SOCIAL PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS OF CHILDREN: A
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' VIEWS AND
PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

SOCIAL PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS OF CHILDREN: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' VIEWS AND PRACTICES

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the views and practices of preschool teachers regarding children's social problem-solving skills. The participants were 15 preschool teachers working in public and private early childhood education institutions in Trabzon. The study was conducted as a phenomenological study within the scope of qualitative research method and data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The findings of this study revealed that teachers find the early childhood period very important for the development of social problem solving skills, but it was determined that most teachers focused on preventing social problems from arising rather than improving children's social problem solving skills. While most claimed to use the drama method in their self-reported activities to develop children's social problem solving skills, and that they taught children to solve problems with verbal expressions, some teachers stated that they did not engage in such activities. On the other hand, all teachers feel that parent related issues account for the difficulties some children experience while developing social problem solving

skills. Teachers stated that the most common problem they encounter in their classrooms is only physical aggression, yet instances of relational and verbal aggression were more frequently seen during in-class observations. As a way of coping with these problems, the majority of the teachers said that they talk to the children about a social problem and lead them to a solution, but in-class observations revealed that in practice they mostly prefer other approaches such as apologizing, ignoring, giving an eye and punishment. Furthermore, in this study, teachers emphasized that they need to be guided about how children should be followed in social problem situations.

ÖZ

ÇOCUKLARIN SOSYAL PROBLEM ÇÖZME BECERİSİ: OKUL ÖNCESİ ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN GÖRÜŞ VE UYGULAMALARININ FENOMENOLOJİK BİR ÇALIŞMASI

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Yüksek Lisans, Temel Eğitim, Okul Öncesi Eğitimi Bölümü

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Bu çalışmanın amacı çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerine ilişkin okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin görüş ve uygulamalarını incelemektir. Çalışmanın katılımcıları Trabzon ilinde devlete bağlı ve özel okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında çalışan 15 okul öncesi öğretmenidir. Çalışma, nitel araştırma yöntemi kapsamında bir olgu bilim çalışması olarak yürütülmüş ve veriler yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ve sınıf içi gözlemler aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin erken çocukluk dönemini sosyal problem çözme becerisinin gelişimi için çok önemli bulduklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Ancak öğretmenlerin çoğunun çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerini arttırmaktan daha çok sosyal problemin oluşmasını engellemeye odaklandıkları tespit edilmiştir. Öğretmenlerin çoğu beceriyi geliştirmeye yönelik kendi bildirdikleri etkinliklerde drama yöntemini kullandıklarını ve sözel ifadelerle çocuklara problemi çözmeyi öğrettiklerini belirtirken bazı öğretmenler ise etkinlik yapmadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Öte yandan, tüm öğretmenler çocukların bu becerileri geliştirirken yaşadıkları zorlukların nedeninin aileyle ilgili sorunlar olduğunu düşünmektedir. Öğretmenler sınıflarında en çok

karşılaştıkları problemin saldırganlık olduğunu ve fiziksel olarak ortaya çıktığını söylemiş ancak yapılan gözlemlerde ilişkisel ve sözel saldırganlığın da sıklıkla ortaya çıktığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu problemler ile baş etme yöntemi olarak öğretmenlerin büyük çoğunluğu çocuklarla problem hakkında konuştuklarını ve çözüme yönlendirdiklerini belirtmektedirler. Ancak sınıf içi uygulamalarda daha çok özür diletme, görmezden gelme ve ceza yöntemlerini kullandıkları görülmektedir. Ayrıca bu çalışmada, öğretmenler çocukların sosyal problem durumlarında nasıl bir yol izlemeleri gerektiği konusunda yönlendirilmeye ihtiyaç duyduklarını vurgulamışlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: okul öncesi eğitim, okul öncesi öğretmeni, sosyal problem çözme becerisi

To my amazing family, Saadet & Ferhat Şakar

&

To my lovely grandparents, Osman Dalgıç & Hikmet Şakar

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

SPSS: Social Problem Solving Skills

MoNE: Ministry of National Education

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From the first moment they are born, children have a great enthusiasm to learn and explore. They explore their environment effectively and learn to communicate (Stephens & Thadani, 2007). Therefore, the early childhood period, which covers the period from birth to the age of eight, provides a basis for the continuation of the skills that are rapidly gained over this period (Skowronsky, 1996). The experiences gained during this period form a strong basis for the cognitive, language, motor, social-emotional development of children, and children become competent in these developmental areas at an astonishing rate. For this reason, the National Early Childhood Education program aims to support children's cognitive, language, social-emotional, motor and self-care skills with a holistic approach (MoNE, 2013). As the development that blossom in these areas is interrelated and a comprehensive process, it will be useful to divide and examine child development to understand it better. Social-emotional development in early childhood is associated with children's later relationships, academic success, and overall quality of life (Strain & Timm, 2001; Whitted, 2011). Thus, social emotional development is one of the areas that should be given importance in early childhood. Social-emotional development is defined as the child's ability to express themselves, to understand others' emotions by regulating their feelings, and to be in harmony with themselves and their environment by solving the problems encountered in the social environment (Cohen et al., 2005). Social-emotional development covers skills such as recognizing and regulating emotions, empathy with others, problem-solving and positive social interactions (Jones & Bouffard, 2012).

In daily life, children may experience various social problems in their relationships with their parents, peers and other individuals, just like adults, and may have

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difficulties in establishing and maintaining relationships (Polat & Yağbasan, 2019). Social problem-solving skills, which are included in social-emotional development, have an important place for children to cope with the problems they face in daily life (Dereli, 2008). Social problem-solving skill, which has an important place in the social development of children, is a cognitive-behavioral-emotional process that an individual creates in order to find effective ways of coping with problem situations encountered in daily life. In other words, social problem solving is a conscious, realistic, demanding, purposeful coping skill that increases one's ability to effectively cope with many problems in social life (D'Zurilla & Nezu, 2001).

Research has found that children who cannot acquire social problem-solving skills in early childhood will experience difficulties in their future lives. For example, children who do not develop social problem-solving skills may tend to use aggression to solve interpersonal problems (Crick & Dodge, 1994), and their aggression becomes more predictable and difficult to change after early childhood education (Tremblay, 2000). In many children, continued aggression eventually leads to peer rejection, guilt, school phobia, abuse, and poor mental health in adulthood (Broidy et al., 2003; Carpenter-Rich et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2011; Bornstein et al., 2010). On the contrary, children who acquire social problem-solving skills are defined as entrepreneurial individuals who are self-confident, can make decisions on their own, make friendships more easily, have effective communication skills, can control their anger and are accepted by their peers. In addition, these children can make predictions about similar events they may encounter in the future by transferring the new experiences they have learned with their problem-solving capacity to other situations (Basun, 2017; Denham, 2006; Raver, 2002; Bowman et al., 2001; Izard et al., 2001; Shields et al., 2001). Clearly, studies generally agree that social problem-solving skills to prevent social/behavioral problems should start early in a child's life.

Early childhood education is effective in helping children gain interpersonal relations and social problem-solving skills at an early age (Joseph & Strain, 2010). Riney and Bullock (2012) emphasized that children with wider educational opportunities had better social skills and problem-solving behaviors than children with shorter education periods. Similarly, Yılmaz and Tepeli (2013) found that children who attend early childhood education institutions for two years or more have higher social problem-

solving skill scores than children who attend these institutions for one year. Also, previous studies about problem solving emphasize that early childhood education may provide children with problem-solving skills effectively (Kaya et al., 2017; Bahar & Aksüt, 2020; Joseph & Strain, 2010). It is clearly seen that children's social problem-solving skills can be developed through early childhood education.

In early childhood education, teachers play an important role in creating the necessary environmental conditions, developing children's social problem-solving skills and producing alternative solutions to their problems (Gloeckler et al., 2014; Joseph & Strain, 2003). Teachers' support of children in finding alternative solutions to social problems enables children to develop their social problem-solving skills, attitudes and behaviors towards social problems (Şahin, 2011). Also, teachers may improve children's social problem-solving skills with activities that include prosocial behaviors such as cooperation, empathy and solidarity (Yaralı & Özkan, 2016). Similarly, Palmer (2019) emphasized that teachers develop children's social skills by taking into account the individual needs of each child through daily activities. Thus, preschool teachers are important figures who can provide the activities mentioned above. They use their educational background and practice to plan and implement activities to increase children's social problem-solving skills (Zembat, 2005). At this point, it is stated that the views and practices of teachers at school affect the educational process of children (Caprara et al., 2000).

Children's motor and language development in early childhood allows them to be more involved in their social environment and to be assertive. This increase in assertiveness and increased socialization may cause conflict between children, which brings along problem behaviors (Senemoğlu, 2018; Crebert et al., 2011). Children with social skills deficiencies often use inappropriate solutions, such as challenging behaviors or social withdrawal, to try to resolve social conflicts (Bernard-Opitz et al., 2001). It is emphasized that the patterns of children's problematic behavior and establishing relationships in prosocial ways are determined at an early age (Briggs-Gowan et al., 2006). Appropriate interventions by teachers in children's emerging social problems can bring about positive changes in their social problem-solving skills development (Anlıak & Dinçer, 2005; Kaytez & Kadan, 2016; Çalışkan et al., 2006; Berk, 2013). Similarly, the important role of teachers in children's social skills development in early

years is emphasized in the relevant literature (Öneren-Şendil & Tantekin-Erden, 2012; Gloeckler et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2020). For example, according to Gloeckler et al. (2014), an effective teacher should understand that children lack emotion regulation and simple problem-solving skills, rather than perceiving young children's problem behaviors as temporary. Besides, it was stated that teachers should consider problem behaviors as an opportunity to develop social problem-solving skills. In support of this, Lynch and Simpson (2010) also state that even everyday events in the educational process are teachable moments for teachers to teach young children appropriate social behaviors during the day.

In the light of all this information, the importance of social problem-solving skills gained in early childhood in the child's life and the important effects of teachers on the development of social problem solving skills cannot be ignored; therefore, it is important to evaluate the views and observe the practices of teachers who serve children in early childhood.

1.1. Statement of the problem

Early childhood is a critical period in terms of acquiring skills related to interpersonal relations and social problem solving in the field of social development, and thus solving problems that have emerged or might arise in the future (Özmen, 2013). It was found that children with social skill deficiencies frequently try to manage social disputes by engaging in difficult behaviors such social retreat or unsuitable solutions (Bernard-Opitz et al., 2001). Studies on the topic emphasize that social problem-solving skills that are not gained in early childhood negatively affect adolescence and adulthood and lead to aggression, peer rejection, guilt, school phobia, abuse and poor mental health in adulthood (O'Connell et al., 2009; Bornstein et al., 2010; Carpenter-Rich et al., 2008). In addition, there is an increasing concern about the number of children who exhibit challenging behaviors in case of problems in early childhood institutions (Holtz et al., 2015). If no precautions are taken, these problems will continue to increase (Güder et al, 2018).

It is highlighted that parents, teachers and environmental factors are important factors in the development of social problem-solving skills (Kayılı & Arı, 2015; Cüceloğlu, 1998; Elias & Tobias, 2005). Considering this, a deficiency in these factors may

prevent the development of children's social problem-solving skills. Knowing the views of teachers, who play a key role in the education of children, on the factors that will hinder this skill in children, is considered important in terms of taking precautions.

One of the reasons why children's social problem solutions, including aggressive behaviors, are inappropriate in early childhood education institutions, is the unconscious reinforcement of wrong strategies by the teacher (Dereli, 2008; Güder et al., 2018). One of the duties of preschool teachers is to guide children to increase their social-emotional competence by teaching them to use more mature and effective strategies to interact with others (Denham, 2006). The development of children's social problem-solving skills can improve when teachers respond to children's emerging social problems by appropriate strategy (Anlıak & Dinçer, 2005; Kaytez & Kadan, 2016; Çalışkan et al., 2006; Berk, 2013). Unfortunately, previous studies on teachers' strategies for children's problem behavior has shown that teachers employ various strategies that do not encourage children's participation in social problem solving in case of problems (Gloeckler & Cassell, 2012; Williams et al., 2010). Preschool teachers generally use reactive methods for problem behaviors (Akgün et al., 2011; Ata & Karayol, 2019; Öztürk & Gangal, 2016) and trying to control these behaviors with negative verbal warnings (Uysal et al., 2010) and they use more negative expressions than positive ones in the classroom (Akgün et al., 2011).

Acquiring social problem solving is closely related to academic success, positive relationships, self-esteem and well-being in future life (Frogner et al., 2021; Basun, 2017; Stevens, 2009; Bingham, 2016). Social problem-solving skills, which have such important outputs, can be taught effectively to preschool children (Joseph & Strain, 2010). The importance of teachers in children's learning in early childhood education is undeniable. For example, carrying out activities to support these skills in the early childhood program is an important step in finding solutions to problems they may experience in the future (Denham, 2016). Teachers who implement the program play an important role in the acquisition and development of social skills in early childhood education programs (Palmer, 2019; Quesenberry et al., 2016). However, to the best of our knowledge, no dedicated study has been undertaken into teachers' views about the program in terms of children's social problem-solving skills and how they carry out activities. Bozkurt-Yükçü and Demircioğlu (2017) has also suggested that the ways

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in which teachers develop these skills should be examined for social problem-solving skills.

In previous studies, it was stated that young children often experience conflict and social problems in early childhood education institutions, and therefore they are ready to acquire social problem-solving skills (Gloeckler et al., 2014; Chen, 2003). Similarly, Ridley and Vaughn (1982) emphasize that although three-year-old children are developmentally behind advanced age groups in terms of language skills, they need to learn skills that facilitate social problem solving. Unfortunately, when the relevant literature is examined, it is stated that the 5-6 age group is the critical period in terms of social problem solving, and most studies focus on this age group. However, to our knowledge, studies about social problem-solving skills of children aged 3-5 years are quite limited. In addition, other research has emphasized that teachers need professional development to involve young children in social problem solving (Chen, 2003; Gloeckler et al., 2014; Silver & Harkness, 2007; Williams et al., 2010). Another problem that arises in this study is the lack of focus on young age groups in the acquisition of social problem-solving skills, which are stated to be developed since the birth of the individual. Therefore, in this study, it was thought that it is important to examine the views of teachers about the importance of social problem-solving skills according to age group.

In summary, preschool teachers are among the first persons responsible for providing children with desired skills and reinforcing learned behaviors and skills (Gürsoy et al., 2012), and early childhood is a critical period for this purpose. Therefore, in this study, teachers' views on children's social problem-solving skills; practices including strategies for children's problems and educational activities were examined. In addition, this study aims to contribute to the literature in this field by not only being limited to teachers' views and practices, but also by revealing the consistency between teachers' self-reported and actual strategies regarding children's social problems.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

This study set out to investigate the views and practices of preschool teachers regarding children's social problem-solving skills. In order to achieve this purpose and

obtain detailed information about the views and practices of teachers, the researcher sought to answer the following questions;

1. What are the views of preschool teachers about social problem solving?

2. What are the views of preschool teachers regarding children's social problem-solving skills?

   2.a. What are the views of preschool teachers about the effect of social problem- solving skills on children?

   2.b. What are the views of preschool teachers on the importance of gaining social problem solving skills in early childhood period?

   2.c What are the views of preschool teachers on the importance of social problem- solving skills considering children's age group in early childhood education?

   2.d What are the views of preschool teachers about the reasons why children cannot develop their social problem-solving skills?

3. What are preschool teachers' views about the place of social problem-solving skills in the MoNE Early Childhood Education Program (2013)?

   3.a. What are suggestions of preschool teachers for MoNE Early Childhood Education Program to improve children's social problem-solving skills?

4. What are preschool teachers' self-reported practices about children's social problem-solving skills?

   4.a. What are preschool teachers' self-reported educational activities about children's social problem-solving skills?

   4.b. What are most experienced social problem behaviors in class reported by teacher?

   4.c. What are preschool teachers' self-reported strategies in dealing with social problems of children?

5. What are preschool teachers' actual practices about children's social problem-solving skills?

5.a. What are the most experienced social problem behaviors observed in class?

5.b. What are preschool teachers' actual strategies in dealing with social problems of children?

6. To what extend are preschool teachers' self-reported practices consistent with their observed practices?

6.a. To what extend self-reported most experienced social problem behavior are consistent with observed social problem behaviors in class?

6.b. To what extend preschool teachers' self-reported strategies in dealing with children's social problems are consistent with their actual strategies?

1.3. Significance of the study

The current study is significant for various reasons. Firstly, social problem-solving skill is accepted as an important social skill that should be developed in the early childhood period (Ömeroğlu et al., 2014). In both national and international studies, it is highlighted that studies should be carried out with teachers on the development of social skills in order to increase the quality of studies on social skills of preschool children. For instance, Özyürek and Ceylan (2014) stated that there is a need for a thorough research to determine the needs of preschool teachers for the development of children's social skills. Gloeckler et al. (2014) recommended examining the practices, educational content and methods of preschool teachers that facilitate children's participation in social problem solving in future research. In another study, Aksoy (2021), on the other hand, suggested that researchers examine the views and practices of preschool teachers to improve their knowledge, skills and experiences regarding social skills by using multi-source data collection methods including observation, documentation and interviews. Considering all these suggestions, this study set out to contribute to the literature in terms of taking the views, self-reported and actual practices of preschool teachers on children's social problem-solving skills by using more than one data collection source.

Secondly, the views of preschool teachers are notable indicators of children's learning of any skill (Wylie & Thomson, 2003). In addition, teachers are the most important component of the education system and it is stated that their behavior in the classroom

is significantly related to their views (Kagan & Smith, 1988). The meaning that teachers attribute to social skills reveals how they will follow their educational practices (Uslu & Genç, 2021). The ability of preschool children to learn skills is closely related to the beliefs and approaches of teachers, who are the main practitioners of the education process (Bektaş, 2019). In this sense, it is important to get the views of teachers about children's social problem-solving skills and to examine their practices. In addition, the study is considered important to reveal the relationship between teachers' views on children's social problem-solving skills and educational practices.

Thirdly, some studies have focused only on teachers' beliefs, views, and attitudes on a particular topic. For this reason, some studies suggest that teachers' beliefs should be taken with their practices in future research (Wang et al., 2008; Han & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2010; La Paro et al., 2009). Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the literature in this field by focusing not only on the views of preschool teachers but also on the practices of teachers.

Fourthly, in the social problems faced by children, teachers should apply strategies that will involve children in the problem-solving process in their daily routines in order to create behavioral patterns that will form the framework of children's conflict resolution skills (Butterfield, 2002, as cited in Gloeckler et al., 2014). Nevertheless, studies on teachers' strategies in Türkiye have revealed that the strategies for children's problems and the solutions produced by teachers are not functional (Şahin & Arslan, 2014; Güder, et al., 2018). Gaining insight into the views and practices of preschool teachers can help future professionals avoid such practices. In addition, examining both the self-reported and actual practices of teachers in this study is important in terms of both revealing consistency and revealing strategies more comprehensively.

Moreover, as teachers have a substantial command of the national curriculum and educational programs implemented in the classroom environment, their views on children's development are highly appreciated (Diakidoy & Kanari, 1999). Therefore, they own a critical role in creating a stimulating classroom and educational context for children regarding social problem-solving skills (Synder & Synder, 2008). Teachers' knowing to what extent such skills are included in the curriculum, expressing their

views on which objectives support social problem-solving, and indicating where the program can be improved in terms of the development of social problem-solving skills is important so this information will also assist program developers to understand the extent to which the early childhood curriculum attaches importance to social problem-solving skills. Therefore, this study will provide information to improve and revise the existing early childhood program in terms of social problem-solving skills. Investigating teachers' experiences is very important because it has an impact on educators' efficiency and the capability of educational systems (Avvisati, 2018). Also, the methods/techniques that teachers use during social problem-solving activities are important in the process of determining their experiences on the practical dimension of skills. Obtaining both the views of preschool teachers about social problem-solving skills and their self-reported practice experiences will be useful in observing the process of representing social skills in early childhood education.

Lastly, in fact, the results of the research will provide a variety of learning opportunities for teachers by drawing attention to some uncovered topics, such as what teachers know and credit social problem-solving skills in early childhood education, what they know about the characteristics of children demonstrating social skills successfully, what they think about the importance of these skills in young age groups. Further, knowing what they think about the obstacles to develop these skills in early childhood education is important to take precautions. The intent of this focus is to create awareness and sensitivity in teachers about enhancing social problem-solving skills and to draw attention to supporting the development of these skills in children.

1.4. Definition of Key Terms

Early Childhood: Early childhood, is a period of significant growth, defined as the process from birth to 8 years old (United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [2021).

Early Childhood Education: Early childhood education, which covers the education of 36-72 month old children in Türkiye, is accepted as preschool education and includes all kinds of systematic, organized and planned educational activities aimed at ensuring the development of children between the ages of 3-6 (Diken et al., 2012).

Activities: In this study, daily activities refer to the activities that are planned each day according to different learning and development areas. According to the Turkish Early Childhood Education framework, language, art, drama, music, movement, play, science, mathematics, and reading are identified as daily activities (MoNE, 2013).

Social-Emotional Development: It is defined as the children's ability to express themselves, to understand the emotions of other individuals by controlling their own emotions, and to be in harmony with themselves and their environment encounters in daily life (Cohen et al.,2005).

Social Skills: A specific, distinct and noticeable behavioral cumulative that enable individuals to carry out behaviors in social contexts (Erwin, 1993).

Social Problem Solving: The process of determining the problems that an individual encounters in daily life, finding effective solutions to these problems or adapting to problem situations (D'Zurilla & Nezu, 1999).

Problem behavior: Behaviors that have become permanent, which hinder the child's social relations, communication and learning, may cause him to harm himself, his family, peers and adults. Social problem behaviors experienced by children in the classroom are generally seen as aggression, threats, not sharing, not participating in group activities and crying (Kesicioğlu, 2015).

Prosocial Behaviors: Expressed as deliberate, voluntary behavior that aims to benefit others without expectation of reward (Bee & Boyd, 2009).

Aggressive Behaviors: In addition to physically harming another person or an object, they are behaviors that involve belittling facial expressions, excluding others or threatening them about something (Dereli, 2008).

View: It's a ''way of thinking about or understanding something'' (Longman, 2011, p.1953)

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Framework

In this current study, Sociocultural theory, Psychosocial theory and Ecological theory are considered to guide the research. In this part, the connections between the present study and these theories are explained respectively.

2.1.1. Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory views human development as a socially mediated process in which children acquire their cultural values, beliefs, and problem-solving strategies through collaborative dialogues with more knowledgeable members of society (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky argues that the child needs the support of adults to find solutions to problem situations. In this context, Vygotsky focused specifically on the zone of proximal development. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is defined as the difference between a child's "actual developmental level determined by independent problem solving" and the child's "potential development determined through adult-guided problem solving" (Vygotsky, 1978). With scaffolds, an expert, well-informed person or peer can help students achieve their goals and objectives, enable them to use the skills, jobs and approaches they have learned before, and enable them to develop themselves at the level of mastery in these skills (Hadwin & Wine, 2001). Thus, the helper becomes part of the learning through supportive guidance. In this way, children can do without help what they could do with help in the past, and this reveals the importance of guidance. In this way, the teacher as an expert can support the child's learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Similarly, Thomas (2000) mentioned that such a concept of ZPD significantly influences teachers' decisions about what kind

of learning activities to offer children to master the skills they lack. In this context, it can be said that teachers in early childhood education are the most qualified person to support children's social learning and social skills through interaction between children. In addition, if children lack social skills or have difficulty performing these skills, teachers can help them gain social skills. The importance of ZPD is undeniable in raising individuals who can work cooperatively, learn lifelong, gain autonomy and have the ability to solve problems.

In this context, with help guides, the child internalizes problem-solving styles, takes more responsibility for problem-solving, and begins to self-regulate (Tappan, 1998). This study is based on Vygotsky's theory, which emphasizes the importance of adult help in children's acquiring skills. The first reason for establishing a relationship between Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory and the current study is that he sees learning as a social process and introduces the term "zone of proximal development".

The second reason Vygotsky's theory was used as the basis for this study is that it focuses on the importance of planning social experiences related to children's development. Specifically, he stated that both the content of what is taught and the role of specially trained adults teaching children are carefully planned for the internalization of socially available skills for children in schools (Vygotsky, 1978). Examining teachers' self-reported activities to support social problem-solving skills in this study clearly shows that there is a connection between the study and theory.

2.1.2. Psychosocial Theory

Besides sociocultural theory, Erikson's psychosocial theory also guides this study. In this theory, it is emphasized that children should adopt and adapt the desired behavior patterns in order to be approved by the society they live in (Thomas, 2000). Similarly, this study is based on the idea that the development of social problem-solving skills should be supported in order to increase children's adaptation to the society they live in.

Furthermore, according to Erikson, there are eight major critical periods in human life. In every period, there is a crisis, a conflict that must be overcome. The confusion that will be encountered in the developmental stages is not a disaster so he states that

confusion is a sensitive turning point for the individual to realize his or her potentials. In Erikson's theory, it is believed that the individual can raise a healthier personality to the extent that he can cope with these complexities (Erikson, 1987). The first three stages are "trust versus mistrust", which refers to a period from birth to 12 months, "shame and doubt versus autonomy" from 12 months to 3 years of age, and "guilt versus initiative" from 3 years to 6 years of age. The third stage, which Erikson stated, covers the early childhood education period. In the stage of guilt versus initiative between the ages of 3-6, children act with a sense of independence, begin to explore the environment and develop their mental and social skills. During this period, if adults display a positive, supportive, curious and respectful attitude towards mistakes, they will support the initiative and socialization of children (Turan-Güven 2018). During this socialization period, children strengthen their social skills and learn how to successfully resolve conflicts (Leyden & Shale, 2012). Similarly, the present study is based on the idea that children encounter various problems with the increase of socialization in the early childhood period and that the ability to solve these problems should be acquired in the same period, which is critical in supporting children's social skills. In addition, Erikson (1987) suggested that people develop in relation to other people and stated that parents, teachers and friends in the social environment play an important and necessary role for the social development of the child. Similarly, this study is based on the idea that teachers play an effective role in helping children acquire a social skill, social problem solving.

2.1.3. Ecological System Theory

Besides Erikson's psychosocial theory, there are elements of other theories to support the main framework of the present study. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory is one of them. According to the theory, everything around the child affects the development of child (Berk, 2003). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), there are independent but interacting systems of interaction that surround the child. These are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. The microsystem includes the child's immediate environment such as family, school, neighborhood, and peers. The social experiences that occur within this system affect the development of children in the most effective way. In other words, different elements such as school, family, peer groups, neighbors, culture, religion and the

interactions between these elements affect the development of the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Additionally, understanding the complex relationship between the individual child and the surrounding ecology is important in implementing the appropriate intervention (Hong et al., 2011). It is stated that some of the characteristics that the child acquires from people with whom he/she constantly interacts form the basis of his/her future behavior (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Therefore, an element of this theory, the school and the teacher responsible for the interaction in the school is directly related to the present study. Within the scope of this study, teachers' strategies, views and educational activities were discussed. Since the researcher believed in the importance of interaction between children and teachers in the development of children's social problem-solving skills, she examined teachers' strategies in the classroom.

2.2. What is a "problem"?

Bingham (1998) defines the problem as the obstacle to one's current strengths that one has gathered to achieve a desired goal. If a person encounters obstacles while trying to reach a certain goal, it can be said that there is a problem. Gelbal (1991) defined the problem as anything that confuses the human mind, challenges it and obscures belie. A problem has to confuse a person. If a person encounters a problem that he has faced and solved before, it ceases to be a problem for him. For a situation to be a problem, it must be new and original. In addition, there is a difficulty and an obstacle at the root of the problems. The person who encounters the problem experiences tension in the face of this difficulty and obstacle (Gelbal, 1991; Oğuz, 2012). In the light of this information, the expected characteristics of the problem to be called a problem are as follows:

• Differences between the current situation and the targeted situation,

• The person noticed this difference and did not encounter this problem,

• The difference between the current situation and the targeted situation creates tension in the individual,

• Efforts to eliminate the tension situation,

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• Faiulure and prevention of the effort put forward in the face of the problem (Bingham, 2016; Kesicioğlu, 2015; Öğülmüş, 2006).

2.3. Social problem solving

The word 'social' does not mean that it only applies to problems that we solve with other people, or, indeed, those that we feel are caused by others. The word is simply used to indicate the 'real life' nature of the problems, and the way that we approach them (Dereli-İman, 2013). Therefore, social problem-solving deals with all kinds of real-life problems includes anything that may affect a person's functioning. It includes personal or internal problems (emotional, behavioral, cognitive, or health problems), interpersonal problems (e.g., marital conflicts, family disputes), as well as broader community and societal problems (e.g., crime, racial discrimination) (D'Zurilla et al., 2004).

When the literature is examined, it is noteworthy that there are different definitions of the concept of social problem-solving. This section will cover different definitions of social problem solving and the definitions that will be based on this study. According to Heppner and Krauskopf (1987), problem solving is the process of "having a behavioral, cognitive, and emotional response that works sequentially for a specific purpose to adapt to internal or external demands or situations that cause distress." D'Zurilla and Nezu (1987) criticize this definition for not clearly stating the broad definition of problem solving and what kind of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses should be displayed. Heppner and Krauskopf (1987) make the concept of problem solving synonymous with the concept of "coping" with their definitions. However, not all coping styles are problem solving (D' Zurilla & Chang, 1995). At this point, Lazarus (1976) divided the types of coping into two as problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. In problem-focused coping, the person deals with the stressful threat behaviorally or fights by changing the problematic relationship, that is, he applies the problem-solving method. Therefore, effective problem solving is closely related to using problem-focused coping. In emotion-focused coping, the person either emotionally reduces his stress-related discomfort or controls his emotions (MacNair & Elliott, 1992). In problem solving skills training, individuals are taught not only problem-focused coping, but also emotion-focused coping. Yaban and Yükselen

(2007) define social problem-solving skills as the child's developing communication skills, perceiving and communicating his feelings and the feelings of the other person fully and accurately, and giving appropriate responses to problems. According to D'Zurilla and Nezu's (2001) definition, social problem solving is "a cognitive-behavioral-emotional process that an individual creates in order to find effective ways of coping with problem situations encountered in daily life". From this point of view, social problem solving is a conscious, realistic, demanding, purposeful coping process that increases one's ability to deal effectively with many problems in social life. This definition was used for social problem solving in this study.

From the moment the child is born, he becomes a member of his family and later of his immediate environment and the society in which he lives. In order to continue his life in interaction with other members of the society, he must have socially approved behaviors, that are, social skills (Ramazan & Dönmez, 2018). One of these skills is social problem-solving skills.

In social life, many problems can be encountered such as friendship, playing games, preparation for school, acquiring good habits, feelings for the opposite sex, and love for society and humanity. The common and most general solution to the problems is the need to move the existing situation to a higher state than it is and the desire to complete it (Adler, 2002, p.34). To improve the problematic situations encountered in life and/or to reduce the negative emotions caused by the problem are the possible aims of social problem solving (Chang et al., 2004, p.12). In problem solving, which is the process of learning to learn, problem solving skills develop and new information is acquired while solving problems with the information obtained from experiences (Ülgen, 2004). Problem solving is a skill learned through social interactions. It is easier and more teachable than it is thought. The more self-confident person is in this matter, the more his/her success in problem solving will increase (Thornton, 1998).

Also, social problem-solving skills include self-awareness, an understanding of emotions, how to manage anger, perspective taking, empathy, prosocial behavior, and establishing positive relationships (Kaltwasser et al, 2017).

Since social problem solving is a learnable skill and teachers are thought to be responsible for teaching in early childhood, the views and practices of preschool teachers were examined in this study.

2.3.1. Social Problem-Solving Stages

Problem solving skills describe the cognitive and behavioral actions of individuals while trying to understand the problems in daily life and aiming to develop effective solutions or ways to cope with these problems. In this context, four basic stages have been defined for problem solving (D'Zurilla & Goldfried, 1971).

1. Problem definition and formulation: The individual tries to collect concrete and realistic data about the problem. It is the ability to define obstacles and problem-solving goals in detail.

2. Generation of alternative solutions: The individual focuses on the purpose of solving the problem. It is the ability to try to find creative solutions whenever possible, regardless of whether they are classic or original.

3. Decision making: By testing and comparing alternative solutions, the individual chooses the most appropriate solution for the problem situation and decides to implement it.

4. Solution implementation and verification: The individual carefully applies the solution he has decided and evaluates the results.

It is considered important that teachers teach the specified steps for children to gain social problem-solving skills.

2.4. Social Problem-Solving Models

In this part of the study, major social problem-solving models will be explained.

In the 1960s and 1970s, researchers addressed the concept of problem solving in individual and social dimensions by focusing on the personal psychological processes of individuals within the scope of "psychological adjustment". Therefore, theories that make different explanations about the concept of problem solving have emerged

including; ''Social Problem Solving Model''(D' Zurillla & Goldfried, 1971) and "Information Processing Model for Solving Real Life Problems'' of Heppner and Krauskopf (D'Zurilla & Nezu, 2007).

2.4.1. Social Problem Solving Model by D'Zurilla and Goldfried

The social problem-solving model developed by D'Zurilla et al. (2004) suggested that social problem-solving skill consists of two large and partially independent dimensions. These are: (1) problem orientation and (2) problem solving styles. Problem orientation is basically a metacognitive process that fulfills a motivational function in social problem solving. Problem-solving styles, on the other hand, describe the cognitive and behavioral actions that individuals take while trying to understand the problems in daily life and aiming to develop effective solutions or ways to cope with these problems. Problem orientation is the first step in social problem solving and refers to the individuals realizing that there is a problem and forming his thoughts, feelings and expectations about the problem (D'Zurilla et al., 2004). In other words, it defines the individual's personal perception of the concept of problem and ability to cope with problems.

The social problem-solving process of D 'Zurilla and Nezu (1987) is basically linked to three elements; problem, solution and problem solving. The problem is what causes one to struggle (D' Zurilla & Goldfried, 1971). Solution is the second important concept in the problem solving process. The solution is a cognitive or behavioral coping style or response pattern related to a specific situation that is referred to in a specific problem situation in the problem solving process (D 'Zurilla & Nezu, 2001). Problem solving, is a cognitive-behavioral process carried out by the individual to find effective solutions to problems encountered in daily life. The problem-solving process is a realistic, purposeful action that requires conscious effort (D' Zurilla & Nezu, 2007). In this model, two approaches are presented for problem solving. This concept, called problem orientation, can be positive or negative. Problem solving styles include making realistic research towards solutions in the application of problem solving skills and techniques. Problem orientation is a factor that should be supported in early childhood (D' Zurilla & Nezu, 2007). While positive problem orientation includes self-efficacy and positive result expectation, negative problem orientation includes

qualities such as perceiving problems as threatening factors, low self-efficacy, negative outcome expectation, and low frustration tolerance. Problem solving styles are also defined in this model. Problem solving styles are grouped as rational, avoidant, impulsive and inattentive. Rational problem solving style; It is expressed as coping with the problem in a constructive and functional way. Rational problem solving is the systematic and rational application of problem solving principles. These principles include defining the problem, determining the goal, creating possible solution options, decision making, implementation and supervision of solutions. Avoidant problem solving is a dysfunctional problem solving style characterized by passivity, stagnation, procrastination and addiction. People who adopt this kind of problem solving method generally avoid problems in their lives, postpone their problems and do not take responsibility for their problems and solutions. The last, impulsive and inattentive problem solving is again a dysfunctional problem solving style with incomplete solutions (D'Zurilla & Nezu, 2007)

2.4.2. Information Processing Model of Real-life Problem Solving

In the information processing model created by Heppner and Krauskopf (1987) problem-solving skill consists of a process in which individuals first obtain information about the problem while solving the problem, then develop action plans for the solution of the problem with the information they gathered, and put these action plans into practice at the last stage. According to the theory, in case of a problem, the individual examines the pre-existing information in his memory and evaluates the problem and creates an action plan. In this theory, people follow four stages respectively in the problem solving process. These are encoding, goal setting, pattern matching and problem-solving process. Coding is the ability of individuals to perceive a problem when they encounter it. In the stage of goal determination, the person creates the goal to be achieved as a result of the problem and tries to reach it. According to this theory, the previous stage should have been passed in a healthy way in determining the goal. In other words, the person should have coded the problem well so that he can create a certain goal that he wants to achieve. In the last stage of the problem solving process, the cognitive behaviors, emotional behaviors and operational behaviors of the person in order to reveal the effective problem solving skill during the problem solving stage are emphasized. Process of this theory consists of three different dimensions. In

terms of cognitive behaviors, the thoughts the person had when they first encountered the problem; in terms of emotional behavior, the feelings he / she felt in the face of the problem; in the dimension of operational behaviors, it is emphasized on what kind of behavior he acts to solve the problem, that is, to overcome it (Heppner & Krauskopf, 1987).

Clearly, in this theory, problem solving skill is accepted as a "teachable" psychological skill. In this context, Heppner and Krauskopf (1987) argued that the educational programs could gain effective social problem-solving.

2.5. Social problem-solving skills in early childhood period

Preschool children act in an effort to understand an event, situation or object that they have not experienced before, with the sense of curiosity they have. In this process, children's developing problem-solving skills should be supported (Gloeckler et al., 2014). All members of the child's environment, especially parents and teachers, including early childhood education institutions, should offer opportunities to develop children's problem-solving skills in the 0-6 age period. Since the child's recognizing any problem he encounters, wanting to solve this problem, and developing possible solutions to the problem improve his problem-solving skills as well as other life skills (Bingham, 2016).

The individual needs to gain problem-solving skills in order to meet his needs resulting from internal and external changes, adapt to social life, cope with the difficulties he encounters, give mental, behavioral and psycho-social reactions towards the determined goal, and continue his life in a healthy way (Shewchuk et al., 2000). For this reason, the acquisition of problem-solving skills is seen among the most important achievements of education (Sonmaz, 2002). Similarly, Joseph and Strain (2010) emphasize that problem solving is one of the most important skills to be developed in the early childhood period. Conflict is a desirable opportunity for learning in a classroom because effective conflict resolution requires successful acquisition of all the skills usually defined in the social-emotional learning lexicon. How we learn to handle conflict determines the positive or negative role that conflict plays in forming our emotions, intelligence, and personality. Well-managed conflict is one of the most important factors in overcoming egocentrism and gaining new knowledge about

oneself and others. Conflict that arises naturally is an opportunity for children to work on their conflicts and develop their social, emotional, intellectual and moral skills. The most effective, long-term and widespread acquisition of these skills occurs in early childhood, when the brain is most open to learning (i.e. from birth to the age of four) (Sandy, 2006).

Ultimately, research and related literature clearly show that children in early childhood period should be taught problem-solving skills effectively (Hune & Nelson, 2002; Joseph & Strain, 2003). Also, preschool teachers are deemed to be important factors to teach children social skills (Joseph &Strain, 2010).

2.6. The importance of acquiring social problem-solving skills in early childhood period

Good problem-solving skills are so necessary in today's complex world and so effective in raising better people who can create a better world (Bingham, 2016). The only solution of an individual who has to solve problems constantly in order to continue his increasingly complex life is to be a good problem solver (Önder, 2012).

Researchers have found that children who cannot acquire social problem-solving skills in early childhood will experience difficulties in their future lives. For example, children who do not develop social problem-solving skills may tend to use aggression to solve interpersonal problems (Crick & Dodge, 1994), and their aggression becomes more predictable and difficult to change after early childhood education (Tremblay, 2000). In many children, continued aggression eventually leads to peer rejection, guilt, school phobia, abuse, and poor mental health in adulthood (Broidy et al., 2003; Carpenter-Rich et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2011; Bornstein et al., 2010). On the contrary, children who acquire this critical skill are defined as entrepreneurial individuals who are self-confident, can make decisions on their own, make friendships more easily, have effective communication skills, can control their anger, and are accepted by their peers. In addition, these children can make predictions about similar events they may encounter in the future by transferring the new experiences they have learned with their problem-solving capacity to other situations (Basun, 2017; Bingham, 1998; Sonmaz, 2000; Denham, 2006; Raver, 2002; Bowman et al., 2001; Izard et al., 2001; Shields et al., 2001).

Especially, the social problem solving skill, which is a necessary and critical skill for children to establish healthy relationships in their social environment, is not only a facilitating factor in the face of problems with peers or other people during social interactions, but also enables the child to have a positive perception about himself (Özkan & Aksoy, 2017).

Moreover, children can be taught in early childhood how to deal with anger and conflict in order to solve the problems encountered in daily life with health. With this learning, the individual encounters interpersonal problems less and his mental health is protected (Shure & Spivack, 1982).

Social problem-solving skills gained at an early age may reduce the susceptibility of children to depression in their future lives. Children with effective social problem-solving skills are better able to cope with problems and stressors in daily life than children who are ineffective in solving social problems. It has been found that better coping ability is directly related to being less prone to depression even under high stress (Goodman et al., 1995).

As a result, studies generally agree that social problem-solving skills to prevent social/behavioral problems should start early in a child's life.

2.7. Factors affecting the development of children's social problem-solving skills

Many variables such as the negative attitudes and beliefs of the individual against the problems, family, school, past experiences, perception power, whether the individual is suitable for his/her age, whether the prior knowledge and education is sufficient for the solution, personal characteristics, ability and health, the benefit to the solution, etc. are effective in the development of problem-solving skills (Gelbal, 1991; Yıldız, 2003). In this part, some factors related to the current study that are stated to affect social problem solving skills are explained briefly.

Personality Characteristics: Self-confidence is necessary for the person to define problems and take action to solve the problems he/she defines. Self-confident people are successful in solving problem because they believe that they can solve it. In this problem solving process, the person's belief that he cannot solve a problem and

negative thoughts about himself prevent the problem from being solved successfully (Oğuz, 2012; Stevens, 1998).

Parents: The attitude of the parents towards their children in the problem-solving process affects the problem-solving skills of children in a positive or negative way. When the child encounters a problem, if the parents solve the problem instead of the child, this causes the child to escape from the problem and prevents him from learning by living (Oğuz, 2012). A democratic environment in the family allows for the development of children's self-control. This is a healthy parental attitude, and in such an environment, children's problem-solving skills are positively affected (Arı & Seçer, 2003).

Teacher: One of the main factors for the development of children's problem solving skills is the teacher. When the teacher is a good guide for children, children can acquire some behaviors related to problem solving (Joseph & Strain, 2010). By observing children closely, teachers seize opportunities to develop problem-solving skills by using the child's social, cognitive, movement and emotional experiences and can develop useful strategies in the learning process (Britz, 1993). By carefully observing children's behavior, teachers can create environments that offer many opportunities to develop problem-solving skills.

Early Childhood Education: Early childhood education institutions provide the opportunity for children to come together with their peers, to communicate and interact with their friends, to do activities together, and to create a natural environment for them to encounter interpersonal problems (Anlıak & Dinçer, 2005). The more problems the child is faced with during the education process and the opportunities are given to find a solution, the more likely the child will be to solve the new problems that arise. Children with a particularly stimulating environment can be good problem solvers if they are encouraged to research and express their opinions in a flexible educational program.

Peer relationship: The child who is faced with social problems during peer relations gains self-confidence. In this way, he knows how to solve problems (Özmen, 2013). Early close relationships can influence later prosocial behaviors by motivating

children to use their understanding of emotion for pro-social purposes (Ensor et al., 2011).

In the light of this information, it is clearly seen that the teachers and early childhood education focused on in the current research are effective in developing children's social problem-solving skills.

2.8. The importance of schools to improve children's social problem solving skills

A school plays a key role in shaping children's problem solving skills so they acquire various techniques by working together (Joseph & Strain, 2010). While providing opportunities for them, it also creates a natural environment for them to encounter interpersonal problems (Anlıak & Dinçer, 2005). It is accepted as an expected natural result that the level of social problem solving skills of the child, who has various social problems in the early childhood education institution and has to find effective solutions to these problems, will increase (Yılmaz & Tepeli, 2013). In addition, it is observed that the prosocial behavior levels of children vary depending on the duration of their attendance at early childhood education. Therefore, considering the importance of early childhood education institutions, children should start early childhood education at an early age and measures should be taken to increase the duration of early childhood education (Erten- Sarıkaya & Gülay-Ogelman, 2013).

Interest and curiosity are very important in problem solving. An environment where children's interests and curiosity are discussed, their thoughts are discussed, their feelings are taken into consideration, and their personal needs are prioritized will improve problem solving. The child in such an environment will adapt to the environment more easily and will understand that problem solving is necessary in many areas (Bingham, 1998). For this reason, the school should provide an environment that will develop the child's problem solving skills.

2.8.1. Role of preschool teachers in the learning process

According to Palmer (2019), preschool teachers have a great role in developing children's social skills. When children experience a problem, the teacher's talking to the children about the problem and discussing solutions helps children better

understand the problem-solving process. In this context, the role of the teacher is twofold; first, they should value the process and trust the child. Second, teachers should create a classroom environment that encourages problem solving and maintain the process successfully. The teacher must also be willing to learn. Curious, observing, listening and questioning, the teacher becomes a model for children by carrying the characteristics that should be in the problem-solving process (Britz, 1993).

Preventing challenging behaviors by teachers can have an unnecessary impact on children's social-emotional development (McLaughlin et al., 2017), because teachers are expected to see these behaviors as an opportunity. Events that occur in the daily flow of the education process may be the moments when teachers can teach children appropriate social behaviors (Lynch & Simpson, 2010). Children can learn social problem-solving skills with the help of the problems they encounter. Lang et al. (2016) stated that when teachers respond positively to children's emotional expressions and support children in learning to take perspective as well as solving problems, these teachers help children develop their skills to express their emotions efficiently and achieve social goals successfully.

When the child encounters a problem, he must learn to solve it on his own because there may not be someone to solve the problems he encounters in real life for him or to guide him (Tavlı, 2007). Today's children will be tomorrow's adults, and one must be able to solve the problems they face in order to progress. Therefore, teachers should develop the children under their guidance as problem-solving adults of the future. Educators should know what kind of problems children face and in what ways children can solve these problems. Teachers should guide children with the methods they use in the problem-solving process and the evaluations they make as a result of the implementation of the solution (Bingham, 1998). By carefully observing children's behavior, teachers can create environments that offer many opportunities to develop problem-solving skills. At the same time, it is very important to allow children to solve the problems that arise, to encourage them to solve. Children actively use their minds while searching for possibilities and solutions to problems, and their abilities such as curiosity, questioning, cooperation and independence increase (Bullock, 1988).

In the problem-solving process, individuals reveal new information by using the knowledge and skills they have gained in the past. Teachers are responsible for providing tools for childrens to develop new skills and techniques, creating a problem environment, and helping them to hide and find new skills (Martz et al., 2016). When teachers are supported with education programs that include problem-solving skills, include problem-solving activities in their education programs, and cooperate with families on this issue, the permanence of children's learning can be ensured (Aydoğan, 2012). Similarly, Joseph and Strain (2010) stated that teachers can plan various activities that encourage children to produce solutions throughout the day in order to reinforce their social problem-solving skills, and that they can implement these activities systematically throughout the year, thus improving this skill in an observable way.

It is clearly seen that teachers have important roles in teaching children social problem-solving skills.

2.8.1.1. Competencies for Preschool Teachers

It is necessary to elaborate the competence frameworks in order to clarify the needs of teachers and what they are supposed to do during the education process (Ingvarson, 1998). According to Koster and Dengerink (2008), teachers' competence is defined as "a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and personal characteristics, empowering the teacher to act professionally and appropriately in a situation and applying them consistently.''

There is a core body of knowledge, skills, values and dispositions that preschool teachers must demonstrate in order to effectively promote the development and learning of young children (NAEYC, 2020). Thus, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2020) defines six professional standards and competencies for early childhood teachers.

1.Child Development and Learning in Context : Teachers understand the stages of development from birth to age 8. They know that each child has unique developmental differences and understands the context in which the child learns. They use this

multidimensional information to make decisions about how to fulfill their responsibilities.

2. Family–Teacher Partnerships and Community Connections: The success of teachers depends on their partnership with the families of the children they serve. They know and value diversity of families and constantly interact with them. They build links between schools and community organizations to support the development of young children and their families.

3. Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment: Preschool teachers understand that the primary purpose of assessments is to provide instruction and planning in instructional settings. They know assessment tools and use assessment to document individual children's progress and plan learning experiences based on findings.

4. Developmentally, Culturally, and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices: Teachers understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex undertaking and that it varies according to children's ages, characteristics and context. They understand and use teaching skills that respond to the needs of each child.

5. Knowledge, Application, and Integration of Academic Content in the Early Childhood Curriculum: Teachers know the key concepts, methods and tools in each academic discipline and understand pedagogy, including how they use this knowledge. They apply this knowledge together with spontaneous and planned learning experiences so that learning is meaningful to children.

6. Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator: Preschool teachers are defined as members of the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and professional guidelines. They have communication skills that effectively support their relationships with children, their families and colleagues. They are continuous learners who develop and maintain the habit of reflective and purposeful application of their knowledge.

2.9. Problem behaviors occurring in the early childhood period

Problem behavior is defined as persistent behaviors that interfere with the child's social relationships, communication and learning, and harm himself, his family, peers and other adults. Although problem behaviours may show themselves as tantrums and violent, some cases may also show reactions such as prolonged bouts of hiccups. Social problem situations experienced by children in the classroom are generally seen as aggression, threats, sharing, not participating in group activities and crying (Kesicioğlu, 2015).

Children's motor and language development in early childhood allows them to explore their physical and social environment more and to be more assertive. Increasing assertiveness and more socialization of children can increase conflict and bring about behaviors that may increase this conflict (Senemoğlu 2001; Crebert et al., 2011). Children with social skills deficits often use challenging behaviors or inappropriate solutions, such as social withdrawal, to attempt to resolve social conflicts (Bernard-Opitz et al., 2001). Additionally, negative interactions may contribute to a pattern of social learning experience that can lead to more serious problem behaviors (Bandura, 1985). Children's problematic behavior patterns and patterns of relating in prosocial ways are determined early in life (Briggs-Gowan et al., 2006). Children who exhibit persistent behavioral problems in early childhood settings often have deficiencies in social skills and interpersonal problem solving (Kohler et al., 1990). Moreover, unacceptable behavior may occur if children fail to identify and learn desirable reactions or are rewarded for undesirable behaviors. Behavior problems that emerge during early childhood tend to persist in later years. Unless children receive support from their family or teachers when they encounter difficulties or express inappropriate attitudes, existing behavior problems may escalate (Cress et al., 2012).

It is clearly seen that the lack of social problem-solving skills in the early childhood period can lead to the emergence of problem behaviors and teachers should see these problems as an opportunity for skill development.

2.9.1. Problem-solving behaviors of children

Children exhibit an attitude parallel to their social-emotional development in problem solving. In this context, the solutions they find to the problems they encounter are divided into two groups. One of them is positive social (prosocial) behavior and the other is antisocial (aggressive) behavior. Prosocial and antisocial behaviors are described in this section.

2.9.1.1. Prosocial (positive social) behavior

Prosocial behavior includes behaviors that can be characterized as positive interpersonal relationships. As can be understood from this definition, prosocial behavior is the type of behavior that children prefer to choose. Behaviors that are chosen for the benefit of others in order to solve the existing problem and that involve a certain amount of risk or sacrifice without the expectation of reward from the other party can be seen as prosocial behavior (Yılmaz & Tepeli, 2013). Prosocial behavior is the behavior exhibited for the well-being of people without a professional duty (Bierhoff, 2002, p.9). These behaviors include various behaviors such as sharing, helping, sympathy, and cooperation (Hay, 1994). Prosocial behavior has a clear importance for the quality of interactions between individuals and groups (Eisenberg et al., 2006). The prosocial behaviors exhibited by children are decisive in their high participation in games, whether they are accepted by their peers and whether they have friends (İnan, 2018).

It is important to raise awareness of prosocial behaviors in children in the early childhood period, which is critical in the shaping of behaviors, to prepare an environment for the development of these behaviors and to support them to acquire prosocial behaviors, so that individuals with advanced social problem-solving skills and empathy are included in the society (Altıntaş, 2017; Tozduman-Yaralı & Özkan, 2016). For this reason, it is emphasized that children's social problem-solving skills should be supported in order to create their future characteristics by following positive social behaviors (Zembat & Unutkan, 2003; Ünal & Aral, 2014; Begde & Özyürek, 2016).

2.9.1.2. Antisocial (aggressive) behavior

Another type of behavior preferred by children in case of problems is antisocial (aggressive) behaviors, which are destructive and include behaviors that hurt and harm the people around them. Children who cannot express their emotions properly have difficulty in solving their problems and cause new problems to emerge (Dereli-İman, 2013; Webster, 2008). Antisocial behaviors that can be seen in some children can cause peer rejection. It can result in low levels of social participation and lack of friends. The most worrying of these antisocial behaviors is aggression, which is defined as physical or verbal behavior that threatens or aims to harm another (İnan, 2018).

Conditions such as genetics, harsh parenting, watching violence on television and other media, aggressive peers, school failure, living in poverty, and biased interpretation of people's behavior are sources of children's aggressive behavior. Findings from studies show that aggression isn't just a playful case of scuffles that kids always go to extremes. On the contrary, a small minority who are extremely aggressive, they can turn into young adults who create turmoil in society (Kail, 2015).

It is stated that aggressive, emotional and impatient children are unsuccessful in problem solving (Malik et al., 2006). Poor social problem-solving skills can lead to maladaptive behaviors and peer rejection. For this reason, it is very important to detect such children in early childhood in order to take preventive measures by teachers.

2.9.2. Teachers' strategies for children's problem behaviors

Considering that the lack of social problem-solving skills affects children's problem behaviors, it can be said that teachers' strategies in this regard are also effective in skill development. An effective teacher should understand that children lack emotion regulation and simple problem-solving skills, rather than perceiving young children's problem behaviors as temporary for their age (Gloeckler et al., 2014). The teacher should see problem as a problem-solving opportunity when children behave in a destructive or harmful way to themselves or others (Gloeckler & Cassell, 2012).

Within the problem-solving opportunities, the teacher should apply strategies that will involve children in the problem-solving process during their daily routines in order to create behavioral patterns that will form the framework of conflict resolution life skills (Gloeckler et al., 2014). It is important for the social-emotional development of children whether they use constructive or destructive solutions while solving their social problems. The correct intervention made by the teachers about which solution method is adopted in social problem-solving skills, constructively or destructively, ensures that the development of children is affected positively (Anlıak & Dinçer, 2005; Kaytez & Kadan, 2016; Çalışkan et al., 2006; Berk, 2013). In this context, it is important for children to be taught some methods or problem-solving steps by the teacher so that they can develop their social problem solving skills and to support children in producing alternative solutions for the social problems they encounter (Kayılı & Arı, 2015; Cüceloğlu, 1998; Elias & Tobias, 2005). On the other hand, Bayer et al. (1995) argued that teachers engage in various practices that do not encourage children's participation in social problems. Similarly, in Dereli (2008)'s study, it was thought that one of the reasons why children's social problem solutions are inappropriate solutions that include aggressive behavior is that these negative problem-solving behaviors of children are unwittingly reinforced by teachers with inappropriate strategies.

It is clear that teachers' positive and constructive strategies for the problem situations faced by children can support children's social problem-solving skills.

2.10. Early Childhood Education Program in Türkiye

It is emphasized that the 0-6 age period has a critical importance in the development of skills such as interpersonal relations, effective communication, empathy, coping with stress, coping with emotions, self-awareness, decision making, creative thinking, critical thinking and problem solving as determined by the World Health Organization [WHO] (1997). In this direction, it is very important to prepare education programs to develop children's life skills from an early age and to include these skills effectively in the early childhood education programs to be prepared, in terms of acquiring life skills for children.

Supporting all developmental areas of children in the early childhood period and providing developmental opportunities are among the main aims of early childhood education (Akkaya, 2006). Helping children learn to solve problems is also one of the functions of the early childhood education program (Tegano et al.,1989). In early childhood education institutions where a flexible program is implemented, children can be good problem solvers when a rich stimulating environment is presented and they are encouraged to do research (Güven, 2005).

The early childhood education program of Türkiye is a developmental program that addresses motor, cognitive, socio-emotional, language and self- care skills with an integrated approach (MoNE, 2013). The program aims to increase the developmental levels of each individual child by creating an education process that has at its various gains and indicators. The program has many characteristics like being child-centered, eclectic, flexible, play-based, etc. (MoNE, 2013). When the early childhood education program is evaluated in terms of social problem solving, it is clearly seen that there are gains and indicators related to problem solving skills directly or indirectly in the cognitive, language, and social-emotional domains (MoNE, 2013). For example, in the cognitive development domain, it has gain like 'Produces solutions to problem situations'. In the social- emotional development domain, it has gains and indicators like 'Solving problems with others'; expressing one's feelings about an event or a situation'; 'Shows positive/negative feelings about an event or situation in appropriate ways'. In the language development domain, it has gains like 'Using language with the aim of communication.' In addition, being able to produce creative solutions to problem situations is also among the gains in the early childhood education program, and it is aimed that children develop ideas on instant problems they encounter in daily life in line with this achievement. These acquisitions directly or indirectly support social problem solving skills.

Besides gains and indicators, experiments, excursions, project studies, art activities and story hours in early childhood programs are moments full of opportunities for children to present problems (Güven, 2005). Problem-solving activities should be included in all areas of planning and should deal with processes, facts, emotions and language (Bullock, 1988). Therefore, it is recommended that teachers support

children's social and emotional development with different types of activities (MoNE, 2013).

2.10.1. An Example Curriculum: Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)

There is a growing number of early childhood education intervention programs designed to support children's social, emotional and behavioral development of in early years to increase protective skills such as communication and problem solving, to increase parent involvement and in turn, to provide the quality of early childhood education (Hughes & Cline, 2015). Several well-known evidence-based intervention programs exist for young children, including the Incredible Years, Emotion Based Prevention Program, I Can Problem Solve, Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum (Domitrovich et al.,2007; Hughes & Cline, 2015). This section describes PATHS Curriculum (Kushe & Greenberg, 1994) as an example.

PATHS is a comprehensive curriculum that aims to improve children's social-emotional competencies and is designed to reduce problem behaviors (Domitrovich et al., 2007). PATHS extends other social-emotional curricula to include the teaching of multiple skills delivered in a developmentally appropriate sequence. It places more emphasis on children's self-regulation abilities than traditional behavior change. PATHS focuses on developing emotional awareness and emotional regulation skills while also combining self-control and social problem-solving skills. PATHS is integrated with the existing curriculum in the school and uses a classroom-wide approach. While promoting the development of children's individual talents and competence, the curriculum also encourages a changes in the environment of the classroom to foster greater empathy and openness toward children's emotional needs (Curtis & Norgate, 2007). Through this curriculum, children learn to reflect on problem situations and predict the emergence of problems, which is critical for social competence (Dodge, 1986; Spivak & Shure, 1974).

The preschool level of this curriculum assists preschool educators in creating an environment that supports the development of young children aged 3 to 6. The PATHS curriculum is designed to be taught at least twice a week for 20 to 30 minutes each

time. Systematic, developmentally-based lessons, materials, and instructions are provided to facilitate five main topics; emotional literacy, self-control, social competence, positive peer relations, and social problem-solving skills (Works Clearinghouse, 2021). In keeping with this purpose, PATHS Curriculum consist of manual and six volumes of 44 lessons divided into three major units, each containing developmentally sequenced lessons to integrate and build on previous learning. First unit is readiness and self-control and is taught by using turtle technique. Second unit is feelings and relationship and focuses on emotional and interpersonal understanding. Last unit is problem- solving for formal interpersonal problem-solving. Each unit contains aspects of five main topic: self-control, emotional understanding, interpersonal problem-solving skills, positive self-esteem and improved peer communication/relationships (Domitrovich et al., 2004). Each volume includes pictures, photographs, activity sheets, home activities, and parent letters. A central focus of PATHS is the generalization of skills into everyday life. This is promoted through dialoguing (a technique which encourages the child to think of solutions themselves and to share thoughts and feelings. Each day, a different child is chosen as 'PATHS child for today'. This child helps the teacher during the lesson, and receives compliments from the teacher and other children in the class. Curriculum needs some materials ; stories, feeling chart whereby children could select a feelings face to show how they were feeling and turtle puppets around setting for children to access in times of need to anger management (Kam et al., 2004). Preschool level of PATHS can be taught over a two year period through lessons and activities that highlight reading, telling stories, puppetry, singing, drawing, and use of concepts in science and math. Timing and frequency of sessions can be adapted to needs of children's or early childhood education institutions (Curtis & Norgate, 2007).

2.11. National and International Studies on teachers' views regarding children's social problem solving skills

Some national and international studies have been conducted on the social problem-solving skills of children in early childhood. The researcher found that these studies mostly examined children's social problem-solving skills in terms of various variables (age, gender, educational status of parents, number of siblings, living context, parental attitude, early childhood education, etc.) (Walker et al., 2002; Mayeux & Cillessen,

2003; Yaban &Yükselen, 2007; Bozkurt- Yükçü & Demircioğlu, 2017; Özyürek, et. al, 2018; Dereli, 2019; Balcı, 2019; Basun- Erden, 2020). Also, in some studies, the relationships between children's social problem-solving skills and the levels of variables such as self-perception, autonomy, school readiness, anger-aggression, anxiety and academic achievement were investigated, and significant relationships were found between these dimensions and social problem-solving skills (Peterson,2001; Walker & Henderson, 2012; Walker et al., 2013; Polat & Yağbasan, 2019; Tozduman & Yaralı- Özkan, 2016).

The researcher found that some studies focused on teachers' views and practices about children's social problem-solving skills.

In 2015, Kesicioğlu aimed to determine the interpersonal problem-solving skills of preschool children and the factors affecting this skill by using The Interpersonal Problem Solving Scale (IPSS) and semi-structured interviews in this study. 152 children from ten different kindergartens, their parents and teachers in Giresun participated in this study. As a result of the research, it was seen that teachers and families focused on children's family structures and duration of watching television as factors. The teachers expressed their views on the behavioral problems of children with interpersonal problem solving problems under the themes of aggression, verbal threat, not sharing, not participating in group activities, crying and attachment to mother/father, while families expressed aggression, verbal threat, crying, and attachment to mother/father. Similarly, Akdoğan and Ulutaş (2017) conducted a study in Sivas with 80 preschool teachers by using Demographic Information Form and semi- structured interview form to examine the opinions of teachers on the social problem-solving skills of 5-6-years-old-children. As a result of the research, it was seen that almost all of the teachers stated that it is necessary to give social problem-solving skills training to children, and more than half of them stated that the causes of social problems were mostly caused by parental attitudes and technology. Most of the teachers stated that they encountered more aggression, interaction and adaptation problems in their classrooms. Many of the participants emphasized that they attach importance to parent involvement activities and that they provide parent involvement in different ways. It was determined that teachers evaluated improve in children's social problem solving skills as an increase in positive social behaviors, active

participation in activities and sensitivity to social problems. Moreover, in their study, Yumus and Bayhan (2017), investigated teachers' views on the behavioral problems of 36–72-month-old children and examined the factors associated with teachers' ability to cope with these problems. 238 preschool teachers responsible for 36-72 months old children participated in this study. Data were collected using a questionnaire developed specifically to measure teachers' opinions on child behavior problems. The findings showed that the educators currently employed in the Turkish education system do not have the desired level of knowledge about behavioral problems and do not approach these problems appropriately. The skills reported by teachers in defining and evaluating behavior problems, classroom management and behavior management showed significant differences according to their age, teaching experience and education level.

When international studies examining the views and perceptions of teachers on social problem solving skills were investigated, the researcher found that social problem solving skills are considered important in terms of school readiness and peer acceptance according to teachers in these studies.

For example, Peterson (2001) investigated the relations between 3-5 years old children's discussions with peers, ability to produce solutions and their self-reliance. The researcher interviewed 43 children and their teachers and found that teachers think that there is a positive relation between children's' social problem solving skills and their acceptance by peers. Also, in their study, King and Boardman (2006) aimed to investigate the importance of children's having social skills from the perspective of teachers and parents. 16 preschool teachers and 63 preschool parents from the Tasmania Education department were included in the study. Data was collected through mailed questionnaires and the Kindergarten Development Check. As a result of this study, it was found that teachers think that children's acquisition of social skills prepares them for school. There was also a discrepancy between school and home expectations that negatively affected children's social skills.

To the best of researcher's knowledge, only one study was found that examined the effectiveness of teacher training on social problem solving.

Gloeckler, Cassell, and Malkus (2014) conducted experimental study with 51 toddlers and 8 teachers in the southeastern United States of teacher practice with young children during social problems. The teachers in the experimental groups were given vocational training in three areas; a) teacher self-regulation and stress management, b) child self-regulation of emotions and behaviors, c) social problem solving. As a result of the study, it has been noted that training for intervention classes resulted in a positive effect and a reduction in social problems. Also, it was emphasized that there is a need for additional research on social problem solving skills and supportive teacher practices of toddlers.

In another study, teachers' practices for children's social problems were discussed comparatively and it was concluded that teachers need training on children's social problem solving skills.

Şahin (2011) conducted a study in which 55 Turkish and 53 Belgian preschool teachers in metropolitan cities participated. In this study, the views of teachers working in public and private institutions working with children aged 3-6 about the social problem solving skills of children were taken by using the Teacher's Interpersonal Problem Solving Questionnaire. As a result, it was found that Turkish teachers tend to solve the social problems faced by children immediately and they did this by offering a solution to the children. However, it was found that Belgian teachers evaluated the problems together with the children and produced the solution together. In the study, it was revealed that few Turkish and Flemish teachers have specific training in improving interpersonal problem-solving skills in children. In the light of these results, it was concluded that Turkish and Belgian teachers need training on children's social problem solving skills.

Besides teachers' views on social problem solving, the researcher found that limited studies focused on teachers' attitude on this issue.

Begde and Özyürek (2016) aimed to examine the effects of teacher and parent attitudes on the problem-solving skills of preschool children. A total of 120 children and their preschool teachers (n=15) participated in the study and Problem Solving Skills Scale (4-7 years old), Teaching Attitude Scale and Parenting Attitude Scale were used. As a result of the research, it was found that as teachers' authoritarian attitudes increase,

children's ability to ask questions about the problem increases, and as teachers' democratic attitudes increase, children's ability to predict the outcome of some actions and to solve problems in general decreases.

In some studies, the researcher found that there are comparative studies in which the views of teachers and parents on children's social problem solving skills indirectly are taken.

In the study conducted by Dalkılıç (2014), social emotional adjustment and interpersonal problem-solving skills were compared in 147 children aged between 60 and 72 months. It was seen that some demographic characteristics of the children's teachers and parents are effective in finding solutions to children's interpersonal problem situations. Further, it was concluded that views of teachers are consistent with the views of parents. A contrary result was also found in a study with 447 children aged 4-6 in Hungary by Kasik and Gál (2016). The views of parents and teachers about children's social problem-solving skills, adaptation, positive social behaviors and difficulties in problem solving were examined and it was found that they have different views about children's social problem solving skills such as positive and negative behaviors.

Besides studies focused specifically on social problem solving skills, the researcher found that some researchers have also studied the views of teachers about supporting children's social skills.

In 2014, Özyürek and Ceylan's study aimed to evaluate the views of preschool teachers and parents about supporting social skills in children by using a focus group interview. Seven teachers working in public early childhood education institutions affiliated to the Karabük Directorate of National Education and eight parents/mothers with children between the ages of four and six attending these schools were included in the study. As a result of this research, preschool teachers and parents stated that in addition to the desired social skills observed in children, there are also social skill deficiencies caused by various reasons. They stated that the methods they use in the development of social skills are not always effective and that they need training in this regard. It was concluded that a comprehensive study is needed to determine the needs of teachers and parents on social skills. Similary, Gülay Ogelman (2014), in her study, examined

the dissertations investigating the social skills of preschool children in Türkiye between the years of 2000-2013. 23 master's theses and 8 doctoral theses were included in the research. According to the results of this study, it was found that the scanning method was frequently used in postgraduate theses, and the experimental method was more common in doctoral theses. In addition, the researcher recommended further research with teachers and parents.

In her master's thesis in 2016, Lin investigated the effectiveness of a teacher in improving social and emotional skills with hierarchical linear modeling. 18,174 children from kindergarten to primary school years participated to study. The findings of this study show that instructional qualities including teacher expectations, teacher-student relationships, and classroom discipline have a substantial impact on both social and emotional skill development and academic achievement goals.

Furthermore, Breen conducted a study in Delphi in 2018 to investigate social and emotional skills in early childhood education with a goal on identifying teachers' methods to support the development of empathy and emotion regulation. As a result of this study, it was found that teachers stated that teachers' positive interaction, being role model, defining feelings in group time are effective strategies to promote empathy and emotion regulation related with social problem solving for children.

Lastly, a qualitative study, which aimed to make a multi-dimensional evaluation of social skills in the early childhood period according to the opinions of preschool teachers, was carried out by Aksoy (2021). 58 preschool teachers working in kindergartens participated in the study and data were collected through face-to-face interviews prepared by the researcher. As a result of the interviews with preschool teachers; it was determined that the social skill that preschool children are the best at is "helping" and the social skill that they are most inadequate is "sharing". According to the opinions of preschool teachers, it was found that "starting and maintaining communication" and "being respectful" come first among the social skills that should be acquired by preschool children. It is seen that the frequency of including social skills activities in the education process of preschool teachers is not very sufficient and they mainly use drama, play and story methods within the scope of social skills activities.

2.12. Summary

In the light of the literature, it is seen that teachers have an important role in both social interactions and social problem-solving skills of young children. The supportive and facilitating roles of teachers are decisive in solving the problems that occur in children's social interactions and in teaching this conflict resolution skill. In this sense, it is important to examine the views of teachers on this issue. It is known that teachers' views on social problem solving, their practices and the strategies they apply in case of problems are very important for the child to gain social problem solving skills. Therefore, in line with this literature emphasizing the critical role of the teacher in the process, the present study aimed to explore teachers' views and practices on children's social problem-solving skills.

It is seen that researches on social problem solving skills have been carried out widely since 1985, especially abroad. In Türkiye, these studies have become widespread after the 2000s. When research on social problem-solving skills of preschool children are examined, we see that the aim is to support children's social problem-solving skills mostly through developed education programs and instructional designs. In addition, there are studies examining the relationship between preschool children's social problem-solving skills and behavioral problems, understanding emotions, self-perception, peer relations, maternal acceptance-rejection level, cognitive skills, aggression, shyness and many other variables.

When the relevant literature was investigated, it is thought that the current study will contribute to the literature by focusing on the views and practices of teachers on social problem solving skills in children and will be beneficial for future studies.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This chapter presents the methodology of the study under these headings; research questions, the design of the study, pilot study, participants and settings of the study, instrumentation and data collection, data analysis, the role of the researcher, ethical considerations and limitations. The current study is a qualitative study, so trustworthiness as validity and reliability of the study are presented at the end of the chapter.

3.1. Research Questions

The main purpose of this research is to investigate preschool teachers' views and practices about children's social problem-solving skills. In keeping with this purpose and to obtain detailed information about the views and practices of teachers who work in public and private early childhood institutions in Trabzon, the researcher sought to answer the following questions;

1. What are the views of preschool teachers about social problem solving?

2. What are the views of preschool teachers regarding children's social problem solving skills?

> 2.a. What are the views of preschool teachers about the effect of social problem solving skills on children?
>
> 2.b. What are the views of preschool teachers on the importance of gaining social problem solving skills in the early childhood period?
>
> 2.c What are the views of preschool teachers on the importance of social problem solving skills considering children's age group in early childhood education?

2.d What are the views of preschool teachers about the reasons why children cannot develop their social problem-solving skills?

3. What are preschool teachers' views about the place of social problem solving skills in the MoNE Early Childhood Education Program (2013)?

> 3.a. What are suggestions of preschool teachers for MoNE Early Childhood Education Program to improve children's social problem solving skills?

4. What are preschool teachers' self-reported practices about children's social problem solving skills?

> 4.a. What are preschool teachers' self-reported educational activities about children's social problem solving skills?
>
> 4.b. What are most experienced social problem behaviors in class reported by teacher?
>
> 4.c. What are preschool teachers' self-reported strategies in dealing with social problems of children?

5. What are preschool teachers' actual practices about children's social problem solving skills?

> 5.a. What are the most experienced social problem behaviors observed in class?
>
> 5.b. What are preschool teachers' actual strategies in dealing with social problems of children?

6. To what extend preschool teachers' self-reported practices are consistent with their observed practices?

> 6.a. To what extend self-reported most experienced social problem behavior are consistent with observed social problem behaviors in class?
>
> 6.b. To what extend preschool teachers' self-reported strategies in dealing with children's social problems are consistent with their actual strategies?

3.2. The Design of the Study

As Creswell (2007) stated, a phenomenological study identifies the participants' feelings, ideas and views about a phenomenon or a concept. Considering this

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definition, in this study, the researcher aims to conduct phenomenological research in order to investigate the views and practices of preschool teachers regarding children's social problem solving skills. In addition, the phenomenon is to be examined as the preschool teachers' views on children's social problem solving skills.

In this current study, the researcher aimed to collect detailed data through meetings and encouraged teachers to share their views. As Creswell (2014) stated, in qualitative research, researchers can use interviews, recordings or observations to obtain information about a concept in order to make the concept more observable and recognizable. Also, according to Gay et al. (2009), the best and most appropriate study is a phenomenological study to collect participants' involvement, viewpoints, thoughts, and experiences about a concept. Thus, the researcher used semi-structured interviews to obtain detailed information from participants about the research topic.

In addition, the researcher observed the teachers in their classrooms. Since the research focused on teachers' views and practices, the consistency of the answers given by the teachers to the questions about children's social problem-solving skills was revealed by the observation method. Furthermore, thanks to the observation made, the researcher examined the strategies used by the teachers for the social problem situations experienced by the children. Detailed information about the semi structured interview and observation will be explained in the instrumentation.

3.3. Pilot Study

3.3.1. Pilot Study for Semi-Structured Interview

According to Merriam (2009), a researcher can conduct pilot interviews to evaluate whether the questions are correct and effective, and to see the quality of interaction between the researcher and the participant. In line with these purposes, a pilot study was conducted with five preschool teachers working in early childhood education institutions for the semi-structured interview in this study. Table 2 demonstrates the demographic information of the participants.

After the pilot study, changes and arrangements were made in the interview questions. To the question of what does the concept of social problem solving mean to you, the

participants answered with one word. Therefore, after the pilot study, it has been changed to "How do you define social problem solving?" in order to obtain a more detailed definition. Also, the researcher first asked ""what is the most common social problem behavior in the classroom, and then asked "how do you deal with the most common social problem behavior when you encounter it in your classroom". The aim was to obtain an answer about the social problem behavior that the participants stated in the previous question, but most of the participants mentioned other social problems. For this reason, the question has been changed to "How do you deal with any social problem you encounter in the classroom? In the interview, the participants were first asked how they defined social problem solving, after a few more questions, the theoretical definition of social problem solving was given, and then the definition was asked again. The researcher wanted to test whether the given definition changed the definitions of the participants. However, the participants stated that they had answered this question before. For this reason, it was thought that it would be more effective to ask if there is anything they would like to add to their own definition after the definition was given.

Also, in the pilot study, the researcher noticed that the participants were worried about answering the questions correctly. Therefore, at the beginning of the interview, the researcher decided to have a talk with the participants about the value of their thoughts as a teacher and that their experiences were guiding in the field of early childhood education. In addition, she thought that talking about her teaching experience would create a relaxed environment wherein the participants would express their ideas more easily.

As a result, the pilot study helped the researcher to revise the questions in a more understandable way in accordance with the objectives of the study, and to decide how the interview would be conducted to make the participants feel comfortable.

3.3.2. Pilot Study for Observation

The pilot study for observation was done for two purposes. The first purpose is to evaluate whether the observation forms prepared by the researcher are appropriate for the intended purposes. Also, a second observer was recruited for the actual and pilot observation. The second purpose is to review the consistency between the observation

notes of the researcher and the second observer to determine whether the second observer needs any training in observation before actual observation. The second observer was a teaching assistant in Department of Child Development and has a graduate degree. In the pilot observation, the teachers were chosen from among the teachers interviewed. After ethical permission and application permission were given to the schools, pilot observations were made with three preschool teachers for four weeks. Four observation sessions were conducted and the total observation time was forty-eight hours. Table 1 includes pilot observation times and durations.

Table 1 *Observation schedule for pilot study*

Weeks	Sessions	Nov 2, Tuesday	Nov 3, Wednesday
1st week	Morning (08.00-12.00)	*P3*	
	Afternoon (13.00-17.00)	*P1*	*P4*
Weeks	**Sessions**	**Nov 8, Monday**	**Nov 10, Wednesday**
2nd week	Morning (08.00-12.00)	P1	P4
	Afternoon (13.00-17.00)	P3	
Weeks	**Sessions**	**Nov 25, Thursday**	**Nov 26, Friday**
3rd week	Morning (08.00-12.00)	P4	P1
	Afternoon (13.00-17.00)		P3
Weeks	**Sessions**	**Nov 29, Monday**	**Nov 30, Tuesday**
4th week	Morning (08.00-12.00)	P3	
	Afternoon (13.00-17.00)	P1	P4

As a result of pilot observation, the first purpose of which was to evaluate the efficiency of observation forms, it was decided that the Social Problem Solving Observation Checklist used was suitable for use by the researcher to collect the data she wanted to obtain. Moreover, it was noticed that there were abstract concepts to

observe in the behaviors specified in the behavior observation list, and these behaviors were exemplified in an observable way and expressed more clearly. For example, the behavior of 'not participating in group activities', which is in the social problem behavior list, is divided into refusing to participate in group activities physically and sabotaging group activities. Through pilot observations, the observation form was revised.

For the second purpose, after the pilot observation, the researcher and the second observer compared the forms filled out for each week, and it was seen that the data in both forms were quite consistent. For this reason, it was determined that the second observer did not need any training to fill the observation forms, but the behaviors specified in the form should be more understandable.

Table 2 *Demographic information of the teachers observed and interviewed in the pilot study*

Participants	Age	Gender	Educational Background	Teaching Experience	Age group taught	Course taken related to social problem solving skills
					Age group experience	
P1 (observed teacher)	28	Female	Undergraduate	4 years	4-5 years old	No
			ECE		3-4,4-5 years old	
P2	32	Female	Undergraduate	8 years	5-6 years old	No
			ECE		3-4, 4-5, 5-6 years old	
P3 (observed teacher)	31	Female	Undergraduate	9 years	3-4 years old	No
			ECE		3-4, 5-6 years old	
P4 (observed teacher)	23	Female	Vocational School for girls	1 year	3-4 years old	No
			Child Development		3-4 years old	

Table 2 *Demographic information of the teachers observed and interviewed in the pilot study cont'd*

P5	46	Female	Graduate Degree	20 years	4-5 years old	Yes
			ECE		3-4, 4-5, 5-6 years old	

3.4. Participants and Setting of the Study

In a qualitative study, the setting, access and participants should be clearly defined (Creswell, 2008; Morse, 1998; Patton, 2002). Since this study is a qualitative study, in this section, the volunteer participants of the study and the schools they work will be discussed in order to define the settings of the study.

3.4.1. Participant teachers

The researcher formed the sample consisting of a small group of preschool teachers (N=15) who are working at public or private early childhood institutions in Trabzon.

The aim of qualitative research is not to generalize for the population, but to investigate the phenomenon in depth (Creswell, 2008). On the basis of qualitative research, it is necessary to select the participants and the context in accordance with the purpose in order to discover the intended phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Since the phenomenon to be investigated in this study is the views of preschool teachers about children's social problem solving skills, it is considered important that the participants are people who have knowledge and experience on this subject.

In qualitative research, attention is paid to the selection of individuals and contexts that will enable us to discover the phenomenon and obtain useful information, and this type of participant selection can be classified as purposive sampling. In addition, as stated by Palinkas et al. (2015), purposive sampling may be preferred in studies if researchers specify one or more criteria in the selection of participants. In the light of this information, the researcher used the purposive sampling method in this current study. The researcher has determined two criteria for the selection of participants in the study. This criterion is related to terms of employment. The first criterion is that the teachers who will participate in the study are currently working in an early

childhood education institution. The second criterion is that the participants have at least 2 years of working experience. The number of experiences is closely related to the fact that teachers have spent time with different children. For the current study, it is important for teachers to have an idea about children by observing them. The reason for the minimum 2 years' criterion is that teachers' years of experience working in private schools is uncertain. The researcher interviewed them to find out the duration of the teachers working in private schools to determine the criteria before the study and the average year of experience was determined as 2 or 3 years.

For the sample size, there are different viewpoints to decide proper size of sample in qualitative phenomenological study. While Dukes (1984) indicated researchers should choose between 3-10 participants in this kind of study, Polkinghorne (1989) suggested 5-25 participants. For the current study, the researcher selected 15 participants from different early childhood institutions. Table 3 includes the demographic information of participant teachers.

Table 3 *Demographic information of teachers observed and interviewed in the study*

Participant	Age	Gender	Educational Background	Teaching Experience	Type of School	Age group taught			Course taken
						Age group experience			
P1	28	Female	Undergraduate	7	Public	3-4 year olds			No
			ECE			3-4, 4-5, 5-6 age groups			
P2	37	Female	Graduate	12	Public	5-6 year olds			No
			ECE			3-4, 5-6 age groups			
P3	38	Female	Undergraduate	13	Public	4-5 year olds			No
			ECE			3-4, 4-5, 5-6 age groups			
P4	31	Female	Undergraduate	10	Public	5-6 year olds			No
			ECE			4-5, 5-6 age groups			
P5	33	Female	Undergraduate	13	Public	3-4 year olds			No
			ECE			3-4, 4-5, 5-6 age groups			
P6	36	Male	Graduate	3	Private	4-5 year olds			No
			ECE			4-5 age groups			
P7 (observed)	26	Female	Undergraduate	2	Private	4-5 year olds			Yes
			Child Development			3-4, 4-5, 5-6 age groups			

Table 3 *Demographic information of teachers observed and interviewed in the study cont'd*

Participant	Age	Gender	Education	Years	School	Age groups	
P8 (observed)	24	Female	Associate / Child	3	Private	4-5 year olds / 3-4, 4-5 age group	No
P9	45	Female	Associate / ECE	23	Public	5-6 year olds / 3-4, 4-5, 5-6 age groups	Yes
P10	42	Female	Undergraduate / ECE	20	Private	4-5 year olds / 3-4, 4-5 age groups	No
P11	35	Male	Undergraduate / ECE	5	Public	5-6 year olds / 4-5, 5-6 age groups	No
P12 (observed)	27	Female	Undergraduate / Child Dev.	3	Private	5-6 year olds / 3-4, 4-5, 5-6 age groups	No
P13	28	Male	Graduate / ECE	5	Private	5-6 year olds / 4-5, 5-6 age groups	No
P14 (observed)	39	Female	Undergraduate / ECE	12	Public	3-4 year olds / 3-4, 5-6 age groups	No
P15 (observed)	40	Female	Undergraduate / ECE, Nursing	16	Public	5-6 year olds / 3-4, 4-5, 5-6 year olds	Yes

(*ECE: Early Childhood Education)

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In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifteen in-service preschool teachers. Among the teachers who work in schools where observation is allowed and accept to be observed (n=8), five teachers were selected according to the criteria determined by the researcher for observation. The researcher selected these teachers according to the criteria that they are currently teaching different age groups from each other and that they have worked with different age groups before. The information of the teachers interviewed and observed is given in table 4.

Table 4 *Participants interviewed and/or observed*

Data Collection Method	Participants
Interview	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9 P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15
Observation	P7, P8, P12, P14, P15

3.4.2. Participant schools

Miles and Huberman (1994) mentioned that setting is an essential issue in qualitative studies because the data on the phenomenon can be limited. Therefore, information about the participants and the research settings was helpful in determining the boundaries of the current study. Moreover, according to Creswell (2007), if a researcher conducts a qualitative study, research settings should be stated clearly. In this study, the researcher collected data through observation carried out in the schools of participant teachers. Therefore, in this section information about schools will be explained.

No criteria have been determined for the selection of schools. The fact that schools and teachers volunteered for the study allowed them to create various opportunities for the researcher for the natural observation of children. For this reason, the voluntariness of schools to work may be the only criterion. Since it was aimed to discover the experiences of the participant teachers, their volunteering was considered important in terms of the teachers' comfort during the observations.

The research was carried out in five different kindergartens in Trabzon. These schools differed in the education they provided and the opportunities offered to children. A

codename is used for schools according to codes of teachers. Below is a brief description of the schools in different districts of Trabzon:

School 7: It is a full-day private school that operates between 07:45 and 18:00. There are three classrooms and three teachers serving children between the ages of 3-6. There are about 50 children in total in the school and there are approximately 15-16 children in each class. Classrooms have approximately 20 m^2 area. It has a gym and playground. Each teacher works alone in the classroom. In workshop activities on art, science and environment, teachers change their classes on certain days of the week.

School 8: It is a private school that operates between 07:30 and 17:30. There are two classrooms and two teachers serving children aged 3-5. There are approximately 19-20 children in each class. The school has a wide corridor inside and a playground outside the school. Classrooms are approximately 30 m^2. Teachers work alone in the classroom. Group activities are often used at school. The school administration emphasizes that children experience the "feeling of being a team", "the sense of achieving together" and "the feeling of enjoying each other's success" through group work.

School 12: It is a public school that operates between 07:30 - 17:30. There are six classes and seven teachers in this school, which serves children between the ages of 3-6. Full-time education is given in six classes and half-day education is given in only one class. There are about 95 children in the school and the average number of children in classes is 12-13. Classrooms have approximately 20 m^2 area. Teachers work alone in the classroom. Since the inside of the school is quite small, there is a large playground outside. The school administration emphasizes that social projects and drama activities are given importance in the school.

School 14: It is a public school that provides half-day service between 07:30 and 18:00. There are nine classes and seventeen teachers in the school, which provides education to children aged 3-6. Teachers work alone and part-time in the classroom. The school has a total of about 300 students and about 20-25 students in classes. It had the most crowded classrooms in the study. It is stated to be one of the biggest kindergartens in Trabzon. It has a large playground. Classrooms have an area of approximately 90

^{m2},the largest class area observed in the study. Two of the observed teachers work in this school.

3.5. Data Collection Tools

In this study, data were collected through the demographic information form, semi-structured interview and classroom observations. Although the responses of teachers were tried to be enhanced with observation, all research questions were not desired to be supported with observation data. The research questions of this study and data sources used for investigation of these questions are seen in Table 5.

Table 5 *Research questions and data sources*

Research Questions	Data Sources
What are the views of preschool teachers about concept of social problem solving? (1)	Interview
What are the views of preschool teachers regarding children's social problem solving skills? (2.a, 2.b, 2.c, 2.d)	Interview
What are preschool teachers' views about the place of social problem solving skills in the MoNE Early Childhood Education Program (2013)? (3, 3.a.)	Interview
What are preschool teachers' self-reported practices about children's social problem solving skills (4.a, 4.b, 4.c)	Interview
What are preschool teachers' actual practices about children's social problem solving skills? (5.a, 5.b)	Observation
To what extend are preschool teachers self-reported practices are consistent with their observed practices? (6.a, 6.b)	Interview Observation

3.5.1. Demographic Information Form

At the beginning of the interview, the purpose of the research was briefly explained to all the teachers and they were asked to fill out the consent form stating that they would voluntarily participate in the research and that they could withdraw from the research at any time via the online application. Then, the demographic information form was sent to the participants via the online interview platform and time was given to fill it out.

The researcher prepared a demographic information form consisting of ten structured questions in order to obtain important demographic information from the participating teachers. In this form, questions were asked about preschool teachers' age, gender, education level, duration of experience, age group they taught and have experience in, and whether they had taken a course/course on social problem solving skills before (see Appendix A).

3.5.2. Semi- Structured Interview

In this study, a semi-structured interview protocol was developed by the researcher to investigate preschool teachers' views and self-reported practices regarding the social problem solving.

To develop the semi-structured interview protocol, the researcher first reviewed the literature on social problem-solving skills. Later, some categories were determined for this study. Table 6 demonstrates distribution of the interview questions according to the research questions. The first category is determined as the concept of social problem solving skills. In this category, there are questions to obtain information about what teachers know about social problem solving skills, what social problem solving skills mean to them, and which skills they see as social problem solving skills. The second category is determined as views about children's social problem solving skills. In this category, there are questions to explore teachers' views about the importance of social problem solving skills for children, as well as the importance of this skill in terms of age group, children's social problem behaviors and the reasons for not developing this skill. The third category is determined as self- reported practices and strategies used by teachers. In this category, questions are about teachers' self- reported practices in early childhood settings. It is aimed to discover to what extent and how teachers use activities to support children's social problem solving skills, what children's social problems are in the class and how their strategy is towards children's social problems. The last category has questions to explore teachers' views about the place of social problem solving skills in National Early Childhood Education Program and their suggestions for the program to support development of children's social problem solving skills.

The prepared semi-structured interview protocol including 14 questions was created. Then, the researcher consulted expert opinion to validate the questions and identify necessary changes and conducted a pilot study before the interviews. Detailed explanation of the pilot study was given in the section *3.3.1*. Three experts, who are the members of faculty at Early Childhood Education Departments at different universities, provided their views on the questions. After expert opinions, three questions were excluded from the interview. After expert opinion and the pilot study, the final interview protocol includes 11 questions to explore preschool teachers' views on children's social problem solving skills and self-reported practices. Thereafter, the final version of the semi- structured interview protocol was used for data collection in this study (see Appendix B).

Table 6 *Distribution of interview questions*

Categories and research questions	Interview questions
Views about social problem solving skills (RQ 1)	1, 2 ,7
Views about children's social problem solving skills (RQ2.a, RQ2.b, RQ2.c, RQ2.d)	3 ,4, 8
Self-reported practices and strategies used by teachers (RQ4, RQ4.a, RQ4.b, RQ4.c)	5, 6, 9
Views about the place of social problem solving Skills in National Early Childhood Education Program and suggestions for the program (RQ3, RQ3.a)	10, 11

3.5.3. Observation

The researcher used observation as a second tool in this study. Two observation forms which are the ABC Behavior Chart and Social Problem Solving Observation Checklist were used.

Social Problem Solving Observation Checklist was created by the researcher following the literature review in accordance with the objectives set in order to reach the answer she sought. This form includes possible social problem behaviors that preschool

children are thought to exhibit in the classroom. During the observation, the social problem behaviors that emerged in the classroom were marked by the researcher and second observer. During the interviews, the teachers were asked 'Which social problem behavior do you encounter most in your class? '. Through this form, the researcher checked the validity of the teachers' answers to this question. In summary, this checklist has been prepared to identify emerging social problem behaviors and to observe whether teachers notice these behaviors and whether they react (see Appendix G). Observer, observed class age group, observed teacher code and date of observation is stated for each checklist. Table 7 represents a brief example of the Social Problem Solving Observation Checklist.

Table 7 *Brief example of Social Problem Solving Observation Checklist*

Social Problem Behavior	Seen in class	Not seen in class	Teacher saw/heard the behavior	Teacher did not see/hear the behavior	Teacher reacted to behavior	Teacher did not react to behavior
Threatening						
Physical violence						

The ABC Behavior Chart is also used for observation (see Appendix F). The social problem behaviors of the children that occurred in the classroom during the observations were written in detail in the Behavior (B) section. By specifying the information about the settings in which this behavior occurs, the events that occurred before this behavior were written in the Action (A) section. Finally, the teacher's reaction to this behavior is written in detail in the Consequences (C) section. The form also included descriptive information about duration, date, children's age group and teachers' participant codes. During the interviews, teachers were asked 'How can you deal with any social problem you encounter in the classroom?' . Through this form, the researcher confirmed the validity of the teachers' answers, and also observed teachers' strategies towards children's social problems.

In order to evaluate the form, the opinions of three experts who are faculty members in the Early Childhood Education department of different universities were taken and

pilot observations were conducted. The detailed information about the pilot observation is explained in the *3.3.2 Pilot Observation section*. A second observer participated in the observations together with the researcher. The second observer has a master's degree in the department of Child Development and Education. She also has four years of teaching experience. Before the actual observation, she was trained by the researcher only on the use of the observation form. In training, the researcher explained the social problem behavior of children in detail and gave specific examples for each of them.

3.6. Data Collection Procedure

Before conducting the study, the necessary ethical precautions and permissions were taken by the researcher. To this end, approval was obtained from the Applied Ethics Research Center of a public university and the Ministry of National Education to conduct the research (See Appendix C /Appendix D). Then, pilot interviews and pilot observations were conducted. After all the forms to be used in the study were approved, the researcher contacted the teachers working in different schools. She explained the purpose and details of the study to twenty one teachers and 15 teachers volunteered for the study. Before starting the interview, a consent form was sent to the teachers and they were asked to signed the form on the online platform. Teachers working with different age groups were selected for observation among teachers working in schools who approved the observation (n=5).

At the beginning, interviews were done with ten teachers that were not observed. As Morse (1998) emphasizes, if participants know the purpose and focus of attention of the study, they can impart more information to the research. Although this may seem positive, it may negatively affect the results of the study. For this reason, since the interview form included questions about the practices of the teachers, it was taken into account that the teachers might be inclined to act in line with the ideas they obtained from the interview during the observations. As a result, observations were made with five teachers before the interview in order not to affect the teachers' practices. Furthermore, it was said that only children's social problem behaviors would be observed in order not to affect teachers' practices. The information that teachers would be observed was hidden from teachers and school principals.

Before starting the observations, the researcher and second observer went to each class for 2 half days in the same week and met with the teacher and the children. In this way, they tried to make children and teachers familiar with them. Then, they started their actual observations. In addition, Creswell (2008) refers to non-participant observers as those who only take notes without intervening and participating in the activities of the observed persons. During the observations, the role of the researcher and the second observer was non-participant observer. When the aim of the researcher is to obtain information about the practices of the teachers, it is recommended that the researchers avoid influencing the activities of the observed people (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). In this way, it is considered that it will not affect the collected data. In the observations made in this study, the researcher and the second observer sat in a corner of the classroom far enough to hear and see the interactions of the children with each other and with the teacher, and took notes and filled out the forms. In this current study, each teacher was observed for 8 weeks. Observations were conducted for 4 hours once a week. In total, each teacher was observed for 32 hours and the total duration of observations was 160 hours.

Observations started on 29 November 2021 and ended on 17 May 2022. The observations were carried out in each teacher's classroom alternately, one day each week. Since it is thought that the observation of different activities and different environments will provide more data, the observation dates were determined at the beginning of each week with the suggestions of the teachers. For example, in one week, P1 suggested that the free play period on Tuesday would be long and that it would facilitate observation, and suggested observation on Tuesday, and in a week, she suggested Wednesday, stating that the activities were intense on Wednesday. In addition, P5, who worked at a full-time school, was observed in the morning of one week and in the afternoon of one week. Where possible observations were made at different times. As the teachers and principals wanted to make maximum contribution to the study, the duration of observation did not vary among the teachers, and each teacher was observed for the same duration. Table 8 demonstrates schedule of observation and interviews.

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Table 8 *Data collection schedule of observation and interviews with observed teachers*

Participants	29.11.2021	30.11.2021	06.12.2021	07.12.2021	13.12.2021	14.12.2021	20.12.2021	21.12.2021	27.12.2021	28.12.2021	03.01.2022	04.01.2022	10.01.2022	11.01.2022	17.01.2022	18.01.2022	24.03.2022	29.03.2022
P7		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		I
P8																	X	X
P12																	X	
P14	X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X	I		
P15	X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		I	

Participants	01.04.2022	04.04.2022	06.04.2022	07.04.2022	08.04.2022	20.04.2022	25.04.2022	27.04.2022	10.05.2022	11.05.2022	12.05.2022	17.05.2022	18.05.2022
P7													
P8		X		X	X		X	X		X	I		
P12	X		X	X			X				X	X	I
P14													
P15													

(P7: Participant 7, P8: Participant 8, P12: Participant 12, P14: Participant 14, P15: Participant 15, X: Observations, I:Interviews)

After the observations, five teachers were interviewed. The researcher stated that she would take a voice recording for the interview and therefore asked for permission. All participants agreed that their answers would be recorded. The interview time varied between 30-40 minutes. Then, the data collection procedure was completed.

3.7. Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, the researcher followed the steps suggested by Creswell (2007) to analyze the interview data. The analysis procedure follows the order of managing and organizing data, defining and classifying codes into themes, developing and evaluating interpretations, and finally representing and visualizing data (Creswell & Poth 2018, p.186). First, the researcher managed and organized the data by preparing the transcripts of the interviews for analysis. Transcription is the process of converting what is obtained through interviews, observations, audio recordings into text (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Secondly, the researcher categorized the data by using and shortening the codes. Coding was used to reach certain parts of the large data set

(Merriam, 2009). In this process, the MAXQDA 2022 program was used for coding and data analysis. The process of defining the codes and classifying them into themes was carried out by two coders to provide intercoder agreement. The first coder is the researcher, and the second coder is a research assistant and graduate student in the Department of Early Childhood Education. These steps were performed independently of each other. Then, coders compared their codes.

In the next step after coding the data, the data were interpreted. This step is the step in which the answer to the question of what was learned in the study is given and includes making sense of the data (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2002). In qualitative data analysis, visual elements provide a concrete presentation of the data interpreted in the study to the reader (Charmaz, 2006). Therefore, in the last step, the researcher used tables from visual elements to express the data she interpreted.

3.8. The Researcher's Role

In qualitative studies, researchers have an important role in collecting data with tools such as observation and interview (Merriam, 1998). The researcher can be considered as a tool of the study as a person who takes notes, asks questions, observes and interprets the answers. Therefore, the role of the researcher in the study should be explained (Patton, 2002). In addition, the experiences of the researcher can threaten the validity of the study and it is impossible to eliminate them. However, in this context, it is important to understand how the researcher influences the research process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Therefore, it was deemed necessary to explain my role as a researcher in the present study.

Before the research, I didn't know any teachers. I found all the teachers by going to the schools one by one and explained the purpose of my study to the teachers and principals in detail. I showed them the approval provided from the Ministry of National Education by saying that voluntary participation was important to study. Some teachers volunteered only for the interview, not for the observation. The interviews were arranged at the appropriate times of the teachers during the determined week. I thought that this was important for teachers to be able to answer questions comfortably. Some teachers were worried that they would not be able to answer the questions correctly, while others stated that they were excited to participate meeting for the first

time. Therefore, I chatted with the teachers before starting the interviews to make them feel comfortable. I emphasized that there is no correct answer to the interview questions, that the answers of the teachers are very valuable because they have a lot of experience with children, and that I am only trying to find out what they think about this subject. Thus, the teachers responded confidently in the interviews. Teachers also stated that they were worried about their identities being known. I assured them that I would not use any personally identifiable information and would use a codename for them.

The voluntary participation of teachers in the observations was very important. Since I was going to enter the classroom with the second observer, I was afraid to affect the natural behavior of the children. For this reason, the second observer and I went to the classes twice for half a day and met the children in order to familiarize both the teachers and the children with them. The teachers expressed that they were happy to know that they would support a study and they tried to create different activities and different environments for me to observe the children. The teachers introduced me and the second observer to children by saying things like 'These sisters are the teachers of older children. They'll come to our classroom and watch how you play.' In the first two weeks, when the children constantly came to us and asked what we had written, I said that I liked the games very much and I took notes to play at home. Sometimes the children wanted to play with me, but I stated that I needed to write something. We sat in a corner of the classroom in a place that would not restrict the movements of the children. After the first two weeks, the kids just hugged us when we entered the classroom and stopped coming to us. Also, some children warned their friends who wanted to come to us as 'they are working, don't go'.

Moreover, since some teachers were worried about the children's names being written down, I assured them that we would use code names for the children and would not share any identifying information about the school.

In summary, teachers' concerns were reduced as I assured them their information would remain confidential. Since I spent time with them for about two months, it was thought that a comfortable and safe environment was created for the teachers. Since

good communication was established between the teachers and us, the teachers supported us in every way throughout the study.

3.9. Trustworthiness

While conducting a research, validity and reliability are issues that should be given importance by researchers. In qualitative research, the term trustworthiness, which is an indicator of the value of the research, is emphasized (Mishler, 2000**).**

3.9.1. Validity

In quantitative studies, the word validity is commonly employed. It is, however, also employed for trustworthy and credible qualitative research (Johnson, 1997). To strengthen validity, several of the procedures proposed by Creswell and Miller (2000), Merriam (2009), and Johnson (1997) were applied in this qualitative study**.**

Prolonged engagement: It is defined as spending enough time in the field of research (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher spent about two months at school to build trust with the teachers. In addition, she spent two half days in the classroom before the interviews and observations, trying to understand the classroom culture.

Triangulation: Triangulation technique is one of the techniques used to increase the validity of the study (Merriam, 2009). It is provided through the collection of data using multiple data sources. Webb et al. (1966) stated that this technique has difficulties, but validating data with two or more data collection sources contributes to a great reduction of uncertainty. In other words, the use of more methods provides more evidence for the researcher (Johnson, 1997). Therefore, in this study, the researcher used interview and observation to collect data. In this way, the consistency between teachers' views and practices was revealed. It is thought that collecting data with these two tools will increase the validity of this research. Furthermore, it was also provided confirmability (Krefting ,1991).

Investigator Triangulation: Researcher triangulation is the use of more than one researcher, observer, interviewer or data analyst in a study (Johnson, 1997). The ability to validate data among researchers can significantly increase the reliability of findings

(Krefting, 1991). Therefore, there were two observers in this study. In this way, it was thought that the reliability of the research was increased by cross-checking the observation data.

Participant feedback (Member-checking): It is seen as one of the most important techniques to increase the reliability of the study (Punch, 2005). The researcher audio-recorded the interviews. Then, she created the transcripts of the interviews and sent them to the participants via e-mail. All participants agreed on the accuracy of the interview transcripts. This strategy was used by the researcher to minimize misunderstandings or missing data, as well as to guarantee that the viewpoints of the teachers were accurately translated into data. It is aimed to increase the reliability of the research with member control (Johnson, 1997; Krefting, 1991).

Peer Review (Peer Examination): All interviews and observations were conducted by getting opinions of an experienced qualitative researcher and academics in the field of Early Childhood Education. The researcher hoped to reduce bias in this way. This action is characterized as peer review and may be viewed as an approach for ensuring study validity (Creswell, 2003). Similarly, almost all of the observation and interview transcripts were coded by a second coder to improve validity. Having a second coder can assist guarantee that the findings are reliable (Merriam, 2009).

Rich and Thick Description: The researcher gives comprehensive information on both the participants and the setting in this validation technique introduced by Creswell (2007). The reader may evaluate whether the context can be transferred to another work with similar features thanks to these extensive explanations (Lincoln& Guba, 1985). Participants and schools were identified in the current study based on demographic data. The researcher's goal with this action was to assist readers in determining generalizability.

Researcher Bias: According to Merriam (2009), one of the primary problems concerning the validity of qualitative research is the subjectivity of researchers. The question is whether the researcher saw what she wanted to see or observed what actually happened. Similarly, the researcher's opinions and beliefs must be subjective in order for the data to be properly interpreted. As a result, it would be beneficial to

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describe the researcher's personal perspectives on study and how he or she attempts to avoid bias.

It is accepted that the early childhood period is a very critical period for the life of individuals. I have observed that adult people often have social problems and their strategies are wrong. Since early childhood is known to be a critical period, I thought that this was a suitable period for the development of social problem-solving skills. During my experience as a preschool teacher, I observed that social problem-solving skills in children did not develop as much as they should. I thought about how effective I was as a teacher in the development of this skill and how my thoughts affected my practices in the classroom. As my views on this subject changed, I realized that the practices I had made to develop children also changed. On the contrary, I saw that some of my colleagues do not create opportunities for the development of social problem solving skills for children and are not aware of the importance of this issue. In my study, I wanted to work with more teachers and explore their views and practices on this subject. In this study, member checking, a second coder and a second observer were used to ensure that my views do not unconsciously affect data and to ensure reliability.

Lastly, to provide the internal validity of the interview questions in this study, the researcher applied expert opinion and pilot study (Oppenheim, 1992). The opinion of three experts in the department of Early Childhood Education was then obtained about the proposed interview questions. A pilot study was also conducted to test the questions on subjects. Under favor of these two methods, the researcher rearranged and developed the interview questions.

3.9.2. Reliability

Creswell (2007) suggested using inter-coder agreement to ensure and increase the reliability of the study. In this current study, inter-coder agreement was sought for both interview and observation to ensure the reliability of the study. Silverman (2005) suggests that when analyzing texts in qualitative research, classification categories should be used in a standardized way, so that any researcher would categorize in the same way. In this process, data from the interview and observations were analyzed by two coders. One of the coders was the researcher and the second coder was a graduate

student and research assistant in the Early Childhood Education department. Detailed information about the research was provided to the second coder. Both coders examined the identical transcript independent from each other and coded them. It was important that neither coder sees what the other person's coding. Then, they shared and discussed their codes and categories. In this method, to provide reliability, consensus between two coders is necessary. Finally, the following inter-coder formula was used:

Reliability = Number of agreements/ (total number of agreements + disagreements) (Campbell et al., 2013).

In this current study, inter-coder reliability was calculated for interview and observation data. 95% of transcripts and observation forms were coded by the two coders. The inter-coder reliability between the researcher and the second encoder were found to be .90. For observation, the second observer participated in the observations. The second coder and second observer were different persons. Before inter-coder reliability was calculated, data in the observation forms were compared with the second observer. In each observation form, they read their notes to each other and compared similarities. In the observation forms, the degree of similarity was approximately 90%. Then, the researcher and the second coder coded observation data and compare their codes and categories. Again, inter- coder reliability was calculated according to Campbell's formula and it was found .92.

According to Landis and Koch (1977), values less than 0 are interpreted as no agreement, values between 0 and 0.20 are interpreted as mild, between 0.21 and 0.40 as moderate, between 0.41 and 0.60 as moderate, between 0.61 and 0.80 as significant, and between 0.81 and 1 as nearly perfect agreements. Accordingly, it is accepted that the inter-coder reliability is nearly perfect for this study.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

Before conducting research and during the research, researchers are required to take into account ethical issues. In this current study, the cases considered in the field of ethics are presented below (Hesse- Biber, 2010).

Honesty: The researcher assured the participants that she would use the information they provided in the same way and would not add her own interpretation to what they said. Transcripts of the interviews were sent to each participant separately. This action can be used to confirm that participants' own responses were conveyed correctly.

Informed Consent: The researcher provided the information in the consent form that all participants needed to decide whether to participate in the study. By stating that they can leave the study whenever they want, she assured that the confidentiality of the participants will be protected. She stated that they could contact her or her advisor if they had any questions. By completing the consent form, the participants declared that they participated in the study voluntarily. Thus, *voluntary participation* has provided for this study.

Confidentiality: Before and during the research, the researcher ensured that the identities of the participants and the schools they work in would remain confidential so that the participants could freely share their ideas. Therefore, codenames were given to participants, children, and schools in this study.

Ethic Approvals: The Institutional Review Board, if conducting research involving human participants, ensures that there is no/minimum risk to participants and that their human rights are recognized and protected. Therefore, before starting this study, the researcher obtained ethics approval from Applied Ethics Research Center in Middle East Technical University (See Appendix C). Later, she received approval for research and application from the Ministry of National Education (see Appendix D).

3.11. Limitations

There are some limitations in the current study that should be considered for the interpretation of the results.

This study is limited to the views of only fifteen preschool teachers working with children in public and private institutions in Trabzon and observations of the actual practices of only five teachers. The sample size is relatively small due to the nature of qualitative research and this may be questionable. However, qualitative research does not aim to make the results generalizable.

The second limitation of the study is that data were collected through interviews and observations in order to interpret the phenomenon of supporting children's social problem-solving skills. The document analysis containing the activity plans of the teachers could have enriched the data of the study by using it as a different data collection tool.

Both female and male teachers (albeit a small number) participated in the study. However, since all of the observed teachers were women, the effect of gender on teachers' practices could not be discussed.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this part of the study, the researcher presents the findings obtained from the analysis of the collected data about the views and practices of preschool teachers on children's social problem-solving skills.

In the first part of this section, the results obtained from the demographic information form, which is one of the data collection tools, are presented. Then, the researcher divided the findings obtained from the interviews and observations into data sets and organized the codes obtained from the data sets according to categories. Organized data will be introduced with tables containing frequencies and percentages. Direct quotations from the transcripts of the interviews were also included in order to reveal their connections with the generated codes. Code names were used for teachers and children in accordance with ethical values. The findings of the study are presented separately in connection with all research questions and the sequence of research findings is shown in Figure 1.

⬇	**FINDINGS**
⬇	Teachers' views about concept of social problem solving (Findings of interview with 15 teachers)
⬇	Teachers' views regarding children's social problem solving skills (Findings of interview with 15 teachers)
⬇	Teachers' views about the place of social problem solving skills in the Early Childhood Education Program and teachers' suggestion for program (Findings of interview with 15 teachers)
⬇	Teachers' self-reported educational activities about children's social problem solving skills (Findings of interview with 15 teachers)
⬇	Most experienced social problem behaviors in class reported by teachers (Findings of interview with 15 teachers)
⬇	Teachers' self-reported strategies in dealing with social problems of children (Findings of interview with 15 teachers)
⬇	Observed most experienced social problem behaviors in class (Findings of observations of 5 teachers)
⬇	Teachers' actual strategies in dealing with social problems of children (Findings of observations of 5 teachers)
⬇	Comparison of self-reported and observed most experienced social problem behavior
◯	Comparison of five teachers' self-reported and actual strategies in dealing with social problems of children

Figure 1 *The order of findings*

4.1. Demographic information of the participants

Data were collected from public and private early childhood institutions in Trabzon, Türkiye. In total, 15 teachers from eleven early childhood education institutions were interviewed. Participants were named P1 to P15. There were three male and twelve female preschool teachers. The age range of participants is 24-45. Thirteen teachers have obtained an undergraduate degree and three of them have maintained their graduate education in the Early Childhood Education. Two teachers have associate degrees in child development. Besides participants' education status, six of the participants had less than 5 years of field experience. Four of the participants had experience 11 to 15 years and just one participant had more than 20 years of field experience .

Before presenting the research findings, information about the age groups of children which teachers are currently working with and type of institutions should be reviewed. Seven of the participants have been working in a kindergarten, which was their first workplace, while the other half of the teachers had worked in different kindergartens. While nine teachers work in a public kindergarten, six teachers work in a private kindergarten. Moreover, considering the age groups of children the teachers are currently working with, seven of the participants are working with 5-6 age group children, while three of the participants are working with 3-4 age group children and five participants with 4-5 age group children. Moreover, about half of the participants worked with all age groups children (n=7). Two participants only worked with 3-4, and 4-5 age groups children and had no experience working with the oldest age group. On the contrary, three participants worked only with the 4-5 and 5-6 age groups children and did not have any experience in the youngest age group. Also, one participant worked only with the 4-5 age group and had no experience of working with the youngest and largest age group. Lastly, two of the participants only worked with 3-4 and 5-6 year olds. Besides demographic information, participants were also asked questions about their attending courses and training on social problem solving. While three teachers had taken courses related with social problem solving, twelve of them had not.

4. 2. Preschool teachers' views about social problem solving

At the beginning of the interview, the researcher asked '*How do you define the concept of social problem solving'* in order to determine whether they had knowledge about the concept. This question was asked to the teachers before the definition of social problem solving was given. In line with the answers given by the teachers, eight categories have emerged for the concept of social problem solving. These categories are problem orientation (n=4), finding a solution for the child by teacher (n=3), problem solving in social relationship (n=3), children's problem solving in peer relation (n=3), children's perception of themselves and the world (n=2), problem solving with acquisition of social skills (n=2), solving daily life problems (n=2). Some teachers mentioned more than one category in their definitions. The categories belonging to the concept of social problem solving are presented in Table 9.

Table 9 *Categories for concept of social problem solving*

Categories	n	p(%)
Problem orientation	4	26.7
Finding a solution for the child by teacher	3	20.0
Children's problem solving in peer relation	3	20.0
Problem solving in social relationship	2	13.3
Solving daily life problems	2	13.3
Problem solving with acquisition of social skill	2	13.3
Children's perception of themselves and the world	2	13.3
Skill that requires intervention	1	6.7

4.2.1. Problem Orientation

Four teachers defined the concept of social problem solving as *problem orientation.* Problem orientation refers to the individual's realizing that there is a problem and forming his thoughts, feelings and expectations about the problem. P8 defined social problem solving as problem orientation by saying '*'We observe that the child has a social problem. I define it as the child's witnessing this, that is, knowing that he or she has a problem.''*

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P5 and P10 agreed P8's opinion on this issue. Also, P9 mentioned about thinking about solution towards the problem as *expectation* and expressed it as follows:

> First of all, the person should know that he has a social problem, or the teacher should know how it is in the child. Thinking about what we can do about the problem we encounter, planning for a solution, thinking about what we expect from whom and trying to solve it, I think it explains this process.

4.2.2. Finding a solution for the child by teacher

Three of the teachers described the concept of social problem solving as *their own solution to the child* when the child has a social problem. P12 expressed her thoughts on this issue as follows:

> I think it is to solve children's wrong behavior, that is, to correct the wrong behaviors. As teachers, we must see the problem that the child is experiencing and find solutions in order to intervene quickly.

Similarly, P10 agreed P12's opinion and gave her thoughts by emphasizing that the teacher should first understand the child's problem:

> For social problem solving, first of all, there must be communication with the child, and first of all, it is necessary to understand the child's problem in order to solve it. Think like that, there is a child in the classroom has a problem and you see it, you need to find a solution to intervene immediately so that the child can get out of the problem. This is what comes to mind when I think of social problem solving.

4.2.3. Children's problem solving in peer relation

Some teachers (n=3), on the other hand, have defined social problem solving as *the ability of children to solve problems they have with their peers on their own*, as opposed to that teachers solve the problem for children. P3 shared her idea by limiting the problem to peer relation as follows:

> I can define the concept of social problem solving as children's solving the difficulties they experience in their social peer relations with their own methods or creatively or observationally I define it as eliminating the case, and eliminating the social problem.

Likewise, P4 limited to peer relations and stated that the solution of children should be observed by saying:

I define it as the ability of a child to solve a problem when he has a problem with his communication with his friends in the classroom. It is necessary to observe whether the child is able to solve the problem on his own or is he trying to cover it up rather than solving it in a combative way. That's what comes to mind.

4.2.4. Problem solving in a social relationship

Some teachers(n=2) have defined social problem solving as solving problems that arise only in social relationships, emphasizing that it is for both adults and children. P2 shared her ideas on this issue by stating that:

I define it as the ability of people (regardless of being a child or an adult) to find solutions for communication problems with each other and to comply with the solution. So, solving our social problems.

Similar with P2, P11 expressed her thought by emphasizing the communication problems:

I can say that social problem solving is the ability to resolve conflict and balance incompatibility in case of conflict in bilateral and multiple relationships. There is always a problem in the communication of more than one person, and in short, it is to be able to solve the problems in relation with communication.

4.2.5. Solving daily life problems

Two of the teachers, while defining the concept of social problem solving, did not limit it only to social relations, but stated their views as solving all kinds of daily problems that we encounter in daily life. P1 expressed her opinion on this issue as follows:

Social problem solving is actually the ability to solve problems that they face in everyday life, both for adults and for children. For example, when I think about children, it is not only about solving problems that children have with their friends and teachers, but also with school, rules, etc. I can define it as the ability to solve the problems they encounter.

4.2.6. Problem solving with acquisition of social skill

Two teachers defined social problem solving as a skill that develops only after the acquisition of social skills defined in the Early Childhood Education Program. P15 expressed her idea by asserting:

We have social skills in the early childhood education program. If we can teach these skills to children, they will be able to solve their social problems more easily. A skill that can develop in children who can reach the achievements there, only after gaining these social skills, these behaviors can be shaped.

4.2.7. Children's perception of themselves and the world

While the other teachers defined social problem solving as problem orientation, their own solutions, peer relations, two teachers expressed a different view and associated social problem solving with the way children perceive themselves and the world. They also added that these perceptions of children are acquired in the family environment before school. P14 reflected her view by saying:

Sometimes children are very social, but families do everything behalf children, so they say my child can't learn, sing, wear themselves, etc. Because of the prompts, the child may not be able to display his/her own personality. The family affects the child's self-perception a lot, and therefore children cannot solve problems, in my opinion. That's why I definitely think of this definition as the way children perceive themselves. In the same way, for example, they have a perception towards the world, if we change it as a teacher, perhaps the child will not see something as a problem.

4.2.8. Skill that requires intervention

One of participant teachers, on the other hand, defined social problem solving as a process that should definitely be intervened and emphasized that it is a skill that should be gained at an early age. P7 stated that:

I can say that it is a process that can lead to very permanent behaviors, that is, behavioral disorders, unless it is intervened early. We have many children like this, families perceive problem behaviors as normal and simplifies them. However, we sure that social problem behaviors in the school environment are turning into a permanent disorder. In short, I can say that it is a very difficult process to fix later on. For this reason, this skill should definitely be intervened in children at the earliest ages.

In summary, when teachers' views on social problem solving are examined, it can be seen that there is no consensus among teachers about the concept of social problem solving. Some teachers emphasized the awareness of the problem (n=4) before solving. Some teachers focused only on the problems in social relations (n=2), on the contrary, other teachers (n=2) mentioned solving all the problems that we may encounter in daily life. In addition, it is seen that some teachers define it as the children's finding solutions

to the social problems experienced by the children (n=3), while others (n=3) define it as the teacher's finding a solution on behalf of the child. Relatively few of the teachers (n=2) associated it with the children's perception of themselves and social skills defined in the program (n=2). A single teacher, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of early intervention by stating that it can turn into a permanent behavioral disorder.

4.2.9. Preschool teachers' views about the concept of social problem-solving after definition

In the semi-structured interview, after the teachers' views on the social problem solving were taken, the definition of social problem solving and problem behavior was given to the teachers, and social problem solving skills were explained. After the definitions given, the teachers were asked whether they wanted to change their definitions of social problem solving. The answers given by the teachers to this question are presented in Table 10.

Table 10 *Changes after definition*

Would you like to change your definition of the concept of social problem solving?		
	n	p (%)
Yes	10	66.7
No	5	33.3

As can be seen in the table, five teachers stated that the definition they said was still valid and they did not want to change it. On the other hand, ten teachers stated they wanted to change their definition for social problem solving (n=4) and wanted to add new information (n=6). Four of ten teachers stated that their definitions were incomplete and that they learned the meaning of social problem solving after the definition given. It has been seen that teachers who say they learn better are in the same category in their previous definitions (problem orientation and finding a solution for the child by the teacher). P10 expressed her thought on this issue as follows:

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> I would like to change my own definition, I did not say anything in detail, but the content is really broad, it was a nice reminder for me, I learned it.

P9 agreed on P10's opinion on the same issue and emphasized that she learned the meaning after definition by saying:

> You said it in more detail because you read it, but I can say that it is incomplete for my definition. Of course, this has been in its expanded form, in fact, I can say that I have learned its meaning.

Six of the teachers that wanted to change their definition added new information. Three issues were emphasized in the definitions that the teachers changed regarding the concept of social problem solving after the definition was given. Table 11 demonstrates views of teachers' after definition was given.

Table 11 *Views of teachers' after definition*

Codes	n	p(%)
skills needed for positive relationships	3	50.0
mutual acceptance of problems	2	33.3
alternative solutions	1	16.7
Total	6	100.0

4.2.9.1. Skills needed for positive relationship

Three teachers emphasized that it is a skill that requires intervention and is formed by the acquisition of social skills. In their second definition, they stated that children's problem behaviors are very frequent and added anger management and empathy skills to their definitions. They emphasized that it is a very important skill for establishing positive relationships. P7 expressed her idea as following:

> In other words, children cannot really control their anger in the social environment, I would like to highlight this a little more from the definition you gave. They think of everything from their own perspective and friendships suffer because they can't empathize. I would definitely say it's a skill they need to acquire in order to have positive relationships both now and in the future.

4.2.9.2. Mutual acceptance of problems

Two teachers, who expressed their first definition as finding a solution for the child by the teacher, added that children's problem solving by mutual acceptance in their second definition. P12 stated her idea by stating that:

> I can say that the problems are solved by mutual acceptance. We see a problem in the student and this is mutual. I would like to include the process of both accepting the problem and looking for a solution so that children can solve these problems.

4.2.9.3. Alternative Solutions

A teacher who defined social problem solving as children's perception of themselves and the world in the first definition added the ability to find alternative ways to problems. P6 shared his ideas by saying that:

> I think I said the child's perception of himself and the world he lives in. The definition you gave says alternative ways, I can add that. Because there is a problem and a solution must be found, but finding not just one solution, but several alternative solutions to a problem, I think it explains social problem solving.

4.3. Preschool teachers' views on which skills social problem solving includes

In the semi-structured interview, the teachers were asked *'What skills come to mind when you think of social problem solving skills?'* . It was tried to find skills that teachers associate with social problem solving skills. In this context, seven main categories emerged with sub-codes for skills. The relevant schema representing the main categories and sub-codes of teachers' views on social problem solving skills is presented in Table12. Some teachers associated more than one skill in the same group.

Table 12 *Teachers' views on social problem solving skills*

Categories	Codes
Communication skills	• Adult communication (n=5) • Peer communication (n=5)
Fundamental skills	• Sharing (n=4) • Helping others (n=2) • Following the rules (n=2) • Patience (n=1)

Table 12 *Teachers' views on social problem solving skills cont'd*

	• Thinking (n=1)
Adaptive skills	• Adapting different environment (n=2) • Skill for living together (n=1)
Emotional skills	• Expression of ideas and feelings (n=2) • Empathy (n=4)
Stress-coping skills	• Accepting fault (n=1) • Relaxing (n=2)
Aggression-replacement skills	• Avoidance of violence (n=2) • Overcoming jealousy (n=1)
Group skills	• Following the leader (n=2) • Take on leadership (n=2) • Cooperation (n=2) • Adapting to group (n=2)

4.3.1. Communication skills

Most of the teachers (n=10) associated social problem solving skills with communication skills.

4.3.1.1. Adult Communication

Some teachers(n=5) stated that communication skill is a social problem-solving skill and they emphasized adult communication. Family members, teachers and staff working at the school were mentioned as adults. Teachers think that a child with advanced communication skills also has high social problem-solving skills. Only two teachers emphasized the importance of listening in adult communication when there is a problem. P2 expressed her thoughts on this issue by mentioning listening as follows:

> The ability to speak with others, the ability to communicate, especially in adults. For example, he has a problem with his teacher. He needs to contact the

teacher to figure it out. He needs to listen to the teacher. If his communication skills are high, that child can solve his problems.

Similarly, P15 also stated that social problem solving and communication skills were closely related. She stated the following in this regard:

Being able to communicate with adults is so important. I say that a child with high communication skills can solve a social problem, because he can talk about something.

P4,on the other hand, expressed communication skill as the basic step of social problem-solving skill. She expressed her views on this matter as follows:

Communication. I can even say communication with his own teacher, his attitude when playing games, in everything, when he enters the school, communication with the staff working at the school, communication comes to my mind more, because I think that communication is the basis of problem solving.

4.3.1.2. Peer Communication

While some teachers emphasized adult communication, some teachers (n=5) emphasized peer communication. They stated that social problems experienced by children emerged in their communication with their peers. Two of five teachers underlined the importance of observing whether children solve their problems by communicating with their peers on their own or whether they need teacher guidance. P6 expressed his views on this issue as follows:

I definitely think of communication skills. Then we can say that it is the point of solving the problems he has with them, that is, the people he communicates with. Actually, it's communication in the classroom with peers. I wonder how he can solve the problems he has in communicating with the children in his group on his own. At that point, observation is important. Let's say, how can this problem be corrected, or does a teacher definitely have a direction for him, or can he solve these problems on his own.

P9 stated that social problems occur in peer communication and expressed it as follows:

First of all, let's talk about his relationships with his friends. This is the first skill that comes to my mind. This is the social problem that most children face. Because he is in constant communication with his friends and there is always a problem here. If the communication skills are high, the child can solve their problems with them.

Three teachers directly associated social problem solving skills with peer communication without adding any comments.

4.3.2. Fundamental skills

Some of the teachers (n=6) associated social problem solving skills with the skills of sharing, helping others, patience, thinking, following the rules. These skills are presented under the category of fundamental skills. Teachers stated that with the acquisition of these skills in early childhood, the problems that children may experience in the future can be prevented. In addition, they emphasized that if these skills are not focused by both parents and teachers in the early childhood period, it is difficult to develop them later.

4.3.2.1. Sharing

Four teachers associated social problem solving skills with sharing. They stated that children who are willing to share have more positive relationships with their friends and therefore do not exhibit or be exposed to aggressive behavior. Furthermore, they think that children with improved sharing skills experience less social problems compared to others. P11 expressed his idea by asserting:

> Actually, sharing comes to my mind directly. Because the problems between children arise from lack of sharing, they hit each other but when they know how to share, they are not exposed to them as much as others. Therefore, they have more friends so they don't fight with them.

P13 expressed the similar opinion with P11 and stated his idea by emphasizing that future problems can be avoided:

> The child must learn to share because when he becomes an adult he has more problems. If he finds out, we'll prevent him from having problems with it in the future.

4.3.2.2. Helping others

Two teachers directly stated that helping each other came to their minds first. One of the teachers emphasized that most of the problems arise from this issue. P1 stated her idea by saying:

> When I think of social problem-solving skills, for example, helping comes to mind. These are the issues that we have the most trouble with. Problems arise in its absence. Children do not help each other; they do not even care when someone needs something.

4.3.2.3. Following the rules

Two teachers associated social problem solving skills with the following the rules. While one teacher expressed it as following the classroom rules, the other teacher stated ability to follow the rules should be taught in early years. P15 shared her thoughts on this issue as follows:

> It may be the ability to follow the rules and even to comply with the rules in different environments. There are rules everywhere, and there will be when they grow up. If children do not know how to follow the rules, they will have many problems, this should be taught from the first moment they start school.

When teachers' views were examined, *patience and thinking* were also associated with social problem solving skills. P11 expressed his opinion on this issue by stating '' *It may be waiting for one's turn, it's about patience, and that's a skill, because a child who waits patiently doesn't pose a problem either.*''

One participant emphasized that the teacher should definitely taught the child the ability to think. P5 expressed her thoughts on this matter as follows:

> First of all, we will definitely not solve the problem on behalf of the child. We will make the child find the solution by making him think, that is, teaching the child how to fish rather than giving them fish. Maybe I looked at the event from a different perspective, but I think this is also a skill. It is also a skill to make the child think and find the solution as a guide. So, I'm trying to tell the child to think about the problem, the real social problem solving skill starts here.

It is seen that some teachers (n=6), who associate social problem solving skills with the fundamental skills mentioned above, emphasize the importance of these skills in order not to create problems rather than to solve problems.

4.3.3. Adaptive skills

Three teachers associated social problem solving skills with adaptive skills. One teacher associated social problem solving skills with the ability of individuals to live together with others in a society, and two teachers associated social problem solving

with being able to adapt in different environments. These skills are presented under the category of adaptation skills. One of these three teachers highlighted these skills in order not to create a problem rather than to solve a problem. P15 stated her idea on this issue by asserting that ' *'Adapting to the new environment, I think this is also a skill in social problem solving, it can prevent the emergence of problems.''*

While P15 focused on not revealing the problem, P6 focused on the solution of the problem and expressed his opinion as follows:

> Knowing that they live in a society, knowing that there is a community at school, being able to be together with different people here, I think these are all social skills and are necessary for children to solve these social problems.

4.3.4. Emotional skills

Some teachers (n=5) have associated social problem solving skills with empathy and the ability to express ideas and feelings. These skills are covered under the category of skills for emotions.

4.3.4.1. Empathy

Four teachers stated that in order to solve social problems, it is necessary to understand the feelings and thoughts of the person with whom the problem is experienced. In addition, they emphasized that problems can be prevented if we can empathize with others. P12 stated her idea by stating that:

> This skill can also be empathy. For example, not sharing is our great problem. Children says I want it; they cannot believe how others wants the same thing. They do not understand the other child and this creates a problem.

Similar with P12, P2 associated empathy with social problem solving. Contrary to other teachers, she focused on empathy as necessary for problem solving rather than not creating problems. P2 stated her opinion on this issue by asserting:

> Empathy comes to my mind first. In order for children to be able to solve their problem, they must first be able to understand the feelings and thoughts of the other person.

4.3.4.2. Expression of ideas and feelings

Two teachers associated social problem solving with expression of ideas and feelings. When people faced with a problem, people's ability to express what they feel and think make solving problem easier. According to the teachers, if our approach to children with social problems is wrong, children may become withdrawn and unable to express themselves. As a result, we cannot develop children's social problem-solving skills. P7 reflected her opinion regarding the issue by saying that:

> The child should be able to say what he feels and thinks when he has a problem, I think the real skill starts here in social problem solving. Let me say something like this, if parents or teachers get angry at the child for doing the problem behavior, the child stops talking. It's a bad result that he stopped talking. At that moment, child starts to be introvert, the importance of the child's ability to express his feelings and thoughts is revealed here because that vicious child with social problems quietly feels suppressed. As a result, they can no longer solve the problem.

4.3.5. Stress-coping skills

Some teachers(n=3) have associated social problem solving skills with children's ability to relax themselves in a problem situation and to accept other people's mistakes. These skills were evaluated under the category of stress-coping skills.

Two teachers stated that when social problems occur, children feel under stress and cannot solve the problem, on the contrary, they are more likely to solve problems when they can relax and think calmly and act calmly. Also, one teacher stated that this skill can be improved by drama activities. P3 shared her idea by emphasizing *relaxing*:

> Among these skills, the child's ability to relax himself in a distressed situation may be among these skills. Because what I have observed is that children feel stressed when there is a problem. If they calm down and act calmly, they will solve the problem, and they do. We can provide this in drama activities. If the child feels comfortable, he/she does not have social problems, I think that means he/she has gained social problem solving skills.

On the other hand, one teacher stated a different point of view. She stated that children's failure to admit mistakes caused problems. If children feel comfortable accepting both their own mistakes and the mistakes of others, they can solve problems. P15 expressed her idea on this subject as following:

I think admitting mistakes is also a skill because some kids are so perfectionist, they never admit mistakes and that creates a problem. If he knows and accepts that it is normal for both himself and others to make mistakes, he can solve the problem more easily. Otherwise, there is stress in children.

4.3.6. Aggression-replacement skills

Some teachers (n=3) have associated social problem solving skills with the ability to turn to alternative behaviors instead of violence and ability to cope with jealousy. These skills were evaluated under the aggression-replacement skills category.

4.3.6.1. Avoidance of violence

Two teachers stated that children's ability to move away from violence is a social problem-solving skill. When there is a problem, children may try to solve it by displaying aggressive behavior. However, they emphasized that the child's ability to move away from fighting is an important skill that should be acquired for their future lives. It has been stated that if this skill is gained, children will be able to find alternative ways to solve their social problems instead of using violence. They highlighted that teachers and parents should aware of children's alternative behavior that preferred to aggression. P8 expressed her idea on this issue by asserting:

> I think it is a skill to be able to avoid violence when there is a problem. Because when there is a problem, they can turn to violence, but to prevent violence, the child does something else, finds another behavior. I can call it the ability to avoid violence. These come to mind. Of course, how the child stays away from violence is also an important issue. For example, does he cry, instead of acting aggressively? We should teach the child alternative behaviors instead of aggression as a skill.

P11, on the other hand, stated that children may act aggressively due to jealousy, and related the ability to overcome jealousy to social problem-solving skills. He reflected his thoughts on this subject as follows:

> I can say that the child can handle sibling or peer jealousy on his own. Problems arise from jealousy; I observe this case most of the time. If the child can handle the jealousy he feels by himself, I can say that this child is a child with social problem solving skills.

4.3.7. Group skills

Some teachers (n=8) have associated social problem solving with skills of following the leader, take on leadership and adaptation to a group. These skills were evaluated under the group skills category. It was observed that teachers mostly (n=5) mentioned the importance of group skills in preventing the emergence of social problems, not in the process of solving social problems.

4.3.7.1. Following the leader

Two teachers associated social problem solving skills with the ability to follow the leader in group games or group work. The teachers emphasized the importance of this skill in order not to solve the social problem but to prevent the social problem from arising. P7 expressed his views on this issue as follows.

> Also, for example, obeying what the leader says in group games is also a skill because problems arise when children do not comply to leader or does not want to comply. If the children follow what the leader says, there will be no problem.

4.3.7.2. Take on leadership

Two teachers, on the other hand, associated social problem solving skills with leadership skills. While one of the teachers emphasized taking the lead in group games, the other teacher emphasized being able to lead their friends in solving a problem. P6 reflected his view on this issue as follows:

> Are children able to lead the children in his group, which is an important skill in my opinion. Leadership is of course a different concept, but when there is a problem in the classroom, can children guide their friends whether they are in that problem situation or not? If they can lead them about problem, I think it means they can solve social problems.

4.3.7.3. Cooperation

Two teachers associated the ability to work collaboratively with their friends in a group with social problem solving skills. While one teacher expressed cooperation directly without making any comments, the other teacher stated that *if children could cooperate, there would be no social problem in that group*. P12 expressed the ability

to work collaboratively as a skill that reduces the possibility of social problems, but did not mention its place in the social problem solving process.

4.3.7.4. Adapting to group

Two teachers, on the other hand, associated children's ability to adapt to a group with social problem solving. While one teacher stated this directly, the other teacher stated that if children adapt to a group, the probability of social problems in that group decreases. It was thought that the teacher focuses on prevention of social problem rather than social problem solving. P11 reflected his view by saying:

> Adaptation to the group is an important skill because when children join a group voluntarily or with direction of the teacher, there are problems and conflicts arise. If the child can adapt to that group, I can say that there will be no problem in that group.

When the teachers' views on the skills they associate with social problem solving are examined, it is seen that the communication skill, which includes both adult and peer communication, is the most associated skill with social problem solving. It is seen that empathy and sharing skills are the most emphasized skills after communication.

4.4. Preschool teachers' views about the effect of social problem solving skill on children

In the semi-structured interview, the researcher asked "*How would you describe the characteristics of a child with advanced social problem solving skills?* " to the participants. In this question, the researcher wondered whether teachers are aware of the contribution of social problem-solving skills to children and she wondered by what characteristics they define a child with advanced social problem-solving skills. The views of the teachers on this subject formed seven main codes together with their sub-codes. Teachers mentioned several characteristics of a child with developed social problem solving skills. Related codes and sub-codes are represented in Table 13.

Table 13 *General information of major codes and sub-codes related with how teachers define children who have social problem solving skills*

Child with social problem solving skills	n	p(%)
Having advanced communication skills	9	25.8

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Table 13 *General information of major codes and sub-codes related with how teachers define children who have social problem solving skills cont'd*

Having positive peer relationship	7	20.0
Self- confident	7	20.0
Leader	5	14.28
Responsible	3	8.58
Compatible	3	8.58
Problem solver	1	2.85

4.4.1. Having advanced communication skills

Most of the teachers (n=9) defined a child with advanced social problem solving skills as a child with advanced communication skills. In communication skills, they mentioned that children can establish both peer and adult communication, express themselves by speaking and empathize.

4.4.1.1. Peer-adult communication

Most of the teachers (n=9) described a child who has social problem solving skills as a child who can communicate with both peers and adults. While some of the teachers (n=5) directly stated that their communication skills were high, other teachers stated that the communication environment was not only school. While two teachers emphasized children's listening skills in communication, one teacher claimed that children with high communication skills had fewer problems. P2 expressed her idea by asserting:

> This child can communicate well with others. She feels comfortable when she has a problem because she is communicating with both her friend and an adult, so she doesn't have too many problems because she knows that even if she has a problem, she can solve it.

Similarly, P3 and P13 agreed on P2's opinion. P13 mentioned about listening skill in communication expressed his thoughts as follows:

> He is a child with high communication skills, high relationship skills, can establish a lot of dialogue, has a good command of words and concepts, he takes into account and listens to someone.

P1 who emphasized not to limit the communication environment with school expressed her idea as follows:

> These children can communicate anywhere. That is, I do not limit the place as a school, they communicate outside, in the market, in the park. Children who can solve social problems have better communication skills, both with adults and with their peers.

4.4.1.2. Self- expression

Some teachers (n=6) stated that children with advanced social problem solving skills can express their feelings and thoughts clearly and comfortably in communication.

P6 mentioned about being aware of emotions and reflected his thoughts on this issue as follows:

> At the same time, these children can express themselves. They are aware of their own and others' feelings, they can respond clearly when they are asked how you feel, what you are doing. in short, I can easily say that being able to express yourself is the most important feature. To be able to communicate with you.

Similar to P6, P13 also stated his views by saying:

> This child is highly interactive. He lives comfortably without hiding his feelings. I can say that he can express himself in any situation. If he has an opinion, he can say clearly, he can express how he feels about something.

P11 agreed with P6 and P13's opinion and reflected his views by emphasizing not oppressing as following:

> Second, he can express himself clearly. A child with social problem solving skills can express his/her feelings correctly when there is a problem, neither by oppressing himself nor by crushing others.

4.4.1.3. Empathy

Two teachers, on the other hand, mentioned that a child with advanced social problem-solving skills has a high level of empathy in communication. One of the teachers stated that the reason for the lack of empathy skills was the family. P7 explained her idea by asserting:

> They definitely have a very high level of empathy. Imagine she hit another child, when asked what he is feeling right now, she says that he was upset, he

was very angry. She knows, she empathizes directly, you say how would you feel if the same thing happened to you, she says I would be sad; such children have more empathy. But when I look at it from the negative side, on the contrary, she sees herself as justified in the case of failure to develop empathy, because she cannot understand what the other person feels. But there are familial reasons behind all of them, so if the child has not developed empathy skills, the family is the most important reason.

4.4.2. Having positive peer relationship

Seven teachers defined a child with developed social problem solving skills as a child with positive friendship relations. While three teachers expressed this directly, other teachers mentioned being a loved one in peer relations, acting together and not harming the friendship relationship in case of losing in the game. P4 expressed his views on this issue by mentioning *not harming* as follows:

> For example, we have some games including winner and losers. When children lose or win, it does not harm their friendship relations, so their friendship is strong.

P8, on the other hand, talked *about collaborative action* and said:

> Their friendships are positive. He can follow the movements of other children, that is, he can proceed in the same way with them, not against them in the learning process, the game process. For example, whether it is group work, he can work with them. In this way, the friendship relations of these children are very positive.

Similarly, P12 agreed on having positive relationship and expressed her idea on this issue by mentioning about the child *being a role model*.

> He is a loved one in the environment because his every behavior can be taken as an example. Because he has no mistakes in his behavior, that is, he is a student who can be taken as a role model by other people, gets along well with his friends, plays his game well, do activities well.

4.4.3. Self- confidence

Some teachers (n=7) described a child with advanced social problem-solving skills as self-confident. Three teachers directly stated that they are self-confident. P14, one of the three teachers, expressed her thought by saying that ''*He is a self-confident child; you can observe this in his behavior that he is self-confident.*''

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A teacher (P5) stated that the children's self-confidence develops when they solve a problem, and as they self-confidence develops, they can solve problems more easily as follows:

> He definitely developed self-confidence because he was able to solve problems. Since their self-confidence also improves, self-confident children can handle problems more easily.

P4 agreed on P5's opinion and differently she mentioned about the role of the family in gaining social problem-solving skills and stated that social problem-solving skills lead to having self-confidence:

> I think this child has received an education from the family, or rather better than the family. For my observation, everything starts in the family, because whatever the child sees in the family, he does it everywhere in the classroom, at school. If he has received a good education from the family, if he has gained social problem solving skills in the family, these children are self-confident.

On the other hand, P9 stated that he is self-confident both because he solves a social problem and because he does not have any social problems by saying that ' *'They feel more secure. A child who does not have social problems, a child who has solved it, is self-confident. I can answer like this.''*

4.4.4. Leader

Some teachers (n=5) mentioned the leadership characteristic of a child with advanced social problem solving skills. Three teachers stated that they come to the forefront because they lead their friends in environments where children are present, but they did not mention their relationship with social problem solving. P3 expressed his thoughts on this issue as follows:

> They stand out in social events and social trips because they can lead their friends in such places.

While other teachers talk about children being in the foreground, P6 mentioned that children can guide their friends when there is a problem, and he expressed his opinion on this issue as follows:

> Ability to lead peers in a problem behavior. Leadership is a different concept, but children with high social problem-solving skills can generally be children

with high leadership skills. It actually depends on the situation in the classroom. I can say this.

On the other hand, some teachers stated that a child with advanced social problem solving skills takes responsibility for completing a task and fulfills his responsibilities more easily (*Responsibility*, n=3). Moreover, three teachers said that children are compatible with any environment they are in (*Compatible*, n=3). However, they did not provide any information on how social problem solving increases children's compatibility.

One of the teachers (P6) mentioned that when children with social problem solving skills have a problem, they find alternative ways to *solve this problem* and reflected his idea as following:

> When this child has a problem, he can find different alternative ways for this problem and find his problem by trying these alternative ways. These are very important.

In summary, teachers mostly defined a child with advanced social problem solving skills as having advanced communication skills, and they mentioned peer-adult communication. They stated that a child who has social problem-solving skills after communication skills has positive friendship relations and is self-confident.

4.5. Preschool teachers' views on the importance of gaining social problem-solving skills in early childhood period

In the semi-structured interview, the researcher asked *'Why is it important for children to acquire social problem-solving skills in early childhood period?'* to teachers. They expressed their views on the importance of the skill for the *learning process*, *its importance for the future life of the children*, and *its importance for the problem solving process*. Findings related to this question are presented with categories based on the codes. The relevant categories are given in Table 14.

Table 14 *Views on importance of gaining social problem solving skills in early childhood period*

Categories	Codes
Importance in better future life (n=9)	- Reduce in committing crime (n=2) - More self-confidence (n=2) - Happier children (n=1) - More self-expression (n=1) - More academic success (n=1) - Other (n=4)
Importance in learning process (n=5)	- Easier to learn (n=3) - More permanent (n=2)
Importance in problem solving process (n=5)	- Be prepared for problems (n=2) - Faster problem solving (n=3) - Reduce in anxiety (n=2)

4.5.1. Importance in better future life

Most of the teachers (n=9) stated that it is important for children to acquire social problem-solving skills at an early age for their future life. Teachers mentioned that with the development of social problem solving skills, children's tendency to commit crimes will decrease in the future, their self-confidence will increase, they will be happier, they will be able to express themselves more and their academic success will increase.

4.5.1.1. Reduce in committing crime

Two teachers mentioned that children who do not acquire social problem solving skills at an early age may be prone to commit crimes when they encounter problems in the future and cannot solve them, and emphasized the importance of acquiring the skill at an early age. P8 reflected her view about the issue by stating:

> A child who cannot solve social problems may commit crimes in the future. We do not want any of our children to experience this in the future, we are

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working for them to come to a good place and have a good character. This skill is very important in order not to lose these children. Nothing is solved with violence, children who cannot solve the problem resort to violence even at a young age. Learning to solve problems at an early age is very important in order not to be ostracized by people in the future and to reduce the tendency to crime**.**

4.5.1.2. More self- confidence

Two teachers, on the other hand, stated that children who solve social problems will gain self-confidence and that this will continue in their future life. They mentioned that being able to overcome a problem alone increases self-confidence. P4 expressed her opinion on this issue as follows:

> The child should be able to learn to overcome a problem alone, in this way his self-confidence will increase even more. That's why it's important because when he can solve the problem, if there is a problem in the future, he will not be afraid, he will say, I can do it, he will trust himself. But right now he's scared, they think I can't do this without someone.

Furthermore, only P11 stated that the child's self-control skills will increase with social problem solving, and he stated by saying ''*With this skill, they will be academically successful in his future life. If they have self-control skills, they will be academically successful in the future*.'' At the same time, P11 also stated that children who learn to solve their problems at an early age will be able to *express themselves more* clearly in the future and therefore will be *happier* individuals.

4.5.1.3. Other

While other teachers mentioned self-confidence and reduce in committing crime, four teachers stated that children will not experience any negativity in their future life, and that they will not have any problems, and stated that it will be effective for their whole lives. P2 expressed her opinion on this issue as follows:

> If they gain this skill at an early age, they go later, it already affects their whole life. If children gain these skills at earlier age, they will not have any problems, their life will not be affected in bad manner, so their future life will be better.

P6 agreed on P2's opinion and expressed his thought by mentioning *better future life.*

> Because children will become adults in the future and it is very important to learn this skill at a young age in order not to perform the behaviors that we call

problems in adult behavior. Because if they think that if they are going to get married in the future, they will become parents, they will have a job, they need to be taught at an early age in order to have a better future.

4.5.2. Importance in learning process

Five teachers stated the importance of the skill in the learning process about the importance of children gaining social problem solving skills at an early age. They emphasized that it is easier to learn social problem-solving skills at an early age and that the learned skill will be more permanent in children.

4.5.2.1. Easier to learn

Two teachers stated that it is important to acquire this skill at an early age because children can learn this skill more easily and when they grow up, it is difficult to change what is learned incorrectly. P9 expressed her idea on this issue by asserting:

> Since children at a young age have much higher receptive features, they perceive what they see and hear more easily. They can learn it more easily at an early age, it is easier to teach, because as they grow up, it is very difficult to teach them how to solve their problems.

4.5.2.2. More permanent

Two teachers, on the other hand, said that skills learned at an early age are important because these are more permanent for children. They emphasized that they could use the gains they learned about social problem solving skills at an early age at every stage of their lives. P5 expressed her thoughts on this issue as follows:

> Why is it important because it is a critical period. Whatever children learn at a young age, they carry it forward, what they learn becomes more permanent. Therefore, whatever they learn about this skill, they can use it at every stage of their lives. I find it right to teach at an early age in terms of permanence.

4.5.3. Importance in problem solving process

On the other hand, five teachers stated that the importance of acquiring social problem-solving skills at an early age is important in terms of the problem-solving process. Teachers talked about *reducing in anxiety, being prepared for future problems*, and *accelerating the problem solving process* with skill learning.

4.5.3.1. Faster problem solving

Three out of five teachers stated that children gain experience by learning to solve problems at an early age and that they can solve different problems faster thanks to this experience. P1 reflected her view on this issue as follows:

> Smaller problems happen when they are younger. They can't share their toy, they can't learn the rules, or they may want to do different things in an activity because their attention span is shorter. I think that the sooner they solve problem, they will progress easier, and they can move forward with bigger problems by finding solutions from here, and they can find the suitable solution for them. As the child learns, he solves problems faster and easier because he gains experience. Considering that he gained these experiences early, he will have had a lot of experience and the process will progress faster.

4.5.3.2. Be prepared for problems

Two out of five teachers stated that children's acquisition of social problem solving skills at an early age makes them ready for future problems and this facilitates reaching a solution. P3 reflected her thoughts on this issue as follows:

> I think it is important for children to gain at an early age in terms of being prepared for problems. Developing this skill means ensuring that the child can solve a problem when there is a problem, which means that the child encounters many problems. When the child communicates with his/her peers, it becomes easier for the child to be prepared for the problems that may arise and to reach a solution that can overcome the problems.

4.5.3.3. Reduce in anxiety

Two teachers, on the other hand, stated that as children gain social problem-solving skills, their anxiety will decrease and they will establish more positive relationships. Therefore, they stated that it is important to acquire social problem-solving skills at an early age. P14 expressed her opinion on this issue as follows:

> For example, someone takes the child's toy, the child cannot ask for it back, because he is worried. If he learns to solve problems, he will not experience this anxiety, because he knows how to solve it. If children acquire this skill at an early age, their anxiety will decrease.

4.6. Preschool teachers' views on the importance of social problem solving skills considering children's age group in early childhood education

In the semi-structured interview protocol, teachers were asked *'Which age group do you think is the most important in gaining social problem solving skills?* The researcher was curious about teachers' views on which age group is seen as most important for the acquisition of social problem solving skills. The descriptive findings on age group are represented in Table 15.

Table 15 *Descriptive findings of age group that teacher consider as most important in social problem solving skills*

Age group	n	p (%)
3 year olds	6	40
4-5 year olds	5	33.3
From birth	2	13.3
Not specified	2	13.3

As can be seen in the table, some teachers (n=6, 40%) stated that 3 year olds are the most important age group to gain social problem solving skills. Some teachers (n=5, 33.3%) stated that 4-5 year olds are more important. Few of the teachers (n=2, 13.3%) stated that this skill should be gained from birth. Few of teachers (n=2, 13.3%) did not specify any age group. Teachers shared their views on why they should start to teach social problem solving skill in that age group. The teachers' views on age are presented in Table 16.

Table 16 *Teachers' views on importance of social problem solving skills considering children's age group*

Age group	Reason	Example quotation from participants
3 year olds (n=6)	Difficulty to gain later (n=2)	It will be better if they gain at this age because if they learn the wrong way to solve problems, the problems will continue and will not be solved. It is difficult to change their solution strategy later. I think it is more appropriate to win at a young age (P2) I think the sooner the child's solution strategy is recognized, the better. Later it becomes so difficult that correcting the child's misbehavior (P8)

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Table 16 *Teachers' views on importance of social problem solving skills considering children's age group cont'd*

	Beginning of socialization (n=2)	Starting school is very important in terms of socialization anyway, this skill should be gained as soon as children start to socialize, that is, it can start in the family. The family should also teach (P10)
		Since the earliest age of preschool is 3 years old, I think it is 3 years old. Children begin to socialize, they begin to have problems, it is not like at home, they Join a group I think it's time for social problem solving (P1)
	Familiarization (n=2)	I think it is beneficial to start at the age of 3, maybe not very effective, but children should get used to problem solving, but not too much, for example, we can focus on this issue for half a day. (P3)
		When children are at 3 years, they may not perceive, but we can get them used to solving problems. Although we cannot fully acquire the skills in children, we can progress better at older ages if we establish a certain lower step (P12)
4-5 year olds (n=5)	Most effective in acquiring (n=4)	The age of 4-5 is very critical because the most socialization starts here, of course, there is communication with the parents before, but problems arise because of socializing at school and this is the most appropriate age to teach this skill (P4)
		I definitely think that it is 4-5 years old, there different approaches in the books, but based on my experience, 3 years old is very egocentric, if you ask to child how did your friend feel when you hit him, he will not understand what other felt, it is abstract to them. At the age of 6, autonomy begins. In this regard, 4 years old is suitable to acquire this skill because this group is more understanding and empathetic than other age groups (P7

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Table 16 *Teachers' views on importance of social problem solving skills considering children's age group cont'd*

From birth (n=2)	Beginning of perception (n=2)	It should be shaped from the first moment the child starts to perceive. The child is now open to learning something. Children are ready to learn even in the womb, they feel everything. Maybe from the moment they were born (P5) I think it should start from the first birth. In other words, I can say that it starts from the moment they begin to perceive the world, and when they are born, they already begin to perceive things (P11)
Not specified (n=2)	Different expectations (n=2)	I cannot specify an age group because I have different expectations from each age group for this skill. My expectation from 3 years old is different from my 4-5 and 5-6 year olds. However, I have expectations at both 3 year olds and 4 year olds. In general, I can say preschool period (P15) So I can't say for sure, because the skill expected from each age is different (P13)

Six of the teachers interviewed (40%) stated that the most important age for social problem solving is 3 years old. The reasons why the teachers considered the age of three important were different from each other. Two of the teachers (13.3%) stated that this skill is more difficult to acquire in later years and focused on the wrong solution strategies of children. While two teachers thought that 3-year-old children should get used to problem solving, two others pointed to the age of 3 as the age at which children start to socialize and focused on gaining problem-solving skills with the onset of this socialization. Five teachers (33.3%) stated that the most important age for gaining social problem solving skills is 4-5 years. Four of the teachers (26.4%) stated that they consider this age group appropriate to gain social problem solving skills because of the problems experienced with the onset of socialization and their high empathy skills. One teacher (6.6%) did not express an opinion on the reason. Two teachers (13.3%) stated that children's social problem-solving skills should be developed from birth. Teachers focused on children's perception in social problem solving skills and thought that they were ready to learn problem solving skills since their perceptions were high

from birth. On the other hand, two teachers stated that it is important throughout the early childhood education by expressing that their expectations were different from each age group but they did not specify any age group.

In summary, the interviewed teachers mostly stated that the most important age to gain social problem solving skills in children are the 3 (n=6) and 4-5 age groups (n=5).

4.7. Preschool teachers' views on the reasons why children could not develop their social problem solving skills

In the semi-structured interview, the researcher asked '*why the children could not develop their social problem solving skills?*' Findings related to this question were explained in four categories. The first category is called as parent- related reasons. All of the teachers stated that they consider parents as the most important reason (n=15). While five of the teachers directly expressed the parents in their answers, ten of them mentioned different characteristics of the parents in the inability to develop social problem-solving skills in children. These characteristics are that the family is oppressive/prescriptive (n=2), the family's lack of communication with the child (n=2), the family does whatever their children want (n=2), the family normalizes the child's problems (n=2), the family does not give responsibility to the child (n=1) and the family's lack of social problem-solving skills (n=1). Most of the teachers (n=9) stated that the reason why social problem solving skills are not developed in children is the social environment. Seven of the nine teachers mentioned social environment directly, while two of them stated that it was due to the lack of friends in the social environment of the children. While three teachers talked about temperament and thought that individual differences would be a reason, only one teacher stated that the teacher's misdirection towards the child could be a reason. The relevant categories and codes related to the question are presented in table 17.

Table 17 *Teachers' views on the reasons why children could not develop their social problem solving skills*

Categories	Codes
	• Oppressive/ prescriptive parents (n=2)

Table 17 *Teachers' views on the reasons why children could not develop their social problem solving skills cont'd*

Parent- related reasons (n=15)	• Lack of communication with child (n=2) • Do whatever children want (n=2) • Normalization of problems (n=2) • Not giving responsibility to child (n=1) • Lack of parents' SPS skills (n=1)
Social environment (n=7)	• Lack of friends (n= 2)
Individual differences (n=3)	• Temperament (n=2)
Teacher- related reasons (n= 1)	• Misdirection (n=1)

*SPS: Social Problem Solving

4.7.1. Parent-related reasons

All of the interviewed teachers stated that they consider parents as the most important reason (n=15). While five of the teachers directly expressed the parents in their answers, ten of them mentioned different characteristics of the parents in the inability to develop social problem-solving skills in children.

4.7.1.1. Oppressive/ normative parents

Two teachers stated that parents restrict children because they are oppressive and normative, and that children who are under pressure cannot develop their social problem-solving skills. One of the teachers mentioned that the use of violence by parents can also be a reason. P3 reflected on this issue as follows:

> Well, because the family is oppressive, children can be introverted in such conservative families. In other words, children who are under pressure generally experience difficulties. Children cannot develop their social skills

because they are restricted. The reason for this may be in families who use violence.

4.7.1.2. Lack of communication with the child

Two teachers stated that the reason why social problem solving skills could not be developed in children was that parents did not communicate with their children. They mentioned that since there is no environment where children cannot express themselves outside of school, even if they gain this skill at school, it will fade if it is not supported at home. P14 expressed his opinion on this issue as follows:

> I think the reason is that their families do not have time to chat with them. It occurs as a result of inadequate relationships between families and their children. We are struggling at school, but the child can only express himself here, he is not supported at home because there is no communication. When this happens, this skill goes out.

4.7.1.3. Do whatever children want

Two teachers, on the other hand, stated that parents see their children as one and only, they do whatever they want, and therefore children cannot develop their social problem-solving skills because they prevent their children from coming out of the egocentric period. P4 expressed her views on this issue as follows:

> As long as the child does not cry, everything is offered to him by the child's parents. The child does not know how to speak, the truth is, I passed communication, he does not know how to speak, because everything is laid before him even before the child speaks. I think this is affected by the attitude of the parents. We think that we are doing them good by doing everything at home, but we are doing them a little bit of harm. Because the family sees their children as unique, the child cannot get out of that egocentric period, therefore, he cannot gain social problem solving skills.

4.7.1.4. Normalization of problems

Similarly, two teachers mentioned that the parents normalize the problem behaviors of the children and the problems they experience, and therefore children cannot solve the problems because they do not consider a problem as a problem. P1 expressed her views on this issue as follows:

> Children do not want to share things, they become more selfish, they always want what they want, they behave problematic, but parents approach it

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wrongly, they tolerate it. The child sees this as normal and does not see any problem that needs to be solved in any way. For example, he does not want to join a group, he expects it to be tolerated at school. So I think these problems are more familial.

P11, on the other hand, stated that parents' lack social problem-solving skills and therefore they could not convey this skill to their children, and expressed this thought as follows:

I see today's parent attitudes as the first priority, in other words, their parents' attitudes and behaviors. The problems we encounter are usually because of parents who are unable to address social problems. In this way, these parents fail to convey problem solving skills to their children.

4.7.2. Social environment

Seven teachers directly stated that the reason for the development of social problem solving skills in children is the social environment. Two of these seven teachers stated that the children did not have a problem because they did not have friends in the social environment and therefore they could not acquire social problem solving skills. P3 explained her idea by asserting:

I think the reason may be the social environment, that is, the lack of friends, they do not have a social environment, they do not have experience, so they cannot develop it. When children communicate with each other, there is a problem, whether they solve it or not, but they try. That's why the social environment is so important.

P6 agreed with P3's opinion and expressed his thoughts as follows by mentioning that having a sibling is not sufficient for social environment:

If children have a sibling at home, the reason may still be the lack of friends. He doesn't want to play with her either, but he has to play because he's at home. Communication with other children is different, communication with the environment is different, and when you look at the point where you can communicate with them, innovation takes place. When there is a problem, he will try to solve it and he will see something new.

While other teachers directly stated the social environment as the reason, they did not give any details when asked to provide more information. For instance, P9 said as following:

It could be their social environment, so the environment which they are in. Of course, we always think that these are factors.

4.7.3. Individual differences

A few of the teachers (n=3) stated that one of the reasons why children's social problem solving skills could not be developed could be individual differences. P5 expressed her thoughts on this subject by mentioning material- spiritual opportunities as follows:

Individual differences in the child may be the cause. That is, the possibilities he has may be material-spiritual. Actually, although it doesn't seem effective, I think it is a very effective thing, because these opportunities create the perception of children, so children differ.

Two teachers stated that children could not develop their social problem solving skills due to the *temperament* that was considered in the individual difference category. P13 reflected his opinion on this issue as following:

If the child is structurally shy as temperament, or if he is a child who cannot express himself and has too much emotion, he cannot easily overcome this. No matter how hard you try, he comes to a certain level, but because his temperament is like this, you cannot progress much because his character is like this. So I think temperament may be a reason for this skill, not in every child, of course.

4.7.4. Teacher- related reason

Only one teacher stated that the reason why the child's social problem solving skills could not be developed was the teacher's misdirection of the child. P13 expressed his opinion on this issue as follows:

Another reason is the teacher. The appropriate direction which should be done performed in wrong manner is also something that affects that child. Honestly, I think that if the child is well guided, of course he will improve himself. However, if the teacher does not direct the child to a solution or misleads, this skill may not develop.

Based on these findings, when asked about the reasons why social problem solving skills could not be developed in children, it was seen that all of the teachers gave the answer as parents from different perspectives, and only one teacher said that it could be due to the teacher.

4.8. Preschool teachers' views about National Early Childhood Education program considering social problem solving skills

Before taking the views of the teachers, they were asked which program they used in the education process. The education program information used by the teachers is presented in Table 18.

Table 18 *The education program used by teachers*

Program	p (%)	Participants
National Early Childhood Education Program (2013)	80.0%	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P9, P10 P11,P12,P13,P14,P15
Institutions' private program	13.3%	P7, P8
Activity plan from Internet	6.7%	P4

The researcher needed information about whether the national program was used or not, before getting teachers' opinions on how much importance was given to social problem solving skills in the program. It is seen that the majority of teachers (80%) use the National Early Childhood Education Program. Two teachers stated that their education program is given by the coordinator of their institutions. One teacher stated that she takes her activity plans from the Internet.

4.8.1. Teacher views about the place of social problem solving skills in National Early Childhood Education Program

Twelve teachers using the National Early Childhood Education Program were asked whether the program placed emphasis on social problem-solving skills. Descriptive information about the answers of the teachers is presented in Table 19.

Table 19 *Does the National Early Childhood Education Program give importance to social problem solving skills?*

	n	p (%)	Because of
Neutral	5	41.7%	program is flexible(n=4)
Yes (n=4)	4	33.3%	objectives are sufficient
No	3	25.0%	place of the skill is few (n=2)

Table 19 *Does the National Early Childhood Education Program give importance to social problem solving skills? cont'd*

(n=1)	no direction for solutions

Most of the teachers (n=5, 41.7%) stated that they could not say yes or no to the early childhood education program's emphasis on social problem solving skills. They said that the reason for their neutrality in this regard is due to the *flexibility of the program*, and that it is in the hands of the teacher to develop the skill as long as the program draws the general framework. P2 expressed her thoughts on this issue as following:

> Since the education program already gives us so much flexibility, I think this achievement ends with the teacher, it also ends with us, not according to any plan. That's why I can't say anything about the program whether it supports it or not

P11 expressed his thought similar with P12 on the same issue by mentioning teachers' individual teaching method and techniques:

> In other words, if we think whether it gives enough place, I cannot say whether it does, I cannot say whether it does. Since the early childhood education program is a flexible program, yes, there is an area for the development of social emotional skills in general, but since it draws general frameworks, it changes according to the teacher's individual teaching methods and techniques and the structure of the teacher. Supporting the skill is definitely up to the teacher

Four teachers, on the other hand, said that the early childhood education program gives importance to social problem solving skills because the objectives in the program will support social problem skills. Some teachers (n=2) said that when they need more, they can focus on different objectives due to the flexibility of the program. P15 expressed her views on this issue by saying that '' *Let me tell you this, our objectives in the social emotional development area are all suitable for problem solving. So there are very nice objectives.* ''

P10 stated that the program is sufficient similar with P15 and she mentioned that she adds other activities if necessary:

> We have a lot of objectives that support this in our curriculum in our program. I work on activities that I will do by integrating them with my activities and programs, and I try to bring those achievements to my students as much as I can. If there are behaviors that are not gained, of course, I organize other activities that reinforce them.

While others said the program is sufficient, three teachers said that it did not give enough importance to social problem solving skills. While some teachers said that *cognitive skills were given more importance* (n=2), one teacher said that he considered the program inadequate because it *did not offer solutions for social problems* and they said they learn by practice. P1 reflected her opinion by saying:

> I don't think that the current program focuses on social problem solving skills, in fact, because it gives more importance to such cognitive skills. In fact, there are a lot of gains in the social-emotional field as well, but it seems like this problem solving skill has not been mentioned much, also we did not learn this much in our undergraduate lessons, frankly, we always learned it by working in practice, or we learned how to progress from the books we read, so it was emphasized a lot. I don't think so in the program.

P12 expressed her thoughts similar with P1 but she focused on the program not having ready solutions for common social problems:

> For example, when there is no sharing, there are no solutions in the style of approaching it like this. We learn what to do by experimenting a little bit, I can't say that the program has a contribution since it doesn't have many suggestions.

Based on the findings of the study, it was found that some teachers consider the program objectives as sufficient (n=4), while some teachers considered it insufficient (n=3). However, the issue that teachers provide a great deal of opinion is that teachers can use different activities and acquisitions to develop this skill due to the flexibility of the program.

4.8.2. Preschool teachers' views about which objectives support children's social problem solving skills

It was found that there were teachers who consider the objectives in the program as sufficient or insufficient, and the researcher asked the teachers which objectives and indicators in the program supported social problem solving skills. Findings related to this question are presented in Table 20.

Table 20 *Objectives that support social problem solving skills*

	n	p (%)
Social- emotional development	8	50.00%

Table 20 *Objectives that support social problem solving skills cont'd*

Cannot say exactly	7	43.75 %
Motor development	1	6.25%

It is seen that the objectives stated by the teachers are mostly objectives in the field of social emotional development (50%), only two teachers mentioned the objectives in the field of language development, and not a few teachers (43.75%) stated that they did not remember the objectives clearly enough.

The objectives that support social problem solving in the field of social emotional development stated by the teachers are explains their positive/negative feelings using verbal expression, shows willingness to take responsibility, ability to express oneself in group, expresses itself in creative ways, protects the right of itself and others, respect differences, introducing their own features, solves problems with others, obeys the rules in a different environment. Among the objectives that support social problem solving, the most stated objective is 'explains their positive/negative feelings using verbal expression' (19.0%). The objective that is 'solves problems with others' was stated by only one teacher (n=1, 4.8%). Other objectives that support social problem solving in the social emotional development area were not mentioned by any teacher.

In addition, all of the three teachers who stated that the objectives were insufficient when asked about the objectives, replied that "I cannot say clearly". It was observed that three of the four teachers who said that they were sufficient were the teachers who mentioned the most objectives from the field of social emotional development.

4.8.3. Preschool teachers' suggestions for the National Early Childhood Education Program (2013)

In the semi-structured interview, the researcher asked '*Do you want to make changes in the early childhood education program to improve children's social problem-solving skills?*' The teacher's answers to this question are presented in Table 21.

Table 21 *Do you want to make any changes to the Early Childhood Education Program?*

	n	p (%)	Participants
I want to make changes	10	66.7	P1, P4, P7, P8, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15
I don't want to make changes	5	33.3	P2, P3, P5, P6, P9

As can be seen in Table 21, most of the teachers (66.7%) stated that they wanted to make changes in the early childhood education program in order to improve children's social problem solving skills, while a few (33.3%) of the teachers said that they did not want to make any changes.

Three of the five teachers who did not want to make changes said that the program is flexible, so the desired changes can be made by the teachers during the education process. In addition, one teacher stated that this is an *adequate program* for social problem solving. P9 expressed his thoughts on this subject as follows:

> We adapt the program according to ourselves. In fact, it provides everything for social problem solving, we also make trips and social events when necessary, it provides an opportunity for all of them. Our way is clearer now, in fact, there were more restrictions before. For now, there is nothing in the program that prevents us or forces us. The program allows me to shape it already in terms of flexibility, so I don't need to make any changes right now.

On the other hand, one teacher stated that he did not want to make changes in the program, but wanted it to be a *separate course in undergraduate education* as follows:

> I did not want to change the program, but during the meeting I realized that; they told us in development course, but it was not taught as a separate course. I think it would be better if a course in which what can be done, how to support it is explained in detail in faculties, that is, in areas related to teaching (P6)

Also, one teacher stated that she *wanted activities such as education and seminar for teachers* to be organized in order to improve children's social problem-solving skills. She expressed her views on this issue as follows:

> A seminar and a training can be organized for teachers on this subject. There can be a training where we can learn what we can do about this subject, how we can do activities for this purpose, or such a booklet can be published. I wanted something like a booklet right now (P2)

The subjects mentioned by the teachers (n=10) who stated that they wanted to make changes in the program are presented in Table 22.

Table 22 *Subjects that teachers want to change in the program*

	n	p (%)	Participants
Changes in concepts	4	26.68	P7,P11, P12, P13
Increase in field trips	2	13.34	P14, P15
Activity book to be provided	2	13.34	P1, P4
Arrange in physical condition	1	6.67	P10
Education for teachers	1	6.67	P8

When the table is examined, it is seen that the first issue that teachers want to change is about concepts. Teachers stated that they want the *concept of empathy* to be included more in the program together with play and drama (n=2), to *emphasize concepts such as sharing, helping, cooperation* (n=1), to include *gains containing negative expressions* in order to attract teachers' attention (n=1). P7 expressed her opinion by mentioning the need to include the concept of empathy with drama as follows:

> The language that the child can understand is play and drama. I would like the concept of empathy to be a completely separate concept in the program with play and drama like this. Let's see, you hit him, you can tell him how he felt, but it flies away, but even when he goes home with drama, he talks to him for three or five days, so this he did this, he did this, look, you did this and that. That is, the child can empathize directly, when focused on it, so I would like this concept to take place especially with his/her achievements.

Unlike the others, P13 mentioned addition of *negative expressions* and explained as follows:

> Now we always have positive things in our program to support social problem solving ability. This draws my attention a lot. As a teacher, I want to see gains that will support the child's transition from negative to positive. In other words, he always communicates like this, communicates like this, his verbal communication skills are strong. I think negative expressions should be place. I think these will make a great contribution to helping teachers make use of it and create their activities.

Two teachers, on the other hand, stated that they would like to include *more field trips* in the program so that children can learn the rules in different environments and gain social skills. P15 expressed her suggestion as follows:

> I would like that. For example, I love field trips, let children go to different environments, see the rules there, learn life skills there. There is a field trip in the program, but I would like it to be increased more and there would be no problems with travel permits.

Two teachers, on the other hand, suggested that there be an activity book with activities for social problem solving that teachers can benefit from. P1 expressed this suggestion by asserting:

> Social behaviors are much more important than cognitive development, because cognitive development ultimately provides it, if it cannot be achieved at the age of 3, it provides psychomotor development at the age of 5. but if these skills to solve social problems are not learned at this age, there will be serious problems in later years. That's why a small activity book like this can be something like an activity book that focuses on this and can guide us from different perspectives in terms of activity.

While other teachers mentioned field trips, concepts and activity book, P10 stated that the *physical conditions of the schools* are not sufficient for social skills and that an arrangement should be made as follows:

> Schools do not have physical conditions for social skills, there really needs to be additional support in this regard. Workshops can be done for this skill, but the physical conditions of every school may not be suitable for this. I think that the physical conditions of the schools should be arranged for this issue.

Unlike others, P8 stated that the teachers did not notice the social problems and stated that they wanted teachers to be given training on this subject. She expressed her suggestion as follows:

> There are children who have social problems in all schools, but sometimes we do not notice these children or my other colleagues do not notice them. Even if it realizes, the family does not accept or support it, I would like a study to be done for this. I would like teachers to be more informed, like holding a seminar, training in all schools. I would like experts to tell teachers how to deal with social problems.

Based on these findings, it was seen that teachers mostly recommend including concepts that will increase social problem solving skills in the curriculum (n=4), and

trainings that will increase teachers' knowledge levels and practices (n=3) in order to facilitate supporting social problem solving skills in children.

4.9. Preschool teachers' self-reported practices about children social problem solving skills

In this section, the findings related to the educational activities that teachers self-reported to support children's social problem-solving skills, the most experienced social problems in the classroom, and the strategies they use to cope with these problems will be included.

4.9.1. Preschool teachers' self-reported educational activities about children's social problem solving skills

In the semi-structured interview questions, the researcher asked *'Do you do activities to support children's social problem-solving skills?* The teachers who answered yes to this question were asked to briefly talk about the activities they did. The researcher wondered whether interviewed teachers do activities to support their social problem solving skills or not, and if they do, how and on what subjects.

At first, teachers were asked whether they do activities to support children's social problem solving skills. Descriptive findings regarding the teachers' answers to this question is presented in Table 23.

Table 23 *Descriptive analysis regarding whether or not the activity is done*

Answers	n	p (%)
I do activities to support social problem solving skills	12	80%
I do not do activities to support social problem solving skills	3	20%

Twelve of teachers (80%) stated that they did activities to support children's social problem-solving skills. On the other hand, three teachers (20%) stated that they did not particularly do activities for social problem solving skills. One of three teachers stated that the children found their own way of solution in case of the problem and therefore did not have any activity. P2 expressed her views on this subject as follows:

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We don't do any specific activities for it. When problem occurs in the classroom, I talk about it, and children figure out whether what they're doing is right or wrong. Actually, they find their own solutions.

Similar with P2, P4 stated that she did not do an activity, explained that she tried to help children gain social problem-solving skills by *supporting their communication during the day* and reflected her idea as follows:

When children come to school for the first time, I observe their social skills and how they communicate with their own group of friends in their free play. Especially when we do activities on events and celebrations, we make sure that they notice their teachers and meet with their friends there. Frankly, I'm trying to support it during the day, not as a special activity. I try to support their communication with each other in other activities.

A teacher, who stated that she did not have an activity, said that *cognitive skills were prioritized* and reflected her opinion as follows:

We concentrate more on these activities in the week when children first start school, then we do not do it. After the first week, we focus on to cognitive skills. I would say our priority is cognitive skills.

4.9.1.1. Methods used in self-reported activities

Teachers who said that they did activities to support children's social problem-solving skills were asked to talk about the activities. The findings including which method the teachers used in their activities are represented in Table 24.

Table 24 *Methods used in self-reported activities*

Methods	n	p (%)
Role-play/drama	5	22.72
Verbal expression	4	18.18
Storytelling/reading book	4	18.18
Play	4	18.18
Group work	3	13.64
Field trip	1	4.55
Educational cartoons	1	4.55
Total	22	100.00

It is seen that the methods used by the teachers who talk about the activities they do to support children's social problem solving skills are role play/drama (n=5, 22.72%), verbal expression (n=4, 18.18%), storytelling/reading book (n=4, 18.18%), play (n=4, 18.18%), group work (n=3, 13.64%), field trip (n=1, 4.55%) and educational cartoon (n=1, 4.55 %). It can be said that role play and drama are used relatively more in teachers' self-reported activities.

4.9.1.1.1. Role play/drama

Some teachers (n=5) reported that they used drama or role play in social problem solving activities. While some of these teachers (n=2) stated that they used drama by giving the children roles from the characters in the story after reading the story, and then changing these roles, some teachers (n=2) stated that the social problems experienced in the classroom were reenacted and changing roles were employed. One teacher said that he used drama by stating that it revealed social problem behaviors of children.

One of two teachers, who stated that they used drama after the stories were read in social problem solving activities, P1 talked about her activities as follows:

> We are using drama and children animated the story we read for sharing and cooperation. I give the characters in the story to the children, they play them, then I say, let's change roles. They have a chance to try others' feelings. Our activities including drama like this.

Similar with P1, two teachers reported that they use drama or role play in social problem solving activities however they focused on social problems experienced in the classroom and these problems were reenacted and changing roles. Regarding this issue, P5 mentioned her activities as following:

> We use the problems they experienced during the education through drama, they make role play. Roles are portrayed by children who have that problem or others. Then I say ''Let's change your roles and look at the same event from the eyes of others.'' Always we do like this.

Likewise, P7 explained her activities by asserting:

> I generally use drama activities for this subject. I focus on a certain problem; I choose which problem behavior is experienced. I want that children make role play and then they chance their roles. Even if we do not completely eliminate

the problem behaviors, it is useful to extinguish it for a certain period of time. Therefore, I'm using dramatization, so we sort of solve the problem in the form of immediate displacement.

While other teachers focused on improving skills, P6 focused on *revealing social problem behaviors* of children in drama and express his activities as following:

I think the best activity we can do is play and drama, my activities include drama mostly. There are more points where social skills can be developed in play and drama activities, because once in drama, children behave like themselves, actually they show themselves clearly. If there is a problem behavior, he displays it there because he feels comfortable. I use drama very often to see children's social problems.

It can be said that the teachers who stated that they used drama or role play, mostly focused on development of empathy in children.

4.9.1.1.2. Verbal expression

It is seen that verbal expression is used in the activities of some teachers (n=4). The teachers stated that they had conversations with the children on the subjects they focused on. While two teachers stated that they explained the solutions to the children during their conversations, one teacher stated that the activity was to talk about what they did with the children during the circle time, and thus they supported their communication. P12 stated that she did social problem solving activity through verbal expression as follows:

For example, it's about our ability to share. We have a conversation about it, what sharing is, how it is done, we have a conversation about them at the beginning, I explain verbally like a conversation brainstorm with the children.

Similar with P12, P1 and P11 stated that they *explained the solutions* for the issue discussed in the activity, P1 expressed her opinion as follows:

They encounter social problems from the first week they start school, for example, there are classroom rules, school rules, they face them, and I actually tell them the children to help them adapt. I always move forward by explaining to children why these rules are and what we can encounter if we do not follow them. After a while, children started to learn following rules. If we say in general, we explain the problems they encounter and explain how they can solve the problems. In sharing activities, I explain that they should share, that the toys here belong to all of us, etc.

Differently, P14 described the *circle time* as a social problem solving skill activity and explained it as follows:

> Well, circle time, the conversation we have before we start the day is a very good alternative for social problem solving activity, the children try to describe themselves in at least a sentence or two. They can talk about what they did on vacation, or what they did when they went home in the evening and what they did at noon, even in a few sentences. I think this is a very good point and in these activities they can express ourselves and learn to communicate. We support with this way.

It can be said that some of the teachers (n=4), after asking the children the way to solve some problems, explained the correct solution to the children themselves, and they preferred to explain it verbally.

4.9.1.1.3. Storytelling /reading book

Some of the teachers (n=4) stated that they told/read stories about the focused issue in the activities they had done for social problem solving. The teachers who read stories were also teachers who stated that they used drama. They stated that they first read/tell the story on certain topics and then they did drama. P12 stated that she also uses storytelling by saying that ‘*'If we have a story, we can read a story, otherwise we tell a story ourselves, we prefer books explaining the concept of sharing, we can dramatize it.'*'Similar with P12, P1 expressed her activity by saying that ‘*'I also deal with some social problems by reading stories. I read stories about helping, sharing, tolerance, then we dramatize it.'*'

In summary, it can be said that story reading is not used as the only method in the activities, but is among the methods used.

4.9.1.1.4. Play

Some teachers (n=4) stated that they used play in social problem solving activities. Three teachers stated that they also use other methods with play. Two teachers said that they support children's social problem solving skills through play.

P5 focused on *creating and solving problems in play* and stated:

We have games about them. In play, we create a problem; we try to solve that problem in the form of a game. When play is involved, children have more fun and while they think they are actually playing, they gain this skill.

Similar to P5, P12 talked about play in which different skills were used and explained as follows:

For example, in helping each other, I use games. We are playing a game in which cooperation is necessary to achieve a successful outcome. Likewise, it can be a game that needs to be shared. The play has an effect on them. Usually this skill become more permanent with the use of play and drama.

Similar with others, P6 said that they play games as an activity and stated that children's social problems should be observed in play. He expressed his opinion on this matter as follows:

I also prefer to use play. In the play, sometimes problem behavior may occur in order for children to find pleasure, and when you see this, you can focus on that behavior. However, if you, as a teacher, do not observe children's play and are not aware of the problems child faces with, you are doing the game activity in vain. I think play is activity, not just to introduce a concept, the best point where you can observe that child is actually the play, we should observe them if we want to develop.

Unlike the others, P10 stated that she allowed children to play more in the morning as an activity as follows:

As an activity, I extend the children's free play time because I think that their social problem solving skills will develop in this way. Our students are in one-on-one communication with their friends during the play. After that process, there is a communication since they are together during the day, but for this, the play is more beneficial. In other words, play about social content constitute the forms of communication.

4.9.1.1.5. Group work

Some teachers (n=3) stated that they frequently use group work in their activities to support social problem solving. In the activities mentioned by the teachers, they stated that they attach importance to the communication of children with each other. P8 explained her activity as follows:

We do a lot of group work all together as an activity. Group work is beneficial because children need to be part of a group. We are trying to do group work-intensive studies to include them in the group. We aim to enable children to communicate more with each other.

Furthermore, two teachers mentioned about children's ability to express themselves, self-confidence and cooperation, along with their communication skills in their activities. On activities, P13 explained his view as following:

> I use group activities to increase sociability in the whole class. Activities in which children express themselves individually. Throughout my education process, I include social skills in my program by applying them as a weekly concept in an integrated manner and combining them with different methods and techniques. For this, I prefer team work and it also provides cooperation. I perform practices that develop self-confidence, expression and communication skills.

Similar with P13, P15 expressed her activity by saying:

> For example, I use group work. I will put one student in the middle and every child explains all our positive feelings and thoughts towards him/her. I think this increases the motivation of children, their communication with friends and their self- confidence. They also learn to express themselves. I often do this activity.

P3 stated that she included field trips in these activities and expressed as follows:

> We do a lot of social field trips. Trips. These are very effective, we used to go filed trips too much but because of the pandemic, we can't do anymore. We experienced its benefit a lot.

One teacher directly stated that they watched educational cartoons related to the subject they focused on, and did not share any details.

When the teachers' self-reported activities were examined, it was seen that some teachers used a single method and some teachers used more than one method. Except for three teachers (P2, P4, P9) who stated they do not use activities for social problem solving skill, the methods used by twelve teachers in their activities were examined and it can be said that eight teachers use a single method in their social problem solving activities and four teachers use more than one method.

4.9.1.2. Topics that teachers focus on in self-reported activities

The activities that teachers do to develop children's social problem solving skills are explained in section 4.9.1.1.with quotations. The topics that the teachers mentioned in their self-reported activities were examined. Eight categories have emerged for the topics in social problem solving activities. These categories are communication (n=6),

problems occur in the class(n=4), sharing (n=3), helping others (n=3), following rules (n=2), self-confidence (n=2) and introversion (n=1). These categories are represented in Table 25.

Table 25 *Topics that teachers focus on in self-reported activities*

Categories	n	p (%)
Communication	6	28.57
Problems occur in class	4	19.05
Sharing	3	14.29
Helping others	3	14.29
Following rules	2	9.52
Self-confidence	2	9.52
Introversion	1	4.76
Total	21	100.00

As can be seen in the table, the teachers mostly (n=6, 28.57%) mentioned communication in the activities they had done for social problem solving. Furthermore, it was seen that among the skills that teachers associate with social problem solving skills, they mostly mentioned communication skills.

4.9.2. Most experienced social problem behaviors in class reported by teachers

In the semi-structured interview, the researcher asked the question that is 'What are the social problem behaviors you experienced most in your class? ' to the teachers. In this section, most experienced social problem behaviours reported by teachers are explained.

When the teachers' views on the most experienced social problem behaviors in the classroom were examined, problem behaviors consisted of ten categories and one sub-category. These categories are; not sharing, difficulty in communication, not respecting the rights of others, jealousy, introversion, adaptation problems, not admitting fault, breaking rules, crying and aggression with sub-categories which are physical aggression and relational aggression. Related categories of most experienced social problem behaviors reported by teachers are represented in Table 26.

Table 26 *Related categories of most experienced social problem behaviors reported by teachers*

Categories	n	p (%)
Aggression	11	30.56
• Physical Aggression	10	27.78
• Relational Aggression	1	2.78
Not sharing	9	25.00
Difficulty in communication	4	11.11
Not respecting the rights of others	3	8.33
Jealousy	3	8.33
Introversion	2	5.56
Adaptation problems	1	2.78
Not admitting fault	1	2.78
Crying	1	2.78
Breaking rules	1	2.78
Total	36	100.00

4.9.2.1. Aggression

Some teachers (n=11) stated that aggressive behaviors were seen most in the classroom. While ten teachers mentioned physical aggression, only one teacher mentioned relational aggression.

4.9.2.1.1. Physical aggression

Ten teachers stated that they frequently experienced aggressive behavior in their classrooms. They stated that children's physical aggression emerged as hitting their friends or breaking an object in the classroom.

P7 explained physical aggression towards both individuals and objects as follows:

> We've broken 3 chairs so far. There is aggression in my class. They kickbox all the time in class, it's a constant state of war. When I turn my back, they grab their friend by the neck and say let's go boxing, and they hit each other. One of my children is using drugs and even because of his aggressive behavior.

P9 agreed with P7's opinion and expressed her opinion by saying ' *'There are a lot of aggressive children, they even attack things, and since this affects the social environment, I think that this is also a social skill.''*

Similarly, P4 reflected the aggression by focusing on *egocentrism* as follows:

> There is an aggression born of egocentrism in children, they think that this is something I want, how do you want it, you had to give it to me. And in my class in this year, when I meet with my other friends, it's the same thing, they all have the same thing, there is more aggression.

P8 and P14 evaluated the family as the reason for the emergence of physical aggression and P14 expressed her opinion as follows:

> They may show aggressive behavior when communicating with each other, or if they have older brothers at home, they think that especially boys can do their behavior both at home at school, so we try to prevent them. At home, the family does not interfere with this, the children think it is normal to hit. Family is very effective in increasing this aggression.

Unlike the other teachers P3 stated that aggression increased due to the inability of children to express themselves and expressed aggression as follows:

> Hitting can be a tendency to violence because children cannot express themselves because they feel inadequate there. When other children do not include him, he can express himself through aggression, that is, he can use violence against children as hitting them, so there is a lot of aggression among children.

4.9.2.1.2. Relational aggression

Only one teacher mentioned relational aggression among the most experienced problems. P13 shared his opinion on this issue as follows:

> Grouping happens in the classroom. This is what we call corruption and mischief. Children say something negative about another child to his friends, trying to break it up. If the other child is someone he sees as a rival, it can cause such things in children, I can say that these are the things we encounter frequently.

4.9.2.2. Not sharing

Most of teachers (n=9) stated that the most common social problem behavior they encounter in the classroom is not sharing. They mostly emphasized not sharing toys.

P11 and P12, stated that the problem of not sharing in their classes was experienced a lot and they consider parents as the reason by asserting:

> We have a lot of trouble with sharing. Especially not being able to share toys. Children cannot get out of that egocentric period due to their parents. It is manifested as not being able to share the behaviors related to this because they only perceive themselves in the world (P11)

> Especially when we start school, it is very common for me to encounter not sharing. If it is a single child or a grandchild, whatever they want is done, the family makes mistakes here, the ability to share is very lacking, we have a lot of problems with them (P12)

4.9.2.3. Difficulty in communication

Four teachers said that the most common social problem behavior they encounter in the classroom is difficulty in communication. Three of the teachers stated that the children could not communicate because they could not express themselves. P3 of these teachers expressed as follows:

> In general, some children cannot express themselves, they have difficulty in communicating, so their communication becomes problematic. This is what I observe most.

Similar with P3, P9 expressed her opinion by saying that '*'Communication problems are the most common in our classroom. They are insufficient in expressing themselves, children cannot communicate.*'*'

Unlike the others, P1 mentioned the communication problem *caused by foreign students* in the classroom as follows:

> Another problem that I encounter most in my classroom right now is the communication problem. Since I have two foreign students, they have trouble communicating with other children. I think this is a social problem.

4.9.2.4. Not respecting the right of others

On the other hand, three teachers mentioned the problems of speaking without waiting for their turn, trying to get to the front in line, and waiting for their turn. These problem behaviors are included under the category of not respecting the rights of others. Regarding this issue, P2 expressed her views as follows:

For example, the class president is in front of the line, it is his right, but others are constantly trying to get there, they do not respect him. We usually experience this, but then they make progress, they can solve problems.

Similar with P2, P5 expressed this behavior by saying:

Speaking without waiting for their turn, that is, these are the things that caught my attention when I observed them. They can't even wait for their turn to do anything.

In addition to these problem behaviors, few teachers (n=3) directly stated that jealousy is among the most experienced problem behaviors in the classroom. Two teachers stated that introversion is among the most common problem behaviors. On this subject, P7 expressed her idea by saying:

I have an overweight child, he wants to eat the food alone, he always says that I will eat after if my friends finished, he is a very introverted child. I have a few more children. They are so introverted and they have hard time even playing games, solving a social problem is very hard for them.

Only P15 stated that the problem she experienced the most in her class was not to admit the fault by saying:

The most difficult thing is for children not to admit mistakes. The fact that he doesn't accept that he can make mistakes is the most difficult situation for me. We always say this, we say that children with behavior problems force us more, but it's not. This is a more problematic situation, because these children are very upset at the slightest mistake, at the slightest warning they can exaggerate.

Some teachers (n=2), on the other hand, stated that social problem behaviors occur when children come to school for the first time, and that there are adaptation problems and crying among these behaviors. In this regard, P10 expressed the adaptation problem as follows:

Since they have just left the family, there may be adaptation problems at first, and there may be problems and situations such as not accepting the environment, not accepting friend or even teacher. They can't adapt to the teacher and their friends, I observe this a lot.

P1 stated that, apart from other problems, he also had a crying problem in the first weeks as follows:

> Apart from that, I can give an example of crying crises caused by not being able to leave the family at the beginning of the year, I think this is a social problem too.

Only one teacher said that 3-year-old children have the problem of not following the rules by stating that it is normal for their age.

In summary, it was found that aggression (n=11) is among the social problem behaviors experienced by teachers mostly in the classroom. While ten teachers said that they encountered physical aggression a lot, only one of them stated that relational aggression was experienced frequently. It was seen that the most mentioned social problem after aggression was not sharing.

4.9.3. Preschool teachers' self-reported strategies in dealing with social problems of children in classroom

When teachers were asked about their strategies toward children's social problems in their classrooms in semi- structured interview, the strategies they reported were determined and the results are given in Table 27. Three main themes emerged as a result of analysis. The categories and codes for themes are represented under the related heading.

Table 27 *Teachers' self-reported strategies for children's social problems in classroom*

Main themes	n	p(%)
Direct-intervention strategies	10	47.62
Non-involvement behaviour	7	33.33
Indirect intervention strategies	4	19.05

(n) is the total number of teachers who stated that they used the specified strategy. Some teachers stated that they use more than one strategy

4.9.3.1. Direct- intervention strategies

When teachers were asked about their strategies regarding children's social problems in their classrooms, they mostly reported direct- intervention strategies (n=10,

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47.62%). Categories and codes for direct intervention strategies are shown in Table 28.

Table 28 *Direct intervention strategies*

Direct intervention strategies	Verbal	• Talking with children about problem (n=4) • Empathizing through questioning (n=4) • Explaining wrongness of behaviour (n=2) • Warning (n=2) • Asking the child to apologize (n=2) • Giving suggestion/solution (n=1)
	Physical	• Take the child physically and ask others to involve in peer group (n=2)
	Punishment	• Deprive of something one loves (n=2)

4.9.3.1.1. Verbal

As can be seen from the table, teachers reported that they mostly used verbal strategies among direct intervention strategies. Among verbal strategies, it was observed that some teachers used more than one strategy, while some teachers used a single strategy.

4.9.3.1.1.1. Talking with children about problem

Four teachers stated that when children have a social problem, they talk with the children about the problem. The teachers said that they talked with children privately (n=4) and asked why they did their behaviour. It was found that the teachers stated that they preferred to speak first and then applied another strategy. While some teachers stated that they only talked to the child who brought up the problem (n=3), one teacher stated that they also talked to other children affected by the problem. One of the teachers stated that by talking about the problem, the child realized the problem. P14 expressed her thoughts on this subject as follows:

> First, I have a private conversation with the child in the classroom, I talk about the problem. What happened, what did he do wrong? This is how I make him realize that his behavior is wrong, right after the behavior occurs.

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Unlike P14, P3 expressed his strategy by emphasizing that he also talked to *other children affected by the problem* as follows:

> I don't just talk to one child, but to other children affected by the problem, because to fix the problem, I don't close the situation by saying you shouldn't do it to the person who did it. I take both children, I talk about the incident, I ask why there is such a problem, what we should have done, what we did wrong.

4.9.3.1.1.2. Empathizing through questioning

Four out of ten teachers stated that they enable children to empathize when there is a social problem in the classroom. They talked about trying to make children think by wearing someone else's shoes by asking them how they would feel if they did the same thing to them. This strategy can be called empathizing through questioning. P13 expressed this strategy as follows:

> For example, there is a fight, I'm talking about the effects of violence on us. I ask the boy how would he feel if I hit him. Emotions come into play here, I make him empathize with how he would feel if his friend hit the child.

Similarly, P7 also mentioned that she directs children to empathy, but she mentioned that she *does this also with games* as follows:

> After asking questions, I'm trying to explain this with a game, I'm trying to courage children to empathize. This time, when he empathizes, he realizes the situation, he says, ah, they did the same to me. We cry there for 5 minutes because they did the same to him, but he was the one who did it. There, we try to create empathy by playing more.

4.9.3.1.1.3. Explaining wrongness of behaviour

Two teachers, on the other hand, stated that they called the children who had problems and talked to them, and they tried to explain that the children's behaviour was wrong by talking about the possible consequences of the behaviour such as upsetting and hurting others. P12 expressed her views on this issue as follows:

> Let's say there was an inability to share and hitting. We confront students who misbehave and talk to them, after talking to them one-on-one why they did this, we talk in this way by saying that it shouldn't be done like this, that by behaving in this way, we can break the heart of our other friend, we can upset him, or it may hurt him a lot.

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Two teachers stated that when they see social problem behaviour, they warn the children first and then use another strategy. In this regard, P1 expressed her practice as follows:

> First of all, I warn you when you do this behaviour, I say that what you are doing is wrong. I throw it at his friend, he showed him violent behaviour, I warn the child not to do it again. Then, I will try to explain why his behaviour was wrong.

Two teachers, on the other hand, stated that they *asked the children to apologize* to their other friend after warning the children when they saw social problem behaviour and explaining that the behaviour was wrong. P4 expressed his views on this issue as follows:

> For example, the children hit each other, I say that this behaviour hurts his friend, that it is not true, I say that his friend is upset. Then I want him to apologize to his friend and they did.

Unlike other teachers, P5 stated that when children experience social problems, she offers options as a solution to children and explained as follows:

> Of course, as an educator, an adult, a mother, for example, when there is a situation of not being able to share, when there is a problem, I offer my own opinion to the children as an option, for example, they could not share the toy, play with the toy in turn, then change the toys, etc. I offer it as an option

4.9.3.1.2. Physical

Two of the teachers stated that they also use other strategies and as another strategy, when there is exclusion from the group or introverted behaviours, they physically take the child to another group and ask the children in the group to include this child in their group. This action was called *take the child physically and ask others to involve in peer group.* P6 reflected his view on this issue as follows:

> And when there is a problem, I try to involve the child among his friends in one way or another, through play or otherwise. Without making him feel that there is a problem, I make others accept that child as that, and I join groups with him. If I say more briefly, I take the child with me and say to the group that your friend wants to play with you. For example, I do this by making the child who has a problem of violence be accepted by his peers without making him feel it. In time, when he is with his peers, his social skills improve.

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4.9.3.1.3. Punishment

While one teacher stated that she *removed the child from the environment* in case of social problems, another teacher stated that she *deprived child of something she loved*. These strategies are classified in punishment in direct- intervention strategy. Stating that she used the empathizing strategy, P7 also stated that she used removal from the environment as follows:

> I take the child directly from that environment, it is especially very important in the classroom, not outside the classroom, but in a distant part of the classroom. When there is a social problem, removing the child from the classroom is a reward for him, but deprivation in the classroom is a more alternative way.

P4, who stated she use other strategy that explaining wrongness of behaviour, stated that she used a strategy of deprivation of a loved one as follows:

> For example, if they are unable to share something in the classroom, obviously that toy or that thing leaves the classroom, absolutely no one plays with it, they realize that they did something wrong when they are deprived of it. I don't know how accurate it is, but I think it works.

4.9.3.2. Non- involvement strategies

Some teachers (n=7) stated that they *made observations* to find out the origin of the behaviour in children's social problems and they *received support from the guidance service*. Since they stated that they did not participate in the problem-solving process at the time of the problem, these behaviours were considered as non-involvement strategies. One teacher out of seven stated that she used both making observation and getting help.

4.9.3.2.1. Making observation

Some teachers (n=4) stated that they prefer to observe when children have social problems. Teachers said that they use observation as a strategy to learn why the problem behaviour originates and when it occurs. P3 expressed her views on this issue as follows:

> I usually observe first to find out the cause of the problem. That is, we are trying to get to the root of the problem, and why this behaviour is caused because not every social problem behaviour is connected to the same cause. We are

investigating the reason, we are trying to find the reason, I am trying to help the child according to the reason. For example, I observe our child, who is aggressive and lacks social skills more.

P9 expressed a similar opinion to P3 about the same issue by focusing on the frequency of behaviour:

First of all, I observe how often does the child exhibit this social behaviour, that is, is he constantly or occasionally exhibiting this behaviour against what? because in order to solve the problem, I am trying to find out where the problem originates from, first of all I observe this behavior.

4.9.3.2.2. Getting help /Direction to others

Some teachers (n=4) stated that they received support from the guidance service for problems that *they could not solve* (n=3) or *without trying to solve* (n=1), and that they referred the child to various therapies when necessary (problems that turned into behavioural disorders). P8 expressed her opinion on this issue as follows:

When we encounter a problem that turns into a social behaviour disorder in the classroom, we inform our school principal and inform our fellow teachers. Then, if we all agree, we talk to our counsellor about the situation and get support from him. We refer play therapy to individual therapy.

P1 expressed a similar opinion to P8 about the same issue by focusing on repetitive behaviours by saying ' *'When there is a child who frequently repeats violent behaviour with recurring problems, we meet with our guidance counsellor and get support from him. ''*

4.9.3.3. Indirect intervention strategies

The last strategy that teachers stated in Table 27 is indirect interventions (n=4, 19.05%). Four of the teachers stated that instead of telling the children what to do, threatening, punishing or warning them*,* they *direct the children to solve their own problems* (n=2) and that they get support from *child's peers to solve their problems* (n=3). One teacher stated that she used both strategies. Directing children to the problem-solving process without directly intervening in children's problems can be called indirect intervention. Indirect intervention strategies include getting help from peers for solution and direct the child to get involved in a problem solving process.

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4.9.3.3.1. Get support from peers

Some of the teachers (n=3) stated that when children experience social problems, they want their peers to be involved and support children to find a common solution. P9 expressed her opinion on this issue as follows:

> I try to create an environment by creating a group with the children at the time of a problem and including them, I give the child the opportunity to solve the problem there, by getting support from other friends. Of course, the child is not very aware of this, but we prepare the environment and direct it to solve it, in fact, I involve other children. This is how we use it the most. I hardly ever use punishment etc. in my classroom. In this way, I try to get support from their friends, while including them in the group, I try to use this way when solving the problem.

P2 stated similar strategy with P9 by focusing on the questioning of children and peers:

> First I want their peers to be involved in that problem, I try to get them to help. I make them see and hear that problem. I ask them what they did, what did you do, how could it be, I ask them to think about a solution. When other children participate, they find the last truth by talking and thinking together.

4.9.3.3.2. Direct child to involve problem solving process

Two teachers, on the other hand, said that when children have a problem, they direct children to first identify the problem, find a different solution, and then try this solution and if it is not working, try another solution. This indirect strategy of teachers was called direct child to get involved in a problem solving process. As an example, P5 reflected her strategy as follows:

> We are contacting first, we are trying to figure out what the problem is, yes there is a problem that people are uncomfortable with, first of all we accept the existence of a problem. What is the problem, for example, there is a problem of not being able to share. Starting from this problem, how can we solve it, how can we produce alternative solutions, we choose the most suitable one among them and we move on to the implementation phase. I do not solve the problem, I just help children how they solve their problem.

4.10. Preschool teachers' actual practices about children's social problem solving skills

Five teachers' classrooms were observed in free play and various activities for a total of approximately 160 hours. Observations were conducted for 4 hours once a week. In

total, each class was observed for 32 hours. While observing, the focuses of the observations was both the social problem behaviors experienced by the children and the teachers' strategies for coping with those social problem behaviors. In addition, the other focus was to determine whether teachers realize experienced social problem behaviors. Through the analysis of the observations, mostly experienced social problem behaviors were determined and teachers' strategies toward these problems were analyzed. In this section, observed experienced social problem behaviors and observed strategies of teachers toward these problems.

4.10.1. Most experienced social problem behaviors observed in class

Observations were carried out in five classes with different age groups. The two classes in which the observations were made were 5-6 years old, two classes were 4-5 years old, and one class was 3-4 years old. Which behaviors occurred during the observations and the frequency of occurrence of the social problem behaviors were analyzed. The frequency of occurrence refers to the number of times the behavior is experienced over the course of eight weeks. It is seen that the social problem behaviors experienced in all age groups are aggression, behaviors disrupting group activities, jealousy, communication problems, breaking the rules, complaining, sharing problems, not respecting the rights of others, crying and not helping each other. As a result of the observations, it was seen that the most experienced social problem behavior was aggression. The findings regarding the experienced social problem behaviors and the frequency of their occurrence are presented in Table 29.

Table 29 *Observed social problem behaviors*

Experienced social problem behaviours	Frequency of occurrence	p(%)
Aggression	150	40.54
Behaviours that disrupt group activities	66	17.83
Not respecting the right of others	38	10.27
Communication problems	36	9.72
Breaking rules	23	6.21
Complaining	18	4.86

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Table 29 *Observed social problem behaviours cont'd*

Sharing	16	4.32
Crying	11	2.99
Jealousy	11	2.99
Not helping others	1	0.27
Total	370	100

4.10.1.1. Aggression

Aggressive behavior is defined as any behavior that aims to injure, harm or hurt another person (Coie & Dodge, 1998). Aggressive behavior can be grouped in three ways. Behaviors such as hitting, kicking to other children, etc. are considered as physical aggression, making fun of other children, calling names, etc. are considered as verbal aggression, hurt other children like gossiping, preventing child from getting on with other friends, etc. considered as relational aggression (Ettekal & Lad, 2017). In addition, according to D' Zurilla and Goldfried (1971), aggression is considered as a social problem since it is seen as antisocial behavior. As a result of the observations in this study, it was seen that the most experienced social problem behavior was aggression. As can be seen in Table 30, considering the types of aggression, physical aggression was found to be the most experienced behavior.

Table 30 *Experienced aggression types*

Types of aggression	Frequency of occurrence	p(%)
Physical aggression	75	50.00
Relational aggression	63	42.00
Verbal aggression	12	8.00
Total	150	100.00

In this study, it was observed that children mostly (50%) showed *physical aggression* against their friends. This includes hitting, pushing, pulling, kicking, throwing any objects and spitting. It has been observed that children who use physical aggression against their peers show violent behavior after not getting what they want, not sharing, being disturbed by their friends. This can be considered as an indicator of the lack of social problem-solving skills.

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After physical aggression, the most common type of aggression was *relational aggression* (42%). Relational aggression, on the other hand, is aimed at harming another's self-esteem or peer relationships and includes the behaviors of spreading malicious gossip, mocking, social exclusion, saying that he will not invite them to the birthday party if they do not do what he wants (Crick et al., 1997). Unlike other types of aggression, the goal is to use non-direct means to harm the other person. Although it is named in different ways in the literature, the feature that is emphasized in common is that the behavior is not clearly perceived as aggression (Öcel, 2011). Relational aggression behaviors observed in this study includes behaviors such as preventing peers from talking with others, insisting on getting what he wants, excluding him from group games, mocking, saying something that will upset his peers and threatening with harming, not sharing his toy, not to invite him to his birthday. When the behaviors of the children before the mocking and saying something to upset peers behavior were examined, no behavior that would trigger this behavior was observed, and it was observed that the children did not understand that they harmed their peers in order to make others laugh. It has been observed that the behavior of threatening and exclusion from group games occurs when the children do not have what they want. Moreover, relational aggression behavior was seen in 4-5 and 5-6 age groups, and it was seen only once in the 3-4 age group. The class in which relational aggression is seen the least is the P7's class.

The less experienced (8%) aggression behavior compared to other types of aggression was *verbal aggression.* Verbal aggression includes the verbal expression of anger such as naming, swearing, insulting and shouting (Smiths et al., 2004). In this study, naming, shouting and swearing were observed. It has been observed that the shouting behavior occurs as a result of the peers not doing what the children want, and the swearing behavior occurs when the children are not listened to by others. As in relational aggression, verbal aggression behavior was observed in the 4-5 and 5-6 age groups, and it was observed only once in the 3-4 age group. It has never been seen in P8's classroom.

Physical aggression behavior has emerged in various activities, mostly in free play, in the cafeteria, in the outdoor play time. On the other hand, verbal aggression and relational aggression mostly occurred in free play. When the Social Problem Solving

Observation Checklist was analyzed for aggressive behavior, it was seen that teachers saw and reacted to most of the physical aggression behaviors (see Appendix G). However, it was revealed that most of the verbal and relational aggression behaviors were not seen by the teachers. It is thought that the teachers do not notice this behavior because they take actions such as doing document work, preparing for the next activity, being outside the classroom during free play.

4.10.1.2. Behaviors That Disrupt Group Activities

When table 29 is examined, it is seen that the second most experienced social problem behaviour in the classroom disrupts group activities (17.83%). Group activities in the early childhood period can be considered as necessary and important time periods, because during group activities, children learn many social skills such as cooperation, communication, waiting in line, listening to others, expressing themselves, and respecting the opinions of others. In this study, it was observed that children's behaviours such as *disrupting the game or activity when they cannot be a leader, not wanting to participate physically in group activities, not wanting to follow the group leader, and sabotaging group activities by disturbing their peers* were observed. It has been also observed that these behaviours harm children's relationships with their peers, disrupt the educational process and result in physical aggression. Therefore, in this study, these disruptive behaviours were considered as social problem behaviour. In this study, it was observed that the children disrupted the activity by giggling, talking, touching their friends, making noise during group activities, and encouraging their other friends to disrupt the group activity. In addition, it was seen that they did not want to participate in the activity, did not want to follow the leader, and therefore could not reach the mutually desired goal in case they were in the same group with people whom they did not talk to/dislike in the class. Among these behaviours, the behaviours of preventing the continuation of the group activity and trying to disrupt the activity when they could not be the leader were observed.

Behaviours that disrupt group activities occur in all classes, but the least experienced class is P15's class. The behaviour that is disrupting the game or activity when they cannot be a leader was not observed in the 3-4 year old group. When Social Problem Solving Observation Checklist was analysed for these behaviours, it was seen that

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teachers only noticed the behaviour of children sabotaging group activity when other children shouted.

4.10.1.3. Not Respecting the Right of Others

When Table 29 is examined, it is seen that the third most experienced behaviour in the classroom is the behaviour of not respecting the rights of others (10.27%). Wentzel and Erdley (1993) found that prosocial behaviours are associated with respect for the rights of others. It is known that prosocial behaviour increases in direct proportion to social problem solving skills. Therefore, in this study, the behaviour of not respecting the rights of others was considered as a social problem.

In this study, it was observed that children took the materials of their peers without their permission, spoke without waiting even though someone else was given the right to speak during the circle time, tried to be the first in line, and ate a food belonging to their peers without permission. This situation harms the children's relationship with their peers and increases their aggressive behaviour towards their peers. If these behaviours are constantly performed by the same person, it causes social problems by causing exclusion from their peers. These behaviours was observed in all classes, but only twice in P15's class. When Social Problem Solving Observation Checklist was analysed for this behaviour, it was observed that teachers mostly noticed this behaviour during activities and reacted but in free play, teachers realized just when children shouted.

4.10.1.4. Communication problems

When the table 29 is examined, it is seen that the fourth social problem experienced relates to communication (9.72%). In this study, it was observed that during free play, some children sat quietly in a corner without being included in a group, only watched the group they wanted to join, and did not speak when asked to join. Not being able to express their needs and wishes in communication with the teacher and with their peers, inactivity, and preferring individual games were observed. In addition, the behaviour of children not listening to each other was detected in their communication with their peers. In only two classes, it was observed that the children lied in their communication with the teacher. These behaviours affect the development of social skills by

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preventing children from making friends in the classroom environment. Communication problems were observed in all classrooms, but little experienced in the classroom of P7 and P15. When the checklist was examined for these behaviours, it was observed that the teachers did not realize that children's introverted behaviours and their preference for individual games, and that they only noticed the behaviour of not being able to express themselves and created a reaction to this behaviour.

There were children who *break the rules* set by the teacher in the activities, free play and daily flow in the classrooms. It has been observed that children who do not follow the rules experience a kind of rejection by their peers and result in aggression. This behaviour is very little experienced in the class of P7 ,P8 and P12. The behaviour of breaking rules was mostly noticed by the teachers.

Complaining about disturbances in the classroom is another problem behaviour observed in this study. It has been observed that children complain to the teacher when the behaviour of their peers disturbs them or someone else. This type of behaviour is not seen as a desirable way of solving social problems. The fact that children resort to complaining to the teacher instead of preferring to solve the uncomfortable situations on their own reduces the opportunities children have to experience the problem-solving process.

In addition, in this study, it was observed that children had problems with *sharing* with their peers and could not share play and activity materials. It has been observed that children with sharing problems resort to physical and verbal aggression and are not included in the social problem solving process. The sharing problem was observed least in P7's class. When the checklist is analysed, it is seen that teachers notice and react to most of the sharing problem.

Furthermore, it was observed that children exhibited *crying* behaviour in this research. When the background to the crying behaviour was examined, it was seen that the children reacted by crying when their requests were not met by their peers, when they were exposed to aggression and when they had sharing problems. For this reason, the crying of children who have problems instead of solving the problem was evaluated as social problem behaviour in this study. Also, crying behaviour was mostly observed

in the 3-4 and 4-5 age groups. When the checklist is analysed, it is seen that teachers notice the crying behaviour and create a reaction.

Jealousy behaviour is another problem observed in this study. In this study, the jealousy behaviours observed in children are considering an object that is in their peers but not their own possession, that the work done by their peers is seen as better than their own work, that the teacher is in close contact with their peers but does not come into contact with them. It has been evaluated as a social problem because children show crying and aggression after jealousy. This behaviour was observed in every class except in P8's class. When the checklist is examined, it is seen that the teachers noticed this behaviour.

The problem of not helping others, which was reported by only three teachers in the interview, was observed only once in a teacher's classroom in this study. When the observation findings were examined, it was seen that the behaviours reported by the teachers were experienced throughout the observations, but the behaviour of adaptation problem and not admitting mistakes that a teacher reported did not occur. In addition, relational aggression was frequently observed in classrooms, although it was not in the behaviours reported by teachers. As a result of the checklist analysis, it was seen that the teachers did not notice some behaviours, including relational aggression. When we look at the frequency of occurrence of social problem behaviours in general, the behaviours were experienced most frequently in the class of P12, while it was experienced the least in the class of P7.

4.10.2. Preschool teachers' observed strategies in dealing with social problems of children

By analysing the observation data, teachers' strategies for the social problems experienced by children were examined and three main themes emerged. These are teachers' non-intervention strategies, direct and indirect strategies. Table 31 demostrates observed strategies of teachers towards children's social problems. Each strategy type is defined and exemplified under related headings.

Table 31 *Observed strategies of teachers toward social problems of children*

Non- Involvement Strategies		• Ignore the behaviour • Give an eye
Direct Intervention Strategies	Verbal	• Asking the child to apologize • Remind rule • Give suggestion/solution • Explaining wrongness of behaviour • Warning • Calling • Direct children to involve into another peer group • Giving reason • Emphasizing through questioning • Others (threatening, saying child's behaviour upset teacher)
	Physical	• Keeping child physically close • Take the child physically and ask others to involve in peer group • Change the place of children • Taking out material • Do the same thing to child Other (put an end to activity)
	Punishment	• Deprive of something one loves
Indirect Intervention Strategies		• Direct children to find alternative solutions
Others		• No realization • Misunderstanding the behaviour

4.10.2.1. Non- involvement Strategies

When teachers' strategies for the social problems experienced by the children were examined, it was seen that all of five teacher used non-involvement strategy. It includes ignoring the behaviour and give an eye. In addition, it was observed that teachers applied this strategy to problems of physical aggression, relational aggression, communication problems, sharing problems, breaking the rules and not respecting the rights of others.

It was observed that the teachers did not intervene and did not prefer to intervene in some social problems of the children. They were not included in the social problems

of the children due to the observed reasons such as preparing material for the activity, being out of the classroom, chatting with the teacher of the other class.

For example, *'while the boy was opening the toy bag he brought from home, his friend asked him if he could take a toy out of it, and the boy started shouting saying you can't buy it, I won't share, I won't share. At that time, P8 was sitting at the table and turned to face the calling voice, continuing to do his job without any reaction.'* Similarly, P12 asked the children to build a group of play dough houses at the table, *'one boy did not touch the play dough, did not answer his friends who asked him questions at the table, and slowly moved his chair away from the table. Another child from the group said : teacher he doesn't talk, he doesn't do anything. The teacher was cutting paper at that time, she turned her head towards the children but kept cutting papers without doing anything.'* The fact that the teachers did not react even though they saw the behaviour was evaluated as i*gnoring*.

To illustrate the *give an eye*, the example scene is given as follows:

> 'P7 asked the children to go to the emotion corner and talk about their feelings. One of the children told of an incident by saying that I cried when my mommy didn't buy ice cream and the other child said, "Are you a baby, are you crying? And continue to saying you are baby, you are baby and shouted to all his other friends that the girl is a baby " At that time P7 was chatting with the teacher of the other class, looked at the boy, opened her eyes wide and showed an angry expression, then continued speaking with the other teacher'

4.10.2.2. Direct Intervention Strategies

Throughout the observations, it was observed that teachers intervened directly in the problem-solving process by trying to be verbally or physically involved in the problem solving process, other than non-involvement strategies. In addition, teachers' punishment practices as direct intervention were also observed. Direct intervention involves the involvement of teachers in some way in the social problems that children experience. Observed direct strategies of teachers consist of three main themes. These themes are verbal strategy, physical strategy, and punishment. Each theme, together with its sub-themes, is explained under the relevant headings with examples.

4.10.2.2.1. Verbal

Teachers used verbal strategies for all observed social problems of children except telling a lie. Table 32 demonstrates sub-codes of the verbal strategy.

Table 32 *Verbal strategies of teachers towards children's social problems*

Verbal	- Asking the child to apologize - Remind rule - Give suggestion/solution - Explaining wrongness of behaviour - Warning - Calling - Direct children to involve into another peer group - Giving reason - Emphasizing through questioning - Others (threatening, saying child's behaviour upset teacher)

Among the verbal ones, it was seen that the teachers mostly used *asking the children to apologize to their friend.* It has been observed that when children experience a social problem, they usually react by shouting, crying and complaining. When the teacher realizes the reactions of children, after the social problem occurred, all five observed teachers asked the child who created the problem to apologize to his friend. In addition, it was observed that some teachers asked why the problem occurred, while others used this strategy directly without asking the reason for the problem. This strategy has been observed as follows:

> ''In the free play time, C1 painted and showed it to C4. C4 pretended to be scratching the child's paper, pretending to be a tiger, and the paper was torn. Then C1 hit his friend. When C4 started crying, the teacher went to the children and C4 said that his friend had hit him. The teacher said to C1, 'What are you doing, you need to apologize to your friend now.''' (P8's class)

As can be seen, P8 directly asked the child to apologize without focusing on why the problem arose.

The second most frequently used verbal strategy by teachers is *remind rule.* This includes teachers' direct verbal expressions such as saying 'Our class had a rule, we were playing by sharing' to a child who could not share his toy, or saying 'we are waiting for our turn, let's not forget this rule' to a child who was not waiting for his turn. In hitting behaviour, it was observed that the reminded rule was mostly reminded as 'remember the rule of not touching our friends'. An example of this strategy is as follows:

> ''During the circle time, the teacher asked C12 to tell his friends about a book he liked. C12 took a book from the library and began to explain. C5 said, "You can't read, don't lie, you can't fool us" and shouted loudly to his friend that he was a liar, and the other children started to laugh. P15 said, 'This is very bad what you did, what is the rule of our class, we were not saying things that would upset our friends'. (P15' class)

Another observed verbal strategy is to *giving suggestion/solution.* In P14's class, two children were steering the round cushion, playing as if they were driving a car. Then, they put the cushion on the floor and another child took the cushion. The children forcibly took the cushion from the child's hand, and he complained to the teacher. P14 said 'all the materials here are for sharing, if no one is playing with a toy, someone can take it, if someone is playing, you can get permission to use it. If you both want to play, let's set an alarm on my phone, and when it rings, the person playing gives it to the other." With this way, P14 gave solutions to children to solve sharing problems.

It was observed that the teachers used the strategy of *explaining wrongness of behaviour* towards the problems of not respecting the rights of others, relational aggression and physical aggression. In this strategy, teachers called the children who had problems and talked to them and tried to explain to the children that the behaviour was wrong by talking about the potential consequences of the behaviour, such as upsetting others. An example of this strategy was observed as follows:

> 'During free play, the girls were playing house in a corner. Two boys were racing cars. There was a doll in the area where the boys raced. The boy threw the baby on the girl's head, saying don't spoil our game by putting the baby. The teacher called the boy to and said, 'It is very wrong of you to do this, your friends did not put the baby there to spoil your game, but as long as you act like this, your friends do not want to take you into the game. He may be very upset when you hit your friend, please don't do that again.' (P12's class)

In the observations, it was seen that *warning* and *calling* were mostly used after children's complaining. Some teachers warned the children after asking what the problem was, while others warned them directly without asking what the problem is. For example, in one observation, a girl demolished blocks while the boys were building towers with Lego. The boys said to the teacher:' she is disturbing us and destroying our tower.' P7 called both children and asked both children what had happened, and then said: "Please don't bother your friends.'' On the contrary, one of the children colouring with finger paint during the activity time and other child asked her give colour pink, and she did not give. Then the boy said:'' if you don't give it to me, then you go to another table, you have to give it.'' She said to the teacher:'' he is speaking badly to me.'' P12 said, 'Please be kind to your friend'' without seeing what happened. It has been also seen that the *calling* practice is mostly used against the problem of not respecting the rights of others and breaking the rules. For example; P8 only loudly called his name to a boy who was speaking even though his friend was given the floor in the circle time. Similarly, when P15 saw the boy trying to get to the front of the line when they were going out to the garden, she called him loudly and then did not say anything.

It was observed that only P8 and P14 *directed children to involve into another peer group* towards solving the problem of a child sabotaging the group activity. For example, one of the children who made robots with a group during the activity was constantly disturbing his other friends by going under the table and trying to break the lego they had made. When the children in the group complained, P8 went to the child and said, "Come on, go to another group, maybe you can work with them better".

Only P14 and P15 were found to use *giving reason* for relational aggression and not respecting the rights of others. Giving reason involves giving the child who is bothered by a problem reasons why it is not a problem. For example, in one observation, the girl asked to be involved in the play of a group of five. They didn't agree saying that they would be too crowded and the game would be broken. The girl got angry and took the doll that the group had been playing with. The group members complained to the teacher. P15 said to the group, 'she loves you very much, she didn't get permission because she thought you would accept'.

It was observed that only P8 *threatened children with taking their toys* for sharing problems. For example, in one observation, the girl jumped on the boy and tried to take his toy, the boy said that he did not want to share. P8 said, 'If you don't share, I'll take your toy from you'. In addition, it was observed that only P14 intervened in the problem of not obeying the rules by *saying the children that this behaviour upset her* very much. For example, she warned the girl who did not stand in line on her way to the cafeteria, by saying get in line first. When the girl couldn't get in line, P14 said: ''I thought you learned to wait in line, I'm very sorry now because of your act."

Among the verbal strategies, unlike the others, only P7 used *empathizing through questioning*. This strategy involves the teacher directing the child to empathy by asking questions about how the child would feel if the other person did the same to him. For example, in one observation, a boy was playing with puzzle alone at the table, and he had only 2-3 pieces left to finish. The other child bought pieces and said, "I want to play, if you don't play with me, I will throw them away." The boy cried and complained to the teacher. P7 called the two children over and asked what was going on. P7 asked to child:''How would you feel if the other bought the puzzle piece and did the same to you? Think of it this way, you built your robot and only one eye remains to complete it, and someone comes and takes that eye, how would you feel?''.

4.10.2.2.2. Physical

Besides verbal strategies, it has been observed that teachers use some physical interventions to cope with the social problems experienced by children. These interventions include take the child physically and ask others to involve in peer group, directing the child to play in another place, taking out the material that cannot be shared, doing the same behaviour to the child, changing the children's places, keeping the child with them. Sub-codes for physical interventions are presented in the table 33.

Table 33 *Physical strategies of teachers towards children's social problems*

Physical	• Keeping child physically close • Take the child physically and ask others to involve in peer group • Change the place of children • Taking out material • Do the same thing to child • Other (put an end to activity)

Among the physical strategies, the most observed strategy used by teachers is *keeping the child physically close*. Teachers took the child who created the problem from the environment where she was or kept them with her by including themselves in the environment. It was seen that all the observed teachers used this strategy. The common point of the teachers who use this strategy is that they keep the child with them so that they do not continue the problem without talking about the problem. For example, in P15's classroom observation, in cinema time, a child spoke loudly and prevented his friends from watching, even though the teacher was explaining the rules during the movie hour. P15 came quickly and sat next to the boy without saying a word. Similarly, in P8's classroom, a child did not sit in the chair while the book was being read at the circle time, he constantly wandered around the chairs, went under the chairs and disturbed his friends by removing their shoes, the teacher took a break from reading, made the child sit next to her and continued reading.

The second most observed strategy is *take the child physically and ask others to involve in peer group.* It was observed in four teachers' classrooms (P8, P12, P14, P15). For example, in one observation in P14's class, the teacher made the children a group for the activity. However, the children in a group did not want the boy in the group, the boy started to cry and said 'I do not want to do the activity.' The teacher took the boy's hand and said, "Come, let me take you to another group." She took the child to another group and said ''in this group, there is room for one more person in your group, can your friend play with you, please don't be mean'. Similarly, in an observation in P8's class, the teacher asked the children to decorate a cardboard to conserve water, and they sat at tables in groups. When the girl wanted to go to a group, others refused saying that her painting is bad. The girl sat next to the teacher for about 10 minutes. P8 asked the child why she did not join, then took the child by the hand to the same group and said to others that 'she will work with you, we do not behave like this.' The girl came back to the teacher after about 15 minutes and the teacher said 'come on, sit with me.'

The third observed strategy was to *change the place of the children*. This strategy was seen in three teachers' classrooms (P8, P12, P15). This strategy was applied to behaviours that disrupt group activities and physical aggression. For example, in one observation in P12's class, two girls could not share the pencil during the activity and

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one of them hit the other on the head. P12 took the girl hit by the hand and made her sit at another table, without giving any warning.

During the observations, it was observed that teachers *took the material* that could not be shared for the sharing problem. Three teachers used this strategy (P7, P8, P14). For example, in P14's class, two children were using the small wooden board as steering wheels. One of the boys said, 'I don't want to play with you, give me the steering wheel. The other boy didn't want to give in and they started pushing and shouting at each other. P14 saw the situation, went to the children and put the toy in her locker without any explanation. Similarly, P8 took the toy from the girls who bumped into each other because they couldn't share the baby during the free play, and put it in her bag and said that ''it will stay in my bag until you learn to share, you two will not play.''

The strategy used only by P12 is *to do the same behaviour to the child*. For example, in one observation, during the free play hour, a group were trying to build a robot at the table. One child kept going to that table and started shouting loudly in the ears of his friends. The teacher went to the children and said, "Now, I will give this child a task and we will say something loudly in his ear while he is doing it," and they did so. This behaviour occurred four times over eight weeks, but it was considered important because the teacher included children in this behaviour.

Put an end to the activity when the problem behaviour occurred was applied only three times by P15. P15 emphasized every time that the activity was finished because of the child who created problems for other children. For example, in one observation, while the teacher was reading, a child was constantly playing with his friend's ear and making fun of him for having big ears. The teacher said angrily 'our reading time is over' before the book was finished. She said to the child 'because of you, your friends will not be able to learn the end of the book' and she switched to the free play time.

4.10.2.2.3. Punishment

During the observations, it was observed that all teachers applied some kind of punishment strategy to the child by depriving the child of something they loved. It has been observed that this strategy is mostly used towards physical aggression. Depriving him of something he loves includes prohibiting him from participating in the game

time, saying that he will not be able to participate in the trip, and asking the child to watch the game by taking him from the game he is playing. This strategy was applied less than other strategies by teachers, but it was observed in all teachers. For example, in one observation in P8's class, two children were sitting next to each other and drawing at the same table. One of the boys took off his shoes for no reason and hit his friend on the head. P8 came to the child and said'' apologize to his friend immediately and you will not attend the garden hour' 'and the child started to cry. Similarly, in one observation in P12's class, the boy was constantly harassing his friend next to him during playtime and hitting him on the leg. The boy complained to the teacher. The teacher came angrily and said, "I guess you're bored, get out of the game, watch your friends without playing," and kept the child with her during the game hour.

4.10.2.3. Indirect Strategies

In addition to direct interventions, teachers indirectly participated in the social problem solving process. Instead of telling children what to do, threatening or warning them, teachers have taken actions such as encouraging children to talk about the problem and directing children to alternative solutions. Only P7 and P12 used the indirect strategy, but this strategy was observed only three times over eight weeks in P12's class.

For example, in P7's class, two children were racing cars during the free play hour. One of the children wanted to quit the game and gave the car to his friend. The other boy said 'you can't leave the most exciting part of the game' and started to cry, then he hit his friend on the back while crying. P7 called both children and asked what happened between them. The children did not answer. The teacher continued and said, 'You two were playing with the car. When your friend told you that he didn't want to play, you got angry right away, but isn't it nice of him to tell you, now ask your friend why he hit you, let's see what he will say to you'' and she said 'I will leave you two alone now and I want you to talk about your problem.'

Similarly, in P12's class, a 3-member group of boys was collecting the Legos he was playing with, and one person was holding the toy box. The boy holding the basket tried to take the Lego from his friend's hand and he did not give it, the boy hit his friend to get the Lego. P12 came to the children, took them both to a corner of the classroom and said ''now talk to each other, what problem did you have with each other and show

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me how you could solve it instead of hitting it, I want to watch it' 'The children saw it as a game and did it in the form of a little animation. Animation was like that when the child wanted a toy, he said he wanted it to be put in the basket, and the other gave it. The children seemed to enjoyable.

4.10.2.4. Others

In addition to the strategies, another situation observed in all teachers is that teachers did *not realize the problem behaviour,* especially relational aggression. It has been observed that they do not see the social problems that occur mostly in free play or outdoor play time. It has been observed that teachers deal with paperwork such as cutting paper at the table, preparing activities, or chatting with other teachers while the children are playing free games.

In addition, it was observed that teachers saw the problem behaviour as a result of crying, shouting or complaining of children and therefore they *misinterpreted the behaviour.* For example, in an observation in P8's class, the boy hit his friend because his friend was constantly bothering him, but the teacher only warned the boy who hit him, she did not see that the other boy was bothering his friend. Similarly, in one observation in P14's class, three girls were making fries from play dough. The boy wanted to be involved in the game, the girls did not allow it. The boy took the play dough and threw it in the trash, one of the girls started shouting and tried to hit his friend. The teacher asked the girl to apologize to the boy.

As it can be seen, teachers misinterpreted the social problem because they saw it as one-sided, but it was considered important because it could affect the perceptions of children about the right or wrong behaviour.

4.11. Comparison of teachers self-reported practices and observed practices

In this section, the findings regarding the consistency between self-reported most experienced social problems and the observed social problems in the classroom; and the consistency between the teachers' self-reported coping strategies and the observed strategies will be presented.

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4.11.1. Comparison of self-reported and observed most experienced social problem behavior

In this part, the most experienced social problem behaviours in the classroom reported by five preschool teachers and the observed social problem behaviours were examined separately. The social problem behaviours reported by teachers and observed behaviours were tabulated and compared.

When we look at in general, in semi-structured interviews, it was found that the most experienced social problem behaviour in the classroom, reported by fifteen teachers, was aggression (n=10). Similarly, it was observed that the most experienced social problem behaviour was aggression in the classroom of the five teachers who were observed (n=5). Interview and observation findings support each other in this regard. Only one of the teachers interviewed mentioned relational aggression, and verbal aggression was not mentioned at all. However, it was observed that relational and verbal aggression were frequently experienced in the observations. It has been observed that these behaviours are mostly experienced during free play.

The second most experienced social problem in the classroom, reported by fifteen teachers in semi-structured interviews, is the sharing problem. However, sharing problem is in the seventh place in the observations, that is, it has emerged less than other behaviours.

The third most experienced social problem in the classroom, reported by fifteen teachers is the communication problem. However, in the observations, the communication problem is in the fourth place, that is, it has emerged less than other behaviours.

In the semi-structured interview, the behaviours of not respecting the rights of others (n=3), jealousy (n=3), crying (n=1) and not obeying the rules (n=1) were reported by a small number of teachers, but these behaviours were frequently experienced in the observations.

Similarly, the behaviours disrupting group activities and complaining behaviour were not reported by the teachers, but it was observed that the children experienced these behaviours in the observations.

4.11.1.1. Aggression

In order to compare the findings of the five teachers who were interviewed and observed regarding the most experienced social problem in the classroom, each behaviour was compared separately. Table 34 demostrates the comparison of self-reported and observed aggression behavior.

Table 34 *Comparison of self-reported and observed behaviour about aggression*

Social problem behaviour	Most experienced behaviours	Self- reported	Observed
Physical aggression	Hitting	P7,P8,P12,P15	P7,P8,P12,P14,P15
	Pushing	-	P7,P8,P12,P14,P15
	Pulling	P7	P7
	Kicking	-	P7,P12,P14,P15
	Throwing any object	-	P7,P14,P15
	Spitting	-	P12,P15
Relational Aggression	Threatening with harming, not sharing toys, not playing anymore etc.	-	P7,P8,P12,P15
	Preventing peers from talking with others	-	P8,P12
	Insisting on getting what he wants	-	P8,P12
	Mocking	-	P7,P8,P12,P15
	Excluding peer from group games	-	P8,P12,P14,P15
	Saying something that will upset peer	-	P7,P8,P152

Table 34 *Comparison of self-reported and observed behavior about aggression cont'd*

Verbal aggression	Naming	-	P14
	Shouting	-	P7,P15
	Swearing	-	P7,P12,P15

As can be seen in the table, for physical aggression, there were both consistency and inconsistency between self-reported and observed behaviour in terms of aggression. Four teachers reported hitting in interviews and hitting was observed in these four teachers. Also, one teacher mentioned about pulling was observed in the classroom of that teacher. The analyses of data show us consistency in terms of hitting and pulling. On the other hand, although the observed five teachers did not reported pushing, kicking, throwing object and spitting, in observations, pushing was observed in all of teachers' class, kicking was observed in four teachers' class, throwing objects was seen in three teachers' class and spitting was observed in two teachers' class. The analysis of data shows us inconsistency in terms of pushing, kicking, throwing and spitting.

Also, there was no consistency between self-reported and observed behaviours about relational and verbal aggression. All five teachers did not report any relational and verbal aggression behaviours. However, during the observations, threatening, mocking and excluding peer from group games were observed in most of the teachers' class (n=4). Similarly, insisting on wishes and preventing peers from talking with others were seen in some teachers' class (n=2). For verbal aggression, all five teachers did not mention verbal aggression but naming (n=1), shouting (n=2) and swearing(n=3) were observed in some teachers' class.

4.11.1.2. Behaviours that disrupt group activities

There was inconsistency among five preschool teachers' self-reported behaviours and observed behaviours about behaviours that disrupt group activities. As can be seen in the table 35, teachers did not mention behaviours that disrupt group activities. However, disrupting the game when they cannot be a leader and sabotaging group activities by disturbing their peers were observed in most of the teachers' class (n=4).

Moreover, behaviour that not wanting to participate physically in group activities seen in some teachers' class (n=3) and behaviour that not wanting to follow the group leader was observed in two teachers' class.

Table 35 *Comparison of self-reported and observed behaviours about disrupt group activities*

Social problem behaviour	Most experienced behaviours	Self-reported	Observed
Behaviours that disrupt group activities	Disrupting the game or activity when they cannot be a leader	-	P7,P8,P12,P15
	Not wanting to participate physically in group activities	-	P7,P12,P14
	Not wanting to follow the group leader	-	P8,P12
	Sabotaging group activities by disturbing their peers	-	P7,P8,P14,P15

4.11.1.3. Not respecting the right of others

The analysis of the data showed that there was no consistency between self-reported and observed behaviours about not respecting the right of others. As can be seen in the table 36, none of five teachers reported behaviours of not respecting the right of others. However, taking materials of peers without permission and trying to be first in line were observed most of the teachers' class (n=4). Also, speaking without waiting when other was given right to speak was seen in two teachers' class and eating others' food without permission was observed in one teacher's class.

Table 36 *Comparison of self-reported and observed behaviour about not respecting the right of others*

Social problem behaviour	Most experienced behaviours	Self-reported	Observed
Not respecting the right of others	Taking materials of peers without their permission	-	P7,P8,P12, P14
	Speaking without waiting when other was given right to speak	-	P8,P12
	Trying to be first in line	-	P7,P8,P12, P14
	Eating others' food without permission	-	P15

4.11.1.4. Communication Problems

The analysis of data showed that there were both consistency and inconsistency between self-reported and observed behaviours about communication. As can be seen in Table 37, there is consistency between self-reported and observed behaviours about not being able to express themselves and introverted behaviours for one teacher. One teacher reported about not being able to express themselves and this behaviour was seen in that teacher's class but not seen in other teachers' class. On the other hand, there were inconsistency between self-reported and observed behaviour about telling a lie and not listening to each other. None of five preschool teachers mentioned telling a lie and not listening to each other. However, behaviour about not listening to each other was observed in three teachers' class and telling a lie was seen in two teachers' class.

Table 37 *Comparison of self-reported and observed behaviours about communication problems*

Social problem behaviour	Most experienced behaviours	Self-reported	Observed

Table 37 *Comparison of self-reported and observed behaviours about communication problems cont'd*

Communication Problems	Not listening to each other	-	P8,P12,P15
	Telling a lie	-	P12,P15
	Not being able to express themselves	P15	P8,P12,P15
	Introverted behaviours	P7	P7,P8,P12,P15

As can be seen in Table 38, for the other behaviours, there were both consistency and inconsistency between self-reported and observed behaviours. None of five teachers mentioned breaking rules, complaining and crying. However, breaking rules and complaining were seen in most of teachers' class (n=4), crying was also seen in three teachers' class. These analyses showed inconsistency. However, all of five teachers reported sharing problem and sharing problems were observed in all classes. One teacher mentioned jealousy and jealousy was seen in that teacher's class. None of five teachers mentioned behaviours about not helping others, similarly not helping behaviour was seen just once in one teacher's class.

Table 38 *Comparison self-reported and observed other behaviours*

Social problem behaviour	Self-reported	Observed
Breaking rules	-	P7,P12,P14,P15
Complaining	-	P7,P8,P12,P15
Sharing	P7,P8,P12,P14,P15	P7,P8,P12,P14,P15
Crying	-	P7,P8,P14
Jealousy	P7	P7,P12,P14,P15
Not helping others	-	P15 (just once)

4.11.2. Comparison of five preschool teachers' self-reported and actual strategies in dealing with children's social problems

In this section, a comparison was made between the teachers' self-reported strategies for the social problems experienced by children and their observed strategies. First, a general comparison was made between the strategies reported by fifteen teachers and the observed strategies of five teachers. Then, for each teacher, their self-reported and observed strategies were compared.

As analysis of the data shows, there was both consistency and inconsistency in teachers' self-reported and observed direct intervention strategies. When the verbal ones of direct intervention strategies were compared, empthasizing through questioning, explaining wrongness of behaviour, warning, asking the child to apologize, giving suggestion/solution strategies reported by teachers were also seen during observations. However, remind the rules, calling, giving reason, threatening and direct children to become involved with another peer group were not mentioned by the teachers, but it was observed that these strategies were applied by teachers in the observations.

When the physical ones were compared, the teachers stated that they only used take the child physically and ask others to involve in peer group, and it was seen that this strategy was also applied during the observations. However, it was observed that the strategies of keeping the child physically close, change the place of children, taking out material, do the same thing to the child were applied by the teachers during the observations, but it was found that the teachers did not mention these strategies during the interviews.

When we look at the punishment, the teachers stated that they deprived the children of something they love, and it was seen in the observations that deprivation was applied. Although the teachers knew that this strategy was wrong, they also stated in the interviews that they thought it was effective.

Analysis of data shows there was inconsistency between self- reported and observed indirect interventions. In the interview, the teachers stated that they directed the children to the social problem-solving process and to think together with their peers

and find solutions for their social problems. However, in the observations, it was observed that the teachers directed the children to just talk to the child with whom they had problems without aiming to find a solution and to think about alternative solutions and what behaviour should be instead of the problem behaviour without trying to find solutions.

When non-involvement strategies are examined, it cannot be said whether there is consistency between the strategies teachers reported and the strategies observed. The teachers stated that they made observations and sent them to guidance in order to understand the cause of the problem. However, the observed strategy is that the teachers turn their heads in the direction of the problems and continue with the paperwork at the table. Finally, it was observed in the observations that the teachers did not notice the problems or misunderstood the problems, but the teachers did not mention these issues in the interviews.

4.11.2.1. Comparison of P7

Analysis of data shows that there were both consistency and inconsistency between P7's self-reported and observed strategies. P7's self-reported and observed strategies are presented in the table 39, separated by strategy types.

Table 39 *Comparison of P7*

Strategies		Self- reported	Observed
Direct Intervention Strategies	Verbal	Emphasizing through questioning	Emphasizing through questioning Warning Calling Asking the child apologize (the most) Remind rule Giving suggestion/solutions Explaining wrongness of behaviour
	Physical	-	Keeping the child physically close Taking out material
	Punishment	Deprive of something one loves	Deprive of something one loves

Table 39 *Comparison of P7 cont'd*

Indirect Intervention Strategies	-	Direct child to find alternative solutions
Non- involvement strategies	-	Give an eye Ignore the behaviour

As can be seen in the table, strategies that the teacher stated to use in the interview were emphasizing through questioning and depriving the child of something they love. Similarly, it was observed that she used these strategies in the observations. However, it was observed that the teacher also used strategies that were not specified in interview. When the observation data were analyzed, it was seen that the most common strategy used by the teacher in the classroom was asking the child to apologize. In addition, she verbally used the strategies of warning, calling, remind rule, giving suggestion and explaining wrongness of behaviour. In addition, it has been observed that P7 ignored the problem or give an eye in cases of workload and the presence of another teacher. As a physical strategy, the teacher used the strategies of keeping the child physically close and removing the unshared toy from the environment. Another point seen throughout the observations is the misunderstanding caused by the teacher not noticing the problems in the classroom and not seeing what happened before the problem. The least used strategy by the teacher was to direct the child to find alternative solutions, which is included in the indirect intervention. Since the teacher did not mention these strategies in the interview, it can be said that there is inconsistency between self-reported and observed strategies.

4.11.2.2. Comparison of P8

Analysis of data shows total inconsistency between P8's self-reported and observed strategies. P8's self-reported and observed strategies are presented in the table 40.

Table 40 *Comparison of P8*

Strategies	Self- reported	Observed

Table 40 *Comparison of P8 cont'd*

Direct Intervention Strategies	Verbal	-	Asking the child to apologize (the most) Direct children to involve into another peer group Threatening Calling Explaining wrongness of behaviour Warning Remind rule
	Physical	-	Take the child physically and ask others to involve in peer group Change the place of children Taking out the material Keeping child physically close
	Punishment	-	Deprive of something one loves
Indirect Intervention Strategies		-	-
Non- involvement strategies		Getting help/direct to others	Ignore the behaviour Give an eye

When P8's self-reported and observed strategies were examined, it was seen that they were completely inconsistent with each other. In the interview, the teacher stated that she only directed the children who had problems to the school guidance service first, and to various therapies if needed. The practice of directing to the guidance service was not observed. Moreover, she did not specify any of the strategies she used in the observations in the interview. When the observation data were analyzed, it was seen that the teacher used verbally asking the child to apologize, directing children to another peer group, threatening, calling, warning, explaining wrongness of behaviour and remind rule. It has been determined that she uses directly physically take the child physically and ask others to involve in peer group, change the place of children, taking out material, keeping child physically close, and frequently uses deprive of something one loves as punishment. It was not seen during the observations that the teacher used any strategy indirectly. It has been observed that she could ignore the behaviour and only uses a give an eye in some cases. Among these strategies, it was seen that the most used one was asking a child to apologize. In addition, it was observed that P8 did not see some behaviours such as P7 for reasons such as workload and misinterpreted

the behaviours because she did not see the behaviours that appeared before the problem.

4.11.2.3. Comparison of P12

Analysis of data shows that there were both consistency and inconsistency between P12's self-reported and observed strategies. P12's self-reported and observed strategies are presented in the table 41.

Table 41 *Comparison of P12*

Strategies		Self- reported	Observed
Direct intervention Strategies	Verbal	Explaining wrongness of behaviour Asking child to apologize	Explaining wrongness of behaviour Asking child to apologize (the most) Warning Calling Remind rule Give suggestion/solution
	Physical	-	Take the child physically and ask others to involve in peer group Change place of children Do the same thing to child Keeping child physically close
	Punishment	-	Deprive of something one loves
Indirect Intervention Strategies		Direct child to involve problem solving process	Direct child to alternative solutions
Non- involvement strategies		-	Ignore the behaviour Give an eye

As can be seen in the table, the teacher stated that among the direct strategies, she used explaining wrongness of behaviour, asking child to apologize among the direct strategies. In the observations, it was observed that she used explaining wrongness of behaviour and asking child to apologize. It was determined that the most used strategies by the teacher among all the strategies were asking child to apologize and remind rule. In this sense, the strategies she said and implemented are consistent with each other. However, it was observed that the teacher also verbally used warning,

calling, remind rule and give suggestion in direct interventions. In direct interventions, it was observed that she used take the child physically and ask others to involve in group, change the place of children, keeping child physically close. In addition, she is the only teacher who implements do the same thing to child. She also used deprive of something one loves, although she did not specify it in interviews. It was not observed that the teacher misunderstood the problem behaviour, but it was observed that she used the give an eye and ignore behaviour in the case of workload and in the presence of another teacher in the class. Finally, the teacher stated that she directed the children to the problem solving process in the interview, but in the observations, it was observed that the teacher only supported the children in finding alternative solutions, but did not apply the steps of trying this solution or realizing the problem by the children.

4.11.2.4. Comparison of P14

Analysis of data shows that there were both consistency and inconsistency between P14's self-reported and observed strategies. P14's self-reported and observed strategies are presented in the table 42.

Table 42 *Comparison of P14*

	Strategies	Self- reported	Observed
Direct intervention Strategies	Verbal	Talking with children about the problem Warning	Warning Giving suggestion/solution Direct children to involve into another peer group Saying to children that this behaviour upsets her Giving reason Asking the child to apologize Calling Remind rule
	Physical	-	Take the child physically and ask others to involve in peer group Taking out material Keeping the child physically close
	Punishment	-	Deprive of something one loves
Indirect Intervention Strategies		-	-

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Table 42 *Comparison of P14 cont'd*

Non- involvement strategies	Getting help/direction to others	Ignore the behaviour
		Give an eye

When the self-reported and observed strategies of P14 were examined, it was seen that there was both consistency and inconsistency. The teacher said that she warned the children in the interviews, and it was observed in the observations that she warned the children when problem behaviour emerged. In this context, what she says and does is consistent. However, while the teacher stated that she talked to the child about what he did wrong in the interview, it was observed that she only told the child that his behaviour upset him. The teacher said that she directed the child to the school guidance service, but this event may not have been observed since it took place apart from observations. Strategies that the teacher did not specify in the interview but applied were observed. It has been observed that she applies direct verbal strategies including giving suggestion/solution, directs the child to involve another peer group, giving reason, asking child to apologize, calling and remind rule. In addition, it has been observed that in case of a problem, take child physically and ask others to involve in peer group, taking non-shared material and keeping the child physically close. The teacher used deprive of something one loves as a punishment strategy. It has been observed that she could ignore the behaviour and, in some cases, only uses a give an eye. In addition, it was observed that P14 did not see some behaviours such as P7 and P8 for reasons such as workload and misterpreted the behaviours because she did not see the behaviours that appeared before the problem. Among these strategies, it was observed that the teacher often wanted the children to apologize to each other when there was a problem.

4.11.2.5. Comparison of P15

Analysis of data shows that there were both consistency and inconsistency between P15's self-reported and observed strategies. P15's self-reported and observed strategies are presented in Table 43.

Table 43 *Comparison of P15*

Strategies		Self- reported	Observed
Direct Intervention Strategies	Verbal	-	Remind rule Warning Calling Giving reason Give suggestion/solution Emphasizing through questioning Explaining wrongness of behaviour Asking child to apologize (the most)
	Physical	Take the child physically and ask others to involve in peer group	Take the child physically and ask others to involve in peer group Keeping child physically close Change the place of children Put an end the activity
	Punishment	-	Deprive of something one loves
Indirect Intervention Strategies		-	-
Non- involvement strategies		Make observations	Ignore the behaviour

When P15's self-reported and observed strategies were examined, it was seen that there was both consistency and inconsistency. P15 stated that she used take the child physically and ask others to involve in peer group, which is a direct intervention in the interviews. Likewise, in the observations, it was observed that the teacher frequently emphasized supporting peer communication of children and used this strategy. However, it was found that there were some strategies that the teacher did not mention in the interviews but used throughout the observations. It was observed that she used remind rule, warning, calling, giving reason, give suggestion, empthasizing through questioning, explaining wrongness of behaviour and asking child to apologize within direct interventions. The physical strategies that she did not specify in the interviews but observed that she used in the observations are keeping child physically close, change the place of children. In addition, she is the only teacher who ends the activity when a problem occurs during the activity. Although she did not mention it in the interviews, it was observed that when there was a problem between the children, she deprived the child of something he loved. Among these strategies, the one she uses the

most is asking the child to apologize. Finally, it was observed that she ignored some problems throughout the observations.

In general, give and eye and ignore the behaviour that all teachers (n=5) did not mention in the interviews for non-involvement strategies were frequently observed throughout the observations. The only teacher who doesn't use give an eye is P15. In the interviews, two teachers stated that they refer children to the school guidance service when they have social problems, but this practice was not seen in the observations.

Four of the five teachers did not mention indirect strategies in the interviews, and similarly, indirect strategies were not observed in the classrooms of three of these teachers. It was observed that two teachers (P12 and P7) used only direct child to alternative solutions from indirect strategies. Only P12 stated that she directed the child to this process by talking about the problem solving process in the interviews, but it was seen that she only directed the child to find a solution and did not follow other processes such as recognizing the problem and trying the solution.

Four of the five teachers did not directly mention physical intervention strategies in the interview, but it was observed that they used various physical strategies. Only P15 said that she used take the child physically and ask others to involve in peer group, and it was seen that she used it frequently in the observations. When direct intervention strategies are examined; Four of the five teachers observed did not state that they used punishment in the interview, but it was seen that they used this strategy. She also stated in the interview that she only used P7 punishment.

When the verbal ones were examined, it was seen that teachers used the strategies that they stated in the interview, but teachers also used different strategies that they did not specify. Among them, the most frequently used ones were remind rule, warning, calling and asking the child apologize. It was observed that the most used strategy by the observed teachers was asking the child apologize. Only one teacher mentioned this strategy in the interviews.

Another issue observed in all teachers (n=5) is that teachers do not realize the social problems of children due to the observed reasons such as workload, preparation for

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another activity, chatting with another teacher in the classroom. In addition, it was observed that all teachers misinterpreted the problem except P12 when they saw the problem when children shouted, complained or cried. For example, when one of the children hit the other and he responded by crying and hitting his friend, the teachers only asked the crying child to apologize, but the other child did not intervene.

4.12. Key Findings

4.12.1. Preschool teachers' views on children's social problem solving skills

- Teachers associated social problem solving skills with communication skill including adult and peer communication mostly. It is seen that empathy and sharing skills are the most emphasized skills after communication.

- Some of the teachers stated that children who are willing to share have more positive relationships with their friends and therefore do not exhibit or be exposed to aggression.

- It has been determined that most of the teachers focused on preventing the emergence of social problems rather than increasing children's social problem-solving skills.

- Most teachers stated that the most important age for the development of social problem solving skills is 3 years old for three reason: difficulty to gain later, beginning of socialization, familiarization to problems.

- Some teachers consider the 4-5 age group more important than other age groups in developing social problem solving skills because problems arise in this age group because of socialization and this age group being the most appropriate group for teaching. None of the teachers mentioned the 6-year-old group.

- All preschool teachers stated that the early childhood period is important to gain social problem solving skill.

- Some of the teachers stated that social problem solving skills gained at an early age would be good for children's future lives, but they did not give an opinion on why it would be good.

- It was found that all teachers feel that parent related issues account for the difficulties some children experience while developing social problem solving skills. They mentioned the different characteristics of the family such as oppressive parenting, lack of communication, normalization of problems.

- Only one teacher stated that the reason why the skill could not be developed could be because the teacher misled the child.

4.12.2. Preschool teachers' views about the place of social problem solving skills in the MoNE Early Childhood Education Program (2013)

- Most teachers stated that they could not say yes or no to the early childhood education program's emphasis on social problem solving skills due to the flexibility of program. They said it is in the hands of the teacher to develop the skill as long as the program draws the general framework.

- Some teachers stated that the program is insufficient because of giving more importance to cognitive skills and did not guide teachers in solving social problems.

- When asked about the achievements, three teachers who stated that the achievements were insufficient gave the answer that I cannot say the achievements clearly.

- Among the objectives that support social problem solving, the most stated objective is 'explains their positive/negative feelings using verbal expression' The objective that is 'solves problems with others' was stated by only one teacher. Other objectives that support social problem solving in the social emotional development area were not mentioned by any teacher.

- It was found that teachers mostly recommend including concepts that will increase social problem solving skills in the curriculum and trainings that

will increase teachers' knowledge levels and practices to facilitate supporting social problem solving skills in children.

4.12.3. Preschool teachers' self-reported practices about children's social problem solving skills

- Some teachers stated that they do not perform activities for social problem solving skills for reasons such as supporting communication in daily life and prioritizing cognitive skills.

- Some teachers stated that they do activities by verbally explaining the solution of problems to children in their activities.

- It was found that teachers mostly mentioned communication in the activities they had done for social problem solving.

- Most teachers stated that aggressive behaviors were seen most in the classroom. It was found that teachers focused on physical aggression and just one teacher mentioned relational aggression.

- Most teachers said that they used direct intervention for children's social problems. These interventions included talking with children, empathizing through questioning which are used frequently.

- A small number of teachers stated that they used punishment as a strategy, saying that it was not true, but that it worked.

4.12.4. Preschool teachers' actual practices about children's social problem solving skills

- It was found that the most experienced social problem behavior was aggression. However, it was found that relational and verbal aggression that teachers did not mention were seen frequently in classrooms.

- Aggressive behaviors have emerged in various activities, mostly in free play.

- It was found that teachers do not notice or misinterpret most of the problem behavior because they occupy themselves with document work, preparing for the next activity, being outside the classroom during free play.

- It has been observed that teachers often use non-involvement strategies involving ignoring and give an eye for children's social problems.

- It has been found that teachers often use the verbal strategy of asking the child to apologize, warning and calling.

- It was observed that only one teacher took actions such as encouraging children to talk about the problem and directing them to alternative solutions instead of threatening or warning children.

4.12.5. Comparison of preschool teachers' self-reported and actual strategies in dealing with social problems of children

- Consistency in the most observed behaviours in the classroom was found only in the emergence of the most aggressive behaviour.

- It was found that there is an inconsistency in the fact that most of the behaviours that the teachers did not mention in the interviews were observed in the classroom and their frequencies were different.

- It was found that there is an inconsistency between the strategies they reported and the actual strategies because the strategies that the teachers stated they used in the interviews were not observed and the teachers who stated that the punishment was not applied, used the punishment.

- It was found that there is some consistency between self-reported and actual practices due to the observation of direct, non-involvement and indirect strategies that teachers stated to be used.

- Finally, when the comparison results were evaluated based on each participant separately, partial consistency and serious inconsistency was found between the self–reported practices and actual practices.

In summary, all these findings provide important information about teachers' views and practices on children's social problem-solving skills. The next section will continue with a discussion of these findings.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the study followed by discussion of the findings, implications that arose with the study, and recommendations for further studies. The findings are discussed in six parts in parallel with the research questions which solicit the views of fifteen preschool teachers about *social problem solving, children's social problem solving skills,* the adequacy of the current *program in terms of it supporting children's development of social problem solving skills, suggestions for improvement of the program.* The fourth aspect concerns the *self-reported practices* of the teachers. In this part, the findings on teachers' self-reported educational activities, their views on the most experienced social problems in the classroom, and self-reported coping strategies for these problems are discussed. In the fifth part, the findings related to *observed practices* include consideration of the most observed social problems in the classrooms of five preschool teachers and teachers' coping strategies observed for these problems are discussed. Finally, the researcher discusses the findings in terms of *consistency* between teachers' self-reported coping skills, self- reported most experienced social problems and observed coping skills and observed most experienced social problems.

5.1. Discussion of the findings

5.1.1. Views of preschool teachers about social problem solving

Under this title, teachers' views on social problem solving were discussed and these views were divided into two as their understanding before and after the definition was given by the researcher. Before the definition was given by the researcher, it was found that there was no consensus among teachers' views about social problem solving, and that teachers pointed out different aspects of social problem solving such as problem-

orientation, solving daily life problems, solving problems in social relationships. Parallel to these findings, Bozkurt-Yükçü and Demircioğlu (2017) stated that every concept has a maturation process following its emergence, and the concept of social problem solving is a concept that has been shaped over time and therefore it is defined in different ways.

Before the definition was given by the researcher, some teachers defined the concept of social problem solving as being aware of a problem and creating an expectation for a solution about the problem. Parallel to this finding, according to D'Zurilla et al. (2004), problem orientation is the first step in social problem solving and refers to the individuals realizing that there is a problem and forming his thoughts, feelings and expectations about the it. Some teachers have defined social problem solving as solving problems that we may encounter in daily life. This finding is supported by the idea of Maydeu-Olivares and D'Zurilla (1996), who define social problem solving as the process of solving problems encountered in daily life. Social problem solving deals with all daily life problems, which can be non-individual such as when we experience a computer breakdown or our cell phone being stolen, individual ones such as conflicts within the family, disagreements between friends, and individual in terms of poor psychological health (D'Zurilla & Nezu, 2010). However, some teachers limited social problem solving to only social and peer relationships. In addition, the word "social" in the concept of social problem solving is used not to limit problem solving studies to any type of problem, but to emphasize that it is concerned with problem solving skills that affect one's harmony with the social environment in real life (D'Zurilla & Maydeu-Olivares, 1995; D'Zurilla et al., 2004). In this context, it might be said that teachers have knowledge about the concept of social problem solving, but their knowledge is limited.

Surprisingly, some teachers limited social problem solving to the teacher's solving a child's problem. However, Nezu et al. (2012) consider social problem solving as a step in which people use their cognitive, affective and behavioural competencies in order to solve a problem that we encounter in our social life. In this sense, emphasizing that the child uses the teacher's competence, not his own competence, does not coincide with the definitions in the literature. Teachers' view of social problem solving from

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this perspective might be a sign that they are preoccupied with solving children's problems and in so doing may actually hinder skill development.

Finally, looking at the definition of D'Zurilla et al. (2004), social problem solving involves defining the problem, creating alternative solutions, predicting consequences, selecting, and planning appropriate responses. In this study, it was found that the teachers mentioned defining the problem and producing a solution, but they did not mention choosing the appropriate solution among produced ones, estimating the results, and planning the appropriate responses. Further, it can be said that before the definition was given by the researcher, teachers mentioned some aspects of social problem solving in their definitions, some of the definitions described above are supported by some of the definitions in the literature, but as can be seen there are deficiencies. In this respect, the findings of teachers' definitions after the definition was given by the researcher should be examined.

The definition given to the teachers by the researcher is given below:

Social problem solving; This concept is a term used to prevent conflicts that we encounter in daily social life, to produce alternative ways and to specify strategies for the mutual acceptance and positive resolution of problems (Berk, 2013). In addition, it is a step where people use their cognitive, affective and behavioral competence in order to solve this problem that we encounter in social life (Nezu et al., 2012).

Social problem-solving skills include self-awareness, understanding emotions, how to manage anger, perspective taking, empathy, positive behaviour and establishing positive relationships (Kaltwasser et al., 2017).

After the definition of concept and social problem solving skills was given by researcher, the majority of teachers stated that they wanted to change their previous definitions. In their second definitions, they mentioned positive relationship, mutual acceptance and ability to find alternative solutions. After the definition was given, most teachers stated that their definitions were incomplete and they learned the meaning of social problem solving. Stating that the definition was a good reminder for them, they added empathy and anger management in their second definition and stated that it was necessary for establishing positive relationships. Some teachers, on the

other hand, talked about mutual acceptance of the problem for social problem solving and finding alternative solutions to solve the problem. As can be seen, the second definition of teachers is supported by the definitions of Berk (2013), Nezu et al. (2012) and Kaltwasser et al. (2017).

Based on these findings, it is thought that teachers have knowledge about social problem solving, but it should be supported. Knowing about social problem solving is instructive as it helps teachers to understand the actual process involved. For this reason, it is thought that teachers should be made familiar with the concept.

5.1.2. Views of preschool teachers regarding children's social problem solving skills

In this part, findings of teachers' views on which skills they associate social problem solving skills with, the importance of this skill for children, the importance of the skill according to age group, the importance of acquiring the skill in early childhood period, and the reasons why children cannot develop this skill are discussed separately.

In this study, it was found that most of the participants associated social problem solving skills with communication skills. Some of the teachers stated that a child with advanced communication skills also has high social problem solving skills. Similar to this finding, Ulutaş and Akdoğan (2017) found in their study on the same subject that preschool teachers mostly associate a social problem with a communication problem. Furthermore, this finding is consistent with other studies stating that there is a positive and significant relationship between preschool children's social problem solving skills and communication skills, and that communication skills predict their social problem solving skills (Kayılı, 2016; Tuncel & Demirel, 2010). It can be thought that the reason why teachers associate social problem solving skill with communication skills mostly is that effective communication is thought to be the basis of other social skills (Kaffemaniene, 2018). Some teachers have underlined the importance of observing whether children solve their problems by communicating with their peers on their own or whether they need teacher guidance. In this context, for the current study, it might be concluded that teachers are aware of the importance of communication skills for the development of social problem solving skills of children.

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After communication, the most commonly associated skill with social problem solving was empathy and sharing. Some of the teachers stated that children who are willing to share have more positive relationships with their friends and therefore do not exhibit or be exposed to aggression. Similarly, some teachers emphasized that children with improved sharing skills experience less social problems than others. In parallel with this finding, Özmen (2013) determined that as the quality of children's relationships with their peers increases, their social problem solving skills also increase, and that children who are successful in social problem solving skills exhibit less aggressive behavior. Moreover, this finding is consistent with previous studies that found that children with low social problem-solving skills are more aggressive (Waschbusch et al., 2007; Malik et al., 2006). Some of the teachers associated social problem solving skills with empathy skills and emphasized that children's empathy needs to be developed for the development of social problem solving in children. In support of this finding, Warden and Mackinnon (2003) in their study investigating the relationships between children's empathy and social problem-solving strategies, found that children with improved social problem-solving skills showed more empathic awareness than the children of bullies and victims. In previous studies on the same subject, it was seen that empathy training increased social problem solving skills and there was a significant relationship between the two skills (Yılmaz 2011; Hatam et al., 2019). In this sense, it can be said that this present study's finding is compatible with the literature. Preparing the environment for the development of prosocial behaviors of children in the early childhood period, which is critical in shaping the behaviors, and supporting them to acquire these behaviors are considered important for the participation of individuals who have developed social problem-solving skills and can empathize in the society (Altıntaş, 2017; Tozduman -Yaralı & Özkan, 2016). Based on these findings, it might therefore be concluded that teachers associate empathy with social problem-solving skills, which would be indicative of their awareness of this issue.

In this study, only one teacher associated social problem-solving skills with being patient. This finding is in line with the study by Malik, Balda, and Punia (2006) who found that children with low social problem-solving skills show impatient emotional characteristics and that impatient children are less likely to produce alternative

solutions to problems in social problem-solving situations. In the literature, to the best of our knowledge, no similar finding was found in the studies examining the opinions of teachers on this issue. This might be because teachers do not see patience as a skill. In general, it has been found that teachers associate social problem solving skills with other social skills such as helping each other and following rules. Since the social problem solving skill is a kind of social skill, not surprisingly in the current study, teachers associated the problem solving skill with other social skills.

Social problem-solving skills include self-awareness, understanding emotions, how to manage anger, perspective taking, empathy, positive behavior and establishing positive relationships (Kaltwasser et al., 2017). In this study, it was found that some teachers mentioned anger management, empathy, positive behavior and positive relationships among behaviors that could replace aggression, but none mentioned self-awareness. In this context, the reasons why teachers do not mention the relationship between social problem solving skills and self-awareness should be investigated.

All in all, in this study, it was seen that while teachers explained the skill associated with social problem-solving skills, most teachers emphasized the importance of these skills in order not to create social problems rather than increasing children's social problem-solving skills. This is thought to be an important finding of the study. Considering that children will encounter social problems in their future life, it is thought that teachers' perceiving children's social problems as an opportunity for the development of problem-solving skills rather than preventing children from experiencing social problems can support the development of this skill.

5.1.2.1. Teachers' views about the effect of social problem solving skill on children

In this part, findings on how preschool teachers define a child with advanced social problem-solving skills are discussed. How teachers define the child with developed social problem-solving skills explains their views on how this skill has an effect on children.

In this study, teachers defined the child with social problem solving skills as having communication skills and positive peer relationships mostly; and less of them described the child as self-confident, a leader, responsible and compatible.

Teachers often defined a child with advanced social problem solving skills as a child with advanced communication skills. Similarly, in this study, it was found that teachers mostly associated social problem solving skills with communication skills. In this sense, it can be said that these findings overlap with each other. In line with this finding, Kayılı (2016) found that as the social problem-solving skills of kindergarten children increased, their communication skills increased. For this reason, it can be said that teachers realize that communication skills develop more easily in children with improved social problem solving skills and they are aware that communication skills are an important step in social problem solving.

While talking about communication, the participants focused on both peers and adults. This finding is directly and indirectly consistent with previous studies. In previous studies, it has been stated that children with skills such as decision making, empathy, and social problem solving have better relationships with adults and can make friendships more easily than their peers who do not have them (Bowman et al.,2001; Denham et al., 2003; Izard et al., 2001; Raver, 2002; Shields et al., 2001). Some teachers, on the other hand, underlined that children with developed social problem-solving skills can express their feelings and thoughts clearly and comfortably in communication. This finding is consistent with previous studies stating that children who cannot express their emotions appropriately have difficulty in solving their problems and cause new problems to arise (Dereli-İman, 2013; Dereli, 2008; Webster-Stratton & Lindsay, 1999). Similarly, Dinçer et al. (2019) found that as children's self-expression skills increase, their ability to find solutions to social problems they experience with their peers increases. The reason for this is thought to be that children who can express themselves prefer social solutions in case of problems with their peers, because they can express their discomfort and reasons in more appropriate ways. A small number of teachers stated that a child with developed social problem-solving skills has a high level of empathy. In parallel with this finding, Yılmaz and Tepeli (2013), in their study with 60-72 months old children, found that as the ability to understand the emotions of others increases, social problem solving skills also increase. At the same time, it was stated that the social problem solving training program could improve the skills of understanding the emotions of others (Johnson, 2000; Webster-Stratton, 2006; Webster-Stratton et al., 2001). In general, a possible

explanation for why the majority of teachers describe a child with advanced social problem solving skills with advanced communication skills is that communication is a skill that can be observed more easily in the classroom environment.

In this study, teachers defined the child with developed social problem-solving skills as having positive peer relations mostly after communication skills. In parallel with this finding, Özmen (2013) stated that peer relations and social problem solving skills can be handled in two ways, and as social problem solving skills increase, more effective peer relationships will be established. Supporting the finding of this study, Beydoğan (2019) determined that the strongest predictor of social problem solving is peer relationships. Children with good social problem solving skills can better solve problems they encounter in peer relationships, which allows them to have a positive relationship, so it was not surprising that teachers associated them with positive peer relationships.

While teachers talked about positive peer relationships, they stated that a child with social problem solving skills was accepted by his peers, loved more and taken as a role model. This finding coincides with the findings of other studies stating that children who are taught how to deal with social problems are liked more by their friends and are more successful in peer relations (Rooney et al., 1993; Spivack & Shure, 1979, Özmen, 2013). Teachers have often emphasized that children who produce solutions to problems in peer relations are a friend preferred by others. In previous studies, it has been found that children who are accepted by their peers produce more social solutions in conflict situations than children who are not accepted (Uz Baş & Siyez 2011), and children who produce solutions to problems are more preferred by their friends (Musun-Miller, 1993). Therefore, this finding of the present study overlaps with previous studies.

In the present study, teachers focused on the fact that children with social problem solving skills cooperate with their friends and establish positive relationships because they do not act aggressively, even when playing their games. In support of this finding, children who use prosocial solution management in social problem solving are more cooperative and more successful at establishing and maintaining friendships (Dodge et al., 1994). It has been stated in previous studies that children who use antisocial

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solutions exhibit more aggressive behavior and are therefore excluded from groups (Rubin & Rose-Krasnor, 1992; Webster-Stratton & Lindsey, 1999; Tozduman-Yaralı & Özkan, 2016). For the continuity of group games and peer interaction, children find they should use effective social problem solving skills when they experience conflict and problems (Deutsch 1994; Pickover, 2006). In this context, it can be said that teachers are aware of the positive effect of social problem solving skills on friendship relations and it is more observable than other skills.

As a result of this study, it can be said that teachers know and observe the benefits of social problem solving skills in children. It is considered important that teachers' awareness of these benefits can motivate them to support this skill of children.

5.1.2.2. **Teachers' views on the importance of gaining social problem-solving skills in early childhood period**

In this study, the views of preschool teachers on the importance of children gaining social problem solving skills in early childhood period were sought in three dimensions, the better future life, their learning process and their problem solving process.

Teachers stated that with the development of social problem solving skills, children's tendency to commit crimes in the future will decrease, their self-confidence will increase, they will be happier, they will be able to express themselves more and their academic success will increase. Of these responses, it was found that the most emphasized is that children who gain social problem solving skills are less likely to commit crime in the future and are more self-confident. This finding is supported by previous studies on this subject. In previous studies, it has been stated that children who cannot acquire social problem-solving skills in the early childhood period will face problems such as aggression, violence, addiction, abuse, committing crime, and school phobia and will continue to exhibit antisocial behaviors throughout their lives (Carpenter-Rich et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2011; Bornstein et al.,2010; O'Connell et al., 2009). On the subject of self-confidence, the teachers emphasized that the child will develop self-confidence as he solves problems, and in this way, he will be self-confident in solving the problems that may arise in the future. In parallel with this finding, it was stated in previous studies that the child's self-confidence develops

through problem solving and is encouraged for his future life (Dereli-İman, 2013; Arı & Seçer, 2003; Arı, 2006). At this point, it can be said that these findings are supported by the literature, but in this study, the number of teachers who talk about the decrease in the tendency to crime and the increase in self-confidence is quite low. From this point of view, although teachers say that social problem solving skills should be gained at an early age, it can be said that they are not aware of how children will have a better life with the acquisition of this skill. The reason for considering this in this study is as follows. While the teachers stated that the tendency to crime will decrease in this regard, they said that children who cannot solve the problems they will encounter in the future will use violence as a solution and will be dragged into crime at an advanced level, but this probability will decrease if they gain the skill. However, they did not mention negative situations such as addiction, abuse, school phobia, and academic failure. A possible reason for this result might be that teachers do not think that the reason for these negative situations is the lack of social problem solving skills. Also, the researcher believes that teachers will be more motivated to support this skill if they also know the aforementioned benefits of social problem solving skills.

In this study, only one teacher stated that social problem-solving skills gained in early childhood period provide self-esteem and bring academic success. Supporting this finding, previous studies found that children's social problem-solving skills are a variable that predicts their academic skills and there is a positive relationship between social problem solving and self-esteem (Walker &Henderson, 2012; Bierman et al., 2009). However, only one teacher mentioned this relationship. A possible reason for this result might be that teachers think that academic success will come together with cognitive skills rather than social skills.

Some of the teachers stated that social problem solving skills gained in early childhood would be good for children's future lives, but they did not give an opinion on why it would be so. Previous studies found that problems are inevitable throughout life and problems are a source of stress, so it is necessary to have problem-solving skills in order to have a better life and social problem solving acquired in preschool, predict mental health and well-being in the future (Erözkan, 2014; Denham et al., 2003; Denham, 2006; Mashburn & Pianta, 2006; Blair, 2002). A possible reason for this

result might be that teachers are insufficient in terms of how the child's future life can be enhanced with the social problem-solving skills gained.

Besides its importance for the future life of the child, the most emphasized importance by the teachers was on the learning process with regard to permanence and difficulty in changing later. Teachers emphasized that it is easier to learn social problem-solving skills at an early age and that the skills learned in children will be more permanent and it is difficult for them to change what they learned incorrectly when they grow up. This finding is supported by Atmaca et al. (2020) , who indicated that failing to learn social skills at critical moments can not only make learning difficult in the future but also have a severe impact on people's social lives. Also, in some studies it was highlighted that children learn at an astonishing rate in the first years of life and can become competent in the field of social development (Tuncer & Tuncer, 2015). At the same time, developing social skills is a crucial phase that has an impact on how well social interactions go throughout life (Ferreira et al., 2021). From this point of view, teachers' views are supported by the literature and it is thought that they respond in this way because social problem solving is a social skill. However, it is thought that they do not put any emphasis on social problem solving, they are aware that social skills are acquired more quickly at an early age and are permanently scarred, but their knowledge about the importance of social problem-solving skills is insufficient.

The acquisition of social problem-solving skills, which is an important social skill, in the early period; peer acceptance, positive perception by parents and teachers, and high self-esteem are also critical in developing a successful cycle of positive outcomes (Gesten et al., 1979). However, in general, in this study, it is seen that teachers do not have sufficient knowledge about the acquisition of social problem solving skills in the early period. It seems that this finding may be very important since it is thought that being aware of the importance of social problem solving skills can motivate teachers to support this skill and seeing these problems as an opportunity for skill development rather than preventing the emergence of social problems in the classroom will contribute to the future lives of children.

5.1.2.3. The views of preschool teachers about the importance of the social problem solving skills regarding age group in early childhood education

In this study, most of the teachers stated that the most important age for the development of social problem solving skills is 3 years old with reasons such as difficulty in gaining them later, beginning of socialization and familiarization with problems. Some of the teachers stated that this skill is more difficult to acquire in the following years and that it is more difficult to change children's wrong behaviors (orientation to negative problem solving) in the following years. In parallel with this finding, Kilburn and Karoly (2008) stated that children's social-emotional competence should be encouraged in the early period, and it may be more expensive and difficult to change challenging behaviors later. Some teachers, on the other hand, emphasized that children start to socialize by the age of 3 and that with the beginning of this socialization, children should get used to problem solving. This finding is supported by Ridley and Vaughn (1982), who stated that although three-year-old children are developmentally behind advanced age groups in terms of language skills, they should learn skills that facilitate social problem solving and have successful social problem solving experiences and practices. Similarly, this finding is consistent with previous studies stating that children develop their social problem-solving skills in the relationship they establish with their peers and that with this socialization, children gain new skills and develop socially by experiencing (Arı, 2006; Kayılı & Arı, 2015). Moreover, Gloeckler and Cassell (2012) stated that children should get used to social-emotional knowledge and skills before starting school life and that daily social problems provide an opportunity for this learning. Based on this result, it is thought that the fact that teachers consider the age of three important is a clue that they will make practices in this age group as well as in older age groups in order to improve their social problem solving skills.

In this study, it was also found that some teachers consider the 4-5 age group more important than other age groups in developing social problem solving skills for the reason that they are the most appropriate group for teaching and socialization. In support of this finding, Azmitia (1988) stated that children gain various problem experiences during socialization with their peers during the school period and develop socially by improving their problem-solving skills. Some teachers stated that the 3-

year-old group could not acquire the skill because they are egocentric and the skill is abstract for them. They also stated that problem solving skills should be taught in the 4-5 age group, on the grounds that 6-year-old children are an age group that acts more freely. However, according to Sandy (2006), conflicts and disagreements that naturally arise in children's lives are an opportunity for children to develop their social-emotional skills. In order for these skills to be acquired in the most effective, long-term and widespread manner, they should be acquired between the ages of 0-4, when the brain is most open to learning. The fact that teachers see teaching social problem solving skills for 3 year olds as an abstract concept may be an indication that they will not attempt to support this skill in 3 year olds. However, there is increasing evidence that social behavior problems occur at younger ages (Briggs-Gowan et al., 2006; Shaw et al., 2006). Since children will experience various problems in this age group, it can be an opportunity for them to learn the skill. It is thought that teachers' knowledge about how to support social problem solving skills in which age group is insufficient.

In studies examining the effect of age on children's social problem solving skills, it is seen that there is a common opinion that social problem solving differs according to age and social problem solving skills develop with age (Arı &Yaban, 2012; Bal & Temel, 2014; Yaban & Yükselen, 2007; Yilmaz & Tepeli, 2013). However, no study was found in which teachers' opinions were taken on the development and importance of social problem solving skills according to age group. In this study, knowing the age group that teachers consider the most important for the development of social problem solving skills in children was examined in terms of giving a clue as to whether they support this skill in younger age groups.

5.1.2.4. Views of preschool teachers about the reasons why children cannot develop their social problem-solving skills

In this study, all of the teachers stated that the reason why children could not develop their social problem solving skills was due to their parents. While some teachers referred to parents directly without giving a reason, some of the teachers talked about the different characteristics of parents. One of those mentioned are oppressive/normative parental attitudes which describe the normative behavior of parents who restrict their children, and that children under such pressure cannot

develop their social problem-solving skills. In addition, teachers stated that since there is no environment where children can express themselves outside of school, even if they gain this skill at school, if it is not supported at home, it will be lost. In previous studies supporting this finding, it was stated that the oppressive attitude of parents may cause insufficient social development in the child (Yavuzer, 2013; Baldwin et al., 1945). Similarly, Çağdaş and Arı (1999) stated that children under pressure are respectful but afraid of expressing themselves, and therefore they may be passive or, on the contrary, aggressive in their social lives. Some teachers stated that the protective attitude is effective. Consistent with this finding (Yavuzer, 2003) stated that a child's social development may be hindered in an overprotective environment where he cannot be allowed to grow up.

Some teachers mentioned that the use of violence by parents can also be a reason. This finding is supported by Bandura's (1978) social learning theory. According to Social Learning Theory behaviors are learned through modeling and observation (Bandura, 1978). If the behaviors of the model are accepted by the observer or if the behaviors solve the problem, an increase in these behaviors is observed in the person who observed the model (Arı, 2006; Bacanlı, 2002; Green & Piel, 2002; Morgan, 2004). Likewise, if some mothers have an aggressive attitude towards the problems they encounter, it is observed that their children's social problem-solving skills are at a lower level compared to their peers (Kayılı & Arı, 2015; Pettit et al.,1988; Goodman et al.,1999). In this context, it is possible for children to turn to antisocial behaviors when they take their violent parents as role models. Studies have revealed that there is a relationship between children's social problem-solving skills and family structure (McDowell & Parke, 2005; Çağdaş & Seçer, 2002) and that children learn to cope with social problems in the family (Aşkın, 2006). In this context, the findings of the present study are consistent with previous studies.

Some teachers, on the other hand, stated that the family does whatever the child wants and for this reason, they think that children cannot develop their social problem-solving skills because they prevent their children from coming out of egocentrism. This finding is supported by the study of Çağdaş and Arı (1999) stating that children who do whatever they want develop antisocial behaviors, are not included in the group of friends because they are children who are not loved by others, do not respect the

rights of others, and cannot establish positive social relations in their future life, and therefore cannot socialize. It may be a possible result that children who cannot socialize cannot develop their social problem solving skills.

In general, in this study, it was found that all of the teachers stated that the reason why children could not develop their social problem-solving skills was the parents. In previous studies, in which teachers' opinions were taken, it was determined that teachers mostly focused on parental attitudes and family structures as the reason for social problems and not developing social problem-solving skills (Akdoğan & Ulutaş ,2017; Kesicioğlu, 2015). In this sense, this finding of the present study are consistent with previous studies. In studies that found similar results, it was stated that this result emerged due to the importance of the family's place in education. However, the possible explanation for the result may be that teachers do not consider themselves responsible for preventing the development of social skills, since teachers mentioned the negative characteristics of the family in this study.

The surprising finding of this study is that only one teacher stated that the reason why children could not improve their social problem solving skills could be due to the teacher regarding teachers' wrong strategies toward children's social problems. Consistent with this finding, Sadık (2006), in her study in which she took the opinions of teachers about problem behaviors such as aggression, found that teachers generally attributed the reasons for these behaviors to factors related to the family mostly other than themselves. Since teachers see children as a mirror of the family, they attribute all responsibility to the family and do not think of themselves as a reason for children's inability to develop their social problem-solving skills. However, throughout the observations carried out in this study, it was observed that teachers used different strategies that would hinder the development of social problem-solving skills in children. Since teachers do not see themselves as a reason, it is thought that they may not be paying the necessary attention to their practices in the classroom. In this context, it is thought that teachers need to have information about their role in the development of social problem-solving skills in children.

The other finding is that some teachers stated that the reason why children cannot develop their social problem-solving skills is the social environment. In this regard,

teachers stated that children do not experience problems because they do not have friends in their social environmentd, and therefore they cannot experience social problem solving. In support of this finding, previous studies have stated that children often have problems in the environment they are with their friends, and in these environments, they have the opportunity to solve the problem without the influence of adults (Yilmaz & Tepeli, 2013; Ensor et al., 2011). The child discovers and develops his/her abilities thanks to opportunities that allow problem solving, so these environments are important for the child's social-emotional development (Bingham, 2016, Dinçer et al., 2019; Sandy, 2006). In this context, it is understood that the child's social environment consisting of his friends affects children's social problem-solving skills. From this point of view, it can be said that teachers know the importance of creating the necessary opportunities for social interaction in the classroom.

5.1.3. Views of preschool teachers about the place of social problem solving skills in the MoNE Early Childhood Education Program (2013)

Before getting teachers' views on the place of social problem solving skills in the program, the researcher needed information about whether the national program was used or not. It was found that the vast majority of teachers use the MoNE Early Childhood Education Program.

In this study, most of the teachers stated that they were undecided about the early childhood education program giving enough importance to social problem solving skills. They said that the reason for their impartiality in this matter is due to the flexibility of the program, and it is up to the teacher to develop the skill as long as the program draws the general framework. When the literature is examined, to our knowledge, no study has been found that directly examines the early childhood education program in terms of social problem solving skills. However, this view of teachers is quite similar to other studies in the literature (Özsırkıntı et. al., 2014; Köksal et al., 2016; Başaran & Ulubey, 2018). In the recent studies of Özsırkıntı et al. (2014) and Köksal et al. (2016), similar results were found and the findings of the research were supported. Özsırkıntı et al. (2014) concluded that the participants in the study provided the necessary flexibility for teachers to make additions in their plans, taking into account the developmental characteristics of their students. According to Köksal

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et al. (2016), most of the teachers expressed a positive opinion as it covers all development areas as a flexible program. In the implementation of the early childhood education program, the most basic determinants in influencing the quality and development of early childhood education are the teachers (MoNE, 2012). Similarly, in this study, teachers who stated that the early childhood education program supports social problem-solving skills with its gain and indicators, and therefore attaches importance to this skill, also stated that they can focus on different goals when they need more, due to the flexibility of the curriculum. In parallel with this finding, according to Çimen and Koçyiğit (2010), activities based on achievements and indicators related to social skills in the program are effective in gaining social skills to preschool children. With this similarity to the literature, the possible explanation for this result might be that teachers are aware that they can benefit from the flexibility of the program in acquiring a skill, and that they can provide more support for the skill by making the necessary changes in line with their needs.

Fewer teachers stated that social problem-solving skills were not given enough importance because more emphasis was placed on cognitive skills in the program. There are studies supporting and not supporting this finding in the literature. For example, Palmer (2019) stated the importance of the program by saying that children's social skills are built with the help of teachers conducting activities and lessons in the program. On the other hand, Kandır and Yazıcı (2016) stated that the achievements in the 2013 early childhood education program support the cognitive and language development areas, but the acquisitions in the social-emotional and motor development areas are insufficient. One teacher, on the other hand, did not mention the achievements, but emphasized that the program was insufficient due to the lack of solutions for children's social problems. From this point of view, it is important to examine the views of the teachers about which achievements in the program support social problem solving skills were needed to evaluate this view and in order to reach a conclusion.

In the current study, when the teachers were asked which achievements in the program support social problem solving skills, it was seen that the majority of the teachers mentioned the achievements in the field of social emotional development, and very few teachers mentioned the achievements in the field of language development.

Several teachers stated that they could not remember the achievements clearly enough and did not mention the achievements. Only one teacher stated that social problem solving is related to motor development, but there is no study in the literature to support this finding, to the researcher's knowledge. When the teachers' views were examined, the surprising finding of the study was that the teachers who said that the achievements were sufficient gave examples of the achievements in the field of social emotional development, and all of the teachers who said that the achievements were insufficient could not clearly remember the achievements. The possible reason for this result might be the insufficient knowledge of preschool teachers about the acquisitions that support social problem-solving skills in the curriculum and teachers' insufficiency in reading the program.

Finally, it was considered important to examine the achievements that teachers gave as examples in the field of social-emotional development. For achievements that support social problem solving in the field of social emotional development, teachers gave examples of these achievements: "express their positive/negative feelings verbally", "express themselves in creative ways", "protect their own and others' rights," solve their problems with others'', "follow the rules in different environments". Surprisingly, only one teacher mentioned the gain "They solve their problems". In the interview, it was found that teachers mostly associate social problem solving skills with communication skills, but none of the teachers mentioned the achievements related to communication. In the current program, it is seen that there are many gains to support social problem solving skills directly or indirectly (MoNE, 2013). Based on all these findings, it is thought that teachers are not aware of the gains in the program to support their social problem-solving skills. Curriculum knowledge (Öner, 2010; Shulman, 1987), which is one of the important curriculum competencies that teachers should have, is among the general competencies of the teaching profession of the Ministry of National Education. This result of the research shows that teachers do not fulfill the requirement of reading and knowing the curriculum, which is an important requirement in order to ensure the proficiency of "curriculum knowledge".

As a result, the fact that the gains in the program were not known by the teachers could be evidence that the teachers did not benefit from program to support children's social problem-solving skills.

5.1.3.1. Suggestion of preschool teachers for MoNE early childhood education program to improve children's social problem solving skills

In this study, most teachers stated that they wanted to make changes in the program to support social problem solving skills in children. The most desired change is related to concepts. Some teachers suggested that concepts such as empathy, sharing, helping and cooperation should be included more in the curriculum in order to develop social problem solving skills in children. Similarly, in previous studies, it was stated that education programs should be enriched in terms of social skills (making friendship, cooperation, interpersonal problem-solving skills, resolving conflicts in the group and empathizing, etc.) that children should acquire during the socialization process in early childhood education institutions (Schweinhart & Weikart , 1997; Senemoğlu, 2001).The similarity of this finding with the literature suggests that there is a need to include these concepts more in the early childhood education program.

In the current study, another change suggested by the teachers is the addition of an activity book to the content of early childhood education program, which includes activities for social problem solving, for the benefit of teachers. Teachers stated that they lacked knowledge about improving their social problem-solving skills and that they needed guidance in this way. From this point of view, it can be thought that this result reveals the need to direct teachers to support this skill in early childhood education institutions.

Some teachers suggested that field trips should be included more in the program in order to improve children's social problem-solving skills. Teachers stated that thanks to field trips, children will gain experience in different environments and have rich learning for social skills. In support of this finding, previous studies revealed that field trips meet children's direct and meaningful learning needs for problem solving and encourages permanent and positive changes in children's social skills and abilities (Bozdogan, 2012; Krahenbuhl, 2014; Smith-Walters et al. 2014; Martin & Sewers ,2010). However, a study by Koç and Sak (2017) revealed that 59% of Turkish preschool teachers have never participated in field-trip activities and stated that field trips should have more space in the program so that children can gain social skills. The compatibility of this finding with the literature highlights the importance of field trips

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for the development of children's social skills, including their social problem-solving skills. The possible reason for this result may be that, as teachers have stated, field trips cannot be included for various reasons, but they are aware that field trips will positively affect the development of social problem solving skills in children.

Finally, besides suggestions for the program, another noteworthy finding of this study is that teachers stated that they need to increase their level of knowledge and be guided, and therefore they should be given training. Similarly, Akdoğan and Ulutaş (2017) stated that in-service training can be given to teachers on social problem-solving skills in their study, which included teachers' views on social problem solving. In addition, Adams has trained 1100 preschool teachers with the ECE-CARES (Social Problem Solving Program) project since 1994, and it has been determined that children's positive social skills have increased significantly according to the data obtained from the classes of these teachers (Adams & Wittmer, 2001). From this point of view, it is predicted that the training to be given to teachers will lead to an increase in children's social problem-solving skills and it is thought that such an education is needed.

5.1.4. Preschool teachers' self-reported practices about children social problem solving skills

In this part, the self-reported educational activities to improve children's social problem-solving skills, the self-reported most common social problem behaviors they encounter in their classrooms, and the self-reported strategies they used to cope with these problems are discussed.

5.2.4.1. Preschool teachers' self-reported educational activities about children's social problem solving skills

In this study, when the teachers were asked whether they perform activities to improve children's social problem-solving skills, some teachers stated that they did not have any activities for different reasons. The first reason is that the children do not need the activity because they find their own solution in case of a problem, the second reason is that they do not need it because they support children's communication during the day, and the third reason is the belief that cognitive skills are more important. However, in the literature, it is stated that with the different activities and methods

used in the early childhood education program, children can gain social skills from early years (Ceylan, 2009). Similarly, in previous studies, it was emphasized that activities that support children's social development should be included in early childhood education and that children show more social competence when they participate in activities (Leung, 2010; Howie et al., 2010; Shure, 2001). A possible reason for this result might be that teachers do not give enough importance to social problem solving skills and do not want to spare time for activities on this subject.

Teachers, who said that they had activities to improve children's social problem solving skills, stated that they frequently used role-play/drama, verbal expression, storytelling, play and cooperative group work in these activities. In the previous studies supporting this finding, it was stated that role playing technique and drama methods could be used for the development of social problem solving skills (Gardner et. al., 2001; Webster-Stratton, 2012; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004). In addition, the teachers stated that they used these methods together in the activities. In support of this finding, it was stated in previous studies that the content of education programs should be enriched and various methods and techniques should be included in order for children to find alternative solutions to their problems (Clark et al., 2017). From this point of view, it can be said that the techniques used by teachers in activities to develop their social problem-solving skills are beneficial in terms of skill development.

When the examples of activities reported by the teachers were examined, it was stated that after reading the book dealing with a social problem or social skill, they asked the children to portray the characters in the story, and then children are asked to act out the other character, allowing the children to look at the events from different perspectives by the role play method. According to Kaltwasser et al. (2017), perspective taking and empathy are included in social problem solving skills. For this reason, it is thought that teachers can support social problem solving skills by increasing perspective-taking and empathy skills in children with these activities. Some teachers stated that they use storytelling and drama to improve their social problem solving skills. In support of this finding, Kayılı and Erdal (2021) stated that among the methods used in the development of problem solving skills, especially in recent years, story and drama attracted great attention. Similarly, Boratav (2019) also stated that children develop their imagination with stories, realize the acceptable and

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unacceptable behaviors of the society they live in from the stories, and learn how to adapt them to their own lives, especially when they encounter problems arising from these behaviors in the early childhood education period. In addition, he emphasized that the events and characters encountered in the stories are advisory and that children learn to produce solutions in these negative situations. We can say that stories containing all these features have many advantages such as improving attention and problem-solving skills, and teachers can develop social problem-solving skills in children by being aware of this. Teachers' use of drama is also supported by the literature. In previous studies, it was stated that when drama applications in early childhood education plans are used for educational purposes, children gain the ability to produce alternative solutions to problems (Erdoğan, 2019; Ritter & Mostert, 2017). In this study it can be said that teachers use drama for educational purposes, not for artistic purposes, and therefore, they use an appropriate method to support children's social problem solving skills in a positive way.

Some teachers stated that they use play in their activities to support children's social problem solving skills. Teachers stated that they can both observe children's social problems and provide them with an opportunity to experience through play by also extending play time. Parallel to this finding, previous studies have underlined the relationship between play and social problem solving, and stated that children develop their problem-solving skills by producing different solutions to problems in the play, and thus, they can find creative solutions to the next problem (Akoğuz, 2017; Yavuzer, 2019; Kaya et al., 2017).

Some teachers stated that they preferred verbal expression in their activities and they said that in these activities they told children how to solve social problems. However, according to Dewey (1966), people learn by doing and experiencing, so he underlined that children should learn by practice, information should never be presented without discussion, and children should be given the opportunity to explore and think. Similarly, Piaget agrees that children are not passive recipients of the world, emphasizing that they learn only by participating in meaningful activities through their own experiences (Hampshire et al., 2012). From this point of view, it is thought that only verbally telling children what to do in case of social problems will not provide the development of social problem solving skills in children adequately. However, it

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was found that very few teachers used drama, storytelling and games in their activities. The possible explanation for this result might be the teachers' lack of knowledge on how to implement social problem-solving activities. Similarly, teachers also stated that they needed an activity book on this subject.

Finally, when the subjects that teachers focused on in their activities to support their social problem solving skills in this study were examined, it was found that the most focused subject was communication. A possible reason for this result may be that they think that communication forms the basis of social skills, as Kaffemaniene (2018) states. However, on the other hand, Leyden and Shale (2012) state that children have difficulties in sharing and conflict resolution and they need help to acquire these important skills. In this study, the fact that the subject of sharing was mentioned in the activities by only three teachers might indicate that the teachers need information about such activities.

5.1.4.2. Most experienced social problem behaviors in class reported by teachers

In this study, it was found that when teachers were asked about the most experienced problem behavior in their classrooms, they stated aggression mostly. Teachers stated that aggression occurs in the form of hitting and breaking an object. After aggression, it was stated that the most common problem in the classroom was the sharing problem. Other problem behaviors stated by a small number of teachers were difficulty in communicating, not respecting the rights of others, which appeared in the form of taking someone else's belongings and not waiting in line, jealousy, introverted behaviors, adaptation problems, crying and not obeying the rules. This finding regarding problem behaviors is supported by most studies in the literature. Similarly, in previous studies, it is stated that such behaviours like introversion, aggression, adaptation problem, taking other people's belongings without permission, not sharing, bullying, teasing, swearing, jealousy, crying, lying, tantrums, waiting in line, not following the rules, annoying friends revealed in preschool children (Uysal et al., 2010; Kesicioğlu,2015; Güder, et al., 2018; Temiz, 2020). The possible explanation to why the problem behaviors in the early childhood period are so many and varied might be that the behaviors exhibited by children are considered as problem behaviors

for some teachers, while they are seen as normal behaviors by other teachers (Cangemi & Khan, 2001).

In this study, it was seen that some behaviors that are considered as a feature of the developmental stages of children (Özbey, 2010; Özgü & Yılmaz, 2017; Yavuzer, 2019) such as being a perfectionist, not accepting mistakes, stubbornness, and telling unrealistic events, were expressed as problem behaviors by only a few teachers. However, Erbaş (2018) stated that in order for a behavior to be a problem behavior, it must have some criteria. These criteria are hindering learning, negatively affecting the child's social communication and interaction, harming their peers or the individuals around them, and having a repetitive process. In the current study, it is thought that teachers should first evaluate problem behaviors, the nature of these behaviors and the reasons for their emergence in order to support children's prosocial behaviors instead of problem behaviors.

An important finding of this study is that the problem most experienced by children reported by the majority of their teachers is aggression. In parallel with this finding, a significant relationship was found between aggression and social problem solving skills in previous studies. In these studies, it was found that as children's social problem-solving skills increase, their aggressive behaviors decrease (Dereli-İman, 2013; Drugli, et al., 2007). Similarly, some studies have stated that aggression and behavioral problems can usually be understood from incompatibility or failure to solve social problems (Malik et al., 2006; Lochman et al., 1993; Pakaslahti & Keltikangas-Järvinen, 2002). In this study, it was found that teachers reported that the most occurred problem is aggression and it was seen that this finding overlapped with the literature. The possible explanation for this result might be that the aggressive behavior in the classrooms is noticed more by the teachers as it results in crying and complaining.

5.2.4.3. Preschool teachers' self-reported strategies in dealing with social problems of children in classroom

In this study, when the teachers were asked about the strategy of coping with the social problem behaviors that occur in children, it was seen that the majority of the teachers reported the direct intervention strategy. Among the direct intervention strategies,

although verbal intervention is mentioned most, teachers stated that they also use physical intervention and punishment.

When children experienced a social problem, teachers stated that most applied strategy among the verbal strategies was to talk to the child about the problem. It is considered important for teachers to talk about the problem with the child in order for the child to realize that there is a problem. However, most teachers emphasized that they only talk to the child who created the problem. When there is a problem between the children, it may indicate that both children cannot solve the problem. In this sense, it is considered important to talk to the child affected by the problem and to think about a solution. A possible explanation for teachers to only talk to the child who created the problem might be that the teacher is trying to prevent the problem from occurring instead of supporting problem-solving skills.

Another strategy stated to be used the most among the verbal strategies is to enable the child to empathize by asking questions. When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that there is a positive and significant relationship between empathy skills and social problem solving skills (Warden & Mackinnon, 2003; Yılmaz 2011; Hatam et al., 2019). In this context, this practice of teachers can motivate children to solve problems by supporting empathy skills in children. Another strategy reported by teachers is to explain that children's behavior is wrong by mentioning the possible consequences of the behavior, such as upsetting or hurting others. There are studies supporting and not supporting this finding in the literature. For example, Williams et al. (2010) found that teachers intervene in case of a problem by using facilitation methods such as starting a conversation with children and talking about the situation and feelings. However, in other previous studies, it was determined that teachers did not show and teach the right behavior to children, and they acted more spontaneously and reactively (Akgün et al., 2011; Öztürk & Gangal, 2016). In the current study, it is thought that the reason why the studies in the literature do not overlap with each other may be due to the contradiction between the actions and discourses of the teachers.

Among the direct intervention strategies, few teachers stated that they physically took the child to another group and asked this group to take this child into the group. However, since these practices of teachers are teacher-centered, they are not intended

to involve the child in the problem-solving process, and this strategy may hinder the development of problem-solving skills in children.

Few teachers stated that they used punishment in case of problems in direct interventions. At the same time, the teachers said that they knew the punishment was wrong, but it worked. In parallel with this finding, in some studies it was stated that teachers apply punishment for children who do not comply with classroom rules (Saltalı & Arslan, 2013; Uysal et al., 2010). Teachers' use of punishment in case of problems is seen as a negative strategy. The possible reason for this result might be that teachers do not have sufficient equipment to deal with problem behaviors.

In general, in this study, it was seen that the verbal strategies were the coping strategies in the problem situations mostly reported by the teachers. Parallel to this finding, it has been emphasized in the literature that most of the teachers use verbal techniques regarding existing problem behaviors (Güven & Cevher, 2005; Öngören-Özdemir & Tepeli, 2016; Sadık, 2004; Uysal et al.,2010).

In this study, the most emphasized strategy after the verbal strategy in the coping strategies reported by the teachers are non-involvement strategies. Teachers stated that they did not intervene when children experienced a problem, and preferred to observe in order to determine when and how often this problem behavior occurs. In line with this finding, Sadik (2002) emphasized that teachers should try to understand the underlying causes of the behaviors in order to be able to successfully manage undesirable behaviors. In this context, it can be said that it is an appropriate method for teachers to make observations to understand the cause of the problem. Some teachers, on the other hand, stated that when children exhibit problem behaviors, they refer children to the school's guidance service. In addition, the teachers stated that they tried to solve the problem behavior, but when they did not solve it, they direct child to guidance. There are studies supporting and not supporting this finding in the literature. For example, Martin et al.(1999) stated that teachers received professional help to manage undesirable behaviors, while Uysal et al. (2010) stated in their study that teachers preferred non-physical behaviors instead of getting help from experts or using positive strategies in the face of unwanted behavior. They stated that they tend to punish and send the student to another class or teacher. This inconsistency in the

literature may be due to the contradiction between teachers' discourses and actions. The reason why teachers use this strategy might be that they aim to get quick results instead of making an effort to give the child social problem solving skills.

Finally, a small number of teachers stated that they use the indirect intervention method and guide children to get support from their peers to solve problems. This finding is consistent with previous studies indicating that the problem behavior is reduced if the child who exhibits undesirable behavior receives peer support (Schuster, 1999; Schwartz et al., 2000).

In general, it is seen that some of the strategies reported by the teachers are not seen as functional to support children's social problem solving skills. For this reason, it might be thought that teachers do not have sufficient knowledge about coping strategies.

5.1.5. Consistency between self-reported and observed social problem behaviors

In this study, teachers stated that they saw aggressive behavior mostly in the classroom during the interview. Similarly, in the observations, it was found that the most observed behavior was aggression. In this context, it can be said that teachers' views and children's behaviors are consistent. However, in general, the problem behaviors that emerged in the observations consisted of six categories. These categories are aggression, behaviors that disrupt group activities, not respecting right of others, communication problems and others. Within these categories, a total of thirty-six types of behavior problems were observed in the observations. However, in the interviews, the teachers stated that only six of these behaviors were seen in their classrooms. Therefore, in this study, it was found that there was an inconsistency between the problem behavior reported by teachers and observed problem behaviors in the classroom. This finding is similar to previous studies in the literature. In previous studies, it was determined that there was an inconsistency between the answers given by preschool teachers about problem behaviors and the problem behaviors displayed by children in the classroom (Akıtürk, 2020; Uysal, et al., 2010). The possible reason for this inconsistency might be interpreted as that preschool teachers do not have sufficient knowledge about defining, specifying and recognizing problem behaviors.

In this study, preschool teachers stated that the most common problem behavior in the classroom was physical aggression. However, in the observations it was found that relational and verbal aggression behaviors frequently occurred in classrooms. It was noted that these behaviors mostly occur during free play time. In the study conducted by Samuelsson and Johansson (2009) with 258 preschool teachers, concluded that teachers perceive play as independent from learning and think that children do not need the presence of teachers while playing, and this thought may prevent teachers from dealing with children during play. However, many literature findings show that teachers can minimize the problem situation among children by regulating the educational environment during play without the children noticing (Farmer et al., 2011; Hughes & Chen, 2011; Luckner & Pianta, 2011). However, in the observations made in the current study, it was noted that all of the observed teachers were preparing the next activity or talking to the teacher of the other class who came to the classroom, instead of observing the children during the free play time and taking actions to support positive peer communication. In some cases, they have even been outside the classroom. This is also supported by studies in the literature. For example, as cited by Kontos (1999), Erwin et al. (1993) found that teachers mostly engage in behaviors that are not related to the education process (taking care of administrative work, organizing the classroom, chatting with adults) in children's free time. From this point of view, the possible reason for the inconsistency between the self-reported and observed problem behaviors in the current study might be that the teachers did not notice the behaviors because they were not interested in children in their free time. However, the fact that the relational and verbal aggression behavior of children, which mostly occurs in play time, is not noticed by the teachers, may lead to an increase in these problem situations, so it is worth examining the reasons why teachers do not participate in children's free play.

5.1.6. Consistency between teachers' self-reported strategies and observed strategies towards children's social problem behaviors

In this study, it was seen that most of the strategies that teachers stated in the interviews were used for the social problems of the children in the observations. Besides, it was found that there were more inconsistencies between teachers' self-reported strategies

and the observed strategies than consistent ones. In this section, the researcher discusses four findings that caused the inconsistencies to occur.

The first finding is that teachers said that they made observations in case of problems and direct children to the school guidance service, but these strategies were not observed in the classrooms. Although a teacher stated that in order to reduce the problem behavior of children, she first made observations to find out where the problem originated. However, it was observed that when children experienced social problems, she mostly ignored the behavior and used give an eye. Two teachers, on the other hand, stated that if the children could not solve their social problem behavior, they received help from the school guidance service, but no such practice was found in the observations. The possible explanation for this situation might be that the observations are made on one day of the week and the practice of getting help is done on the days when the observation is not made. In addition, a teacher stated that she directed the children to the problem solving process in the interviews and talked to the child in case of a problem, but during the observations, it was observed that this teacher frequently used the strategies of warning, calling and remind rule, but did not apply the strategies she mentioned. At the same time, it was noted that this teacher often stated during the observations that her workload was too high and that she could not complete the educational plan during the day. This finding is supported by the literature. In this regard, Chien and Hui (2010) stated that the limited time allocated for various activities can be an obstacle for teachers. Similarly, Wang et al. (2008) stated that factors such as limited time to complete the program, excessive workload, parent and management expectations may prevent the teacher from performing the practices that they believe to be correct. The possible explanation to this result might be that workload may prevent teachers from performing the strategies they want to implement.

The second finding is that the strategies did not mentioned by teachers in the interviews are frequently used in the observations. Among these strategies, keeping the child physically close, changing the place of children, warning, taking out material and doing the same thing to the child are the most observed. It has been observed that teachers use this strategy to quickly end the conflict or problem situation between children. This finding is supported by the literature. Similarly, Bayer et al. (1995)

stated that when children experience a social problem, teachers use various practices such as warning and verbal commands that do not encourage children's participation in the solution of social problems. In addition, it was emphasized that if the problem intensifies, teachers physically terminate the problem behavior by restraining, removing the object and separating the child, emphasizing that teachers should take advantage of this as an advantage instead of quickly ending the problem in social problem situations. On the contrary, studies in the literature show that teachers who provide comforting practices to children in case of problems, thus helping children manage their emotions, can facilitate simple social problem-solving skills in young children (Gloeckler et al., 2014). A possible reason for the inconsistency between teachers' self-reported and observed strategies might be that teachers know some strategies to support skill development in case of problems, but they are concerned about children's safety and find quick solutions on behalf of children to avoid physical contact.

The third finding is that only one of the teachers stated that she used asking for the child to apologize in the interview, but it was observed that all teachers used this strategy. This finding is supported by various studies in the literature. In some studies, it was found that teachers engage in controlling strategies, such as forcing children to apologize, rather than facilitating children's problem-solving skills by including all children, listening to perspectives, and reaching consensus (Gloeckler & Cassell, 2012; Kovach & Da Ros, 1998; Williams et al., 2010). From this point of view, it is thought that the use of controlling teacher techniques as a quick solution in case of problems may encourage children to trust teachers unintentionally under difficult conditions, and this may motivate children to need someone else instead of relying on themselves in problem solving. At the same time, when teachers use this strategy, children may think that the problem can be solved easily by apologizing directly, without having an idea about what the problem is and how it should be solved, and this may not support them in reducing the problem. Since in this current study, it is thought that children's motivation in this direction will prevent the development of social problem-solving skills.

The last finding in this study is that although the teachers did not report it during the interview, they used ignoring and giving an eye in children's problem situations. It is

thought that this contradiction arises because the teachers know that these practices are incorrect or do it unconsciously. This finding is also supported by the literature (Gloeckler et al., 2014; Güder et al., 2018). For example, Gloeckler et al. (2014) conducted a qualitative, descriptive study focused on teacher practices with toddlers during problem-solving opportunities in four classrooms. As a result, it was found that teachers used inappropriate interventions such as ignoring, scolding and using sarcasm in children's social problem situations. Moreover, in the current study, it was observed that children repeated the same problem behavior in a short time after these interventions. In this regard, it can be said that teachers need support in using effective strategies in order to provide children with problem-solving skills in children's problem situations.

In general, when we examine the consistency between the views of the participants, self-reported and their real practices, it is seen that teachers believed in the importance of social problem solving in children at an early age, they were aware of supportive practices, but some of their practices contradicted their views. In order to explain this contradiction, many factors are mentioned in the literature. For example, Wen et al. (2011) emphasized that professional education and experience equip the individual with high-level knowledge and thought and can help the teacher understand the distinction between what he believes he should do and what he actually does. For this reason, it is thought that the professional training of teachers to develop their views and practices will have a positive effect on the development of social problem solving skills in children. Last possible explanation for inconsistency may be that preschool teachers have difficulties in transforming their knowledge into practice. It is also stated that teachers need to professional development to support children's social skills (Gloeckler & Cassell, 2012; Orgoványi-Gajdos, 2016). From this point of view, it is thought that teachers may have deficiencies in the defined teachers' competencies.

5.2. Implications

With this qualitative study, the researcher revealed findings that can be considered important. In this part, various implications for teachers, school administrators, teacher education programs, researchers and the Ministry of National Education are discussed through the findings.

Firstly, in this study, preschool teachers stated that the early childhood period causes permanent learning in children's lives, it is the most suitable time for skill teaching, and it is difficult to acquire skills that cannot be acquired later on. They also agree that social problem solving skills should be taught to children. However, it has been found that teachers do not have sufficient knowledge about the place of social problem solving skills in the child's life, its importance for their future life and the difficulties they may encounter in their future life if they cannot acquire this skill. Since it is thought that being aware of the importance of social problem solving skills can motivate teachers to support this skill, it is recommended to organize various trainings for teachers in order to increase their knowledge level on this subject.

Secondly, in the current study, when teachers explained the skill that they thought was related to children's social problem-solving skills, most of them emphasized the importance of these skills in order not to create social problems rather than increasing children's social problem-solving skills. Considering that children will constantly encounter social problems in their future lives, it is thought that teachers considering children's social problems as an opportunity for the development of problem-solving skills rather than preventing children from experiencing social problems may support the development of this skill. For this reason, in teacher education programs, it can be ensured that teacher candidates have both theoretical and applied knowledge in order to effectively evaluate the problems for skill teaching.

Third, in this study, all of the teachers stated that the reason why children could not develop their social problem-solving skills was the parents. It is known that the parents, including parental attitudes and family structures, has an impact on children's social problem-solving skills (Kesicioğlu, 2015). In this context, it is recommended that teachers and school management use family recognition forms to learn about the attitude of the family and the factors that may affect the development of the child related to the family, to make family visits, to be informed about this issue and to make the necessary interventions to support children's social problem solving skills.

Moreover, in this study, only one teacher stated that the reason for children's inability to develop their social problem-solving skills may be the teacher, and that teachers' wrong strategies for children's social problems may be an effective reason. Since

teachers see children as a mirror of the family, they attribute all responsibility to the family and do not think of themselves as the reason why children cannot develop their social problem-solving skills. However, throughout the observations made in this study, it was observed that teachers used different strategies that would prevent the development of social problem-solving skills in children. For this reason, teachers should be informed that they have a very important role in supporting children's social problem-solving skills. Even the school administration should be informed about this issue to support the teachers.

In the current study, it was found that teachers were not aware of the achievements that would support social problem solving skills in the National Early Childhood Education Program. This finding shows that teachers do not use the program as intended. For this reason, it may be beneficial for the Ministry of National Education to inform the teachers about the effective use of the achievements and indicators in the current 2013 program in developing social problem solving skills and to prepare a training.

Another implication about the program is that teachers suggested that trips should be included more in the program in order to improve children's social problem-solving skills. Teachers stated that thanks to field trips, children will encounter problems in different environments, gain experience and have a rich learning experience. This finding may be an idea for program developers.

In addition, teachers stated that they did not have theoretical knowledge to support social problem solving skills in children and they learned by trying in practice. They also emphasized that they need to be directed and increase their knowledge in order to improve children's social problem solving skills. In addition, considering the compatibility with the literature by examining the activities that teachers reported; it can be said that methods such as role-playing, drama, games and stories, which are used other than direct verbal expression, are effective methods in supporting children's social problem-solving skills and that teachers are aware of supporting this skill in children by using these methods. However, considering the small number of participants expressing this, it is seen that teachers lack knowledge about activities and their effects on social problem solving. In this context, it is thought that an activity

book specially prepared for social problem solving skills in the national early childhood program may be useful.

Another implication is that there is inconsistency between the self-reported and observed problem behaviors. The observed reason for this inconsistency is that the behaviors mostly occur during free play when the teachers are busy with non-educational work. However, the fact that children's problems, including relational and verbal aggression behaviors that occur mostly during playtime, are not noticed by the teachers may cause an increase in these problem situations. For this reason, it may be suggested to researchers to examine the reasons why teachers do not participate in children's free play.

Furthermore, in this study, only one teacher stated that she used field trips to support children's social problem-solving skills. On the other hand, previous studies have shown that field trips meet children's meaningful learning needs for problem solving and create permanent and positive changes in their social skills (Krahenbuhl, 2014; Smith-Walters et al. 2014). For this reason, it is recommended that teachers integrate field trips into educational activities and increase their frequency.

As the last but by no means the least important implication, the present study found inconsistency between teachers' self-reported strategies and their observed strategies towards children's social problem situations. It was observed that the teachers did not use the strategies that would support children's social problem solving skills, which they stated that they frequently used in the interviews. Moreover, they frequently used the strategies not evaluated as appropriate that they did not express in the interviews. In this regard, one task belongs to researchers to investigate the reason for the inconsistency between teachers' actions and discourses. In addition, since it is believed that the vocational training of teachers to develop their strategies will have a positive effect on the development of social problem-solving skills in children, it is recommended that these training courses be planned accordingly.

5.3. Recommendations for Further Studies

In this study, the views of in-service teachers on children's social problem-solving skills were taken. In future research, a comparison study can be made by taking the

opinions of senior university students on this subject. In addition, the content of the courses given in the education faculties of universities can be examined in terms of social problem solving skills.

This qualitative study focused on teachers' views and practices concerning children's acquisition of social problem solving skills. In future studies, the outcomes of the education programs and learning processes prepared to inform preschool teachers about social problem solving skills on teachers and children can be investigated with experimental methods.

Also, future studies can be carried out with data collection tools containing multiple sources (observations, interviews, documents and reports, etc.) in order to examine the relationship between preschool teachers' views on social problem solving skills and different variables (such as classroom management, professional attitude, temperament, self-regulation, etc.)

In future studies, it is recommended to organize training and conferences to improve teachers' theoretical and practical knowledge, skills and experience regarding social problem solving skills in the early childhood period and to ensure the active participation of teachers in a systematic way.

Educational books can be created especially by experts in the field of child development and education and early childhood education, for both teachers and families, including activities that support the development of children's social problem-solving skills.

The final recommendation for future studies relates to the participants. This study was conducted with teachers working in public or private schools in Trabzon. It may therefore also be useful to get the opinions of teachers in other provinces about children's social problem solving skills. In this way, it can be ensured that their views are evaluated in terms of contextual differences. Also, both male and female teachers participated in the interview part of this study. However, the observation was carried out only with female teachers. The second suggestion is that future research should observe the strategies of both female and male teachers regarding social problems. In this way, the gender variable can be addressed in the practice dimension.

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A. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

1.Yaşınız: _____

2.Cinsiyetiniz:

3.Eğitim durumunuz:

( ) Kız meslek lisesi

( ) Ön lisans (2 yıllık)

( ) Lisans tamamlama (2 + 2 yıllık)

( ) Lisans (4 yıllık)

Diğer (Belirtiniz) _____

4. En son mezun olduğunuz bölümün adını belirtiniz.

( ) Çocuk Gelişimi ve Eğitimi

( ) Okul Öncesi Eğitimi Öğretmenliği / Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği

( ) Diğer (Belirtiniz) _____

5. Okul öncesi öğretmeni olarak ne kadar süredir çalışıyorsunuz?

( ) 2- 5 yıl

( ) 5-10 yıl

( ) 10-15 yıl

( ) 15-20 yıl

( ) 20 yıldan fazla

6. Görev yaptığınız kurum türü: Devlet ( ) Özel( )

7. Ne kadar süredir bu kurumda görev yapmaktasınız ?_____

8. Şu an öğretmeni olduğunuz sınıfın yaş grubu nedir? 3-4 ( ) 4-5( ) 5-6( ) Diğer: (Belirtiniz)

9. Şu ana kadar hangi yaş grubundaki çocuklarla çalıştınız?

10.Eğitiminiz boyunca çocuklarda sosyal problem çözme becerisi ile ilgili ders(ler) aldınız mı?

Aldıysanız içeriği ne yöndeydi belirtiniz.

Evet: _____

_____

Hayır: _____

B. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Sosyal problem çözme kavramını nasıl tanımlarsınız?

2. Sosyal problem çözme becerisi denilince aklınıza hangi beceriler geliyor?

3. Sosyal problem çözme becerisi gelişmiş bir çocuğun özelliklerini nasıl tanımlarsınız?

4. Sosyal problem çözme becerisinin kazandırılmasında en önemli yaş grubunun hangisi olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?

5.Çocuklara sosyal problem çözme becerisi kazandırmak için etkinlikler yaptırıyor musunuz? Cevabınız evet ise bu etkinliklerden kısaca bahseder misiniz?

6.Sınıfınızda en çok karşılaştığınız sosyal problem davranışları nelerdir?

Şimdi size kısaca sosyal problem çözme kavramının tanımını vermek, sosyal problem becerisi içerisinde yer alan becerileri ve problem davranışların tanımını vermek istiyorum. Birazdan soracağım sorulara, bu tanımlardan yola çıkarak daha rahat cevap verebileceğinizi düşünüyorum.

Sosyal problem çözme; Bu kavram günlük sosyal hayatta karşımıza çıkan anlaşmazlıkların engellenmesi, sorunların karşılıklı kabul edilerek ve olumlu yönde çözülmesi için alternatif yollar üretmek ve stratejiler belirtmek için kullanılan bir terimdir (Berk,2013). Ek olarak sosyal hayatta karşımıza çıkan bu problemi çözebilmek için kişilerin bilişsel, duyuşsal ve davranışsal yeterliliğini kullandığı bir basamaktır (Nezu, D'Zurilla ve Nezu, 2012):

Problem davranış; Çocuklar için tanımlanan problem davranış diğer insanlarla iletişimine engel olan, çevresine zarar veren ve çocuğun öğrenmesine engel olan sürekli davranışlardır. Çocukların sınıf içinde yaşadıkları sosyal problem davranışları genellikle saldırganlık, tehdit, paylaşmamak, grup etkinliklerine katılmamak ve ağlamak olarak görülmektedir (Kesicioğlu,2015).

Sosyal problem çözme becerileri içerisinde öz farkındalık, duyguların anlaşılması, öfkenin nasıl yönetileceği, perspektif alma, empati, olumlu davranış ve olumlu ilişkiler kurma yer alır (Kaltwasser vd., 2017).

7.Yukarıdaki tanımdan yola çıkarak, sosyal problem çözme kavramı hakkındaki düşünceleriniz değişti mi, eklemek veya çıkarmak istediğiniz herhangi bir şey var mı? Çocukların erken yaşta sosyal problem çözme becerisi kazanması neden önemlidir?

8.Çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerisini geliştirememe sebebi ne olabilir?

9.Sınıfta sosyal problem davranışı ile karşılaştığınızda nasıl bir yol izliyorsunuz?

10. Eğitim programı sosyal problem çözme becerisine ne kadar önem veriyor? Programda bu beceriyi destekleyen kazanımlar neler olabilir?

11. Son olarak eğer imkânınız olsa, sosyal problem çözme becerisini desteklemek için okul öncesi eğitimi programında bir değişiklik yapmak ister miydiniz? Evet, ise, ne tür bir değişiklik olurdu?

C. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

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APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

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ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

Sayı: 28620816   / 268

23 Haziran 2021

Konu   : Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi   : İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Prof. Dr. Feyza Tantekin Erden

Danışmanlığını yürüttüğünüz Gizem Nur Şakar'ın "OKUL ÖNCESİ ÇOCUKLARIN SOSYAL PROBLEM ÇÖZME BECERİLERİ: ÖĞRETMEN GÖRÜŞLERİNE GÖRE FENOMONOLOJİK BİR ÇALIŞMA" başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve **268-ODTU-2021** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.

Dr.Öğretim Üyesi Şerife SEVİNÇ
İAEK Başkan Vekili

D. APPROVAL OF THE MINISTIRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION ETHICS COMMITTEE

T.C.
TRABZON VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : E-82438636-605.99-35486955   25/10/2021
Konu : Uygulama İzni
        (Gizem Nur ŞAKAR)

VALİLİK MAKAMINA

Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Temel Eğitim Anabilim Dalı Okul Öncesi Eğitimi yüksek lisans programı öğrencisi Gizem Nur ŞAKAR'ın, Prof. Dr. Feyza TANTEKİN ERDEN'in danışmanlığında yürütmekte olduğu **"Okul Öncesi Çocukların Sosyal Problem Çözme Becerileri: Öğretmen Görüşlerine Göre Fenomonolojik Bir Çalışma"** başlıklı tez çalışması kapsamında ekli listedeki okul/kurumlarda görev yapan okul öncesi öğretmenleriyle anket çalışması yapma ve bu öğretmenler arasından belirlediği 3 öğretmenle gözlem çalışması yapma isteği Müdürlüğümüz Araştırma İzinleri Değerlendirme Komisyonu tarafından incelenmiştir.

Bahsi geçen çalışmanın eğitim öğretimi aksatmayacak şekilde; 2021–2022 eğitim öğretim yılında Covid-19 pandemisi kapsamında alınması gereken tedbirler dikkate alınarak yapılması gerekmektedir.

Araştırmacının 2020/2 sayılı genelge çerçevesinde hareket etmesi, **izinsiz herhangi bir ses ve görüntü kaydı yapılmasına kesinlikle izin verilmemesi,** elde edilen verilerin çalışma kapsamı dışında kullanılmaması, uygulama yapmak için kurum müdürünün onayı ve ilgili öğretmenlerin onamı alınıp, mühürlü veri toplama araçlarıyla uygulamanın yapılması ve sonuçların bir örneğinin Ar-Ge birimine teslim edilmesi kaydıyla, çalışmanın İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü sorumluluğunda ve yetkisinde, okul müdürlerinin de uygun göreceği zamanlarda ve kontrolünde uygulanması Müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmektedir.

Makamlarınızca da uygun görüldüğü takdirde olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Hızır AKTAŞ
Milli Eğitim Müdürü

OLUR
Ömer ŞAHİN
Vali a.
Vali Yardımcısı

E. CONSENT FORM

Değerli öğretmenim,

Bu çalışma, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Okul Öncesi Eğitimi yüksek lisans programı öğrencisi Gizem Nur Şakar'ın ''Okul Öncesi Çocukların Sosyal Problem Çözme Becerileri: Öğretmen Görüşlerine Göre Fenomonolojik Bir Çalışma '' başlıklı tezi kapsamında, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Temel Eğitim Bölümü Erken Çocukluk Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı Öğretim Üyesi Prof. Dr. Feyza Tantekin Erden'in danışmanlığında yürütülmektedir.

Çalışmanın amacı öğretmenlerin çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerisiyle ilgili görüşlerini almak, sınıftaki sosyal problem davranışlarını ve öğretmenlerin bu beceriye ilişkin sınıfta karşılaştıkları sorunları belirlemektir.

Çalışmaya katılım gönüllülük esaslıdır. Görüşmede sizden kimlik belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Araştırma bilimsel bir nitelik taşıdığından soruların sizin için en uygun şekilde cevaplanması araştırmanın güvenilirliği açısından önemlidir. Soruların doğru ya da yanlış cevabı olmadığından deneyimlerinizden yola çıkarak cevap vermeniz beklenmektedir. Araştırmaya verilecek yanıtlar gizli tutulacak olup, sağladığınız veriler gönüllü katılım formlarında toplanan kimlik bilgileri ile eşleştirilmeyecektir. Görüşmenin geçerli olabilmesi için tüm sorulara yanıt verilmesi gerekmektedir.

Bu anketi cevaplayarak yürüttüğüm çalışmaya değerli katkılarınızdan dolayı şimdiden teşekkür ederim. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Temel Eğitim Bölümü öğretim üyelerinden Prof. Dr. Feyza Tantekin Erden (e-posta: tfeyza@metu.edu.tr) ya da yüksek lisans öğrencisi Gizem Nur Şakar (e-posta: gizem.sakar@metu.edu.tr) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Gizem Nur Şakar

Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi

Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi

Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda kesip çıkabileceğimi biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayınlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.

İsim- Soyisim   Tarih   İmza

F. OBSERVATION FORM

Bu gözlem formunda gözlem yapılan sınıfın öğretmenin katılımcı numarası yazılacaktır. Gözlemler sırasında çocukların sınıfta meydana gelen sosyal problem davranışları Davranış (B) bölümüne yazılacak, bu davranışın ortaya çıktığı yer ve zaman bilgisi belirtilerek bu davranıştan önce ortaya çıkan olaylar Davranış Öncesi (A) bölümüne yazılacak, son olarak davranış karşısında öğretmenin bu davranışa verdiği tepki Davranış Sonrası(C) bölümüne yazılacaktır.

Katılımcının kodu	P…
Gözlem tarihi	../../….
Gözlem saat aralığı	**Örn;** **09.40-17.00**

Ortam	Davranış Öncesi(A)	Davranış (B)	Davranış Sonrası (C)

G. OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Gözlemci:

Gözlemlenen Öğretmen Kodu:

Gözlem Tarihi:

🔶 Aşağıdaki tabloda okul öncesi çocuklarının sınıf içinde sergiledikleri düşünülen sosyal problemler yer almaktadır. Gözlem sırasında sınıfta ortaya çıkan sosyal davranışlar ve öğretmenin tepkisi ilgili alana işaretlenecektir.

Sınıfta görülebilecek olası problem davranışlar	Çocuklarda bu davranış görüldü	Çocuklarda bu davranış görülmedi	Sınıfın öğretmeni davranışı gördü/du ydu	Sınıfın öğretmeni davranışı görmedi/duymadı	Sınıfın öğretmeni davranışa tepki oluşturdu	Sınıfın öğretmeni davranışa tepki oluşturmadı
Bir gruba veya bireye zarar vermeyi amaçlayan fiziksel veya sözel saldırganlık						
Başkalarının haklarına saygı göstermeme						

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(başkasının sırasını almak, elinden materyalini almak,vb)								
Grup etkinliklerini sabote etmek								
Grup oyunlarında lider olamadığında oyunu bozmak								
Karşılıklı istenilen amaca ulaşamama								
Anksiyete/ içe dönük davranışlar (grup oyunlarından kaçınma, bireysel oyunları tercih etme, hareketsizlik, ihtiyaçlarını ifade edememe, vb.)								
Kıskançlık davranışları								
Akran baskısı								
Başkalarıyla alay etme								
Yaşıtlarını veya yetişkinleri tehdit etmek								

Ağlamak						
Uyumsuzluk						
Karşısındaki dinlememek						
Kötü söz söylemek						
İletişim kurmada zorluk						
Kendini ifade edememek						
Diğer (Aşağıda belirtiniz)						

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ÇOCUKLARIN SOSYAL PROBLEM ÇÖZME BECERİSİ: OKUL ÖNCESİ ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN GÖRÜŞ VE UYGULAMALARININ FENOMENOLOJİK BİR ÇALIŞMASI

GİRİŞ

Çocuklar günlük hayatta tıpkı yetişkinler gibi ebeveynleri, akranları ve diğer bireylerle olan ilişkilerinde çeşitli sosyal problemler yaşayabilmekte, ilişki kurma ve sürdürmede güçlük çekebilmektedirler (Polat &Yağbasan, 2019). Sosyal-duygusal gelişimin içinde yer alan sosyal problem çözme becerileri, çocukların günlük hayatta karşılaştıkları sorunlarla baş etmelerinde önemli bir yere sahiptir (Dereli, 2008). Sosyal problem çözme becerisi, bireyin günlük hayatta karşılaşılan problem durumlarıyla etkili baş etme yollarını bulmak için oluşturduğu bilişsel-davranışsal-duyuşsal bir süreçtir (D'Zurilla & Nezu, 2001). Araştırmalar, erken çocukluk döneminde sosyal problem çözme becerilerini kazanamayan çocukların gelecek hayatlarında saldırganlık, akran reddi, suça sürüklenme, okul fobisi, istismar ve yetişkinlikte kötü ruh sağlığı gibi zorluklarla karşılaşabileceğini vurgulamaktadır (Tremblay, 2000; Carpenter-Rich, Shepherd & Nangle, 2008). Sosyal problem çözme becerisi kazanan çocuklar ise, kendine güvenen, kendi başına karar verebilen, daha kolay arkadaşlıklar kurabilen, etkili iletişim becerilerine sahip, öfkelerini kontrol edebilen girişimci bireyler olarak tanımlanmaktadırlar (Denham, 2006).

Erken çocukluk eğitimi, çocuklara sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin erken yaşlarda kazandırılmasında etkilidir (Joseph & Strain, 2010). Erken çocukluk eğitiminde öğretmenler sosyal problemlere alternatif çözümler bulma konusunda çocuklara destek olarak, onların sosyal problem çözme becerilerini, sosyal problemlere karşı tutum ve davranışlarını geliştirmelerinde önemli rol oynamaktadırlar (Gloeckler, vd.,

2014). Sosyal beceri eksiklikleri olan çocuklar, sosyal çatışmaları çözmeye çalışmak için genellikle zorlayıcı davranışlar veya sosyal geri çekilme gibi uygun olmayan çözümler kullanırlar (Bernard-Opitz vd., 2001). Öğretmenlerin çocukların ortaya çıkan sosyal problemlerine uygun müdahaleleri, çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin gelişiminde olumlu değişiklikler meydana getirebilir (Kaytez & Kadan, 2016). Ayrıca öğretmenler işbirliği, empati ve dayanışma gibi olumlu sosyal davranışları içeren etkinliklerle çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerini destekleyebilirler (Yaralı & Özkan, 2016). Bu nedenle okul öncesi öğretmenleri yukarıda bahsedilen etkinlikleri sağlayabilecek önemli kişilerdir.

Erken çocukluk döneminde kazanılan sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin çocuğun hayatındaki önemi ve öğretmenlerin sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin gelişiminde önemli bir etkiye sahip olduğu göz ardı edilemez. Bu nedenle erken çocukluk döneminde çocuklara hizmet veren öğretmenlerin görüşlerinin değerlendirilmesi ve uygulamalarının gözlemlenmesi önemlidir.

Problem Durumu

Erken çocukluk, sosyal gelişim alanında kişilerarası ilişkiler ve sosyal problem çözme ile ilgili becerilerin kazanılması ve dolayısıyla ortaya çıkan veya ileride çıkabilecek sorunların çözülmesi açısından kritik bir dönemdir (Özmen, 2013). Erken çocukluk eğitimi kurumlarında problem yaşanması durumunda zorlayıcı davranışlar sergileyen çocukların sayısı konusunda artan bir endişe vardır (Holtz vd., 2015). Önlem alınmazsa bu sorunlar artarak devam edecektir (Güder vd., 2018). Sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin gelişmesinde veli, öğretmen ve çevresel faktörlerin önemli faktörler olduğu vurgulanmaktadır (Kayılı & Arı, 2015; Cüceloğlu, 1998; Elias & Tobias, 2005). Bunu göz önünde bulundurarak söz konusu faktörlerdeki eksiklik çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin gelişmesini engelleyebilir. Çocukların eğitiminde kilit rol oynayan öğretmenlerin, çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerisinin gelişimini engelleyebilecek faktörlere ilişkin görüşlerinin bilinmesi bu engellerin önüne geçebilmek açısından önemli görülmektedir.

Çocukların erken çocukluk eğitimi kurumlarında saldırgan davranışlar da dahil olmak üzere sosyal problem çözümlerinin uygun olmamasının nedenlerinden biri, yanlış stratejilerin öğretmen tarafından bilinçsizce pekiştirilmesidir (Dereli, 2008; Güder vd.,

2018). Öğretmenler, çocukların ortaya çıkan sosyal problemlerine uygun stratejilerle yanıt verdiğinde çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerileri gelişebilir (Anlıak & Dinçer, 2005; Kaytez & Kadan, 2016; Çalışkan vd., 2006; Berk, 2013). Ne yazık ki, öğretmenlerin çocukların problemli davranışlarına yönelik stratejilerine ilişkin daha önce yapılan araştırmalar, öğretmenlerin problem durumunda çocukların sosyal problemlerin çözümüne katılımını teşvik etmeyen çeşitli stratejiler kullandıklarını göstermiştir (Gloeckler & Cassell, 2012; Williams vd., 2010). Okul öncesi öğretmenleri çocuklara istenilen becerileri kazandırmak, öğrenilen davranış ve becerileri pekiştirmekle sorumlu ilk kişiler arasındadır (Gürsoy vd., 2012) ve erken çocukluk bu amaç için kritik bir dönemdir. Bu nedenle bu çalışmada öğretmenlerin çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerine ilişkin görüşleri; çocukların sosyal problemlerine yönelik stratejileri ve kendi bildirdikleri eğitim etkinlikleri incelenmiştir. Ayrıca bu çalışma, sadece öğretmenlerin görüş ve uygulamalarıyla sınırlı kalmayıp, çocukların sosyal problemlerine yönelik öğretmenlerin kendi bildirdikleri ve gerçek stratejileri arasındaki tutarlılığı ortaya koyarak bu alandaki alanyazına katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Çalışmanın Amacı

Bu çalışma, çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerine ilişkin okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin görüş ve uygulamalarını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Çalışmanın Önemi

Mevcut çalışma çeşitli nedenlerle önemlidir. İlk olarak sosyal problem çözme becerisi erken çocukluk döneminde geliştirilmesi gereken önemli bir sosyal beceri olarak kabul edilmektedir (Ömeroğlu vd., 2014). Gerek ulusal gerekse uluslararası araştırmalarda erken çocukluk dönemindeki çocukların sosyal becerilerine yönelik çalışmaların niteliğinin artırılması için öğretmenlerle sosyal becerilerin geliştirilmesine yönelik çalışmaların yapılması gerektiği vurgulanmaktadır. Örneğin Özyürek ve Ceylan (2014), çocukların sosyal becerilerinin gelişimi için okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin ihtiyaçlarının belirlenmesine yönelik kapsamlı bir araştırmaya ihtiyaç duyulduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Aksoy (2021), araştırmacıların okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sosyal becerilere ilişkin bilgi, beceri ve deneyimlerini geliştirmeye yönelik görüş ve uygulamalarını gözlem, görüşme ve dokümantasyon gibi çok kaynaklı veri toplama

araçlarını kullanarak incelemelerini önermiştir. Gloeckler, Cassell ve Malkus (2014) başka bir çalışmada okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocukların sosyal problem çözmeye katılımını kolaylaştıran uygulamalarının, eğitim içeriklerinin ve yöntemlerinin ileride yapılacak araştırmalarda incelenmesini önermiştir. Tüm bu öneriler göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, bu çalışma, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerine ilişkin görüşlerinin, kendi bildirimlerine dayanan ve fiili uygulamalarının birden fazla veri toplama kaynağı kullanılarak incelenmesi açısından alanyazına katkı sağlamak amacıyla yola çıkmıştır.

Ayrıca öğretmenlerin görüşleri, çocukların herhangi bir beceriyi öğrenmelerinin dikkate değer göstergeleridir (Wylie & Thomson, 2003). Öğretmenlerin sosyal becerilere yükledikleri anlam, onların eğitim uygulamalarını nasıl takip edeceklerini ortaya koymaktadır (Uslu & Genç, 2021). Erken çocukluk dönemindeki çocukların bazı becerileri öğrenebilmeleri, öğretmenlerin inanç ve yaklaşımları ile yakından ilişkilidir (Bektaş, 2019). Bu anlamda çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerine ilişkin öğretmen görüşlerinin alınması ve uygulamalarının incelenmesi önemlidir. Ayrıca araştırma, öğretmenlerin çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerine ilişkin görüşleri ile eğitim uygulamaları arasındaki ilişkiyi ortaya koyabileceği için de önemli görülmektedir.

Ek olarak, bazı araştırmalar yalnızca öğretmenlerin belirli bir konudaki inançlarına, görüşlerine ve tutumlarına odaklanmıştır. Bu nedenle bazı araştırmalar gelecekte yapılacak araştırmalarda öğretmenlerin inançlarının uygulamalarıyla birlikte ele alınması gerektiğini önermektedir (La Paro vd., 2009). Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, sadece okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin görüşlerine değil, öğretmenlerin uygulamalarına da odaklanarak bu alandaki alanyazına katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Ayrıca öğretmenler çocukların karşılaştıkları sosyal problemlerde çatışma çözme becerilerinin çerçevesini oluşturacak davranış kalıpları oluşturmak için çocukları günlük rutinlerinde problem çözme sürecine dahil edecek stratejiler uygulamalıdır (Butterfield, 2002, as cited in Gloeckler et al., 2014). Bununla birlikte, Türkiye'de öğretmen stratejileri üzerine yapılan araştırmalar, çocukların sorunlarına yönelik stratejilerin ve öğretmenlerin ürettiği çözümlerin işlevsel olmadığını ortaya koymuştur (Akgün, vd., 2011; Güder vd., 2018). Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin görüşleri ve

uygulamaları hakkında bilgi edinmek, geleceğin profesyonellerinin bu tür uygulamalardan kaçınmasına yardımcı olabilir. Ayrıca bu çalışmada öğretmenlerin kendi bildirdikleri uygulamaları ile beraber fiili uygulamaları da incelenmiştir. Bu nedenle, hem öğretmenlerin stratejilerinin daha kapsamlı ele alınması hem de öğretmenler tarafından bildirilen ve fiili uygulamaları arasındaki tutarlılığın ortaya koyulması açısından önemlidir.

Dahası, öğretmenlerin ulusal müfredata ve sınıf ortamında uygulanan eğitim programlarına önemli ölçüde hakim olmaları nedeniyle, çocukların gelişimine ilişkin görüşleri oldukça takdir edilmektedir (Diakidoy & Kanari, 1999). Öğretmenlerin bu tür becerilerin müfredatta ne kadar yer aldığını bilmesi, hangi kazanımların sosyal problem çözmeyi desteklediğine ilişkin görüşlerini ifade etmesi ve sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin geliştirilmesi açısından programa ilişkin önerileri program geliştiricilere mevcut erken çocukluk eğitimi programının sosyal problem çözme becerisi açısından iyileştirilmesi ve revize edilmesine yönelik bilgiler sağlayacaktır. Öğretmenlerin deneyimlerini araştırmak, öğretmenlerin etkililiğini ve eğitim sistemlerinin kapasitesini etkilediği için oldukça önemlidir (Avvisati, 2018). Ayrıca öğretmenlerin sosyal problem çözme etkinliklerinde kullandıkları yöntem/teknikler becerilerin pratik boyutuna ilişkin deneyimlerini belirleme sürecinde etkilidir. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin hem sosyal problem çözme becerilerine ilişkin görüşlerinin hem de kendi bildirdikleri uygulama deneyimlerinin elde edilmesi, erken çocukluk eğitiminde sosyal becerilerin temsil edilme sürecinin gözlemlenmesinde faydalı olacaktır.

Son olarak, araştırma sonuçları, öğretmenlerin erken çocukluk eğitiminde sosyal problem çözme becerisinin önemi, bu becerilerin neler olduğu, küçük yaş gruplarında önemi konusunda ne bildikleri ve bu becerileri desteklemeye yönelik uygulamaları gibi ele alınmayan bazı konulara dikkat çekerek öğretmenlere çeşitli öğrenme fırsatları sunabilir. Bu noktadan hareketle, mevcut çalışma öğretmenlerde sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin geliştirilmesi konusunda farkındalık ve duyarlılık oluşturmak ve çocuklarda bu becerilerin gelişiminin desteklenmesine dikkat çekmek açısından önemli görülmektedir.

YÖNTEM

Araştırma Soruları

1. Öğretmenlerin sosyal problem çözme konusundaki görüşleri nelerdir?

2. Öğretmenlerin çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerine ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir?

2.a. Sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin çocuklar üzerindeki etkisine ilişkin öğretmenlerin görüşleri nelerdir?

2.b. Erken çocukluk döneminde sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin kazandırılmasının önemine ilişkin öğretmenlerin görüşleri nelerdir?

2.c Erken çocukluk eğitiminde çocukların yaş grubunu dikkate alarak sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin önemine ilişkin öğretmenlerin görüşleri nelerdir?

2.d Öğretmenlerin çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerini geliştirememe nedenlerine ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir?

3. Öğretmenlerin MEB Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programı'nda (2013) sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin yeri hakkındaki görüşleri nelerdir?

3 a. Çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerini geliştirmek için MEB Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programına öğretmenlerin önerileri nelerdir?

4. Öğretmenlerin çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerileriyle ilgili kendi bildirdikleri uygulamaları nelerdir?

4.a. Öğretmenlerin çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerileri hakkında kendi bildirdikleri eğitim faaliyetleri nelerdir?

4.b. Öğretmenlere göre sınıfta en çok deneyimlenen sosyal problem davranışları nelerdir?

4.c. Öğretmenlerin çocukların sosyal problemleriyle başa çıkmada kendi bildirdikleri stratejiler nelerdir?

5. Öğretmenlerin çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerileriyle ilgili gerçek uygulamaları nelerdir?

5.a. Sınıfta en çok gözlemlenen sosyal problem davranışlar nelerdir?

5.b. Öğretmenlerinin çocukların sosyal problemleriyle başa çıkmadaki gerçek stratejileri nelerdir?

6. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin kendi bildirdikleri uygulamaları, gözlemlenen uygulamalarıyla ne ölçüde tutarlıdır?

6.a. En çok deneyimlenen sosyal problemli davranışlar, sınıfta gözlemlenen sosyal problemli davranışlarla ne ölçüde tutarlıdır?

6.b. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocukların sosyal problemlerine yönelik kendi bildirdikleri stratejileri, gerçek stratejileriyle ne ölçüde tutarlıdır?

Araştırma Yöntemi

Bu çalışma, nitel araştırma yöntemleri çerçevesinde bir olgu bilim çalışması olarak yürütülmüştür. Bu çalışmada veriler okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerine ilişkin görüşlerini almak, sınıf içi uygulamalarını ortaya çıkarmak ve detaylı bulgular sağlamak amacıyla yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ve sınıf içi gözlemler aracılığıyla toplanmıştır.

Katılımcılar

Bu çalışma Trabzon ilinde devlete bağlı ve özel anaokullarında görev yapan 15 okul öncesi öğretmeni ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmaya katılacak öğretmenler amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak seçilmiştir. Bu nedenle öğretmenlerin seçiminde bütün öğretmenlerin herhangi bir okul öncesi kurumunda çalışıyor olmaları, en az iki yıl öğretmenlik deneyimleri olması ve araştırmaya istekli ve gönüllü olarak katılıyor olmaları gibi bazı kriterler kullanılmıştır. Katılımcılar için P1'den P15'e kadar kod isimleri kullanılmış ve gerçek isimleri gizli tutulmuştur.

Veri Toplama Araçları

Bu çalışmada veriler, demografik bilgi formu, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme ve sınıf gözlemleri yoluyla toplanmıştır. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin görüşmedeki bazı yanıtları gözlemle zenginleştirilmeye çalışılsa da araştırma sorularının tamamının gözlem verileriyle desteklenmesi amaçlanmamıştır. Görüşme soruları, ilgili alanyazın

incelenerek araştırmacı tarafından oluşturulmuştur. Sorular için okul öncesi eğitimi alanından üç uzman tarafından görüş alınmıştır. Ek olarak, beş katılımcı ile pilot çalışma yürütülmüştür. Uzman görüşü ve pilot çalışma sonuçları göz önüne alınarak görüşme soruları yeniden düzenlenmiş ve son haliyle 11 sorudan oluşmuştur. Aynı süreç gözlem için de yürütülmüştür. Gözlem formları çalışmanın amacı doğrultusunda hazırlanmış ve uzman görüşüne sunulmuştur. Üç öğretmen ile pilot çalışma yapılarak gözlem formlarının amaca uygunluğu, araştırmacı ve ikinci gözlemci arasındaki tutarlılık incelenmiştir.

Görüşme soruları, katılımcıların çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerine ve sınıftaki sosyal problemlere ilişkin görüşlerine yönelik soruları, beceri gelişimini desteklemek için eğitimsel aktivelerine yönelik soruları ve çocukların sosyal problemleriyle baş etmede kullandıkları yöntemlere ilişkin soruları içermektedir. Gözlemde ise öğretmenlerin cevaplarının tutarlılığını doğrulamak, çocukların sosyal problemlerini ve bu problemlere ilişkin öğretmenlerin tepki ve uygulamalarını daha iyi anlamak amacıyla ABC Davranış Formu; öğretmenlerin sınıftaki problem davranışları fark edip tepki verip vermediklerini gözlemlemek amacıyla Gözlem Kontrol Listesi kullanılmıştır.

Veri Toplama Süreci

Üniversite Etik Kurulu ve Milli Eğitim Bakanlığından gerekli izinler alındıktan sonra çalışmaya katılmak için gönüllü olan öğretmenler içerisinde on öğretmen ile görüşmelere başlanmıştır. Her görüşmeden önce araştırmacı tüm katılımcılara çalışmasını anlatmış ve katılımcılar gönüllü onam formunu imzalamışlardır. Görüşmeler katılımcıların izni ile ses kaydı altına alınmıştır. Görüşmeler tamamlandıktan sonra sınıflarında gözlem yapılmasını da kabul eden öğretmenler arasından beş öğretmen seçilmiştir. Her öğretmen haftada dört saat olmak üzere sekiz hafta boyunca gözlemlenmiş ve daha sonra görüşmeye alınmıştır. Gözlemler boyunca ikinci gözlemci araştırmacıya eşlik etmiştir.

Verilerin Analizi

Bu çalışmada araştırmacı, verilerini analiz etmek için Creswell (2007) tarafından önerilen adımları izlemiştir. İlk olarak görüşmeler ses kayıtları dinlenerek yazıya

dökülmüştür. Daha sonra bu veriler sınıflandırılarak kategoriler ve kodlar oluşturulmuştur. Kategori ve kodlar, araştırmacı ve Okul Öncesi Eğitimi alanında görev yapan bir araştırma görevlisi tarafından ayrı ayrı belirlenmiş ve daha sonra kategoriler ve kodlar üzerinden bakış açılarını tartışmışlardır. Ayrıca bu adımlar gözlem verileri için de gerçekleştirilmiştir. Son olarak, araştırmacı yorumladığı verileri ifade etmek için görsel ögelerden tabloları kullanarak verileri somut bir şekilde sunmuştur.

SONUÇ VE TARTIŞMA

Bu bölümde, araştırma bulguları tüm araştırma sorularıyla bağlantılı olarak ayrı ayrı sunulmuştur. Bulgular sunulurken, daha anlaşılır olması amacıyla bazı bölümlerde tablolar kullanılmıştır.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sosyal problem çözmeye ilişkin görüşleri

Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmede öğretmenlere 'Sosyal problem çözme becerileri denilince aklınıza hangi beceriler geliyor? sorusu sorulmuş ve öğretmenlerin hangi becerileri sosyal problem çözme becerileri ile ilişkilendirdiği bulunmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu kapsamda, becerilere yönelik alt kodlarla birlikte yedi ana kategori ortaya çıkmıştır.

Tablo 1. *Sosyal Problem Çözme becerisi ile ilişkilendirilen beceriler*

Kategoriler	Kodlar
İletişim Becerisi	Akran iletişimi (n=5)
	Yetişkin iletişimi (n=5)
Temel Beceriler	Paylaşma (n=4)
	Yardımlaşma (n=2)
	Kurallara uyma (n=2)
	Diğer (n=2)
Uyum Becerileri	Değişik ortamlara uyum sağlama (n=2)
	Beraber yaşayabilme becerisi (n=1)
Duygusal Beceriler	Duygu ve düşüncelerini ifade edebilme(n=2)
	Empati (n=4)
Stresle Baş etme Becerileri	Hatayı kabul etme (n=1)

Tablo 1. *Sosyal Problem Çözme becerisi ile ilişkilendirilen beceriler devamı*

	Rahatlayabilme (n=2)
Saldırganlığın yerine geçebilecek	Şiddetten uzaklaşabilme (n=2)
Beceriler	Kıskançlığın üstesinden gelebilme (n=1)
Grup Becerileri	Lideri takip edebilme (n=2)
	Liderliği üstelenebilme (n=2)
	Ortak çalışabilme (n=2)
	Gruba uyum sağlama (n=2)

Katılımcılar sosyal problem çözme becerisini çoğunlukla iletişim becerisi ile ilişkilendirmişlerdir. Bazı katılımcılar akran iletişimini vurgularken bazıları yetişkin iletişimine odaklanmışlardır.

Sosyal problem çözme becerisinin çocuklar üzerindeki etkisine ilişkin öğretmen görüşleri

Araştırmacı, katılımcılara "Sosyal problem çözme becerisi gelişmiş bir çocuğun özelliklerini nasıl tanımlarsınız?" diye sormuştur. Bu soruda araştırmacı, öğretmenlerin sosyal problem çözme becerisinin çocuklara katkısının farkında olup olmadığını incelemiştir.

Tablo 2. *Öğretmenlerin sosyal problem çözme becerisi gelişmiş çocuğa ilişkin tanımları*

Kodlar	n	p(%)
Gelişmiş iletişim becerisine sahip	9	25.8
Olumlu akran ilişkilerine sahip	7	20.0
Özgüvenli	7	20.0
Lider	5	14.28
Sorumluluk sahibi	3	8.58
Uyumlu	3	8.58

Öğretmenlerin çoğu sosyal problem çözme becerisi gelişmiş çocuğu iletişim becerisi gelişmiş bir çocuk olarak tanımlarken, en çok akran-yetişkin iletişiminden söz etmişlerdir. İletişim becerilerinden sonra sosyal problem çözme becerisine sahip olan çocuğun olumlu arkadaşlık ilişkilerine sahip olduğunu ve özgüven sahibi olduğunu belirtmişlerdir.

Erken çocukluk döneminde sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin kazandırılmasının önemine ilişkin öğretmenlerin görüşleri

Tablo 3. *Erken çocukluk döneminde kazanılmasına ilişkin görüşler*

Kategoriler	*Kodlar*
Gelecek yaşam açısından	Suç işlemeyi azaltma (n=2)
	Özgüvenli olma (n=2)
	Daha mutlu olma (n=1)
	Daha fazla akademik başarı (n=1)
	Diğer (n=4)
Öğrenme süreci açısından	Daha kolay öğrenilmesi (n=3)
	Daha kalıcı olması (n=2)
Problem çözme süreci açısından	Problemlere hazırlıklı olma (n=2)
	Problemleri daha hızlı çözme (n=3)
	Probleme yönelik endişeyi azaltma(n=2)

Öğretmenlerin çoğu , çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerini erken yaşta kazanmalarının gelecek yaşamları için önemli olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenler, çoğunlukla sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin gelişmesiyle birlikte çocukların gelecekte suç işleme eğilimlerinin azalacağını, özgüvenlerinin artacağını, daha mutlu olacaklarını, kendilerini daha fazla ifade edebileceklerini ve akademik başarılarının artacağını belirtmişlerdir.

Erken çocukluk eğitiminde çocukların yaş grubunu dikkate alarak sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin önemine ilişkin öğretmenlerin görüşleri

Görüşülen öğretmenlerin çoğu, sosyal problem çözme becerisi için en önemli yaşın üç yaş olduğunu belirtmiş ve nedeninin ise daha sonraki yıllarda bu beceriyi kazanmanın

zorluğu, sosyalleşmenin başlaması ve probleme alışması gerektiği olarak belirtmişlerdir. Bazı öğretmenler ise en önemli yaşın 4-5 yaş olduğunu; bu yaş grubunun beceri öğretimi için en uygun olmasını ve sosyalleşmenin başlamasını neden olarak öne sürmüştür. Yalnızca iki öğretmen ise çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin doğumdan itibaren geliştirilmesi gerektiğini belirtirken, iki öğretmen ise herhangi bir yaş grubu belirtmemiştir.

Öğretmenlerin çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerini geliştirememe nedenlerine ilişkin görüşleri

Tablo 4. *Becerinin geliştirilememesinin nedenine ilişkin görüşler*

Kategoriler	Kodlar
Ebeveynle ilgili sebepler (n=15)	Baskıcı/kuralcı ebeveynler
	Çocukla iletişim kurmamaları
	Çocuğun her istediğinin yapılması
	Problemin normalleştirilmesi
	Diğer
Sosyal çevre (n=7)	Arkadaş eksikliği
Bireysel farklılıklar (n=3)	Mizaç
Öğretmen kaynaklı sebepler (n=1)	Yanlış yönlendirme

Öğretmenlerin tamamı becerinin geliştirilememe nedeninin ebeveynler olduğunu düşünmektedir ve ailenin farklı özelliklerinden bahsetmişlerdir. Örneğin ailenin baskıcı/kuralcı olması, ailenin çocukla iletişiminin olmaması, ailenin çocuğu ne isterse onu yapması ve problemin normalleştirilmesi aile kaynaklı nedenler arasındadır.

Öğretmenlerin MEB Okul Öncesi Eğitimi Programı'nda (2013) sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin yeri hakkındaki görüşleri

Bu araştırmada öğretmenlerin çoğu, okul öncesi eğitim programının sosyal problem çözme becerilerine yeterince önem vermesi konusunda kararsız olduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bu konudaki tarafsızlıklarının nedeninin programın esnekliğinden kaynaklandığını, program genel çerçeveyi çizdiği sürece beceriyi geliştirmenin öğretmene bağlı olduğunu söylemişlerdir. Bazı öğretmenler ise programda bilişsel becerilere daha fazla ağırlık verildiği için sosyal problem çözme becerilerine yeterince

önem verilmediğini ifade etmiştir. Araştırmanın şaşırtıcı olarak tanımlanabilecek bulgusu ise programın yeterli olduğunu söyleyen öğretmenlerin sosyal duygusal gelişim alanındaki kazanımlardan örnekler vermeleri, programın yetersiz olduğunu söyleyen öğretmenlerin tamamının ise kazanımları hatırlayamadıklarını belirtmeleridir.

Öğretmenlerin çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerileriyle ilgili kendi bildirdikleri uygulamalarına ilişkin bulgular

Kendi bildirdikleri eğitsel aktivitelere ilişkin bulgular

Bazı öğretmenler çocukların bir sorun olduğunda kendi çözümlerini buldukları için etkinliğe ihtiyaç duymamaları, çocukların gün içinde iletişimini desteklemeleri ve bilişsel becerilere daha fazla önem vermeleri gibi nedenlerle etkinlik yaptırmadıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerini geliştirmeye yönelik etkinlikler yaptıklarını söyleyen öğretmenler, bu etkinliklerde en çok rol yapma/drama olmak üzere, sözlü anlatım, hikaye anlatımı, oyun ve iş birlikçi grup çalışmalarını sıklıkla kullandıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bazı öğretmenler etkinliklerinde sözlü anlatımı tercih ettiklerini ve bu etkinliklerde çocuklara sosyal problemleri nasıl çözeceklerini anlattıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Son olarak, bu çalışmada öğretmenlerin çocuklarda sosyal problem çözme becerilerini desteklemek için etkinliklerinde odaklandıkları konular incelendiğinde, en çok odaklanılan konunun iletişim olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Öğretmenlere göre sınıfta en çok yaşanan sosyal problem davranışlara ilişkin bulgular

Öğretmenler sınıflarında en çok saldırganlık davranışıyla karşılaştıklarını ve bunun vurma ve bir cismi kırma şeklinde gerçekleştiğini belirtmişlerdir. Saldırganlıktan sonra sınıfta en sık karşılaşılan problemin, paylaşım problemi olduğu belirtilmiştir. Az sayıda öğretmen tarafından belirtilen diğer problem davranışları ise iletişimde güçlük, başkalarının haklarına saygı duymama, başkasının eşyalarını alma ve sıra beklememe, kıskançlık, içe dönük davranışlar, uyum sorunları, ağlama ve kurallara uymama şeklinde ortaya çıkmıştır.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocukların sosyal problemleriyle başa çıkmada kendi bildirdikleri stratejiler

Bu çalışmada, öğretmenlere çocuklarda meydana gelen sosyal problem davranışlarıyla baş etme stratejisi sorulduğunda, öğretmenlerin çoğunluğunun doğrudan müdahale stratejisini bildirdikleri görülmüştür. Doğrudan müdahale stratejilerinden en çok sözel müdahaleye değinilse de öğretmenler fiziksel müdahaleyi de kullandıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Çocuklar sosyal bir problem yaşadıklarında öğretmenler sözel stratejiler arasında en çok uyguladıkları stratejinin çocukla problem hakkında konuşmak olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Az sayıda öğretmen ise doğrudan müdahalelerde cezayı kullandığını, yanlış olduğunu bildiklerini ancak işe yaradığını ifade etmiştir. Öğretmenlerin bildirdiği başa çıkma stratejilerinde sözel stratejiden sonra en çok vurgulanan strateji, katılımsızlık stratejileridir. Bu stratejiyi kullanan öğretmenler, çocuklar bir sorun yaşadıklarında müdahale etmediklerini ve bu sorunlu davranışın ne zaman ve ne sıklıkla meydana geldiğini belirlemek için gözlem yapmayı tercih ettiklerini belirtmişlerdir.

Öğretmenlerin bildirdiği ve gözlemlenen sosyal problem davranışları arasındaki tutarlılığa ilişkin bulgular

Sınıfta en çok gözlenen ve öğretmenlerin bildirdiği sosyal problem davranışlar arasındaki tutarlılık yalnızca en çok ortaya çıkan davranışın saldırganlık olmasıyla sağlanmıştır. Öte yandan, öğretmenler saldırganlığın yalnızca fiziksel olarak ortaya çıktığını belirtmiş ancak gözlemlerde ilişkisel ve sözel saldırganlığın daha fazla ortaya çıktığı bulunmuştur. Ayrıca bu davranışların çoğunlukla serbest oyun sırasında meydana geldiği gözlemlenmiştir. Öğretmenlerin görüşmelerde bahsetmediği davranışların çoğunun sınıfta gözlemlenmesi ve sıklıklarının farklı olması, kendilerinin bildirdikleri ve gözlemlenen davranışlar arasında ciddi tutarsızlık olduğunu göstermektedir.

Öğretmenlerin bildirdiği ve gözlemlenen stratejiler arasındaki tutarlılığa ilişkin bulgular

Öğretmenlerin görüşmelerde belirttiği stratejilerin çoğunun gözlemlerde çocukların sosyal problemlerine yönelik uygulandığı görülmüştür. Ancak, gözlemlenen stratejiler

ve bildirilen stratejiler arasındaki tutarsızlık, tutarlılıktan daha fazladır ve tutarsızlığa ilişkin çeşitli bulgular mevcuttur. İlk bulgu öğretmenlerin problem durumunda gözlem yaptıklarını ve çocukları okul rehberlik servisine yönlendirdiklerini belirtmeleri ancak bu stratejilerin sınıflarda gözlemlenmemesidir. İkinci bulgu ise öğretmenlerin görüşmelerde bahsetmediği stratejilerin gözlemlerde sıklıkla kullanıldığıdır. Bu stratejiler arasında çocuğu fiziksel olarak yakın tutma, çocukların yerini değiştirme, uyarma, materyal çıkarma ve aynı şeyi çocuğa yapma en çok gözlenenlerdir. Öğretmenlerin bu stratejiyi çocuklar arasındaki çatışma ya da problem durumunu hızlı bir şekilde sonlandırmak için kullandıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Üçüncü bulgu ise öğretmenlerden sadece birinin görüşmede çocuktan özür dilemesini istediğini belirtmesi, ancak tüm öğretmenlerin bu stratejiyi sıklıkla kullandığının gözlemlenmesidir. Bu çalışmadaki son bulgu ise öğretmenlerin görüşme sırasında bildirmemelerine rağmen çocukların problem durumlarında görmezden gelme ve göz atmayı kullandıklarının gözlemlenmesidir.

Özetle, tüm bu bulgulara dayalı olarak öğretmenlerin sosyal problem çözme konusunda bilgi sahibi oldukları ancak desteklenmeleri gerektiği düşünülmektedir. Ek olarak, çalışmada çoğu öğretmenin çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerini arttırmaktan daha çok sosyal problem yaratmamak için bu becerilerin önemine vurgu yaptıkları görülmüştür. Bunun çalışmanın önemli bir bulgusu olduğu düşünülmektedir. Çocukların gelecek yaşamlarında sosyal problemlerle karşılaşacakları düşünüldüğünde, öğretmenlerin çocukların sosyal problemler yaşamasını engellemekten daha çok çocukların sosyal problemlerini problem çözme becerilerinin gelişimi için bir fırsat olarak görmelerinin bu becerinin gelişimine destek olabileceği düşünülmektedir. Tüm öğretmenler sosyal problem çözme becerisinin erken çocukluk döneminde kazanılması gerektiği konusunda hem fikirdir, ancak öğretmenlerin neden geliştirilmesi gerektiği konusunda yeterli bilgiye sahip olmadıkları görülmektedir. Sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin öneminin farkında olmanın öğretmenleri bu beceriyi desteklemeye motive edebileceği düşünülmektedir. Bununla birlikte öğretmenler çoğunlukla erken çocukluk döneminde sosyal problem çözme becerisinin öğretiminde en önemli yaş grubunun üç yaş grubu olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Bu sonuç büyük yaş gruplarına yapıldığı gibi bu küçük yaş grubuna da uygulama yapacaklarının bir göstergesi olabilir.

Bu araştırmanın beklenmedik bir bulgusu da, sadece bir öğretmenin çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerini geliştirememelerinin nedeninin, öğretmenlerin çocukların sosyal problemlerine yönelik yanlış stratejilerinden kaynaklanabileceğini belirtmesi ve tüm öğretmenlerin nedenin aile kaynaklı olduğunu ifade etmesidir. Bu bulguyla tutarlı olarak Sadık (2006), saldırganlık gibi problem davranışlara ilişkin öğretmenlerin görüşlerini aldığı çalışmasında, öğretmenlerin bu davranışların nedenlerini genellikle kendileri dışındaki en çok aile ile ilgili faktörlere bağladıklarını bulmuştur. Öğretmenler çocukları ailenin aynası olarak gördükleri için tüm sorumluluğu aileye atfetmekte ve çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerini geliştirememelerinin nedeninin kendileriyle ilgili olabileceğini düşünmemektedirler. Ancak bu çalışmada yapılan gözlemler boyunca öğretmenlerin çocuklarda sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin gelişimini engelleyecek farklı stratejiler kullandıkları görülmüştür. Öğretmenlerin kendilerini bir neden olarak görmediklerinden sınıf içi uygulamalara gerekli özeni göstermiyor olabilecekleri düşünülmektedir. Bu bağlamda öğretmenlerin çocuklarda sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin gelişimindeki rolleri hakkında bilgi sahibi olmaları gerektiği düşünülmektedir. Araştırmanın programla ilgili bulguları göz önüne alındığında, programdaki kazanımların öğretmenler tarafından bilinmemesi, çocukların sosyal problem çözme becerilerini desteklemek için öğretmenlerin programdan yararlanmadıklarının kanıtı olabilir ve öğretmenlerin "program bilgisi" yeterliliğini sağlamak için önemli bir gereklilik olan programı okuma ve bilme gereksinimini yerine getirmedikleri söylenebilir. Sınıfta yürütülen etkinlikler incelendiğinde ise, bazı öğretmenler etkinliklerinde sözlü anlatımı tercih ettiklerini ve bu etkinliklerde çocuklara sosyal problemleri nasıl çözeceklerini anlattıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Ancak Dewey (1966) insanların yaparak ve yaşayarak öğrendiğini belirterek, çocukların pratik yaparak öğrenmeleri gerektiğinin, bilgilerin onlara tartışılmadan kesinlikle sunulmaması gerektiğinin ve çocuklara keşfetme ve düşünme fırsatı verilmesi gerektiğinin altını çizmiştir. Bu sonucun olası açıklaması, öğretmenlerin sosyal problem çözme etkinliklerini nasıl uygulayacakları konusundaki bilgi eksikliği olabilir. Benzer şekilde öğretmenler de bu konuda bir etkinlik kitabına ihtiyaç duyduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenlerin bildirdiği ve sınıfta gözlemlenen davranışlar arasındaki tutarsızlığın olası nedeni ise okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin problem davranışları tanımlama, belirleme ve tanıma konusunda yeterli bilgiye sahip olmamaları olarak yorumlanabilir. Ek olarak, bu çalışmada çocukların problem

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davranışlarının çoğunun serbest oyun sırasında ortaya çıktığı ve gözlemlenen öğretmenlerin tamamının serbest oyun süresinde çocukları gözlemlemek yerine bir sonraki etkinliği hazırladıkları veya sınıfa gelen diğer sınıfın öğretmeniyle konuştukları görülmüştür. Bazı durumlarda, sınıfın dışına bile çıkmışlardır. Bu durum alanyazındaki çalışmalarla da desteklenmektedir. Örneğin, Kontos 'un (1999) aktardığı gibi, Erwin ve diğerleri (1993) yaptıkları çalışmada öğretmenlerin çocukların serbest zamanlarında en çok eğitim süreciyle ilgili olmayan davranışlarla (idari işlerle ilgilenme, sınıfı düzenleme, yetişkinlerle sohbet etme) meşgul olduklarını bulmuştur. Ancak çocukların daha çok oyun zamanlarında ortaya çıkan ilişkisel ve sözel saldırganlık davranışlarının öğretmenler tarafından fark edilmemesi bu sorun durumlarında artışa neden olabileceğinden öğretmenlerin çocukların oyun zamanına katılmama nedenlerinin incelenmesinde fayda vardır. Aynı zamanda bu çalışmada, çocukların sosyal problemlerine yönelik öğretmenlerin bildirdikleri staretejileri ile araştırmacının sınıfta yaptığı gözlemlerde öğretmenlerin kullandıkları stratejiler arasında ciddi tutarsızlıklar olduğu bulunmuştur. Gözlemler sırasında öğretmenler sık sık iş yükünün fazla olduğunu ve gün içerisinde eğitim planını tamamlayamadıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bu sonucun olası açıklaması, iş yükünün öğretmenlerin uygulamak istedikleri stratejileri gerçekleştirmelerini engelleyebileceği olabilir. Öğretmenlerin kendi bildirdikleri ve gözlemlenen stratejileri arasındaki tutarsızlığın olası bir nedeni, sosyal problemin ortaya çıktığı durumlarda öğretmenlerin bildikleri stratejileri uygulamak yerine çocukların güvenliğini ön planda tutarak çocukların birbirlerine fiziksel temasını önlemek istemesi ve bu nedenle çocuklar adına hızlı çözüm üretmeye çalışmaları olabilir. Aynı şekilde, problem durumlarında hızlı bir çözüm olarak kontrol edici öğretmen tekniklerinin kullanılmasının, çocukları zor şartlar altında istemeden de olsa öğretmenlere güvenmeye teşvik edebileceği ve bu durumun da çocukları kendine güvenmek yerine başkasına ihtiyaç duymaya motive edebileceğinden sosyal problem çözme becerisinin gelişimini engelleyeceği düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca çocukların bu müdahalelerden kısa bir süre sonra aynı problem davranışı tekrarladıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Bu bağlamda, sosyal problem durumlarında çocuklara sosyal problem çözme becerisi kazandırmak için öğretmenlerin etkili stratejiler kullanma konusunda desteğe ihtiyaçları olduğu söylenebilir.

Genel olarak, katılımcıların görüşleri, öz bildirimleri ve gerçek uygulamaları arasındaki tutarlılık incelendiğinde, mevcut çalışmada öğretmenlerin erken yaşta çocuklarda sosyal problem çözme becerisinin önemine inandıkları, destekleyici uygulamalardan söz ettiği ancak bazı uygulamaları ile kendi görüşlerinin çeliştiği bulunmuştur. Bu çelişkiyi açıklamak için alanyazında birçok faktörden bahsedilmektedir. Örneğin, Wen ve diğerleri (2011) yaptıkları çalışmada mesleki eğitim ve deneyimin bireyi üst düzey bilgi ve düşünceyle donattığını ve öğretmenin yapması gerektiğine inandığı ile gerçekte yaptığı arasındaki farkı anlamasına yardımcı olabileceğini vurgulamıştır. Bu nedenle öğretmenlerin görüş ve uygulamalarını geliştirecek mesleki eğitim almalarının çocuklarda sosyal problem çözme becerilerinin gelişimine olumlu etkisi olacağı düşünülmektedir.

D. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU

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