin pilot çalışması yapılmıştır. Bu pilot çalışma, 2020-2021 güz döneminde Türkiye'de hem özel hem de devlet okullarında görev yapan 184 okul öncesi öğretmeni ile soruların etkililiğini ve anlaşılırlığını doğrulamak amacı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. İkinci olarak, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çember zamanına ilişkin inançları konulu görüşme protokolünün pilot çalışması yapılmıştır. Bu pilot çalışma ise 2020-2021 güz döneminde özel veya devlet okullarında görev yapan 3 okul öncesi öğretmeni ile görüşme sorularının anlaşılırlığını sağlamak için yapılmıştır. Pilot çalışmalar sorucunda kullanılacak olan veri toplama araçlarında gerekli değişiklikler yapılmıştır.

Veri Toplama Süreci ve Analiz

Araştırmanın ilk bölümü olan anketin uygulanması amacıyla Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı'ndan gerekli araştırma izni alındıktan sonra okul müdürleri aracılığıyla Çankaya, Yenimahalle, Keçiören, Altındağ, Mamak ve Etimesgut ilçelerindeki öğretmenlere ulaşılmıştır. Veri toplama süreci 2020-2021 Bahar döneminde yapılmıştır. Çalışmaya katılmayı kabul eden öğretmenlere anket ulaştırılmış, anketin sonunda, katılımcılara araştırmanın ikinci kısmı olan görüşmeye katılmak için gönüllü olmak isteyip istemedikleri sorulmuştur.

Araştırmanın ikinci bölümünde, anketi önceden dolduran ve iletişim bilgilerini veren okul öncesi öğretmenlerine e-posta veya telefon yoluyla ulaşılmıştır. Bu süreçte uygun olan katılımcılarla görüşmek üzere randevu alınmıştır. Planlanan randevularla ilgili olarak katılımcılara konferans linkleri gönderilmiş ve görüşmenin en başında ses kaydı için katılımcıların sözlü onayı da alınmıştır. Görüşmeler yaklaşık olarak 30-35 dakika sürmüştür.

Araştırmadan elde edilen veriler iki aşamalı olarak analiz edilmiştir. Öncelikle katılımcıların demografik bilgileri betimsel istatistik yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir.

Daha sonra Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Çember Zamanına İlişkin İnançları Uygulamaları Anketi betimsel istatistik yardımıyla analiz edilmiştir. Son olarak, görüşme sonuçları, verilerin analizi için yazıya dökülmüştür. Tüm transkripsiyonlar, kodlama işleminin bu program üzerinden yürütülmesi için nitel veri analizi için kullanılan MAXQDA 2020 programına yüklenmiştir. Kodlama, ilgili literatüre ilişkin veri setinin kodlar halinde etiketlenerek anlamlı parçalara bölünmesi ve kodların gruplandırılmasıyla kategoriler ve temalar oluşturulması sürecidir (Kuckartz ve Rädiker, 2019).

BULGULAR VE TARTIŞMA

Çalışmanın bulgular ve tartışma bölümlerinde iki ana konudan bahsedilecektir. Bunlardan ilki okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çember zamanı uygulamaları, ikincisi ise okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çember zamanı hakkındaki inanışlarıdır. Öğretmenlerin uygulamaları çerçevesinde çember zamanını planlama süreçleri, çember zamanının bağlamı, çember zamanında kullanılan yardımcılar ve çember zamanında uyguladıkları aktivite türlerinden bahsedilecektir. Öğretmenlerin inanışları çerçevesinde ise çember zamanının faydaları, uygulama nedenleri ve çember zamanını engelleyen faktörler konularına değinilecektir.

Öğretmenlerin uygulamaları konusunun bir başlığı olan çember zamanını planlama süreçleri hakkındaki bulgular şu şekildedir. Çalışmanın katılımcıları, çember zamanı planlama sürecinde programın kazanım ve göstergelerine önem verdiklerini, çember zamanını planlarken çocukların yeteneklerini, ilgi alanlarını ve seçimlerini dikkate aldıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Literatürde öğretmenlerin etkili sınıf yönetimi stratejilerine sahip olmaları için günlük program planlaması Ebert ve Culyer (2011) tarafından önerilmektedir. Ayrıca McKitrick (2014) ve Gambino (2019) da etkili bir çember zamanı süreci için gerekli hazırlıkların ve planlamanın öğretmenler tarafından yapılması gerektiğini açıklamışlardır. Morrison'a (2007) göre sınıf öğretmeni, öğrenme sürecini planlarken programın amaç ve göstergelerini ve çocukların ilgi, ihtiyaç ve seçimlerine yönelik gelişimsel olarak uygun etkinlikleri dikkate almalıdır. Bu bulgu, mevcut çalışmanın katılımcılarının uygulamaları ilgili araştırmalarla benzer

göründüğü için, çember zaman sürecini nasıl planlamaları ve hangi yönleri dikkate almaları gerektiği konusunda bilgili olduklarını gösterebilir. Çember zamanının planlanması konusunda bir diğer nokta olarak Tokuhama-Espinosa (2014), planlamanın kaliteli eğitimin öne çıkan unsurlarından biri olduğundan bahsetmektedir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları dikkate alındığında, katılımcıların çember zamanı rutinlerini süreci yürütmeye başlamadan önce planladıkları görülmektedir. Ayrıca planlama yaparken içeriğin gelişimsel olarak uygunluğu, çocukların ilgi ve düşüncelerinin dikkate alınması gibi faktörleri de göz önünde bulundurmaktadırlar. Dolayısıyla Tokuhama-Espinosa'nın (2014) belirttiği gibi, bu araştırmaya katılanların kaliteli erken çocukluk eğitimi için gerekli olan çember zamanının planlanması konusunda gerekli uygulamaları yaptıkları söylenebilir.

Çember zamanının bağlamı konusunda çember zamanı sıklığı, zaman aralığı, süresi, konumu ve oturma düzenine değinilmiştir. Katılımcılar çoğunlukla çember zamanını en az günde bir kez uyguladıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Araştırma sonuçlarına paralel olarak Collins (2007) de, çember zamanının bir rutin haline gelmesi ve çocukların sürece alışabilmesi için en az haftada bir kez uygulanması gerektiğini vurgulamıştır. Çalışmaya katılan öğretmenlerin daha sık çember zamanı uyguluyor olması, edindikleri deneyim ve faydalardan kaynaklı olabilir. Bunun dışında Collins (2007) çember zamanı süresinin küçük yaştaki çocuklarla 10-15 dakika, daha büyük çocuklarla 30-40 dakika kadar sürebileceğini ifade etmiştir. Fakat mevcut çalışma sonuçları öğretmenlerin 10-20 dakika aralığında çember zamanı uyguladıklarını göstermektedir. Bu sonuca paralel olarak yine bu çalışmada öğretmenlerin çember zamanı uygularken yardımcı öğretmen ihtiyacı, sınıf mevcudunun fazla olması, öğretmenlerin çember zamanı hakkında eğitim ve kaynaklara ihtiyaç duyduğunu göstermiştir. Bu iki bulgu, öğretmenlerin çember zamanını beklenen süreden daha kısa yapıyor olmasının karşılaştıkları zorluklar ile ilişkili olduğunu gösterebilir. Katılımcı öğretmenler ayrıca çember zamanını kahvaltıdan hemen sonra yaptıklarını göstermiştir ki bu durum öğretmenlerin tüm çocukların okula gelmiş olmasını ve her birinin çember sürecine dahil olmasını önemsediği hakkında fikir verebilir. Çember zamanı konumu ve oturma düzeni konusunda ise Mosley (2005) çember konumunun kritik bir nokta olmadığı fakat oturma düzeninin çemberdeki her bireyin diğerleri ile

eşit konumda hissetmesi, kişiler arası hiyerarşi mesajının verilmemesi amacı ile U şekli yerine daire şeklinde olması gerektiğini vurgulamıştır. Araştırma katılımcılarından kimisi ise U şeklinde oturmanın sınıf hakimiyeti konusunda daha etkili olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Bu durum bu öğretmenlerin çember zamanı konusunda ve neden çember şeklinde oturulması gerektiği konusunda eğitime ihtiyaç duyduklarını gösterebilir.

Öğretmenlerin çember zamanı yardımcıları konusunda onların bu süreçte çeşitli materyal, metot ve medya unsurlarından yardım aldığı görülmüştür. Literatürde bu unsurlara başvurma konusunda Zaghlawan (2010), Mosley (2007), Bennet (2010) çocukların çember zamanı konusunda daha istekli olmalarını sağlamak, dikkatlerini toplamak, hayal güçlerini geliştirmek, sınıf yönetimini sağlamak ve çocukların sürece dahil olmasını sağlamak için etkili yöntemler olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Bu durum öğretmenlerin daha fazla materyal ile desteklenmesinin, onların daha etkili çember zamanı yapmalarını sağlayacağını gösterebilir.

Öğretmenlerin çember zamanı aktiviteleri konusunda bazı uygulamaları olduğu görülmüştür. Bu çalışmada, genellikle öğretmenlerin çember zamanında kitap okuma, sohbet etme, duygu ve düşünceleri paylaşma gibi etkinlikler yaptıkları görülmüştür. Alan yazın incelendiğinde öğretmenlerin duygu ve düşüncelerin paylaşılması, kitap okuma gibi dil etkinliklerinin yanı sıra takvim zamanı, günün planlanması, müzik, şarkı söyleme, sabah egzersizleri, yoklama alma, rakamsal etkinlikler, sabah mesajı gibi etkinlikleri çember zamanında yapabilecekleri görülmüştür (Zaghlawan, & Ostrosky, 2010; Bustamane vd., 2018; Collins, 2013; Seifert & Metz, 2017). Bu durum öğretmenlerin çember zamanının içeriği hakkında bilgi ve kaynak desteğine ihtiyaç duyduklarını gösterebilir.

Öğretmenlerin çember zamanı hakkındaki inanışları yukarıda belirtildiği gibi, faydaları, çember zamanı uygulama nedenleri ve süreci engelleyen faktörler konuları kapsamında incelenecektir.

Öğretmenlerin çember zamanının yararları hakkındaki inanışları incelendiğinde, çember zamanının hem öğretmen hem de çocuklar için faydalı olduğuna inandıkları görülmüştür. Çocukların gelişim alanları göz önüne alındığında öğretmenler en çok çember zamanının sosyal duygusal gelişime katkısı olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Sosyal gelişim kapsamında çember zamanının, akran etkileşimi, topluma aidiyet hissi, empati becerilerinin gelişmesi, güven duygusunun gelişmesi, başkalarının fikirlerine saygı gösterme, kendini ifade etme becerileri, öz güven ve öz denetim konularında faydalı olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Bunun dışında dil gelişimi, bilişsel gelişim alanlarında da çember zamanının yararlarından bahsetmişlerdir. Araştırmaya katılan öğretmenlerin ifadeleri ile paralel olarak, pek çok çalışma çember zamanının sosyal duygusal gelişim üzerindeki faydasını doğrulamaktadır (Pace, 2012; Bulut, 2004; Bondy & Ketts, 2001; Suggs, 2019; Leicester, 2006; Morgan, 2017; Sönmez & Ceylan, 2017; Galbraith & Alexander, 2005). Bu bulgunun alan yazın ile paralel olması, okul öncesi öğretmenlerimizin kaliteli okul öncesi eğitimi verme konusunda bilinçli oldukları anlamına geliyor olabilir çünkü kaliteli eğitimin unsurları konusunda, öğretmenlerin çocukların kendilerini güvende hissettikleri, fikirlerinin dinlendiği, öz yeterliliklerinin desteklendiği alanlar yaratması gerektiği vurgulanmıştır. Dolayısı ile öğretmenlerin bu faydaları görüyor olması, onların çember zamanı ile kaliteli eğitim veriyor olduğu anlamına gelebilir.

Öğretmenlerin çember zamanı uygulama nedenleri incelendiğinde üç ana unsur ile karşılaşılmıştır. Bunlar okul yönetiminin beklentisi, programın gerekliliği ve faydalarından dolayı öğretmenlerin kendilerinin tercih etmesidir. Fakat çok büyük bir çoğunluk çember zamanını çocuklar üzerinde gözlemledikleri faydalarından dolayı uyguladıklarını belirtmiştir. Bu faydalar yukarıda belirtildiği gibi çoğunlukla sosyal-duygusal gelişim alanı ile ilişkilidir. Bu durum öğretmenlerin çember zamanının faydalarını gözlemleyecek kadar sıklıkla ve düzenli olarak uyguladığının bir diğer göstergesi olabilir. Bunun haricinde okul yönetiminin talebi doğrultusunda çember zamanının yapıldığını ifade eden öğretmenlerin çember zamanı süreçleri negatif yönlü etkileniyor olabilir çünkü sınıf ortamı uygun şekilde düzenlenmez ve çocukların ilgi ve gelişimleri göz önünde bulundurulmaz ise, ana uygulama sebebi otoritelerden kaynaklı olduğunda çember zamanının etkililiği azalabilir (Cefai vd., 2014). Ek olarak,

programın gerekliliği sebebi ile çember zamanı uygulayan öğretmenler, eğitimleri süresince çember zamanının uygulanması gereken bir rutin olduğunu öğrendiklerinden dolayı, sınıflarında bu sürecin günlük akışın bir parçası haline gelmesi gerektiğine inandıklarını vurgulamışlardır. Bu durum da öğretmenlerden bu inanışa sahip olanlarının MEB, 2013 Okul Öncesi Eğitimi Programı'na hâkim olduklarını gösterebilir.

Bir diğer konu olarak, öğretmenler çember zamanı uygulamalarını engelleyen faktörlerle ilişkili olarak çocukların ihtiyaçları, zamanla ilgili konular, okul yönetimi ile ilgili konular ve sınıftaki çeşitlilik konularından bahsetmişlerdir. Öğretmenler çocukların ihtiyaçları konusunda yaş gruplarının farklılığı, davranışsal problemleri olan çocuklar, özel gereksinimli çocuklar, zaman içinde sürecin güncellenme ihtiyacı, çocukların tercih öncelikleri konularına değinmişlerdir. Zaman ile ilgili konular kapsamında zaman kısıtlamaları ve çocukların okula geliş saatlerindeki farklılıklar konularından bahsetmişlerdir. Okul yönetimi ile alakalı unsurlar konusunda yardımcı öğretmen ihtiyacı, çocukların sayısının fazla olması ve fiziksel şartların yetersizliği konularını sıklıkla dile getirmişlerdir. Son olarak ise öğretmenler sınıf içerisindeki çeşitlilik konusunda kültürel, gelişimsel ve dil farklılıkları konularından bahsetmişlerdir. Tüm bu faktörlerin öğretmenlerin neden kısa süreli çember zamanı uyguladıkları ve nasıl daha kaliteli çember zamanı uygulamaları yapabilecekleri hakkında bilgi verebilir çünkü alan yazın yardımcı öğretmen ihtiyacı, yeterli fiziksel koşulların sağlanması, öğrenci sayısının kaliteli eğitimin en önemli unsurlarından olduğunu vurgulamaktadır (Bustamente vd., 2018; Karademir & Akman; 2021; Zic Ralic vd., 2020).

Son olarak, öğretmenlerin çember zamanına ilişkin geçmiş bilgi ve deneyimi sorulduğunda yüksek çoğunluğun bu konu hakkında bir eğitim almadığı ve kaynak ve eğitim ihtiyaçları olduğu görülmüştür. Buna ek olarak öğretmenler çember zamanı içeriklerini genişletmek ve yeni yöntemler öğrenmek için meslektaşları ile iş birliği yaptıkları ve birbirlerinin bilgi ve deneyimlerinden faydalandıkları görülmüştür. Konuya ilişkin olarak Housego ve Burns (1994) de öğretmenlerin bu konudaki eğitim ve kaynak ihtiyacının altını çizmiştir. Bu durum geçmişten günümüze öğretmenlerin halen

çember zamanı ile ilgili kaynak ve eğitim ihtiyaçlarının karşılanamadığını gösterebilir. Ayrıca Kaufmann ve Wishmann (1999) pek çok okul öncesi öğretmeninin çocukların sosyal duygusal gelişimleri ile ilgili ihtiyaçlarını karşılama veya çocuklardaki davranış problemleri ile başa çıkma konusunda gerektiği kadar öz yeterliliğe sahip olmadıklarını belirtmiştir (akt. Hemmeter vd., 2008). Çocukların davranış problemlerini azaltmanın yollarından biri çember zamanıdır. Öğretmenler çember zamanını nasıl uygulayacakları konusunda ne kadar bilgili olursa o kadar çok verim sağlanabilir. Bundan dolayı, çember zamanının etkililiğini artırmak amacı ile öğretmenlere eğitimler verilmelidir çünkü çember zamanının amacını derinlemesine bilmeden, çember zamanının faydalarına kapsamlı bir şekilde ulaşmak pek mümkün değildir (Glazzard, 2016).

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