

RICKS, TYLA C. Ph.D. Exploring the Protective Factors of Early Care and Education Professionals through an Innovative Professional Development Approach: Associations with Head Start Educators' Wellbeing. (2023)
Directed by Dr. Linda L. Hestenes and Dr. Karen M. La Paro. 180 pp.

The wellbeing of early care educators is essential for lessening burnout and increasing teachers' intentions of staying in the field. Protective factors related to the wellbeing of early care educators in the field have been given little attention in research and practice but have such a profound impact on programs, classrooms, children, and families. A potential approach for promoting the wellbeing of early education professionals is the implementation of innovative professional development book study focused on resilience and wellbeing. This dissertation (1) examines how EHS and Head Start HS/North Carolina Pre-K lead teachers, co-teachers, assistant teachers, and support staff 'change in their knowledge and behaviors related to wellbeing and resilience' over the course of the book study (2) considers how the book study professional development opportunity influenced change in educators' commitment to their program and the field and (3) investigates how the book study serves as an innovative professional development approach for EHS and HS/ NC Pre-K early care educators. Given how aspects of early education programs may be related to wellbeing, organizational climate was studied as a contextual factor. Using both quantitative and qualitative data collected throughout the book study professional development opportunity, this dissertation used descriptive analyses and thematic analysis of surveys, discussions, and activities that occurred throughout the book study process. The results revealed (1) EHS and HS/NC Pre-K educators experienced a positive change in their knowledge/awareness and behavior over the course of the book study professional development;(2) there was a positive change observed in commitment to EHS and HS/NC Pre-K educators' program and the field, and (3) educators and directors viewed the book study as an

innovative professional development opportunity. The specific findings and implications of this study for promoting the wellbeing of the early educator workforce are discussed.

EXPLORING THE PROTECTIVE FACTORS OF EARLY CARE AND
EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS THROUGH AN INNOVATIVE
PROFESSIONALDEVELOPMENT APPROACH:
ASSOCIATIONS WITH HEAD START
EDUCATORS' WELLBEING

by

Tyla C. Ricks

A Dissertation
Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Greensboro

2023

Approved by

Dr. Linda L. Hestenes
Committee Co-Chair

Dr. Karen M. La Paro
Committee Co-Chair

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by Tyla C. Ricks has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Co-Chair

Dr. Linda L. Hestenes

Committee Co-Chair

Dr. Karen M. La Paro

Committee Members

Dr. Catherine Scott-Little

Dr. Harriette Bailey

June 22, 2023

Date of Acceptance by Committee

June 1, 2023

Date of Final Oral Examination

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Words cannot express my gratitude for the amount of support I have received throughout my graduate school journey. As I am nearing the completion of my doctoral program, I must acknowledge the endless support and love I have received from my mentors, colleagues, family, and friends.

The completion of the program could not have been possible without the expertise, guidance, and support of my co-advisors Dr. Linda Hestenes and Dr. Karen La Paro. The invaluable knowledge and experiences that I have received from both of you have been immeasurable. Dr. Hestenes, I appreciate you not only for your unwavering support throughout this process, but for introducing me and giving me the opportunity to be a part of EQuIPD. Dr. La Paro, thank you for providing insight and feedback all throughout this process and allowing me to have experiences that have helped to shape me as a researcher. It has been an honor to learn from you and grow into someone who will always be an advocate for the early care and education field.

To my dissertation committee members- Dr. Harriette Bailey and Dr. Catherine Scott-Little- thank you for your insight, feedback, and support throughout my journey here at UNCG. I am so appreciative of the words of encouragement and the way you both have offered advice in relation to my research, coursework, and as a doctoral student needing guidance through this process. I am blessed to have a committee who has valued my perspective and encouraged my ideas.

Thank you to my family and friends for being my rock, a shoulder to cry on when times were tough, and my safe space when I needed it the most. To my mom, there are no words to ever express the way you have supported me in every way through this process. You encouraged

me to pursue my Ph.D. and I am so glad you did. To my sister- you will never know how your words of support, love, and physically being there helped me through this journey. Thank you for the check-ins, the laughs, and staying up with me while I completed assignments. Last but not least to my Grandpa- thank you for pushing me all the way to the end. I felt your presence and could hear you saying how proud you were that I made it to the finish line.

To my graduate school friends- you are the best and I will forever be grateful and thankful for our time together in classes, conferences, completing STATs homework, and enjoying each other outside of school. Stone 188 was my home away from home and I will cherish the friendships I have made and will continue to sustain into my next phase of life. Specifically, I want to give a shoutout to Christina Stephens, Savannah Bayer, Blenda Chor Rodrigues, and Mauri Mckoy, my 10-pack cohort, and my HDFS colleagues for being a part of this journey with me these last four years. I know that we all have such bright futures and goals ahead of us and I cannot wait to collaborate and celebrate with you!

Lastly, the most important thanks goes to God. With his leadership and guidance I applied to be in the MS/Ph.D, program at UNCG and now I am able to say that I am the first person in my family to receive my doctorate degree. My faith in God has only grown stronger through this process and I now know that with him by my side, I can achieve anything!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background and Significance.....	1
Context of Early Care Educators.....	3
Commitment to the Field.....	4
Head Start.....	5
Current Study	8
CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE	10
Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Model	11
Proximal Processes.....	11
Person	13
Context	14
Time.....	16
Implementation Science Framework.....	18
Fidelity.....	19
Meaning and Sustainable Change	20
Implementation Stages.....	20
Implementation Drivers.....	24
Competency Drivers	25
Selection.....	26
Training.....	26
Coaching.....	26
Organizational Drivers.....	27
Leadership.....	29
Readiness to Change.....	30
CHAPTER III: LITERATURE REVIEW	32
Wellbeing	32

Components of Wellbeing.....	33
Psychological Wellbeing	33
Depression.....	34
Stress.....	35
Emotional Exhaustion.....	35
Professional Wellbeing/Work-Related Wellbeing.....	36
Social-Emotional Wellbeing.....	37
Internal Protective Factors	38
Resilience	38
Self-Control	40
Relationships.....	41
Initiative	41
Internal Beliefs.....	42
Self-Efficacy.....	42
Teacher Efficacy	43
Identity	43
Self-Care	45
External Protective Factors	46
Organizational Climate.....	46
Collegiality.....	47
Supervisor Support	48
Decision- Making	48
Professional Development.....	50
Communities of Practice	50
Professional Learning Communities	51
Early Care and Education Professionals’ Commitment to their Program and Field.....	52
Current Study	53
Research Questions	54
Wellbeing (knowledge gained and behavior change)	54
Resilience (knowledge gained and behavior change)	54
Commitment to Their Program and Field	54
Professional Development Delivery Effectiveness	55

CHAPTER IV: METHODS.....	57
Book Study as a Professional Development Approach.....	57
Book Selected for the Current Study.....	58
Book Study Overview	60
Book Study Sessions	61
Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).....	61
Goal Setting.....	62
Study Design	63
Participants- Head Start Programs.....	63
Recruitment Process	64
Measures.....	67
Teacher/Director Characteristics	69
Wellbeing	69
Teacher Resilience.....	71
Organizational Climate.....	72
Commitment to Program/Field.....	74
Readiness to Change.....	75
Exit Tickets.....	76
Procedure.....	77
Activity Descriptions.....	78
During Session	78
Know Yourself: Resilience Self-Assessment.....	78
Discussion for Professional Learning Community (PLC).....	79
Data Analytic Plan	80
CHAPTER V: RESULTS AND PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION	84
Themes for Research Question 1: Change in Knowledge and Awareness of Wellbeing	86
Deductive Themes RQ1 Educators’ Knowledge/Awareness of Wellbeing	87
Individual’s Sense of Personal Professional Fulfillment.....	88
Purposefulness	89
Constructed in a Collaborative Process with Children and Colleagues	90

Inductive Themes RQ1 Educators’ Knowledge/Awareness of Wellbeing	92
Questioning Purpose	92
Negative Aspects of Wellbeing	93
Themes for Research Question 2: Book Study Participation and Change in Knowledge and Awareness of Resilience.....	96
Deductive Themes for RQ 2 Change in Knowledge and Awareness of Resilience.....	98
Relationships.....	98
Internal Beliefs.....	99
Initiative	100
Self-Control	102
Inductive Themes for Research Question 2 Change in Knowledge and Awareness of Resilience.....	103
Questioning Aspects of Resilience	103
Expectations of Emotions (Familial, Cultural, Societal)	105
Themes for Research Question 3: Book Study Participation and Change in Behavior/ Goal Setting in Relation to Resilience and Wellbeing.....	107
Action Plan Goals.....	108
Themes for Research Question 4: Book Study Participation and Commitment to their Program and the Field.....	112
Deductive Themes for RQ 4 Commitment to their Program and the Field.....	115
Passion and love for the job.....	115
Collegiality.....	115
Pay	116
Inductive Themes for RQ 4 Commitment to their Program and the Field.....	117
Respect.....	118
Relatable	118
Accountability.....	119
Trust.....	119
Themes for Research Question 5: Professional Development Delivery Effectiveness	121
Personal Goals.....	121

Hope to Gain from Book Study.....	121
Exit Tickets.....	122
Satisfaction Survey.....	123
Final Thoughts from Educators.....	124
Directors’ Perspective About Book Study.....	125
CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION.....	134
Research Question 1: Book Study Participation and Change in Knowledge and Awareness of Wellbeing.....	135
Research Question 2: Book Study Participation and Change in Knowledge and Awareness of Resilience.....	138
Research Question 3: Book Study Participation and Change in Behavior and Goal Setting in Relation to Resilience and Wellbeing.....	141
Research Question 4: Book Study Participation and Commitment to their Program and the Field.....	143
Research Question 5: Professional Development Delivery Effectiveness.....	145
Connection to Theory.....	149
Implementation Science.....	150
Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Model.....	154
Strengths and Limitations.....	155
Implications.....	158
Implications for Policy Decisions.....	159
Implications for Program/Professional Development Decisions.....	160
Conclusion.....	162
REFERENCES.....	166

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Book Study Assigned Chapters	59
Table 2. Educators' Role and Age Group	67
Table 3. Constructs for the Current Study	68
Table 4. Educator Resilience and Trauma-Informed Self-Care Assessment Items and Possible Scores.....	70
Table 5. Stages and Group Averages of the URICA Scale.....	76
Table 6. Outline of Initial Book Study Session	78
Table 7. Educators' Years of Experience (Current Program, Head Start, Early Care and Education).....	84
Table 8. Pre- and Post Results from the Educator Resilience and Trauma-Informed Self-Care Survey (Psychological and Emotional Self-Care)	87
Table 9. Results from Deveureux Adult Resilience Survey	97
Table 10. Educators' Action Plan Goals	110
Table 11. Statements About Commitment to Organization.....	113
Table 12. Exit Ticket Results.....	123
Table 13. Satisfaction Survey Results	124

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Implementation Stages	24
Figure 2. Implementation Drivers Framework	25
Figure 3. Framework for Current Study	56
Figure 4. Theme Map for Research Questions 1 and 2.....	131
Figure 5. Theme Map for Research Question 3.....	132
Figure 6. Theme Map for Research Question 4.....	132
Figure 7. Theme Map for Research Question 5.....	133

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background and Significance

The wellbeing of early care educators has been defined as the “dynamic state, involving the interaction of individual, relational, work-environmental, and sociocultural-political aspects and contexts” (Cumming & Wong, 2019, p. 276). It is crucial to consider the wellbeing of early care and education professionals because it is essential in strengthening effective educators, reducing burnout, and increasing intention to stay in the field. Personal protective factors related to the wellbeing of educators in the field of early care and education have been given little attention in research and practice but when those factors are acknowledged, they can have a profound impact on programs, classrooms, children, and families. In order for programs and the field of early care and education to retain and sustain high-quality educators who feel supported in promoting the learning and developmental outcomes of children (Cumming et al., 2020), the wellbeing of educators needs to be a priority. When adequate attention is given to the wellbeing of educators, they are given the chance to thrive, develop, and have favorable outcomes at their professional, personal, and interpersonal levels (Ruggari et al., 2020). Detrimental outcomes can occur at the individual, classroom, and program levels, when early care educators' wellbeing is given limited attention (Kwon et al., 2021).

The responsibilities placed upon early care educators are numerous and can limit the time an educator can focus on their wellbeing. Coupled with these great responsibilities are the demands of working in a field which has been associated with low pay, long hours, little control, challenging working conditions, lower job satisfaction, reduced health. and wellbeing (Farwell et al.,2021). The demands of working in the field of early care and education are oftentimes coupled with the limited resources. In a study looking at the personal and external demands and

resources and its' impact on job satisfaction and turnover among teachers who provide care for preschool children (3-5 years of age), teachers reported higher levels of personal demands which included depression and perceived stress as well as external demands such as workload and staffing concerns compared to the national workforce (Farwell et al., 2021). An external protective factor that can help lessen the personal demands in early care education programs is the program's work environment.

Zinsser et al. (2016) described how a program's work environment directly influences educators and subsequently indirectly impacts children's classroom experiences. Bloom (1996) defined the elements of the work environment, also known as organizational climate, as being able to come to a consensus about a goal, task orientation, the physical setting of a classroom and program, innovation, professional growth, an effective reward system, decision-making, clarity about goals and expectations, the support of supervisors, and collegiality. Educators who viewed organizational factors positively, were more satisfied with their job and experienced less emotional exhaustion (Jeon et al., 2018). These organizational factors included relationships with coworkers, supervisor support, pay, and workplace conditions. Work environment or organizational climate is a concept that can impact individuals' behaviors, attitudes, and wellbeing within a program but can also help researchers understand why some programs are more productive, effective, innovative, and successful (Veziroglu-Celik & Yildiz, 2018). The work environment in early care settings, although crucial, is just one avenue to enhancing the wellbeing of early care educators. The role of organizational climate will be examined as contextual feature in facilitating and supporting early childhood educators' resilience and wellbeing.

Context of Early Care Educators

The early care and education field is complex and multifaceted and consequently the roles of educators are challenging (Eadie et al., 2021). When educators are aware of their roles and the demands of the early care and education field, they can then cultivate or improve their resilience to combat the challenges they face. An important factor that needs to be considered and acknowledged in the early care and education field is the impact of COVID-19 on educators' wellbeing. The COVID-19 pandemic heightened the need to focus on the wellbeing of educators due to the additional demands placed upon the early care and education field. A recent study looking at early care and education teachers' working conditions and their psychological, and professional wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that 31% of teachers within the sample reported a diagnosis of anxiety, 23% reported a diagnosis of depression with 35% having scores reaching clinical levels. Overall, 48% of teachers within this sample classified their psychological wellbeing as experiencing somewhat or mostly negative changes during the pandemic (Kwon et al., 2022). This sentiment was echoed when having conversations with a Head Start Director in the piedmont region of North Carolina. When asked about her perception on teacher retention and turnover within her Early Head Start/Head Start programs, her response was that the COVID-19 pandemic had increased burnout among her staff and educators were not feeling appreciated. COVID-19 was negatively contributing to educators' burnout and turnover.

Findings from the *Historic Crisis, Historic Opportunity* brief (2021) showed that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, early care educators reported their schedules changing to accommodate new cleaning requirements and responsibilities, adjustments were made to their instructional formats, educators' professional development needs shifted, and their mental health

and wellbeing had suffered due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Educators also experienced physical and behavioral manifestations of stress that were two to three times higher during the pandemic (Swigonski et al., 2021). These symptoms included trouble sleeping, overeating, headaches, stomach aches, worsening chronic conditions, and an increase in alcohol and drug use. Although the number of educators who have left the profession due to the pandemic is missing from the data, Weiland et al. (2021) described the early care and education field experiencing teacher layoffs towards the beginning of the pandemic, with some educators leaving voluntarily due to the health and safety of their families. The loss of educators from the field and the working conditions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, will likely continue to affect the field's ability to recruit and retain high quality effective educators.

Commitment to the Field

Reasons for early care educators leaving the field or deciding to quit their teaching position was documented and divided into personal and job-related or external factors (Jeon & Wells, 2018). Personal factors included an educator's mental health, education level, or self-efficacy, while external job-related factors were listed as salary, relationships with supervisors, and workplace stress. Personal and external factors can impact early care educators' wellbeing negatively or positively depending on how it is perceived by the educator. Other factors that impact teachers' decisions to leave the field are stress, emotional exhaustion, poor emotional regulation, and a lack of coping skills due to the demands that occur when providing young children with a strong foundation (Grant et al., 2019). The programs that typically experience greater levels of stress are programs that serve children from chaotic homes, disadvantaged areas, have higher rates of child behavior problems, and tend to have higher rates of turnover (The Early Years Workforce Study Team et al., 2020). A federal early care and education

program dedicated towards offsetting the risks associated with children from low-income families is Head Start (Scarborough et al.,2021).

Head Start

Head Start is unique from most other early care and education programs due to the multitude of services they offer and the comprehensiveness of those services (Gilford, 2013).

The services offered include education and training for children and families who are enrolled in the areas of health, nutrition, education, and parenting as well as addressing the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of children. Early Head Start/Head Start (EHS/HS) is a federally funded program across the U.S. serving mostly low-income populations and the young children and families within those communities. The main goal of Head Start is to offset children and families' risks by offering comprehensive support services for families and providing high quality learning experiences for children (Scarborough et al., 2021; Harding et al., 2019).

Head Start programs follow a federal-to-local funding model which allows local leaders to create a Head Start experience that is unique and specific to the needs of their communities. Although Head Start programs are individualized based on the needs of their communities, they are expected to follow the Head Start Performance Standards and the Head Start Act which are the primary regulation documents that outline the requirements for EHS/HS programs to follow (Gilford, 2013). Programs are “in compliance” when they are able to meet or exceed all Head Start Performance Standard regulations and requirements. One of the performance standards for Head Start relates specifically to their recruitment process for children and families. According to Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.13, in order to reach families who need Head Start services, programs must actively locate and recruit children with disabilities and other

vulnerable children including children who are homeless and those who are in foster care.

Although all educators in the field of early care and education are expected to be knowledgeable, flexible, caring, and trustworthy, educators in Head Start may bear even more of this weight due to the distinctive experiences of the children and families they serve (Gilford, 2013). Given the characteristics of children and families, the federal monitoring, and compliance, educators in Head Start have significant and varied responsibilities that may be vastly different from educators in other settings.

In September of 2021, the Office of Head Start released a series of COVID-19 updates in relation to supporting the wellness of all staff in the Head Start workforce and resources to build and retain a strong education workforce. Some of the strategies listed to promote the wellness of Head Start staff were as follows: Encouraging programs to foster a working environment of mutual respect, trust, and teamwork where staff feel empowered to make decisions and know that program leadership are there to support them; programs are encouraged to utilize sources of COVID-19 relief funding to provide incentives to staff to support retention; programs had to make mental health and wellness information available to staff regarding health issues that may affect their job performance, and they had to provide staff with regularly scheduled opportunities to learn about mental health, wellness, and health education (ECLKC, 2021). This specifically aligns with Head Start's performance standards Part 1302. 93 Staff health and wellness. In the current study, the executive director utilized funding from the CARES Act to provide health coaches to address children's needs, looked closer into staff health and wellness, offered a three-day training before the school year to address the teachers' needs, and rolled out an initiative around mental health and trauma. The executive director also mentioned how the wellbeing of early care educators is a topic that needs ongoing attention. These initiatives were the starting

point for addressing the wellbeing of early care educators in Head Start. When educators are given the opportunity to focus on their wellbeing, they are better able to deal with the demands that may come from being an educator in an early care setting (Russ, 2014).

The numerous daily demands Head Start teachers face include ensuring that instruction is high quality in order to meet the accountability mandates for learning outcomes, creating safe environments both physically and emotionally, and keeping the line of communication open between colleagues and families (Lawrence et al., 2020). An example of a specific demand placed upon EHS/HS teachers is regarding the several guidelines EHS/HS teachers are mandated to follow when planning. EHS/HS teachers are asked to follow the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Head Start Performance Standards, and state standards and curriculum requirements (Snyder, 2013). These demands placed upon Head Start teachers daily can have a negative impact on their wellbeing which in turn could make it more difficult to serve as models for young children and meet the needs of families (Whitaker et al., 2013).

In order to counteract the complex demands and responsibilities unique to Head Start, sustainable approaches and strategies that address the wellbeing of early care educators need to be implemented consistently and continuously throughout and across programs. Teachers are often mandated to attend trainings and workshops that enhance their knowledge about early care and education but receive little attention on how to address their wellbeing. Wellbeing is a topic that even the most highly qualified teachers need support and strategies to strengthen and sustain. Teachers need training to not only address their attitudes, beliefs, teaching practices, and high-quality experiences for children, but to also focus on their wellbeing (Harding et al., 2019). Professional development opportunities are oftentimes limited to a single time and have been

viewed as ineffective. There is a need for more sustained and intensive opportunities for professional development (Schachter et al., 2015).

Current Study

The current study adds to the early care and education wellbeing literature by acknowledging the role of resiliency as a protective factor and its components (self-control, relationships, initiative, internal beliefs, self-care) as they exist within the context of organizational climate to cultivate early care educators' wellbeing. Furthermore, this study utilizes an implementation science framework to give insight in how to create sustainable ways to enhance the resilience of early care educators. This framework also supports the innovative professional development approach that will be the central focus of the current study.

Resilience as a protective factor to support the wellbeing of Early Head Start and Head Start/NC Pre-K lead teachers, co-teachers, and assistant teachers was explored through an innovative professional development approach. This innovative professional development approach consists of a book study that supports teachers in increasing their knowledge and awareness about wellbeing and resilience, reflecting on their current behaviors and beliefs, setting goals for change, and receiving support through their professional learning communities. The role of organizational climate was examined as a contextual feature in facilitating and supporting early care educators' resilience. In conjunction with the framework of implementation science, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theoretical framework was utilized in the current study to consider the multiple systems and influences that occur within an educator's environment and how those elements cultivate resilience and wellbeing in early care educators. The theoretical approaches relevant to this study, definitions of wellbeing and its components, descriptions of

personal and external protective factors, and the methodology of the study is discussed in more depth in the following sections.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory and implementation science were used as the theoretical frameworks for this study. These frameworks complement each other and support a systems level approach to better understand the complexities of early care educators' wellbeing and resilience, and how meaningful and sustainable change through an innovative professional development approach might be achieved. Senge (1990) stated: "We tend to focus on snapshots of isolated parts of the system and wonder why our deepest problem never seems to get solved." The author further states how both implementation science and Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory acknowledge the impact of systems.

Bronfenbrenner's revised bioecological theory is one of the most widely known theoretical frameworks for human development and has been used in evolving forms in the field of early care and education for over two decades (Velez-Agosto et al., 2017). The early model of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory described the child as being the center of development whereas later models reference the center or inner circle as being any individual. In the current study, the individual of interest is the early care educator, and the focus of the study centers on resilience as an internal protective factor and how it influences early care educators' wellbeing within the context of the organizational climate of the program(s). Bronfenbrenner's final version of the ecological model, also known as Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, is defined as being "an evolving theoretical system for the scientific study of human development over time," and includes four elements known as process, person, context, and time to represent the PPCT model (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model

Proximal Processes

Process, also known as proximal processes, are the primary mechanisms in which development occurs (Tudge et al., 2009). There are two central propositions of this concept and are mentioned in several of Bronfenbrenner's later publications. Rosa and Tudge (2013) highlighted the first proposition which states, "Human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interactions between an active evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in their immediate environment. To be effective, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time. Such enduring forms of interaction in the immediate environment are referred to henceforth as proximal processes" (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1993, p. 317). Proximal processes can occur in an educator's immediate environment through interactions with the children in the classroom, administration, families, colleagues, and their work environment. These interactions occur on a regular basis due to the nature of early care and education settings. The classroom or program is an educator's place of work and can also be considered reciprocal in nature depending on the relationship the educator has with the children, families, colleagues and administration within their program.

The second proposition states: "The form, power, content, and direction of the proximal processes that affect development vary systematically as a joint function of the characteristics of the developing person and the environment (both immediate and more remote) in which the processes are taking place and the nature of the developmental outcomes under consideration"; (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1993, p. 317) and "the social continuities and changes occurring over *time* through the life course and the historical period during which the person has lived"

(Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p. 996). Rosa and Tudge (2013) discussed proximal processes as almost always having a positive effect on developmental outcomes either by promoting competence or by lessening the possibility of dysfunctional outcomes. The authors also found that the power of these proximal processes is greater and more positive for individuals who are in advantaged and stable environments than for individuals from disadvantaged, disorganized environments, and for individuals who have strong emotional relationships. The power of proximal processes demonstrates the importance of the organizational climate impacting programs, educators, administration, children, families, and communities in a positive way. When the environment and the people within that environment are having increasingly complex and reciprocal interactions on a regular basis over time, these interactions could be termed proximal processes that can either increase the wellbeing of educators or lessen the negative influences.

Proximal processes have not been described as occurring negatively or promoting dysfunction but as facilitating positive development and lessening the negative impacts. By knowing that proximal processes have not been described as occurring negatively, this supports the notion that proximal processes are crucial for individuals to continue to grow and be successful. Roberts et al. (2019) reiterated the importance of proximal processes and the quality of interactions within individuals' close daily relationships and their impact on development and wellbeing over time. The goal in the current study is to address educators' wellbeing through their resilience which can be considered an individual's personal characteristics. By addressing the individual's personal characteristics, we hope to promote more proximal processes within programs, classrooms, among colleagues, families, and children.

Person

An individual's personal characteristics, which can also serve as protective factors, influence developmental outcomes, and they are also what individuals carry with them into any social situation including their biological and experiential history (Perry & Dockett, 2018; Tudge et al., 2009). Specifically, educators bring their previous experiences, personal characteristics, both biologically and environmentally, into the classroom and their programs. These characteristics represent the second *P* in the PPCT model and can be broken into three types: demand, force, and resource (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Demand characteristics are considered traits that are easily noticeable and can either encourage or discourage a reaction from the environment affecting the way proximal processes are established (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). These characteristics are described as a person's temperament, age, gender, and appearance. According to The Early Care and Education Workforce (2021), 94% of the field are predominantly women and are racially and linguistically diverse with 40% being people of color and 22% foreign born. These are demand characteristics. Force characteristics are individual differences in temperament, motivation levels, persistence, curiosity, and other similar traits. It is then broken into generative which are those that introduce or maintain proximal processes, or disruptive which can hinder them (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Tudge et al., 2009). Lastly, resource characteristics are not easily seen and are the mental and emotional resources of individuals such as their skills, intellect, past experiences, and can also be social and material resources such as opportunities for education and access to food and housing (Perry & Dockett, 2018; Tudge et al., 2009). Resilience in educators can be considered a resource characteristic. Early care educators who demonstrate resiliency, are able to strengthen their ability to manage stressors, improve their chances for positive outcomes, and enhance their

intentions of staying in the field (Prilleltensky et al. 2016; Beltman et al., 2011). Truebridge (2016) described resilience as consisting of a negotiated process both internally and externally with the internal process representing an individual's personal strengths, attributes, and past experiences. Educators who can cultivate or strengthen their resilience are better able to thrive, and not just survive which allows them to bounce back quickly from adversity (Aquilar, 2018). The personal characteristics of educators are important to consider when thinking about how resilience can serve as a buffer or aid in an educator's wellbeing. Another aspect of the PPCT model is the context in which early care and education professionals are situated which also plays an instrumental role.

Context

Rosa and Tudge (2013) presented Bronfenbrenner's ecological model as being the environment or context organized through four interconnected structures, also referred to as nested structures. These four interconnected structures include the microsystem, which is the closest environment to the individual and where the educator is an active participant, such as the home or place of work. In this system there is an interplay between the personal characteristics of the individual and the physical and social environments individuals are a part of. The mesosystem is the interrelations of two or more microsystems in which the individual is actively participating and is referred to as a process. The exosystem is the setting in which the individual is not situated but experiences its' effects and at times its' impact. This system may include a significant other's workplace or a local regulatory agency. Lastly, the macrosystem encompasses the economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems or the overall beliefs held within those systems. Examples of the macrosystem include society's attitudes towards

women and children which can have an impact on how educators are treated due to the early care and education field being composed of 94% of women (Cassidy et al.,1995).

Perry and Dockett (2018) highlighted the importance of context in terms of the four systems, with the microsystem being the primary system for proximal processes. The authors also discussed how experiences within multiple systems can create both consistency and tension. An example of multiple systems overlapping with early care and education professionals' wellbeing would be the intersection between home and the workplace (microsystem), with the added layer of beliefs held about women working in early care and education (macrosystem) which translates into the low wages early care educators receive. When thinking about the microsystem, which is representative of an educator's home and work, these two contexts are intertwined meaning the factors that impact an educator's wellbeing may be connected to both the home and workplace. A program's organizational climate and the community in which early care educators work are also a part of the microsystem.

Beltman et al. (2020) discussed community characteristics and aspects of organizational climate such as: workplace characteristics, collegial support, and leadership as microsystem level challenges and resources. Programs and the classrooms within a program are considered microsystems since the teacher is present in both contexts. The interrelationships between the program and classroom create the mesosystem. McCartney (2018) described a study in which data looking at first-year teachers' general satisfaction of their first year compared to the second-year retention were explored. The study found that the influence first year teachers had over their working environment and the support they received from administration were significantly correlated to their satisfaction. Russel et al. (2010) wrote about the support needed from administrators in the early care and education field and how inadequate administrative support

could be a significant antecedent of turnover for teachers in the field. The decisions made at the administrative or program level can directly impact the educator as well as their classroom. For these reasons, it is important to consider the organizational climate of the program and its' impact on educators' wellbeing. In the current study, the wellbeing of early care educators will be examined through their resilience in the context of their program's organizational climate. Early care educators' wellbeing and resilience in the current historical context also needs to be taken into consideration.

Time

Time, like personal characteristics, can be broken into subfactors called micro-time, meso-time, and macro-time. Tudge et al. (2009) described time as a crucial part in Bronfenbrenner's theory and defined the subfactors as: micro-time representing the interaction itself and what is occurring within that interaction; meso-time as how often and consistent proximal processes occur during an individual's development; and macro-time as being consistent with chronosystem representing historical time (Perry & Dockett, 2018; Tudge et al., 2009).

Chronosystem was not a part of the second phase of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, but the definition given in Cassidy et al. (1995) article reiterated how Bronfenbrenner defined chronosystem. Cassidy et al. (1995) defined chronosystem as being a process in which the individual is impacted by the entire system and the historical events occurring within that time frame. An example given in relation to chronosystem was the women's movement that served as a catalyst for middle class women leaving the household to join the workforce which sparked the need for out of home childcare. In Rosa and Tudge's (2013) article, the authors quoted Bronfenbrenner who stated, "The individual's own developmental life course is seen as

embedded in and powerfully shaped by conditions and events occurring during the historical period through which the person lives” (p. 254). When thinking about an educator’s wellbeing, one has to think about how the current pandemic has influenced the context and consistency of proximal processes and what is occurring among interactions with colleagues, administration, families, and children.

Related to the pandemic, Swigonski et al. (2021) explained the impact of new federal, state, and local guidelines on early care and education programs and how some programs were forced to close, decrease in enrollment or only allowing certain children to attend (i.e., children of essential workers), hence affecting educators’ stability in their programs. The shift that has occurred during the pandemic has impacted the interactions that occur within programs. When interactions cannot occur on a regular basis, over a period of time, and are not reciprocal in nature, the lack of interactions then affects the proximal processes that can positively impact or lessen the negative influence on an educator’s wellbeing.

When thinking about Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory and its’ relevance to educators’ wellbeing, we specifically look at the proximal processes that occur within an educator’s mesosystem or the interrelationships between the classroom and program; the macrosystem and the belief systems held about early care and education, the culture and climate of individual early care and education programs, its’ impact on the educator; and lastly the educator’s emotional resources such as their coping strategies and personal characteristics. In sum, Bronfenbrenner’s theory will support the need to understand the interaction that occurs between early care and education professionals and their wellbeing, their personal characteristics, and how it impacts their intentions or commitment to the field within the context of their program. The way in which we support early care educators in their wellbeing, present

coping strategies to enhance their practices to address their wellbeing, discuss and enhance their personal characteristics, and acknowledge their perceptions about their organizational climate is through the implementation of evidence-based practices.

Implementation Science Framework

Implementation science will be used to help guide the process of how evidence-based interventions or professional development approaches can be implemented in the context of typical, everyday settings (Dunst et al., 2013) such as early care and education programs and classrooms. As for implementation science there are a few ways it has been conceptualized in the literature, but for the current study a couple of definitions were taken into consideration. Linland et al. (2015) characterized implementation science as “referring to the emerging scientific study of variables that influence the use of new innovations in practice” (pp. 5-6) and Dunst et al. (2013) stated it as being an “understanding of the processes, procedures, and conditions that promote or impede the transfer, adoption, and use of evidence-based intervention practices in the context of typical, everyday settings” (p. 86). Both of these definitions are helpful when thinking about emerging evidence-based strategies that could be implemented for early care educators. In the current study, implementation science is a useful framework to examine the use of an innovative professional development approach to addresses the wellbeing of early care and education professionals and their resiliency in the context of the program’s organizational climate. Implementation science is utilized to understand the process of how educators can learn about evidence-based strategies through a book study and apply those strategies into their everyday lives.

Omdal and Roland (2020) described implementation as consisting of the process it takes to put an idea, program, activity, or structure that is new to the target audience into practice.

There is a gap that occurs between research and implementation, and this gap is being attributed to an increase in knowledge about intervention practices and professional development opportunities, but this increase in knowledge is not being translated into the continuous use of sustainable practices (Odom, 2009). There is also a need for more studies on the implementation of model programs as well as how implementation science can be communicated in a way that is useful for early care educators and leaders at the program and organizational level (Franks & Schroeder, 2013; Linland et al., 2015; Metz & Bartley, 2012). Overall, implementation science helps bridge the gap between evidence-based strategies, interventions, or professional development opportunities, and how to implement them both effectively and successfully into practice. When implementation science is utilized at its fullest potential and exhibits fidelity, it supports providing successful interventions or professional development opportunities to improve and sustain wellbeing in early care and education settings.

Fidelity

One of the key components of implementation science is ensuring that the intervention, program, or practice has fidelity throughout the implementation process. Dunst et al. (2013) recognized that fidelity has been conceptualized similarly with many definitions, but for the proposed study, fidelity will be defined as being the “strategies that monitor and enhance the accuracy and consistency of an intervention to ensure it is implemented as planned and that each component [of a program or practice] is delivered in a comparable manner” (Smith et al., 2007, p. 121). Fidelity is critical when implementing interventions because it demonstrates how evidence-based strategies are put in place to produce the intended outcomes. Fidelity has been broken down into implementation and intervention.

Implementation fidelity refers to the extent in which any evidence-based professional development such as coaching, in-service training, or instruction is used as intended and results in the adoption of those intervention practices. Intervention fidelity is the extent to which intervention agents such as early childhood practitioners utilize evidence-based intervention practices as intended with the expected benefits (Dunst et al., 2013). In the current study, implementation fidelity refers to the book study and the degree to which it is delivered as intended. Implementation fidelity also includes how evidence-based strategies taught within the book study translate into everyday practices for early care educators. Intervention fidelity involves the researcher's role in implementing and facilitating the book study and how they utilize evidence-based intervention practices as intended to produce the desired outcomes. The desired outcomes of the current study are for early care educators to gain awareness and knowledge in relation to wellbeing and resilience, identify and pursue their wellbeing and resilience goals, provide feedback about the book study and its' process, and examine how educators' participation in the book study is associated with their intentions to stay in their program and in the field. Fidelity is just one of the major components of implementation science. In order for program models and professional development opportunities to produce meaningful and sustainable change, the stages as well as the core implementation components need to be taken into consideration.

Meaning and Sustainable Change

Implementation Stages

Implementation is not seen as a single event but as a process that involves multiple decisions, actions, and adaptations to help change the structures and conditions in which organizations can support new evidence-based practices, models, innovations, and initiatives

(Metz et al., 2013). Implementation is a process that includes stages and core components that must also be implemented and are referred to as the implementation drivers of implementation science. Implementation stages consist of four phases: exploration, installation, initial implementation, and full implementation, with phases often overlapping and sustainability embedded within each of the four phases (Metz & Bartley, 2012). The implementation stages can be referenced in Figure 1. Also, within each phase are a set of activities that are pertinent to follow. Metz et al. (2013) discussed the importance of following each stage and the activities listed within those stages especially for new early childhood initiatives, while also taking into consideration the financial and programmatic sustainability within each stage. For this proposed study, the exploration stage will be the focus due to this innovative professional development approach as well as the acknowledgement that to move through the stages takes two to four years.

The exploration stage of implementation science includes completing the steps that need to occur before a new practice, program, or intervention is put into place as well as reassessing what is in place currently and examine if it is best meeting the needs of the targeted population (Metz et al., 2015). The authors also emphasized the steps needed beforehand including assembling an implementation team who are a group of people working together to explore options and eventually implement an intervention. This group of people will work together to create a plan for the intervention. The responsibility for the researcher on this study is to create a plan with the help of the implementation team for the book study, prepare for data collection, collect data, aggregate, and analyze data. The paragraph below outlines the steps of the exploration stage for the current study (Foundation for Child Development, 2020).

The implementation team for the current study consisted of the educational director of Head Start, the individual center director(s) of the participating program(s), and the researcher's advisors. Next effective professional development approaches were discussed and identified with the implementation team. After the professional development approach was established, the researcher examined the feasibility which included assessing the buy-in and readiness of those being impacted by the potential professional development implementation, needs of individuals, and ensuring the intervention will lead to expected outcomes. This step of the exploration stage was completed by sending out a survey to Early Head Start and Head Start lead teachers, co-teachers, and directors asking about their current supports and needs related to wellbeing, perceptions about professional development, work environment, job satisfaction, and stressors. Lastly, by taking the needed steps during the exploration stage, the researcher can examine if a book study has produced meaningful and sustainable outcomes.

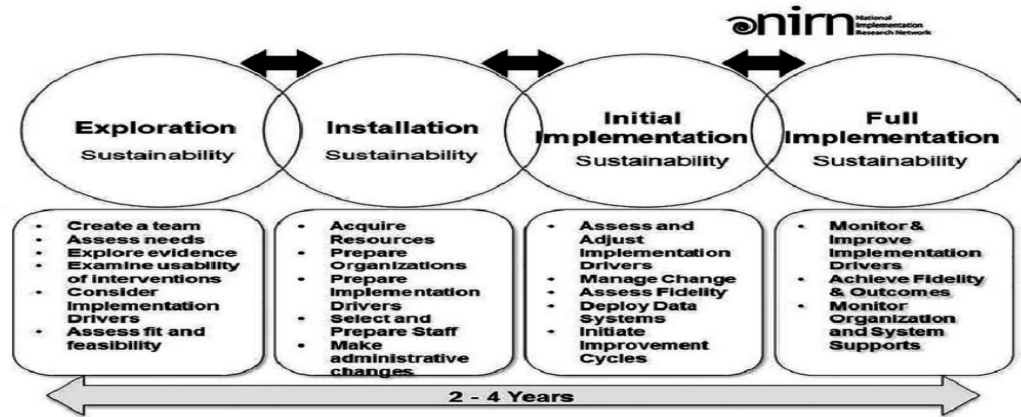
Although this study only went through the exploration stage of implementation science, there is a process for moving an intervention forward with a larger scale installation and eventually into full implementation. The current study explores the possibility of a book study being an effective professional development approach in enhancing the wellbeing of early care educators but also acknowledging the impact it may have on other areas such as the organizational climate of early care and education programs. When thinking about how the book study approach could move through the stages and be fully implemented, the next stage after exploration would be the installation stage.

In this stage, the book study would have already been implemented as a pilot professional development approach for a targeted program. The next step may be to offer this opportunity to additional Head Start programs in the county. In order for this step to occur, the necessary

individual and organizational competencies as well as supporting infrastructure should be established so that the book study can successfully be put into place in the near future (Metz et al., 2015). This means that collaboration has to occur among the facilitator of the book study, the individual programs, as well as the administration of Head Start at the county level before the implementation of the book study. Initial implementation involves the book study being implemented at the county level and available to all Head Start educators regardless of their role. The last stage, full implementation, occurs when the book study becomes integrated statewide and at least fifty percent of programs are recognizing it as an innovative professional development approach to enhancing the wellbeing of early care educators (Metz et al., 2015).

In the current study, the exploration stage included assessing the readiness and needs of early care and education professionals in Head Start, keeping close communication with Head Start administration, creating a plan for the book study, and implementing the book study for Early Head Start/ Head Start lead and co-teachers from designated program (s). The implementation stages are just one element within the implementation science framework that can be utilized to see change at all levels (individual, classroom, program, and county levels). Implementation drivers are another element of the implementation science and sustainability framework that demonstrate how multiple systems work together to produce change.

Figure 1. Implementation Stages



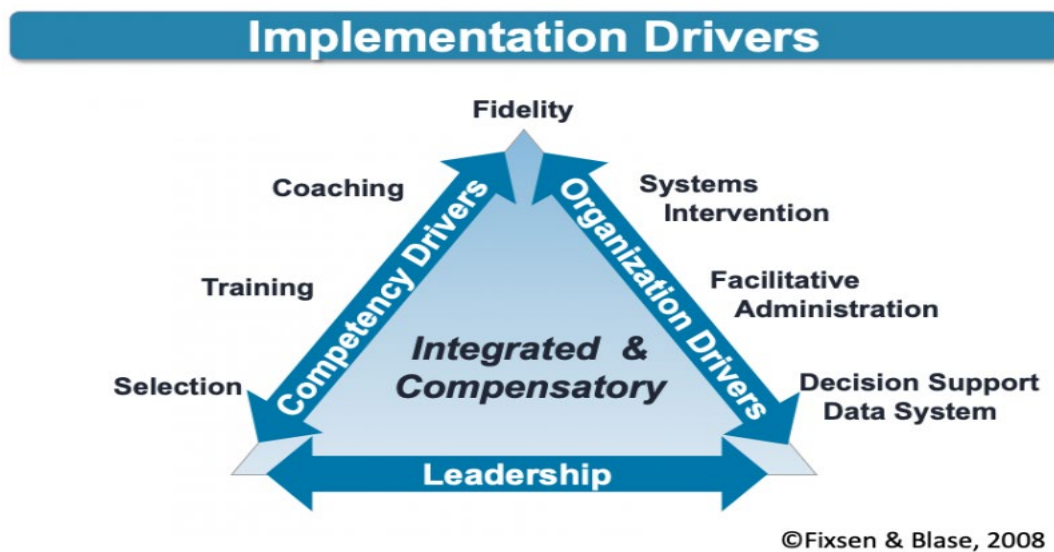
Implementation Drivers

Implementation drivers are referred to as the “building blocks” of the infrastructure to support what is needed at all levels to produce change (Metz et al., 2013). These building blocks are classified into three categories: competency, organization, and leadership drivers. Visually, these three categories as well as other components of implementation drivers can be seen in Figure 2. The three categories emerged from the common themes found among successful programs and practices who followed the structural components and activities that were within each implementation driver which resulted in success and sustainability (Metz & Bartley, 2012).

Competency drivers are defined in the current study as the way in which the researcher developed, advanced, and sustained the confidence and competence of early care and education professionals to implement an intervention or professional development approach the way it was intended (Metz et al., 2013). A key component of successful implementation that accompanies competency drivers is performance assessment. Performance assessment allows researchers to find areas of strengths and improvement of implementation in order to adjust, but it also aids in the fidelity of the implementation (Fixen et al. 2016). This component is used to determine the use and outcomes of the skills that are being reflected within the selection of participants as well

as what was learned through training and throughout the coaching process (Metz et al., 2013). Organization drivers are the creation of environments that are hospitable and sustainable at the organizational and system level for services that are effective (Fixen et al., 2016) Lastly, leadership drivers focus on the strategies those in leadership need when faced with challenges and the need for leaders to make decisions and provide support through guidance and organization functioning (Halle et al., 2019). Competency, organization, and leadership drivers like the implementation stages are broken down into specific elements that need to be taken into consideration when looking at core implementation components as a whole. The specific elements of these components of each driver or drivers included in the current study are discussed further in the following sections.

Figure 2. Implementation Drivers Framework



Competency Drivers

When looking at how the implementation process supports readiness to change, we can specifically look at competency drivers, which have professional development elements embedded. Components of competency drivers include selection, training, and coaching.

Selection. Selection refers to identifying the skills, abilities, and other characteristics needed to recruit participants who possess the skills and characteristics needed for the intervention/professional development (Fixen et al., 2016). This element was achieved in the current study by surveying early care and education professionals, specifically Early Head Start and Head Start lead teachers and co-teachers, on their readiness to change and their willingness for professional development/intervention.

Training. Training is another element of competency drivers that has been described as a composition of activities specifically focused for early care and education programs that provide skill instruction or skill-building that can be used in an early care and education setting (Sheridan et al., 2009). Peterson (2013) provided an example of a training that focused on staff's motivation and confidence to increase their readiness to change. The researcher in this study also expressed the criticalness of assessing the readiness for change on an administrative level because the buy-in at that level impacts the receptiveness of implementation at the staff level. This element of competency drivers can occur once implementation has begun, and it is decided to enter the installation phase of the implementation. Coaching is the last element of competency drivers and is discussed in more detail below due to the important role it plays in the proposed study.

Coaching. The last element of competency drivers is coaching. Coaching is defined as being a “voluntary, nonjudgmental, and collaborative partnership that occurs when one desires to learn new knowledge and skills from the other” (Hanft et al., 2004, p.1) and its' outcomes include a heightened sense of self-efficacy, self-awareness, wellbeing, competence, and a community within the field of early care and education (Page & Eadie, 2019; Sheridan et al., 2009). An issue with coaching comes into play when educators may not be in a place to change.

In order to mitigate this issue Peterson (2013) offered two possible strategies. One strategy would be to offer coaching to educators who are in the later stages of readiness or completely alter the construction of coaching programs so that it can meet the needs and levels of all educators regardless of their level of readiness. Schachter et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of the director providing resources for small groups of educators or the group as a whole to encourage engagement in professional development experiences and to ensure that staff is responsive and ready for change (Peterson, 2013). Coaching and specialized training are two different types of approaches to professional development that could be offered to early care and education professionals. Head Start has coaching through educational coaches and mentors within their programs. Although educational coaches were not utilized in the current study, educational coaches and mentors can check in with teachers as well as encourage their readiness to change. Organization drivers are another component of implementation drivers that allow for successful implementation.

Organizational Drivers

Fixen et al. (2016) described organization drivers as being the organization's infrastructure and their capacity to support programs, staff in implementing practices, and strategies with fidelity. Fidelity is achieved through the collection of data to monitor the implementation of the intervention/professional development and its components, different sources of funding and resources, and collaboration among external partnerships that can provide additional resources for the intervention/professional development. In *Getting it Right: The Conversation Guide for Preparing the Next Generation of Implementation* (2020) the authors described organizational drivers as consisting of decision- support data systems, facilitative administration, and systems interventions. Decision-support data systems involve the data used

to assess the performance of an intervention and help support the decisions made to make sure there is continuous fidelity of the intervention over time.

In the current study, data was collected throughout the book study to evaluate progress, if the information, activities, and strategies are influencing early care and education professionals' behaviors in and outside of the classroom, and if any adaptations were needed for continuous improvement. Facilitative administration is described as the administrators of the program and their involvement in the process, their use of data gathered through the intervention/professional development to inform their decision making, the support throughout the intervention/professional development process, and assisting staff in staying focused and organized on the outcomes of the intervention. In the current study, the center director(s) of the participating program(s) were aware and received the materials their Early Head Start/Head Start lead and co-teachers received for the book study. The center directors were asked to fill out a survey about their perception of their program's organizational climate. Center directors being aware of the information discussed in the book study, they have the potential to support and assist in cultivating wellbeing within their programs. Lastly, systems interventions are the strategies to collaborate with external systems to make sure there is an availability of financial, organizational, and human resources needed to support early care and education professionals (Fixen et al., 2016). This aspect of the framework was not emphasized in the current study but gives insight on what needs to occur to implement this intervention fully. All of these elements work together to make up the organizational drivers' component of implementation drivers. The last section involves leadership's role in implementation.

Leadership

Lastly, Hsueh et al. (2020) described leadership as the individuals who are helping to support the implementation of the intervention, but it can also refer to the individual who is directly implementing the intervention/professional development approach. Fixen et al. (2016) emphasized the importance of leadership at the organization and systems level as being critical and widely acknowledged. These individuals will be able to address the technical and adaptive challenges that often emerge as a part of the change that may occur within the professional development process. In order for implementation to be successful, the leader or administrator should emphasize building up and creating a collaborative environment, distribute leadership, develop people, build strong relationships, and reassure staff of the safety of exploring new practices (Omdal & Roland, 2020). In the current study, leadership includes the student researcher, Head Start educational director, and center directors. Communication between the student researcher and educational director began a year before the professional development opportunity was implemented. A few months before the book study, the student researcher had meetings and communication exchanges with the center directors of the participating centers. A month leading up to the book study, the student researcher visited the programs to establish the book study being a collaborative effort among the student researcher, educational director, center directors, and teachers.

When all three components are used collectively, these implementation drivers support sustainable intervention implementation as well as high-fidelity (Metz & Bartley, 2012). The context of the proposed professional development approach also has an important role in implementation. Readiness to change is an element to consider when thinking about the best

ways to conceptualize and design a professional development opportunity for individuals and programs.

Readiness to Change

Halle et al. (2019) discussed how readiness to change can be pertinent to intervention fidelity and possibly directly or indirectly impact outcomes. The researchers also provided a definition of readiness as capturing where a person, group of individuals, or organization may be at a particular point by measuring the willingness and capacity they have to take on a new or existing practice in the way it is intended. An individual or organization's readiness to change needs to be assessed early in order to gain access to support and to be able to make connections between readiness to change and any resistance experienced later on.

Implementation of an intervention, policy, or practice involves change, and when organizations or individuals are not ready for this change, it can lead to detrimental effects. Doyle et al. (2011) explained how organizational change, a source of stress in the workplace, can be linked to negative outcomes such as job loss, loss of identity, reduced wellbeing, interpersonal conflict, and several behavioral, psychological, and physiological outcomes. Assessing readiness to change is important for the organization as a whole to evaluate why some individuals are not ready to change and what may be preventing them from changing. Once programs are able to assess staff readiness, they are able to make the changes needed to produce the desired outcomes. In order to ensure that this change will not add to the stressors early care and education professionals face on a daily basis, we first have to gauge an individual's readiness to change.

On an individual level, an educator's readiness to change can speak to the level of satisfaction they have at their workplace as well as their work environment. Doyle et al. (2011) mentioned how a readiness to change among early childhood educators from existing literature

was based mainly on a high level of job satisfaction but could also be attributed to a certain level of dissatisfaction as well as having a positive and supportive work environment. The current state of the early care and education field can also impact the readiness to change for a number of reasons, including turnover rates, low pay, level of education, and low levels of professional identity (Peterson, 2013). When creating a book study approach for the current study addressing Head Start lead teachers and co-teachers' wellbeing and resilience, an assessment of educators' readiness to change was taken into consideration.

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory and Implementation science were helpful theoretical frameworks to guide the current study and to better understand the elements that were considered as valuable when designing the study. The next section will review the literature related to the important components of wellbeing and resilience and associations with teacher retention.

CHAPTER III: LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides an overview of the wellbeing of early care and education professionals. The next sections address internal and external protective factors. The internal protective factor, resiliency and the key attributes that help build resilience are also discussed. The external protective factors which serve as the contextual feature for this study include the facets of organizational climate. The professional development approaches that were utilized in the study is defined as well as early care educators' commitment to their program and the field. Lastly, the goals of the current study, as well as research questions and hypotheses are presented.

Wellbeing

There has not been a consensus on a definition that encompasses the broad concept of wellbeing across disciplines and literature (Zhang et al.,2020; Jones et al., 2019). The term wellbeing has been used broadly to describe the overall quality of life or specific domains in isolation such as job-related, psychological, emotional, social, and professional wellbeing (Jones et al., 2019). When looking specifically at an educator's wellbeing, the definition Acton and Glasgow (2015) provided described wellbeing as "an individual's sense of personal professional fulfillment, satisfaction, purposefulness and happiness, constructed in a collaborative process with colleagues and students" (p. 102). This definition is closely related to Ruggari's et al. (2020) description of a person's overall wellbeing as being the experience of positive emotions including happiness and contentment, having control, developing one's potential, purposefulness, and establishing positive relationships. These definitions demonstrate how wellbeing involves an educator's personal and professional life as well as the importance of wellbeing being a collaboration among educators, colleagues, and students. Both of these

definitions encompass wellbeing for early care and education professionals and why it should be a priority in the early care and education field.

Components of Wellbeing

Psychological Wellbeing

One of the components or domains of wellbeing that has been studied in isolation is psychological wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing has been broadly defined as being the subjective experience and assessment of a person's cognitive, emotions, and motivation. Other aspects of psychological wellbeing that are included in Cummings and Wong's (2019) research include an educator's purpose in life, their mental health, personal development, and self-acceptance.

Teaching young children has been found to be one of the most stressful occupations and early care educators have reported feeling stressed, exhausted, isolated, and burnt out (Jeon et al., 2018). Cumming and Wong (2019) described these negative feelings as representing psychological distress (stress, depression, and burnout) which is commonly confused with and used to measure psychological wellbeing. The effects of psychological load, which includes depression, stress, and emotional exhaustion, should also be explored in relation to psychological wellbeing. Overall, an educators' psychological wellbeing has been significantly impacted by their perception of the autonomy within their program in relation to routines, programming, and supervision which coincides with educators' most basic psychological needs to have a sense of autonomy, cordial interpersonal relationships, and competence in their teaching ability to fulfill the responsibilities of their job (Cumming, 2017).

Jeon et al. (2018) has also examined psychological wellbeing in relation to an educator's professional background, their perception of the work environment, and teaching efficacy. In

Jeon's et al.'s work, these constructs were studied in association with psychological load. In order for educators to manage their psychological load, they have to employ their coping strategies or emotion regulation strategies (Grant et al., 2019). Coping behaviors or styles can be defined as the way in which a person appraises how stressful their situation may be by employing their intellectual and behavioral resources to buffer or manage their situation (McCarthy et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2019). Coping behaviors or strategies can also be thought of in terms of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory as a person's characteristics or protective factors. The results in Jeon et al. (2018) study showed significant associations between a teacher's perception of their work environment with depression, stress, and emotional exhaustion as well as childcare chaos being a predictor of an early care and educator's psychological wellbeing. This demonstrates the importance of taking a look into educators' work environment as well as the types of support that are in place for educators who have chaotic classrooms in relation to their psychological wellbeing. Competence was negatively associated with depression and perceived stress while general teaching efficacy was negatively associated with teacher's stress and work-related emotional exhaustion. By knowing the significant associations between constructs of psychological wellbeing, interventions or preventative measures can be provided to educators in the field.

Depression. Depression is defined by feelings of sadness or emptiness, restlessness, a hard time concentrating, and irritability. Those who experience depressive symptoms may have trouble meeting the daily cognitive, social, and emotional demands of life and work (Roberts et al., 2016). This element of psychological load is important to consider when thinking about how it affects several areas from a person's cognitive development to their emotions. In a study with Head Start teachers in Pennsylvania, 24% of staff reported experiencing depression through an

online survey using the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D) which was greater than the national caregiver sample (Madill et al., 2018). Although this was solely Head Start teachers from one area compared to a national sample, it is worth taking into consideration how certain aspects of psychological load may be impacting wellbeing. Tebben et al. (2021) gave another example of how within Head Start programs teachers who had more stress and symptoms of depression were more likely to get into conflicts with children in their classroom. Stress is another element of psychological load that receives great attention in the early care and education literature.

Stress. Thirty percent of preschool teachers who leave the field annually have named stress and workload as being the causes (Gagnon et al., 2019) with Head Start lead teacher turnover percentage not being too far behind at 22.3% (Berenstein et al., 2018). Both percentages are alarming, which makes examining teacher stress even more important. Tebben et al. (2021) described teacher stress as being anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or depression felt as a result of an aspect of their work as an educator. In relation to the workplace, these stressors may stem from factors such as restricted budgets, noisy environments, challenging behaviors, unreasonable parent expectations, an absence of appreciation from parents, colleagues, and leadership (Jones et al., 2019). Some of these factors could possibly be mediated by personal and workplace resources but if these supports are not in place, it could lead to a dimension of psychological load known as emotional exhaustion.

Emotional Exhaustion. The importance of early care educators' psychological wellbeing has been associated with classroom quality as well as children's development. Emotional exhaustion can be the result of an increase in demands and requirements, but it also can stem from a lack of physical, psychological, and emotional resources (Zhang et al., 2019). Lovgren

(2016) reiterated the importance of the emotional health of early care educators. Increased levels of emotional exhaustion were associated with higher absenteeism, job withdrawal, decreased levels of productivity and effectiveness, and has been seen as a predictor of early care educators' intent to leave their job. It's important to take into consideration dimensions of psychological load both individually and collectively and its impact on turnover rates in early care and education and specifically how it is affecting Head Start programs.

Professional Wellbeing/Work-Related Wellbeing

Professional wellbeing includes teachers' feelings about their work and perception of autonomy. It also incorporates an educator's perception on the fairness of wages in the early care and education field, their program, their ability to meet their financial needs, and work time supports (Cassidy et al., 2019). Higher compensation and professionalizing the field of early care and education has and remains to be the fight of early care educators, but there should also be a focus on early care educators' feelings about their work and how it has impacted the classroom, children, and families they serve. Professionalizing the field and fairness of wages relates back to the macrosystem described in Bronfenbrenner's theory. The beliefs held about the early care and education field have impacted educators' professional wellbeing. An educator's perception of their autonomy is an element that is a part of multiple components of wellbeing including psychological wellbeing which was described in an earlier section.

The decision-making structures and the magnitude in which educators are involved in those decisions influence an educator's feelings about their work (Cassidy et al., 2017). Educators' involvement in decisions about their work environment, classroom, and teaching could be a way to increase their perception about their autonomy. Cassidy et al. (2017) discussed these decisions as being an educator's teaching styles, policies involving parents and personnel,

and the hiring of teachers. The decisions made about an educator's classroom and what may impact the children and families they serve should involve the educator themselves. When educators feel like their voices are being heard and supports are in place, their chances of having the emotional capacity to support the children and families they serve increases (Cassidy et al., 2019) and it also supports the social and emotional practices of the classroom (Jeon et al., 2018). Not only is this vital to understanding how we can assist educators in their classrooms and the programs they are a part of, but also in how we can support educators' social-emotional wellbeing.

Social-Emotional Wellbeing

Although the early care and education field has been studied as a profession that requires a great deal of emotional work, there have been few studies to show the effects that this work has on an educator's social-emotional wellbeing (Cumming, 2017). This is surprising given the need for educators to be able to support young children in their social-emotional development which requires them to be aware of their own emotions and appropriately model self-regulation. Young children's social and emotional competence can impact their academic outcomes, peer relationships, and their interest in learning (Lang et al., 2017) which can depend heavily on an educator's social and emotional competence and training (Tebben et al., 2021). By modeling positive self-regulation and social-emotional skills for children, educators may help lessen the challenging behaviors exhibited in the classroom and the impact it has on their wellbeing. Lang et al. (2017) reiterated the importance of educators being a model for how to navigate negative feelings, how to appropriately communicate those emotions, meet their needs, and negotiate conflicts about items and ideas. Focusing on educators' social and emotional wellbeing as a part of their overall wellbeing can indirectly impact children's social and emotional development and

their developmental trajectories (Lang et al., 2017). The ability educators have to understand, express, manage their emotions, recognize, and react successfully to another person's emotions demonstrates their emotional competence and in turn serves as a source of emotional capital for themselves and the children in their care (Garner et al., 2019). In the current study, the student researcher addressed and discussed the emotional work that is involved in early care and education and educators through a chapter in the book study called *Understanding Emotions*. An educator's resilience was measured in the study, and we discussed it in the book study through the book *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators*.

Internal Protective Factors

Resilience

Although the stressors early care educators face in their everyday lives have been documented extensively, research has recently focused more on early care educators' resilience, which is what sustains them and allows them to thrive in the field (Beltman et al., 2011). Sumison's (2003) article described resilience in the context of early care and education as "the ability to continue to find deep and sustaining personal and professional satisfaction in one's work as an early care educator despite the presence of multiple adverse factors and circumstances that have led many to leave the field" (p. 143). Resilience in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory can be seen as a personal characteristic that can serve as an internal protective factor for an educator's wellbeing. In the resilience literature there are multiple terms used to describe aspects of resilience including terms like mental health promotion, emotional intelligence, social-emotional competence, and emotional literacy (Knight, 2007). This helps to see that there is an overlap in the areas of emotions, mental health, and how it plays a role in an individual's resilience. Sumison (2004) mentioned how Massey et al. (1998) argued against

resiliency being characterized as fixed or gained from adverse circumstances but more so an enduring characteristic with unsteady trajectories that reflect the “inevitable ups and downs of life” (p. 340). When early care and educators are able to learn how to maximize their resilience, it can result in adaptive outcomes such as greater success, commitment, wellbeing, engagement, and retention among educators who are new in the field (Mansfield et al., 2016; Seo & Yuh, 2021).

Despite the fact that resiliency has been characterized as something that requires working through adverse factors and situations before it can be built internally, there can be some inner work that could be completed to help build resiliency among educators. Arnup (2016) believed resilience to be the key in gaining insight on why educators leave the field and how efforts should be made to increase resilience in educators, specifically those who are early in their career, to cope with aspects of the job that may be less satisfying. The *Center for Resilient Children* created checklists titled Devereux Adult Resilience Survey and Devereux Resilient Leadership Survey, that assist early care and education professionals in reflecting on their behaviors associated with resilience. Their tool is arranged around four protective factors that promote resilience. Within the description of each protective factor are personal characteristics that can be referred to as force and resource characteristics in Bronfenbrenner’s theory. These personal characteristics cultivate a specific protective factor. The four protective factors that promote resilience are known as self-control, relationships, initiative, and internal beliefs. Another protective factor that is discussed in the *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators* book and is explored through this study, is how educators practice self-care.

Self-Control

Self-control is the ability to express and experience a wide range of emotions but also being able to act on your emotions in a way that society considers appropriate (Mackrain, 2007). Emotional labor is inevitable in the field of early care and education due to the interdependent relationship between teacher and children (Cassidy et al., 2019) and can lead to negative effects including burnout, occupational stress, low competence in teaching ability, lessened job satisfaction, and a deterioration of mental health (Hong & Zhang, 2019). Emotional labor is conceptualized as being “the silent work of inducing or suppressing feelings in ourselves and in others [and] the management of feelings to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” (Zhang et al., 2020, p. 7). Self-control can help lessen emotional labor because you are able to express and experience emotions rather than suppressing those feelings that can lead to burnout and stress. Although emotional labor is part of the work of early care and education, emotional capital is the tools that educators possess or can gain to buffer the effects of the job.

Yarrow (2015) emphasized educators who realized the agency they have over their emotions, can use emotional capital as a tool to improve their wellbeing despite their work conditions. Andrew (2015) expressed emotional capital as being utilized as use-value instead of exchange-value. Use-value benefits the educator by consciously choosing to change their emotions over time into attitudes of empathy, insight, and resilience while exchange-value is done for the service of others and benefits the employer in providing superficial or temporary attitudes to increase worker’s performance. There continues to be little research on how emotional labor impacts early care and education professionals specifically, (Zhang et al, 2020) but there are implications for supporting educators’ ability to express and experience their emotions rather than mask them. When early care educators demonstrate high emotional

competence, they are better able to deal with the emotional demands of the job and be connected relationally to the children in their classroom and colleagues (Ciucci et al., 2017).

Relationships

Daniilidou and Platsidou (2018) characterized protective factors of resilience along four dimensions with one of those dimensions being social. This dimension is described as educators demonstrating strong interpersonal skills which allows for the development of social support networks such as co-workers, family, friends, and other groups of support. Supportive relationships in and outside of an educator's workplace can aid in job satisfaction. Beltman et al. (2020) found that relationships presented themselves as both a challenge and a resource at the microsystem level. Early care and education professionals perceived other staff members as being challenging and attributed it to their perception of certain staff members lacking expertise and politics within the workplace. Supportive relationships included a wider range of support networks such as mentors, relationships educators had with children, and relationships educators had outside and inside of work including colleagues. The interaction of these support networks makes up an educator's mesosystem. Colleagues were perceived as being both challenging and a resource, which demonstrates the importance of their role within the work environment. The relationship with colleagues will be discussed more with organizational climate. Another protective factor that contributes to resilience is an educator's initiative.

Initiative

When early care and education professionals exhibit initiative as a protective factor, it results in effective communication, working together to problem solve, seeking professional development opportunities and growth, new ideas, and feelings of positivity and optimism (Center for Resilient Leadership). Beltman et al. (2020) examined resilience through an

ecological view with one of the personal-system level resources identified as being optimistic thinking. Optimistic thinkers were described as people who take risks and persist until the problem is solved, which has been linked to job satisfaction. Motivation can also be seen as contributing to one's initiative, specifically intrinsic motivation. Early care educators who are characterized as having more intrinsic motivation chose to work in the field because of the inherent value of the job and are more engaged in their workplace and in seeking professional development. This results in educators being more likely to remain at their program and in the field (Grant et al., 2019). The last protective factor that contributes to an educator's resilience is their internal beliefs which is another protective factor that contributes to an educator's resiliency.

Internal Beliefs

Internal beliefs are described as the feelings and thoughts we may have about ourselves and how much we believe we can take action in our lives (Mackrain, 2007).

Self-Efficacy. Friedman (2003) explained a person's perceived self-efficacy as being defined as the ability or belief to "organize and execute the courses of action required to achieve goals" (p. 192). Huang et al. (2019) characterized self-efficacy as being based on the assessment of an individual's competence and the resources or constraints of certain contexts. The reason for highlighting self-efficacy as well as teachers' efficacy is to encompass not just the sense of efficacy needed in the classroom setting, but the self-efficacy needed in an educator's personal life. Self-efficacy can be considered a resource characteristic under Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory. Karademas (2006) described the difference between individuals with high self-efficacy and those with low self-efficacy. Individuals with high self-efficacy are able to regulate themselves and stressful situations, display higher levels of self-esteem, better

wellbeing, in better physical condition, and are able to adapt and recover from acute and chronic diseases. Those with lower self-efficacy exhibit more anxiety and depression as well as lower levels of their wellbeing.

Teacher Efficacy. Teachers' efficacy is clearly defined as a teacher's perception of their capabilities as a teacher to accomplish outcomes desired within a school setting (Jeon et al., 2018). It can also be defined as how an educator appraises their task requirement and their personal competence in their program setting, across different learning topics, throughout their career, and other contextual factors (Huang et al., 2019). The researchers then divided teachers' efficacy into two constructs: personal teaching efficacy which relates to their ability to encourage children's learning and offer support to children with challenging behaviors; and general teaching efficacy as being the teacher's ability to impact children's outcomes beyond a parent's role in their child's development. Both self-efficacy and teachers' efficacy are critical. Friedman (2003) described individuals with a higher sense of self-efficacy experiencing less stress when taxing situations arise. This is due to educators' belief in their ability to cope, the confidence in their identity as an educator, and the identity early care and education professionals share collectively.

Identity. Ryan and Goffin (2008) discussed how the early care and education field is mostly composed of women whose voices have been silenced in research and policy which means their shared knowledge and expertise have not been used in an intentional way to improve the field of early care and education. The reasoning for early care and education professionals being silenced is because of two major discourses. One of those discourses is related to the traditional view of women which is that childcare is associated with women in the home and the second discourse is that the field of early care and education is a low status, underpaid field,

mostly composed of women who have limited training (Moloney, 2010). These discourses are related to the macrosystemic level and also the historical influences on the field of early care and education. This is why it is important that educators who are entering the field have a sense of identity both personally and professionally. Chang-Kredl and Kingsley (2014) used several terms to describe the various approaches to identity including identity as shaped, built, unstable, multifaceted, ongoing process, associated with the individual and context, and shaped by discourse.

Educators need to know who they are personally, collectively as early care and education professionals, relationally, and professionally when entering the field due to the voices of educators being omitted in decisions relevant to them. Cumming and Wong (2019) described the term identity in relation to early childhood educators as being broken into personal, collective, and relational. Personal identity which are personal perceptions and factors that make individuals unique can include one or more features such as ethnic/racial background, tradition, occupation/class, and other aspects of an individual's social identity which has been defined by others and the individual (Siraj-Blatchford, 1996). In Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, the personal identity of educators can be representative of the personal characteristics' individuals carry with them into any social situation including their biological and experiential history (Perry & Docket, 2018; Tudge et al., 2009). Baum and King (2006) mentioned how educators, specifically preservice teachers, need to develop an ability to recognize and consider how their personal characteristics, beliefs, and attitudes encompass who they are and play a role in their teaching, learning, and ultimately impacting their decision-making processes. Lastly, Cummings and Wong (2019) characterized collective identity as the shared values and characteristics with others in the field and relational identity as the attributes exhibited when interacting with others.

When educators have a better understanding of their identity within these different contexts, they are more likely and better equipped to use their voice to improve the field of early care and education. Although the inner emotional work needs to be built and enhanced in teacher preparation programs, it's imperative that it continues as early care educators progress through the field in order for them to feel competent in addressing factors that impact their wellbeing. Another element of resilience that should be taken into consideration and addressed as an internal protective factor, are educators' self-care practices.

Self-Care

Studies addressing self-care for educators have been limited, despite the early care and education field being one of the most stressful occupations (Park et al., 2020). Self-care has been described as intentional actions designed at taking care of oneself daily by meeting physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and relational needs (Cardinal & Thomas, 2016; Philibert et al., 2019). These practices are embedded into one's daily routines, relationships, and environment. The importance of early care educators taking care of themselves not only influences how and what they teach to students but also how they can relate, teach, model their emotions, and manage the classroom (Philibert et al., 2019). The benefit and impact of self-care on educators' professional lives may be an aspect of wellbeing that is going unnoticed and unappreciated.

The complexity of early care educator's job includes being on their feet all day, constant demands on their energy and patience, pretend play with preschoolers, cultivating problem-solving skills and modeling self-regulation skills, while also worrying about compensation, benefits, and the support they need to fulfill the demands of the daily work (Nicholson et al., 2019). Self-care provides educators the ability to recognize their personal and professional

identity, find a balance psychologically, accept children as they are, and equip educators with the qualities associated with high-quality care which include enthusiasm, creativity, flexibility, patience, and the ability to understand differences in personality and learning styles among children (Park et al., 2020). The ways in which educators can practice self-care psychologically and emotionally was captured in one of the measures used in the study as well as in a chapter in the book study titled *Taking Care of Yourself*. A critical piece in educators' wellbeing and resilience is a program's organizational climate. Although this element was looked at as a contextual factor in the current study, an educator's program and its' organizational climate is another microsystem teachers experience on a daily basis and needs to be looked into closer.

External Protective Factors

Organizational Climate

Early care educators' wellbeing from an organizational perspective has received little attention although it is vital in providing high quality programs for children and healthy work environments for educators (Logan et al., 2020). Organizational climate has been defined in multiple ways. Klinker et al. (2005) defined organizational climate as being the "social-emotional environment of a workplace" (p. 90), while Hewett and La Paro (2020) characterized it as stemming from employees' subjective interpretation about the multiple dimensions of the work environment based on their attitudes, beliefs, and values. Collectively, organizational climate may be seen as representing an educator's feelings about the different dimensions of their program and how it may impact their classroom. A measure used in the current study to assess organizational climate was the *Early Childhood Job Satisfaction* survey which was adapted from Bloom's (2010) the technical manual *Measuring work attitudes in the early childhood setting*. Specifically, this study measured educators' perceptions about collegiality,

supervisor support, and decision-making, as these dimensions involve an educator's mesosystem, and have been found to impact quality, and support wellbeing.

Collegiality

Collegiality is described in Hewitt and La Paro's (2020) article as being the interrelationships between educators as well as the amount of support and trust given to one another. When educators feel a sense of support within their program, it can serve as an emotional resource. Beltman et al. (2020) discussed how positive collegial relationships could help reduce the demands of the workplace, lessen emotional exhaustion, bolster commitment, and provide the daily emotional, practical, personal, and social support needed in the field of early care and education. Educators who have the support of their colleagues are not only able to balance the demands of the classroom but are also able to feel valued. Prilleltensky et al. (2016) emphasized the feelings educators develop when there is a disconnect between their job expectations and their perceived value in the workplace. The researchers in this study reiterated the need to set aside time for colleagues to share concerns and ideas with one another. Zinsser et al. (2016) also found that when preschool teachers felt a greater sense of community, they were more satisfied with their job and committed, engaged in more professional development opportunities, and overall provided classroom instruction of a higher quality. This speaks to the longevity of an educator staying in the field when they feel a sense of connectedness and commitment to their job. Colleagues that provide support act as a sounding board for ideas, concerns, and help one another feel more valuable in their workplace (Schaack et al., 2020). The opportunity to better support collegiality was given during the book study process through the sessions and professional learning communities. This sense of connectedness and support is also important from the supervisor.

Supervisor Support

It is imperative that educators feel supported by their colleagues as well as the leadership in their program setting. Supervisor support can be determined by the presence or absence of leadership who promote and provide encouragement, support, and clear expectations (Jorde-Bloom, 1988). Supportive leadership not only impacts educators but also the children they serve. Beltman et al. (2020) explained the trickle-down effect that occurs when leaders support the social-emotional development of young children and how it produces an environment where educators feel psychologically safe. This demonstrates the interaction that occurs when leadership is supportive at the program level and classroom level. Another study echoed the importance of social emotional supports within and between programs as a way of feeling supported by leadership (Zinsser et al., 2016). Although research may focus on the structural aspects of an administrator's job in early care and education, there is importance in shifting the focus on how administration sets the emotional environment for both educators and children. The need for feedback from leadership has also been seen in the literature as beneficial to educators. Schaack et al. (2020) found that when leadership offered reflective supervision, it lessened teacher stress. Although leadership was not directly involved in the book study, they worked with the student researcher to coordinate times to meet with the participants on-site and were asked to give insight about the book study as an innovative professional development opportunity. Supportive leadership provides educators with similar benefits as colleagues, other than the aspect of decision-making.

Decision- Making

Jorde-Bloom (1988) defined decision-making as relating to the level of autonomy given to educators within the program setting and their involvement in decisions program wide.

Decision-making and autonomy are seen interchangeably in the literature. Autonomy-supportive factors were classified as being the amount of choice and control the teacher has in making decisions in regard to how they teach, curriculum, the degree of freedom to be creative and challenge their abilities as a teacher, and the extent to which the level of connectedness between educator and colleagues, parents, and children is encouraged or undermined (Wagner & French, 2010). Allowing early care educators to be a part of the decision making has benefits to the work environment because it means their voice is being valued in their place of work.

The director's decision-making style can also impact the relationships between colleagues as well as the director themselves and because of this it is important that decisions as a team are made to increase motivation, trust, and respect within the program setting (Zinsler & Curby, 2014). Zinsler et al. (2016) expressed what occurs when organizational climate is neglected in early care and education programs in relation to the working conditions, enormous job demands, unhealthy relationships with colleagues, and the absence of support and feedback from the director. This can result in stress, burnout, low staff morale, teacher turnover, and negative emotional experiences for children and educators. When a program does not support the educator's development and competencies, the proximal processes within that microsystem are not being promoted which can lead to a compromise in an educator's wellbeing.

When early care educators are dissatisfied or satisfied with the organizational climate of their program, it can impact their readiness to change and their willingness to be involved in opportunities that promote change commitment and change efficacy within their program. Professional development can enhance the wellbeing of early care educators and help address the stress, burnout, and isolation educators feel and that oftentimes interfere with high-quality teaching practices and positive child outcomes (Rombaoa et al., 2020).

Professional Development

Professional development (PD) is defined as “facilitated teaching and learning experiences and are transactional and designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions as well as the application of this knowledge in practice” (Schachter, 2015, p. 239). Sheridan et al. (2009) defined what knowledge, skills, and dispositions mean in terms of professional development. Knowledge includes “the facts, concepts, ideas, vocabulary, and related aspects of educational culture and best practice” (p. 379); skills are the actions that occur as a result of professional development in a discrete amount of time and can be observed; lastly, dispositions are the tendencies of creating a pattern of the skills and knowledge gained frequently, consciously, and voluntarily. In the current study, a book study was conducted in the form of a community of practice and follow-up discussions were held in professional learning communities. These two forms of professional development will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Communities of Practice

Alcalde-Rabangal et al. (2018) conceived communities of practice (CoPs) as representing a group of people who share common problems, practices, and interests within their workplace and possessing a wealth of knowledge about a specific domain. The emerging model of communities of practice (CoPs) are an approach to not just promote professional development, but as a way to connect educators who have common interests in order to provide support, reflection, and information (Odom, 2009). This type of approach to professional development could be a way for early care educators within and across different programs and settings to join together and brainstorm solutions to the issues they may face. These communities have also been known to lessen the research-to-practice-gap while creating effective networks of stakeholders

whose aims are to translate, apply, and eventually produce new evidence-based strategies and knowledge to early care educators (Sheridan et al., 2009). The book study implemented for this study utilized a community of practice approach to address the emotional resilience of early care educators. Another form of professional development that is important to highlight and was used as a follow up to the community of practice are professional learning communities (PLCs). PLCs can provide support to individuals within programs as well as help educators feel a sense of belonging within their program.

Professional Learning Communities

Enthoven and Bruijn (2010) described the difference between communities of practice and professional learning communities. Communities of practice are the ideal social structure of “stewarding” knowledge and allow organizations to come together to gain knowledge about topics that are oftentimes taken for granted and codified. In professional learning communities, educators are able to deconstruct knowledge through reflection and analysis as well as co-constructing knowledge through collaborative learning with their colleagues.

When creating a professional learning community (PLC), it is key to have joint values, a mission, collective learning, and supportive leadership that has developed a clear structure of how to work together and share ideas around personal practices (Omdal & Roland, 2020). Prilleltensky et al. (2016) presented that the three goals of professional learning communities are to enhance educational outcomes for children, increase the wellbeing of educators, and to improve the policies, and procedures of the program setting. These communities are a small piece of the puzzle when thinking about how to include educators in the decisions being made about their program and classroom but to also set aside some intentional time dedicated to their wellbeing needs.

In CoPs and PLCs, a strong and knowledgeable leader is needed to facilitate the discussion. The selection of professional development and having knowledgeable leadership to facilitate and sustain the implementation of communities of practice and professional learning communities make up the “building blocks” or implementation drivers of the implementation science framework. By understanding what types of professional development contribute to educators’ outcomes, researchers can then assist programs and ultimately policymakers to individualize future professional development to be the most effective (Harding et al., 2019).

Early Care and Education Professionals’ Commitment to their Program and Field

Programs in early care and education have a persistent challenge of recruiting and retaining high-quality educators who are vital to providing high- quality care for children and a positive work environment for themselves (Totenhagen et al.,2016). An educator’s commitment to staying in their program, also known as organizational commitment, refers to how involved an individual is in their organization and the strength of their identification with a specific program. Their commitment is characterized by three factors: a strong belief in and alignment with the program’s goals and values, willingness to exert effort, and a desire to stay in their program (Jorde-Bloom, 1988). In order to achieve organizational change, educators must feel that they are able to integrate the goals and values of their program into their own needs and values. This then impacts their sense of belonging and satisfaction within their program (Humphries, 2018).

Early care and education professionals’ commitment to their program and the early care and education profession has been associated with turnover intentions and satisfaction (Grant et al., 2019). This study analyzed data from the Survey of Early Childhood Educators: US Project in 2014 and explored whether teachers’ perception about their working conditions, psychological wellbeing (stress, emotional exhaustion, emotion regulation, and coping) and motivation were

associated with their commitment and intentions to their job and the early care and education field. Early care educators who feel valued, are resilient, have their wellbeing needs met and supported, and whose organizational climate is conducive to their values and goals, may exhibit a higher commitment to staying not only in their program but the early care and education field. In the current study, educators were asked in a pre- and post-survey about their commitment to their program. The first question asked educators to identify statements that described how they felt about their organization. Some of these statements included. “I often think of quitting,” “I’m just putting in time,” and “I take pride in my center.” The next question asked educators on a scale of 1(not committed) to 10 (very committed), how committed they were to early childhood education as their life’s vocation. The last question about commitment asked educators if they could do it all over again, would they choose a career in early care and education.

Current Study

Early care and education professionals in Early Head Start/Head Start were recruited to engage in a book study as an innovative form of professional development focused on resilience and wellbeing. Resilience serves as a protective factor and as a support for early care educators’ wellbeing and organizational climate was considered as a contextual feature. The sample for this study consisted of Early Head Start and Head Start lead teachers, assistant teachers, co-teachers, and the center director from three identified programs in a county in North Carolina. Teachers participated in a 4-month book study, attended follow-up sessions (PLCs), completed pre- and post-surveys, and created goals in relation to their wellbeing and resilience. The center directors were interviewed at the end of the intervention and completed surveys about their perception of the organizational climate of their program. This dissertation investigated the following research

questions across four content areas: wellbeing, resilience, commitment to their program/field, and professional development delivery effectiveness.

Research Questions

Wellbeing (knowledge gained and behavior change)

- 1) How do Early Head Start/ Head Start/NC Pre-K educators who participated in the book study professional development opportunity change over time in their knowledge/awareness about their wellbeing?
- 2) Across the book study, what goals are individual Early Head Start/ Head Start/NC Pre-K creating in relation to their wellbeing and how are educators working towards their goals?

Resilience (knowledge gained and behavior change)

- 3) How do Early Head Start/ Head Start educators who participated in the book study professional development opportunity change over time in their knowledge/ awareness about their resilience through their participation in the book study?
- 4) Across the book study, what goals are individual Early Head Start/ Head Start/NC Pre-K educators creating in relation to their resilience and how are educators working towards their goals?

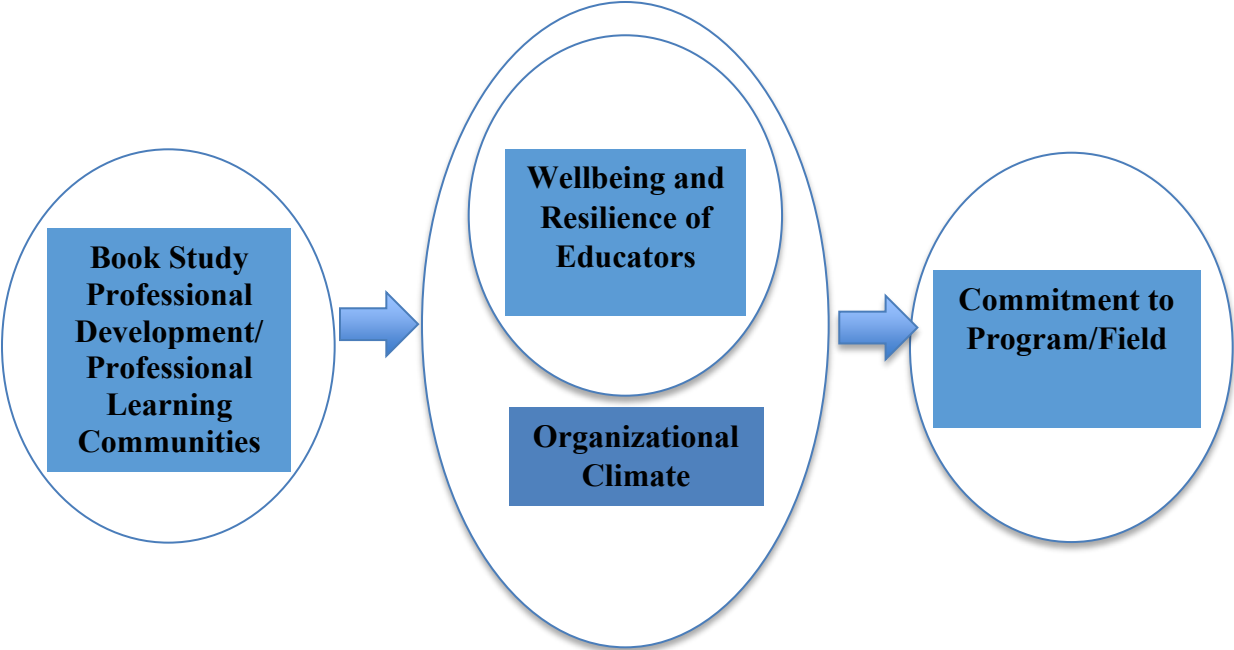
Commitment to Their Program and Field

- 5) Does the book study influence a change in commitment for Early Head Start/ Head Start/ NC Pre-K educators? To their program? To the early care and education field? How is this change associated with their wellbeing and resilience?

Professional Development Delivery Effectiveness

- 6) Generally, how does the implementation of a book study provide/serve as an innovative professional development approach for Early Head Start/Head Start/NC Pre-K educators?
- a. What components of the book study intervention were most effective (activities, PLCs, book study itself)?
 - b. What aspects of the logistics of the book study (e.g., format, mode of delivery, length of time, group size, etc.) were strengths or challenges?
 - c. Satisfaction: How satisfied were the participants with the following:
 - Book for the book study
 - Workbook activities
 - Length of the book study sessions/ PLCs
 - Topics being discussed during book study sessions/ PLCs
 - Format of the book studies and PLCs
 - Activities completed or presented during book study sessions/ PLCs
 - d. Usefulness:
 - How useful was the book used for the study?
 - How useful were the workbook activities?
 - e. Relevance: How relevant were the topics being covered in the book study to participants?

Figure 3. Framework for Current Study



CHAPTER IV: METHODS

Book Study as a Professional Development Approach

Book studies as a type of professional development in early care and education settings are uncommon but have recently received increased attention as a form of professional development. The goal of book studies, also known as book clubs, is to provide educators with the opportunity to explore their knowledge, beliefs, and practices building from the content of a preselected book. This form of professional development allows educators to engage in a social and intellectual forum where they are able to share ideas, thoughts, feelings, and reactions to the book (Burbank et al., 2010). The book study can also be characterized as a community of practice due to it creating a space characterized as a professional development opportunity to have conversations that often go untapped and could produce changes in practice (Kuh, 2011). The specific community of practice (CoP) in the current study focused on the individual and collective implementation of evidence-based practices and strategies that addressed resilience and wellbeing as a protective factor through collaborative discussions in the book study sessions and through professional learning communities. Communities of practice are able to offer support, reflection, and information by connecting a group of people who have common interests (Odom, 2009). The community of practice in the current study consisted of educators from three different Head Start programs within the same funding organization which allowed opportunities for educators to increase collegiality amongst and within individual programs. The facilitator in a community of practice has experience related to the topic and practical wisdom to help the group ask questions, make connections and build ideas, expand on points made in the meeting, and provides resources while creating a bidirectional relationship between the facilitator and the educator (Sheridan et al., 2009). In the current study, the student researcher was the facilitator in

the book study and made sure that the book study sessions and professional learning communities reflected the needs of the educators by allowing educators to take the lead in sessions with the guidance and support of the student researcher. This educator-led approach to the book study was critical to the success of the book study process and also showed that the student researcher cared about the educator as a person first. This community of practice was accomplished through the book study by specifically focusing on the resilience and wellbeing of educators through discussions, activities, and goal setting.

Book Selected for the Current Study

The book and workbook for the book study was titled *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators* and is authored by Elena Aguilar (2018). The book and workbook were developed by the author to cultivate resilience within educators and help educators uncover their true selves, address and understand their emotions, utilize their energy where it counts, adopt a mindful, story-telling approach to communication and community building, and create a culture and environment of collective celebration. The book is sequenced and maps onto the school year. Due to the shortened length of the book study, specific chapters were chosen based on feedback from a previous book study utilizing the same book. The student researcher asked participants to choose the chapters that resonated with them the most. These chapters were then included in the book study and are titled *Know Yourself*, *Understand Emotions*, *Taking Care of Yourself*, *Cultivate Compassion*, *Ride the Waves of Change*, and *Celebrate and Appreciate*. A description of each chapter is outlined in Table 1 below. Although certain chapters were chosen for the book study, the student researcher pulled information from additional chapters based on discussions and conversations in the book study and PLC sessions. The goal for using this book in the current study was for Early Head Start, Head Start and North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten lead

teachers, assistant teachers, co-teachers, and support staff to create habits and goals that enhanced their wellbeing and resilience through the book study sessions and PLCs.

Table 1. Book Study Assigned Chapters

Chapter Title	Description
Chapter 1: Know Yourself	When you know yourself well, when you understand your emotions, social identities, core values, and personality, you gain clarity on your purpose in life and in work. Being anchored in purpose makes you able to deal with setbacks and challenges.
Chapter 2: Understand Emotions	Understanding emotions, accepting them and having strategies to respond to them is essential to cultivate resilience. With an understanding of emotions, you can accept their existence, recognize where you can influence a situation, and let go of what is outside your control.
Chapter 6: Taking Care of Yourself	Physical self-care and wellbeing are foundational for many other habits. When your body is cared for, you're better able to deal with emotions. Resilient people have a healthy self-perception, are committed to taking care of themselves, and accept themselves more or less as they are.
Chapter 8: Cultivate Compassion	Compassion for ourselves, as well as for others, helps us deal with the interpersonal challenges we face on a daily basis. Perspective allows us to recognize the complexity of a situation. Perspective allows us to empathize with others, see the long view, extricate ourselves from the drama of a moment, and identify a wider range of responses to an event.
Chapter 11: Ride the Waves of Change	Change is one thing we can count on, and when we encounter it, we can harness our physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual energies, and direct them where they will make the biggest difference. Perseverance, patience, and courage help us manage change.

Chapter 12: Celebrate and Appreciate

Individual and collective celebrations, as well as the practice of gratitude, is the capstone to the habits in the book. Even during hard moments, if we can shift into a stance of appreciation, we'll build our resilience. Appreciation cultivates our trust in ourselves, in a process, and perhaps in something greater, which helps us to respond to the inevitable challenges of life.

Book Study Overview

The purpose of the study was to engage early care educators from local Head Start programs in a book study to better understand how they could cultivate their resilience and wellbeing and how the book study influenced their commitment to their program and the field of early care and education. The book study had multiple components; 1) assigned book chapters, 2) workbook activities, 3) book study sessions, 4) professional learning communities (i.e., previously established within centers), and 5) the development of wellbeing and/or resilience goals. At the end of January 2023, the book study sessions began. Educators attended book study sessions for two weeks with one session occurring each of those weeks, followed by a PLC in the third week. Educators had a break in their fourth week and the same book study session schedule occurred two more times. The sessions ended in the beginning of April 2023 with the book study professional development lasting four months. Book study sessions lasted 90 minutes on a day and time that was agreed upon by the participants and the student researcher. Although research suggested on-site professional development as being more beneficial for educators and producing positive outcomes due to educators having the opportunity to practice working as a team in their own sites (Kuh, 2012; Christ & Wang, 2013), the educators within the current study were from three different programs and preferred meeting at a library that was centrally located. After the book study process ended, educators and directors voiced the importance of having the

book study sessions offsite because it offered a neutral space where educators felt safe to discuss topics that oftentimes go untapped without the fear of consequences or judgement. Educators also had the option of joining virtually to any of the in-person book study sessions. The number of educators who joined virtually varied for each in-person session ranging from as low as four participants to a high of ten participants, depending on each educator's availability to join in-person.

Book Study Sessions

The book study sessions included reviewing and discussing the book chapters and workbook activities assigned for that specific week as well as participating in the planned activities for the session through both small and whole group discussions. The activities and book were designed to prompt educators' thinking and allow for reflection. Additional chapters that were not assigned in the book and workbook were highlighted in book study sessions and PLC sessions based on the needs and conversations had among educators. Organizational climate was used as a contextual feature in the study and the chapter *Building Community* discussed aspects of organizational climate. Although it was not an assigned chapter in the book study, the student researcher brought in pieces of the chapter and workbook into the sessions because of the conversations and needs of the educators. As educators were making connections to their personal and professional experiences, knowledge, beliefs, and everyday practices, the student researcher utilized this information as guidance for future discussions in book study sessions and PLCs.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Participants attended a total of three professional learning communities (PLCs), with each PLC reflecting the previous book study session and a review of the workbook activities

educators completed. Professional learning communities (PLCs) in educational settings have demonstrated an increase in teacher agency, the practice of research-based practices, and producing higher quality teaching and programs (Christ & Wang, 2013). Professional learning communities already existed within individual Head Start programs but the student researcher created a new PLC for the subgroup of educators who participated in the book study. The student researcher facilitated the PLCs by reviewing workbook activities the educators had completed, discussing how the chapter was relevant to their personal and professional experiences, and completing group activities. The group activities furthered educators' awareness about how to build their resilience as well as helped educators gain a sense of collegiality. In the current study, professional learning communities provided a space for educators from different programs to discuss how strategies stemming from the book study and workbook activities were being implemented in everyday practices both in and outside of the classroom. The PLCs were virtual sessions that lasted an hour and occurred in the evenings. The day of the PLC occurred was determined by participants.

Goal Setting

At the beginning of March, educators started developing their goals in relation to their resilience and/or wellbeing/self-care. These goals reflected the areas where educators felt they needed to give more attention based on the survey they completed before the first book study session, discussions, activities in the book study sessions and PLCs, and the self-assessments at the beginning of each assigned chapter in the workbook. Educators met individually with the student researcher to develop a wellbeing and/or resilience goal as well as discuss strategies to help work towards those goals. The student researcher worked with the educator to reflect on the areas they wanted to address, the action steps they needed to take to work towards their goal(s),

the resources needed to help reach their goal(s), and the workbook pages that could help educators focus on their goal(s). Once the student researcher met with each educator, the information was documented electronically which gave access to the student researcher and a printed copy was given to the educators so that they could work towards meeting their goals in the next three to five months.

Study Design

This study employed a short-term longitudinal design and included ongoing opportunities for feedback and data collection to improve the book study and assess the wellbeing and resilience of educators. The book study process lasted from January to April which allowed for six book study sessions and three PLCs over the course of four months. The continuous collection of data and feedback ensures fidelity of implementation, which is a key element within the implementation science framework. The selection of Early Head Start/Head Start and NC PreK lead teachers, co-teachers, assistant teachers, and support staff for the book study was determined by the educational director identifying three Head Start programs, and educators within those programs volunteering to participate in the book study.

Participants- Head Start Programs

The organizational structure of Head Start in a county in North Carolina includes the Head Start executive program director who is responsible for the successful delivery of all services in relation to the program including health and wellness screenings, disability services, home-based learning, and the recruitment and maintenance of required enrollment numbers. The assistant program director of Early Head Start/Head Start responsibilities include supporting the program director in all aspects of program operations, supervising, providing leadership, and direction to mental health/disability, health, and nutrition component areas for children, families, and staff.

The educational director assists and helps with lesson plans, CLASS observations, supplies, and supports teachers, educational coaches, and individual center directors. Individual center directors administer and supervise center operations to achieve quality as described by Head Start Performance standards, NC Child Day Care licensing, and regulations to meet 4- and 5- star requirements, and the NAEYC Accreditation Criteria. Assistant center directors work with individual center directors at the larger centers. Educational coaches are assigned to teachers who are not assigned a mentor through the state. Educational Coaches could be assigned to more than one teacher depending on the number of teachers within a specific program who are connected to a mentor from the state. Within this specific county, NC-PreK is offered through the public school system, private licensed childcare centers, and as well as Head Start programs. The multilayer and multifaced organizational structure of Head Start allows us to better understand the benefits and challenges of this hierarchical approach as well as how it impacts the organizational climate of Head Start programs.

The organizational climate of each center was considered as a contextual feature. Specifically, I sought in this study to understand how early care educators' knowledge/awareness translated and changed into behavior when they gained information about resilience and wellbeing. Three programs that included Early Head Start, Head Start, and NC PreK lead teachers, assistant teachers, co-teachers, support staff, center directors, and the educational director were recruited for the study. Pseudonyms were utilized in the results section to keep the names of educators confidential.

Recruitment Process

The sample included Early Head Start, Head Start, and NC PreK center-based lead teachers, assistant teachers, support staff, and co-teachers from one county in North Carolina.

The county currently has fourteen programs, with early care and education teachers serving approximately 1,400 children from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds and whose families' income is below 100% of the federal poverty level. There are forty-eight classrooms within their Head Start organization, with sixteen of those classrooms being Early Head Start and thirty-two Head Start/NC PreK classrooms (e.g., classrooms serving preschool age children in Head Start programs, but administered according to guidelines set up by the state NC Pre-K program).

Participants were recruited from three Head Start programs with two of those programs being the largest Head Start programs in the county. Combined, the two larger programs serve at least half of the 48 Early Head Start and Head Start classrooms in the county. Recruitment started at the beginning of January and ended in the middle of January. On the recruitment flier, educators were given the purpose of the book study, why they were being recruited, what was involved in the book study process, incentive information, the student researcher/facilitator contact information, and the times and dates of the four virtual meet and greet sessions. The meet and greet sessions were held virtually to accommodate educators' schedules and to maximize attendance; there were two sessions held each week for a total of four sessions. The purpose of the meet and greet sessions was for educators to learn more about the book study process and ask any questions they had from the flier. During the meet and greet sessions, educators were introduced to the student researcher/ facilitator, learned more about the background information of the book and workbook for the book study, the purpose of the book study, what they would gain as a result of being a part of the book study, and how the book study would be implemented. The educators were shown an outline of activities and a tentative schedule of the day and time the book study sessions and PLCs that would occur each week.

At the conclusion of the meet and greet session, educators were told about what would happen next once they emailed the student researcher showing interest in the book study. Educators who sent an email showing interest received a link to a survey and the completion of the survey showed the student researcher that the educator wanted to participate in the book study process. Educators were asked for their consent to use their survey responses at the beginning of the survey. The student researcher then visited the programs of the educators who completed and gave consent for their survey responses. During the visit, educators were asked to sign a consent form for the book study process and a commitment form outlining the expectations of the book study process. The commitment form also had the payment schedule and the amount they would receive based on the completion of activities, book study sessions, and PLCs. The commitment form was signed by both the student researcher and educator. Educators also received the book and workbook for the book study during this visit. This recruitment strategy occurred within each of the meet and greet sessions.

From the completed surveys, consent, and commitment forms, 19 Early Head Start, Head Start, and NC PreK lead teachers, co-teachers, assistant teachers, and support staff participated in the book study. The majority of educators in the book study were female (n=18), with one participant being male. The majority of the sample in the current study were also women of color (n=16), with three educators identifying as being White. Out of the nineteen educators in the book study, eight were from four classrooms and taught in the same classroom. These demographics are important due to the unique and individualized perspectives they provide in relation to the topics covered in the book study. The number of educators, their role, and the age group they taught are reflected in Table 2. The center directors were identified for each program and recruited to participate in the study as well. Although the original plan was to recruit

educational coaches to serve as mentors, these staff were being utilized in classrooms to help with staffing due to teacher turnover.

Table 2. Educators' Role and Age Group

	Age Group			
	Early Head Start	Head Start	Head Start/ NC Pre-K	Support Staff (Floater)
Lead Teacher	-	-	4	-
Co-teacher	9	-	-	-
Assistant Teacher	-	1	4	-
Support Staff (Floater)	-	-	-	1

Measures

The measures in the table below capture the constructs that were studied including the wellbeing and resilience of educators, educators’ commitment to their program and the early care and education field, educators’ readiness to change, individual programs’ organizational climate, and educators’ characteristics. The different constructs and their connection to specific measures, their role in the model, method/how they were reported, and when they were collected is outlined in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Constructs for the Current Study

Construct/ Purpose	Qualitative/ Quantitative	Measure	Method/ Reporting	Data Collection Period
<i>Teacher/Center Director Characteristics</i>	Teacher and Director-level Characteristics	Questionnaire	Teachers/ Directors	Before the book study
Wellbeing (Psychological and Emotional)	Qualitative	Educator Resilience and Trauma- Informed Self-Care Self-Assessment and Planning Tool (Center on Great Teachers & Leaders ,2020)	Survey for teachers (Self-report)	Before and after the book study
Resilience (Internal Beliefs, Self-Control, Initiative, Relationships)	Qualitative	Devereux Adult Resilience Survey (DARS) (Mackrain, 2007)	A self- reflection tool/survey for teachers	Before and after the book study
Organizational Climate (Collegiality/ Co- worker relations, Supervisor Relations, The work itself, working conditions, Pay and promotion opportunities)	Quantitative	Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey Parts 1-4 http://newhorizons books.net/wp- content/uploads/20 15/05/ECJSS.pdf (Bloom, 2010)	Survey for teachers and directors (Self-report)	-Teachers completed before and after the book study -Directors completed after the book study
Commitment to your program and the field (Organizational Commitment)	Quantitative	Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey Part 5: Commitment to Program/Field (Bloom, 2010)	Survey for teachers and directors (self-report)	Before and after the book study

Readiness to Change	Contextual Feature	University of Rhode Island Change Assessment Scale (URICA) (McConaughy et al., 2983)	Survey for teachers (Self-report)	Before the book study
Exit Tickets	Qualitative/ Quantitative	Questionnaire	Teachers (Self-report)	After each chapter of the book study
Satisfaction Survey	Qualitative/ Quantitative	Survey	Teachers (Self-report)	At the end of the book study

Teacher/Director Characteristics

Early Head Start, Head Start, and NC PreK lead teachers, assistant teachers, co-teachers, and support staff’s background information was collected before the book study. This information included the name of their Head Start program in which they are currently employed, the age group they currently teach/serve (Early Head Start, Head Start, Head Start/NC PreK), current role/position (lead teacher, co-teacher, assistant teacher, support staff, director), years of experience in their current Head Start program, years of experience in Head Start, how long they worked in early care and education as a paid employee, and if they entered the early care and education with the intentions of it being a long time career.

Wellbeing

The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at the American Institutes for Research released an Educator Resilience and Trauma-Informed Self-Care assessment and planning tool. This questionnaire was adapted from a tool used in a workbook entitled *Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization* (1996) created by Saakvitne, Perarlman, staff of TSI/CAAP, and Lisa D. Butler at the University at Buffalo School of Social work. The tool was

originally known as the Self-Care Assessment Worksheet (SCAW). The Educator Resilience and Trauma-Informed Self-Care assessment (2020) included a self-care assessment with key strategies in fostering resilience and a self-care planning tool to help educators in identifying areas of strength and growth related to self-care and developing self-care plans. The six domains and some sample items the questionnaire addressed were how often educators’ incorporated strategies in relation to physical self-care (“ Eat regularly”) , psychological self-care (“ Make time for self-reflection”), emotional self-care (“Find opportunities for movement that are regulating to your nervous system”), relational self-care (“Stay in contact with important people in your life”), spiritual self-care (“Spend time in nature:”), and workplace/professional (“Create a workspace that includes things that inspire you”) self-care. For this study, the subscales psychological and emotional self-care were the focus.

Each of the subscales have a different number of items assessing a range of self-care strategies an educator may engage in across differing periods of time ranging from 1 to 4 (1: never- 4: frequently) and the possible range of scores are listed in the table below. Higher total scores for each subscale signify more engagement in self-care activities while lower scores indicate lower engagement in self-care activities. This tool is not meant to suggest a person’s state of wellbeing but provide a description of the different strategies in which an educator is or may not be engaging in self-care. Psychometrics has not been established for the Educator Resilience and Trauma-Informed and Self-Care Assessment and Planning Tool.

Table 4. Educator Resilience and Trauma-Informed Self-Care Assessment Items and Possible Scores

Self-Care Area	Number of Items	Minimum Score Possible	Maximum Score Possible
Psychological	20	20	80
Emotional	17	17	68

Teacher Resilience

The Devereux Adult Resilience Survey (DARS) is a self-reflective instrument with different subscales that are designed to help adults including teachers reflect on the protective factors present in their lives and was developed at the Devereux Center for Resilient Children (Fleming et al., 2013). The survey consists of 23 items related to adult protective factor domains including: *Relationships* (5 items) reflecting on behaviors that are *mutual, long-lasting, back-and-forth bond we have with another person in our lives*, the sample items include “I have good friends who support me,” and “I provide support to others”; *Initiative* (8 items) inquiries about *the ability to make positive choices and decisions and act upon them*, items include “I try many ways to solve a problem.” and “I can ask for help.”; *Internal Beliefs* (6 items) asks about *the feelings and thoughts we have about ourselves and our lives, and how effective we think we are at taking action in life*, sample items include “My role as a caregiver is important,” and “I am hopeful about the future”; lastly, *Self-Control* asks about *the ability to experience a range of feelings, and express them using words and actions that society considers appropriate*, sample items include, “I set limits for myself,” and “I can calm myself down.” Participants are asked to answer these items and check one of three boxes for 23 items. The boxes indicate frequency of presence by “Almost Always” the protective factor is present in their lives, “Sometimes” it is present, and it is “Not Yet” present.

The staff at the Devereux Center for Resilient Children researched the reliability and validity of DARS by correlating the scores teachers had for the DARS to the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC; Connor & Davidson), which is a 25-item scale consisting of four domains related to resilience: personal competence, intuition/coping with stress, secure relationships, and spiritual influences (Fleming et al., 2013). They found DARS had a high

internal consistency ($\alpha=0.76$) and was highly correlated to the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (Spearman rho= 0.58, $p=0.01$). The purpose of the DARS is not to compare individual scores but to give educators an opportunity to become aware of their personal strengths and areas of need (Center for Resilient Children, 2013). In relation to staff wellness and health, the DARS aligns with Performance standard 1302.93 (b) which states, “A program must make mental health and wellness information available to staff regarding health issues that may affect their job performance and must provide regularly scheduled opportunities to learn more about mental health, wellness, and health education.”

Organizational Climate

The Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey was used in this study to determine early care and education professionals, both teachers’ and center directors’, perception about the organizational climate of their program. This assessment tool is a modified version from Bloom’s (2010) *Measuring work attitudes in the early childhood setting*. The Early Childhood Job Satisfaction survey is designed to help educators discover how they feel about different facets of their job and become more aware of specific aspects that contribute most to their job satisfaction and those that need improvement. This tool has five parts that examine an educator’s satisfaction with their job. In *Part I*, educators can receive a score of 10-50 for each subscale. There are a total of fifty items with ten items listed underneath each of the five facets or subscales: co-worker relations, supervisor relations, the work itself, pay and promotion, and working conditions. Early care educators rated the items underneath each facet from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree with five items within each subscale requiring the researcher to reverse code (e.g. “My coworkers are hard to get to know” and “My supervisor is too busy to know how I’m doing”). The ECJSS has demonstrated adequate psychometric characteristics

meaning the subscales are reliable and measure what they are supposed to measure with some facets being interrelated and reflect change when it occurs (Jorde-Bloom, 1988). In this article the author discussed the internal consistency for the different subscales ranging from .65 (the work itself) to .86 (co-worker relations). The overall internal consistency for the tool was .89.

The five facets determined to be the most important in an early care and education setting were determined by a review of the research and interviews with early care and education professionals (Jorde-Bloom, 1988). In Bloom's (2010) technical manual, the five facets are described as an early care and education professional's satisfaction with:

1) *Co-worker relations* is the extent to which a worker has formed close relationships with colleagues and the degree of mutual trust and respect. A sample item includes, "My co-workers care about me."

2) *Supervisor relations* is the perceived quality and quantity of feedback, encouragement and helpful support from the supervisor and the worker's assessment of the supervisor's overall competence. An item for this facet states, "My supervisor respects my work."

3) *The work itself includes* various job components as they relate to the nature of the work experience (degree of challenge, variety, autonomy and control) as well as the sheer quantity of tasks to be done and the time frame in which to do them. The extent to which the job provides intrinsic enjoyment and fulfills the worker's needs for recognition, creativity, skill building, and task identity (the perception about the importance of the work). A sample item includes, "My work is stimulating and challenging."

4) *Pay and opportunities for promotion* concerns the adequacy of pay as well as the perceived equity and fairness of policies regarding the distribution of pay, fringe benefits and

opportunities for advancement. This section also includes the worker's perceived job security. An item under this section includes, "My pay is fair considering my background and skills."

5) *Working conditions* include both the structure of the work experience (flexibility of hours, teacher-child ratio, adequacy of breaks, substitutes and teaching materials) as well as the context in which the work is performed (the aesthetic quality of the physical environment, overall noise level, heat, ventilation, light and spatial arrangement). An item under this fact states, "The center's policies and procedures are clear."

Part II asks educators, "If they could design their ideal job, how closely would their present position resemble their ideal job with respect to the following facets: relationship with co-workers, relationship with supervisor, the work itself, working conditions, and pay and promotion opportunities. The scale for this section is (1) Not like my ideal at all to (5) Is my ideal.

Part III lists the ways that jobs can be rewarding and contribute to personal and professional fulfillment. Examples of some of those items include, "Achievement-the feeling of accomplishment from doing a job well" or "Challenge-the opportunity to master new skills." There are a total of 14 items that educators can choose from. They are asked to place a check next to the three job characteristics that matter the most. *Part IV* asks educators to write down the two most satisfying and two most frustrating things about their current job. This allowed the researcher to find themes among educators' responses in what they found frustrating and satisfying as well as what they valued in their work.

Commitment to Program/Field

The last part or *Part V* of the Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey (ECJSS) addresses an educator's commitment to their center as well as to the field. In *Part V*, educators

are asked statements in a no (0) /yes (1) (true/false) format. There are five items that are worded positively (e.g., “I take pride in my center”) and 5 items worded negatively (e.g., “I often think of quitting”). This scale assesses individuals’ loyalty and their level of commitment to their job and their program. Scores can range from 0 (low commitment) to 10 (high commitment). Lastly, educators were asked on a scale of 1 (not committed) to 10 (very committed), to rate their level of commitment to early care and education as their life’s vocation. After they rate their commitment, they were asked if they could do it all over again, would they choose a career in early care and education. The options are “no” and “yes” with a space provided for an explanation and some example statements.

Readiness to Change

The University of Rhode Island Change Assessment Scale (URICA) was created by Eileen McConaughy, James O. Prochaska, and Wayne F. Velicer (1983) and can be used to assess where educators are in their stages of change in relation to psychotherapy. Research in relation to stages of change has received limited attention in clinical literature but this scale can be used to assess readiness for change and its scope has a broader impact. This scale helps assess where educators are in the stages of change (1: Precontemplation, 2: Contemplation, 3: Preparation (Action), 4: Maintenance). The URICA is a self-reported 32 item measure that includes 4 subscales which measure the stages of change. Educators were asked on a -5point scale with 1 (strong disagreement) to 5 (strong agreement) about how an educator feels when starting therapy or approaching problems in their lives. Educators were asked to make their choice in terms of how they felt right now, not what they had felt in the past or would like to feel. The scale was adapted to fit the needs of the current study. Words like “wellbeing” were added to statements. An example of the change in wording of statements include: “I think I

might be ready for some self-improvement” to “I think I might be ready for some improvement regarding my wellbeing” and “It might be worthwhile to work on my problem” to “I think it might be worthwhile to work on my wellbeing.” To calculate the readiness to change score, the sum of the assigned items to each subscale (Precontemplation, Contemplation, Action, and Maintenance) were calculated and divided by 7 in order to achieve the mean. Three of the subscales (Contemplation, Action, and Maintenance) were then added together and the Precontemplation mean was subtracted from that score. The stage and group average for the URICA scale will be demonstrated in Table 5. The coefficient alphas were calculated for the four scales: Pre-contemplation, .88; Contemplation, .88; Action, .89; and Maintenance, .88 (McConnaughy et al., 1983).

Table 5. Stages and Group Averages of the URICA Scale

Stage	Group Average
<i>Pre-contemplation</i>	8 or lower
<i>Contemplation</i>	8-11
<i>Preparation (Action)</i>	11-14
<i>Maintenance</i>	14 and above

Exit Tickets

Early Head Start/Head Start/NC PreK lead teachers, assistant teachers, and co-teachers filled out an exit ticket at the end of each chapter with most questions being asked on a Likert scale. The following questions were asked:

- 1) Please rate how satisfied you were with the following for today’s session on a Likert scale from 1(very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).

- a. Length of the session
 - b. Topic being discussed this month
 - c. Workbook activities for the month
 - d. Format of the book study
 - e. Activities completed or presented
- 2) How useful were the workbook activities on a scale of 1 (Not useful) to 5 (very useful)?
- 3) The topic being discussed this month is relevant to me and my work as an educator (Educators were asked this question on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree))
- 4) What activities in the workbook did you complete for this session?

Procedure

After the meet and greet sessions for the book study in January, Early Head Start/ Head Start and NC PreK lead teachers, assistant teachers, and co-teachers, completed surveys regarding their background in early care and education, wellbeing, resilience, organizational climate, commitment to their program/field, and their readiness to change.

The activities and book were designed to facilitate discussions that naturally arose from educators' personal and professional experiences, knowledge, beliefs, and everyday practices. The sessions are meant to bring awareness and deepen educators' knowledge about the habits or behaviors that cultivate certain dispositions needed to build resilience. Each chapter of the book is titled by a habit and the chapter ends with the disposition that can be learned through that habit. For example, chapter one focused on the habit of getting to know yourself, and through the habit of getting to know yourself, educators will gain a sense of purposefulness. The goal for the

book study was for educators within the book study to create habits that lead to resilient dispositions. An example of how the initial book study session was conducted is outlined in the table below. The remaining book study sessions each month had the same structure as the initial book study session. Some of the activities will be described below in Table 6.

Table 6. Outline of Initial Book Study Session

Book Study Chapter	Description of Chapter	Activities and Discussion	Discussion for Professional Learning Community (PLCs)
<p>January: <i>Chapter 1</i></p> <p>Habit: <i>Know Yourself</i></p> <p>Disposition: <i>Purposefulness</i></p>	<p>When you know yourself well—when you understand your emotions, social identities, core values, and personality—you gain clarity on your purpose in life and in work. Being anchored in purpose makes you able to deal with setbacks and challenges</p>	<p>-Know Yourself: Resilience Self-Assessment: -Describe yourself using your sociopolitical identity (Discussion) -Core Values -Dominant culture (Discussion) -What is your purpose?</p>	<p>1) Of the different elements of self in this chapter, which ones do you feel have the greatest impact on your daily experience as an educator? 2) Which of these elements of self do you want to learn more about? 3) How could you explore your purpose and feel more purposeful?</p>

Activity Descriptions

During Session

Know Yourself: Resilience Self-Assessment. An assessment educators completed during the session. They wrote down the date of when they completed the self-assessment. An example of one of the items on the self-assessment stated, “I am clear on my core values and how they guide my behaviors.” When educators reassess themselves in the future, the workbook

will give them guidance on how to think about their reassessment by asking questions such as, “Is your resilience reservoir a little more full? If so, which practices do you want to keep up? If not, what else do you want to try?”

Describe yourself using your sociopolitical identity. A discussion had during the book study session that allowed educators to reflect on how their sociopolitical identity impacted their personal experiences as well as their classrooms.

Core Values. An activity that helped educators identify their core values and how they have stayed the same or changed each year. Educators read through a list of values and circled 10 they felt were most important to them. Then they had to cross out five of those values, leaving them with the five that were most important to them. Lastly, from their group of five values, they had to cut off two, leaving them with the three values. Those three values represented their core values.

Dominant Culture. The activity was discussed in the chapter as being the most powerful, widespread, or influential culture with a social group, organization, or society that may have multiple cultures present. Educators were asked about how they felt dominant culture showed up within their programs.

What is your purpose? This was a discussion educators had at the end of the book study session after they had read and reflected on what were the elements of self (psyche, values, strengths and aptitudes, sociopolitical identity, and personality).

Discussion for Professional Learning Community (PLC)

Chapter Reflection. During the PLCs, educators reflected on the chapter by discussing workbook pages and answering questions about how the chapter related to their experiences. For Chapter 1: Knowing Yourself, educators were asked the following questions:

- Of the different elements of self in this chapter, which ones do you feel have the greatest impact on your daily experience as an educator?
- Which of these elements of self do you want to learn more about?
- How could you explore your purpose and feel more purposeful?

The time spent in the book study sessions and professional learning communities were documented through notes, audio, video recordings, and exit tickets. The researcher went over activities educators had completed on their own and they completed activities as a group. The activities that were completed together as a group furthered educators' knowledge about how to build their sense of resilience as well as build a sense of collegiality amongst each other since they were from different Head Start programs. A graduate student researcher attended all the book study sessions and PLCs to assist in the setup of the in-person book study sessions, took fieldnotes at each session, and provided insight into the book study process. By capturing information through video/audio recordings and the graduate student's fieldnotes the student researcher was able to go back through the data and pull themes from discussions had among educators as well as whole group discussions.

Data Analytic Plan

Qualitative analysis can be described as a nonlinear, iterative process and thematic analysis, a qualitative analytic approach, allows for theory-driven or data-driven findings that can address a wide range of questions (Lester et al., 2020). Wellbeing and resilience were analyzed qualitatively through the educators' wellbeing/self-care and resilience goals as well as the data collected through fieldnotes, audio, and video recordings during book study sessions. The wellbeing and resilience self-assessment tools were taken before and after the book study

professional development to help demonstrate any knowledge that was gained throughout the process. The wellbeing and resilience goals allowed the researcher to capture the changes in behavior as educators worked towards their goals. Certain parts of the organizational climate survey (*Parts III: Occupational Values and IV: Satisfactions and Frustrations*) were analyzed qualitatively. *Parts I (Facets of Job Satisfaction)* of the organizational climate survey and commitment to the program/field were assessed quantitatively by calculating educators' total scores and using descriptive statistics. Exit Tickets provided quantitative and qualitative data to assess the feedback about book study sessions. After the last session, educators completed a satisfaction survey asking about the specifics of the book study.

The student researcher utilized the transcripts created from the Zoom recordings and went back through the transcripts using the audio/video recordings to ensure that the data was accurate. In-person book study sessions were captured through video and audio recordings as well as through Zoom for educators who joined virtually. This method allowed the student researcher to use the Zoom transcripts to capture educators online and add the quotes from participants in-person to the Zoom transcript. Once the transcripts were finalized, the student researcher uploaded the transcripts to a confidential shared drive where the student researcher and graduate student both had access. The graduate student uploaded her fieldnotes to the confidential drive after each session to help provide context of what was occurring throughout the sessions. The fieldnotes helped to provide a clear picture of what was being said, facial expressions, if cameras on Zoom were off or on, gestures, and the repetition of topics and conversations. A discussion about the fieldnotes occurred after each session. Audio, video, zoom recordings, and pictures of artifacts (charts and activities) collected during sessions were also uploaded to a confidential shared drive after each session.

Transcribing and completing initial analysis of the video and audio recordings throughout the study prevented the data from piling on to the end. Analyzing the exit tickets after each chapter allowed the researcher to adjust the facilitation of the book study to best meet the needs of the Throughout the duration of the book study, transcripts gathered through video and audio recordings from the book study sessions and PLCs were analyzed using thematic analysis to further understand how it related to the research questions. The transcripts were analyzed by the student researcher and a graduate student for reliability. The student researcher and graduate student analyzed the data separately using main codes such as “awareness,” “behavior,” “organizational climate,” “wellbeing” “resilience,” and “commitment.” Other codes were created as consistent topics seemed to emerge within each session. Once the student researcher and graduate student analyzed the data separately, they came together to check any similarities and differences they found in the data. After the transcripts were analyzed, themes were pulled from the data based on the research questions of the study as well as what emerged as a result of the discussions that took place.

The results chapter of the current study is comprised of each research question. Depending on the question, both quantitative and/or qualitative analysis were used to shed light on the data and each research question was concluded by a discussion. For the qualitative component of the research questions, a mixture of theoretical thematic analysis was utilized throughout the study. Theoretical thematic analysis is more driven by the theoretical or analytic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Inductive analysis is a type of thematic analysis and is represented by themes strongly linked to the data or themes having little relation to the questions that were asked to educators in order to dive deeper into a topic. Both inductive and deductive analysis was used for the field notes, audio, and video recordings of the activities and discussions

captured during the book study and professional learning community. Deductive analysis uses a “top-down approach” by applying predetermined codes to analyze the data (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022). Fieldnotes gave researchers insight into how to “consciously and coherently narrate, synthesize, and interpret practices and actions in the field, offering creative depictions of the data collected (Tracy, 2020).” This process allowed for the data to drive the themes that emerged around the educators’ knowledge and behaviors around their wellbeing and resilience, external factors such as aspects of organizational climate, and their commitment to their program and the field. The student researcher will organize the data for the findings by researcher question utilizing both the quantitative and qualitative data collected throughout the duration of the book study. Each research question in the results will end with a brief discussion.

CHAPTER V: RESULTS AND PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

In the current study, there were a total of nineteen educators from various racial, ethnic, and educational backgrounds who participated in the book study. Among the nineteen educators, there were nine Early Head Start co-teachers, nine Head Start/NC Pre-K Teachers (four lead teachers and five assistant teachers), and one support staff/floater. Educators were asked about the amount of time they had been in their current program, their total amount of time working in Early Head Start and/or Head Start/ NC Pre-K, and how long they worked in early childhood as paid employees. These numbers are shown in Table 7. Educators (n=18) were also asked if they chose early care and education as their long-term career, the majority said yes (n=14) with (n=4) said no. As seen in Table 7 educators came from varied experiences which shed light on and helped us understand their unique perceptions about wellbeing, resilience, their commitment to their program and the field, and the book study process.

Table 7. Educators' Years of Experience (Current Program, Head Start, Early Care and Education)

	Years of Experience			
	<5 years	5-10 years	11-20 years	>20 years
How long have you worked in:	<i>N</i>			
Current Head Start Program	12	4	3	0
Head Start	6	5	6	1
Early Childhood field	3	6	3	5

The results for the study are presented in relation to the research questions: (1) How do Early Head Start and Head Start/NC PreK educators who participated in the book study professional development opportunity change over time in their *knowledge/awareness* about their *wellbeing*? (2) How do Early Head Start and Head Start/NC PreK educators who participated in the book study professional development opportunity change over time in their

knowledge/ awareness about their *resilience* (3) Across the book study, what *goals* are individual Early Head Start and Head Start/NC PreK educators creating in relation to their wellbeing and resilience and how are they working towards those goals? (4) Does the book study influence a change in *commitment* for Early Head Start early care educators? To their program? To the early care and education field? How is this change associated with wellbeing and resilience? and (4) Generally, how does the implementation of a book study provide/serve as an innovative professional development approach for Early Head Start and Head Start/NC PreK educators? Initially, the third research question was two separate questions. As the book study progressed and educators began to set goals in relation to their wellbeing and resilience, the connection and overlap between these two constructs became evident and findings related to the change in behavior in relation to wellbeing and resilience are presented together as research question #3.

In relation to how the data was analyzed and organized in the following sections, during the book study process, key words within the research questions were taken into consideration and the quotes and comments from educators were pulled from the audio/video transcripts and coded. These key words included: educators' wellbeing, resilience, awareness, knowledge, behavior, goals, organizational climate, and commitment. Additional codes were created based on the relevance of certain quotes/discussions educators had that fit or gave insight into the major codes above, but also how often certain topics recurred in book study sessions and PLCs. Themes were then determined from the codes and were selected based on their relevance to each research question. For instance, the first research question asks about educators change in awareness/knowledge of wellbeing. The definition of wellbeing was broken into smaller parts and quotes/discussions that were coded "wellbeing" were then pulled to see how it was relevant or demonstrated a pattern into how educators conceptualized their wellbeing. Each research

question will be addressed using qualitative data through deductive and inductive analysis.

Research questions 1, 2, 4, and 5 include quantitative data that measure educators' understanding and awareness of the same concepts through self-reported surveys.

Themes for Research Question 1: Change in Knowledge and Awareness of Wellbeing

The first research question was designed to understand how early care educators' knowledge and awareness of wellbeing changed over time during the participation in this book study. The *Educator Resilience and Trauma-Informed Self-Care* survey was used as a pre- and post- survey and educators were asked to identify and reflect on the strategies, they used to address their self-care using a Likert Scale ranging from 1 (I never do this.) to 4 (I do this often. (e.g. frequently) educators reported how often they incorporated each of these strategies. There were 20 items for psychological self-care and 17 items for emotional self-care. Educators could have a minimum score of 20 and a maximum score of 80 for psychological self-care and a minimum of 17 and a maximum of 68 for emotional self-care. Overall educators in the book study demonstrated a change in awareness of the strategies they could use to address their wellbeing through self-care. The mean total score was taken from the educators' scores for the pre- and post- survey to help demonstrate this change over time and is represented in the table through the actual range of min/max. The mean total scores indicate that participants used self-care strategies. Although the mean total score shows slight increases, the standard deviations for the pre- and post- survey for emotional self-care indicate greater variability with educators' mean total score. Over the course of the book study, some educators were documenting higher levels of emotional self-care by the end of the book study. The standard deviation highlights the range in educators' awareness and knowledge of self-care strategies over the course of the book study.

Table 8. Pre- and Post Results from the Educator Resilience and Trauma-Informed Self-Care Survey (Psychological and Emotional Self-Care)

	Mean Total Score (SD)	Valid N	Min/Max	Actual Range of Min/Max
Psychological Self-Care (Pre)	53.32 (7.73)	19	20-80	36-66
Psychological Self-Care (Post)	61.58 (7.08)	12	20-80	51-76
Emotional Self-Care (Pre)	42.17 (4.60)	18	17-68	33-49
Emotional Self-Care (Post)	45.83 (6.74)	12	17-68	33-57

The qualitative data related to educators’ knowledge about wellbeing is provided below using both deductive and inductive themes. Components of this definition of wellbeing were taken into consideration to evaluate educators’ awareness of their wellbeing and a deductive thematic approach was utilized. Additional themes emerged from discussions and activities throughout the book study in relation to educators’ knowledge and awareness of their wellbeing and those themes are highlighted under inductive. The inductive themes demonstrated educators questioning elements of the wellbeing definition and displayed their awareness of the consequences of neglecting wellbeing.

Deductive Themes RQ1 Educators’ Knowledge/Awareness of Wellbeing

Wellbeing within this study was defined as an *“individual’s sense of personal professional fulfillment, satisfaction, purposefulness and happiness, constructed in a collaborative process with colleagues and students”* (Acton & Glasgow, 2015, p.102). Data collected during the book study activities related to personal professional fulfillment are presented first, then data related to purposefulness, and finally collaboration.

Individual's Sense of Personal Professional Fulfillment

An individual's sense of personal professional fulfillment involves educators' feelings of satisfaction, happiness, self-efficacy, and self-worth both personally and professionally (Acton & Glasgow, 2015) In this study, it was important that educators were asked about what made them happy or fulfilled within and outside of the classroom because oftentimes they are overlooked or not given the space to answer those questions. By educators being able to identify what gave them a sense of personal professional fulfillment, they were able to feed into their wellbeing. It was evident through discussions that children provided educators personal professional fulfillment and their love for the children in their care was why they became a teacher. During the first chapter of the book study, as a part of a discussion, educators were asked about their path to teaching. Mrs. Jackie is a caregiver to not only the children in her classroom but to her children at home. She is currently in school studying to receive her teaching license and is an Early Head Start co-teacher. In relation to her path to being a teacher, she responded:

"I became a teacher because I think that it's a reasonable job, and my kids will be...happy to introduce me as a teacher. ...also...in my culture, teachers are highly respected, so here's [United States] a little bit different story. But I still love teaching."

Mrs. Jackie speaks of the fulfillment and pride she has for being an educator of young children. She also speaks to the cultural difference in how educators are viewed. Ms. Marie, who spoke in book study sessions about her mother's influence on her teaching career shared the same sentiment and the joy she receives from teaching:

“I got into teaching because I enjoy seeing children happy. They are so full of energy and resilience; they bounce back from almost anything and it just drives me to want to be around them and to instill in them the things they need to know in life.”

Several of the teachers talked about the children in relation to their personal professional fulfillment. An element of the definition that is closely related to an individual’s sense of personal professional fulfillment is an educator’s purposefulness.

Purposefulness

Purposefulness is an element of wellbeing and an aspect of resilience. Identifying one’s purpose in life helps guide behaviors, attitudes, and commitment to a profession (Aguilar, 2015). In chapter one of *Cultivating Emotional Resilience Among Educators*, participants were asked to dive deep into getting to know themselves through their values, strengths and aptitudes, personality, and socio-political identity through workbook activities and discussions. By reflecting on the different aspects of what makes them both unique and similar to one another, educators could then use that knowledge to inform their purpose. Three educators from Head Start/NC Pre-K classrooms felt that their purpose was clear and stated the following:

“Knowing that you make a difference in their[children’s] life. Cause you know, sometimes being in school is the only love, nurturing, and everything that they [children] get. So, knowing at the end of the day that they [children] left and you made a difference in their life and they are going to remember you for the rest of their life.” (Ms. Marie)

Although Ms. Marie shared her feelings of burnout and exhaustion during the sessions which is documented under negative aspects of wellbeing, she also exhibited the internal motivation needed to fulfill her purpose as a teacher and the awareness of the significant role she plays in the lives of young children.

“I feel very clear about my purpose in life. I know what I’m here on Earth to do.” (Mrs. Donna)

This clarity of purposefulness that the participant shared mirrors the confidence in purpose that the book illustrates in *Chapter 1 Know Yourself* as being an anchor to access deep reserves of energy.

“I have always wanted to be a teacher from what I can remember. I am a very spiritual person and when God told me my purpose, I had no choice but to accept it!” (Ms. Krysten)

This participant echoed the clarity and sense of purpose she receives from teaching. In *Chapter 12 Celebrate and Appreciate*, the book talks about a belief in a higher power and how it helps people to feel loved, cared for, valued, and resilient.

Constructed in a Collaborative Process with Children and Colleagues

Wellbeing also includes the mutually beneficial relationships educators share with the children in their care and their colleagues. Educators need a reflexive, two-way relationship with the people in their work environment (Acton & Glasgow, 2015). A reflexive, two-way relationship speaks to the reciprocity educators yearn for from administration, colleagues, and children. In the organizational climate section of the pre- and post- survey, educators were asked about the two most satisfying aspects of their job. Over half of educators (n=12) in the book study mentioned the children in their care, writing sentiments including, “I love my kids!”, “help create new young minds,” and “watching a child’s excitement at mastering a hard-gained skill and seeing the growth and successes of the children and their families.” Educators were also asked within the organizational climate section of the survey to pick the three job characteristics that they valued the most. The majority of educators (n=13) chose “colleagues-working with people I like” as their number one value among values like pay, environment, leadership, and a

host of other values. Ms. Savannah, who has been in the field for over twenty-six years, highlighted how the collaborative process of working with children feeds into her wellbeing:

“I stayed because I loved seeing the children learn and grow, and I can see the difference I was making.”

Ms. Marie shared the challenge young children face because of their background and her role in working with them to instill a love of learning.

“I like to try and instill the joy of learning in them [children] because... with the kids we teach, they’re the ones who [are] most likely to drop out of school. And if you make it fun for them in the beginning, hopefully that will instill in them how important it is to get that education.”

As previously mentioned, working with this population of children is a strong contributor to teachers’ motivation to serve as a Head Start teacher. Additionally, collaborating with like-minded professionals to achieve this same goal of making learning fun is motivating and fulfilling. Ms. Yolanda who started off as a hair stylist and then a volunteer in Head Start shared,

“I really love the people that I work with at my job. We have a lot of fun and you know, we do bump heads sometimes, but overall, I can honestly say I work with a really wonderful group of people.”

Educators strived to work with one another to create a high-quality environment for children and each other. Ms. Yolanda spoke to the respect and rapport that contributes to creating opportunities for collegiality.

“I take the initiative to try to do things to bring everybody [colleagues] together and to make sure that everybody feels loved and appreciated.”

Additional educators spoke to the sense of collegiality and collaboration they felt while being a part of the book study. The book study allowed educators to strengthen their relationships with one another by creating a space where they could collectively speak about the unique challenges they face as early care educators and collaboratively brainstorm solutions.

Inductive Themes RQ1 Educators' Knowledge/Awareness of Wellbeing

The inductive themes emerged from data in relation to educators' awareness of their wellbeing and are relevant to the definition of wellbeing presented above. The following themes demonstrated educators' questioning of their purpose as well as the negative consequences of neglecting their wellbeing.

Questioning Purpose

Chapter 1 Know Yourself was all about creating a habit of educators' getting to know themselves by reading the chapter and completing workbook activities that looked deeper into their elements of self (psyche, values, strengths and aptitudes, sociopolitical identity, and personality). By diving deeper into getting to know themselves, educators were forming a disposition of purposefulness. Educators were asked at the beginning of the book study, what they felt their purpose was and if they felt like teaching young children fulfilled their purpose. A couple of educators questioned teaching as their purpose. Ms. Christina, who has worked in a few of the Head Start programs within the county, works multiple jobs, and is a caregiver to her young child and parents explained why this was the case for her.

“Honestly, that was the one [knowing her purpose] that I kind of struggled with, because I feel like I go through this every year with myself. Like I know what I do. I know my profession. I know the field that I’m in and I know where I’m comfortable. But I’m not sure like you know, is this where I should stay or should I really be doing more. Because

I feel like in some aspects, I'm doing everything that I feel like I should be doing like when I'm actually at work in the classroom with the children... It's like I have this toss, this fight with myself, like, what else is my purpose? Because I feel like it's not enough once I leave that environment [classroom]."

This educator speaks to the battle between being comfortable in the classroom and the profession but not knowing if her purpose is being truly fulfilled. She has been in the early care and education field for over twenty-three years.

"I know I want to work with children and impact their life, but I don't think it's teaching, in the area of teaching. I am completely burnt out of teaching... I've been in this field for 23 years." (Ms. Ashleigh)

These educators questioned whether teaching truly fulfilled their purpose and how burnout can play a role in educators who have more experience. Educators' responses/discussions presented in the next section were gathered through informal discussion and highlighted another theme that surfaced which was the negative consequences of not attending to their wellbeing.

Negative Aspects of Wellbeing

"Sometimes you don't feel like you're human, like you don't have space to make mistakes." (Ms. Christina)

Wellbeing is often conceptualized by its negative aspects such as burnout, anxiety, stress, depression, and just an overall feeling of not having one's needs met. Many educators voiced feelings of being overwhelmed and drained.

“If I get so overwhelmed... I’ll go in a dark place and just cry. Cry it out that’s me and just get it out and try to regroup or think about do I want to deal with this? You know, fight through it or leave it alone and let things continue?” (Ms. Yolanda)

Ms. Christina expressed the reality of so many educators within the book study. Ms. Christina along with other participants in the book study work multiple jobs, are caregivers to their parents, and oftentimes do not have the time or energy to attend to their wellbeing.

“[I] Ignore how sad I am or how I feel about myself. I just stay busy and make things keep...moving. And I don’t do self-care.”

Ms. Krysten speaks about the negative aspects of wellbeing due to the personal and professional responsibilities educators carry in the classroom.

“You feel overwhelmed, drained because you’re carrying all this stuff trying to act like you’re okay when you’re not.”

Ms. Marie reiterated the feelings of Ms. Krysten and how she felt as she was reading *Chapter 2 Emotions*.

“Drained, burnout, tired, frustrated, unsupported”

Throughout the book study, educators were given a chance to display their awareness of the concepts being discussed. During a discussion about the chapter covering emotions, the student researcher asked educators to define burnout. Burnout was discussed in this chapter and the student researcher wanted to gain a sense of how educators defined burnout. A phrase starting with “Burnout is...,” was written on a poster board and educators were asked to finish the sentence. Their responses are as follows:

“[Burnout is] constantly tired”

“[Burnout is] not feeling like yourself”

“[Burnout is] not fair to [children], it’s not fair to them.”

“[Burnout is] as soon as I crank up to go to work my head immediately starts hurting. As soon as I leave work it stops.”

Although educators were asked to define burnout, some educators described burnout through their own firsthand experience and had expressed throughout the book study feelings of stress, being drained, burnt out, and frustrated. Thus, burnout appears to be a major concern for several of the educators within this sample. Educators within the book study described their working circumstances as well as stressors they face as the cause of their overall burnout. The following paragraph further discusses the first research question.

Educators’ awareness of their wellbeing was not only demonstrated through discussions in book study and PLC sessions, but also in how they identified and reflected on the strategies they could use to enhance their wellbeing. Throughout the book study we talked about the importance of knowing what wellbeing encompasses but also what happens when your wellbeing is neglected. The literature often focuses on the negative aspects of wellbeing such as burnout, stress, and depression instead of strengthening the areas that promote an educator’s wellbeing (Cumming & Wong, 2019). These areas include helping educators finding a sense of purposefulness whether that be in or outside of the classroom, providing educators with the opportunity to figure out what truly fulfills them, and realizing the importance of educators collaborating and building relationships with their colleagues and the children in their care. Wilson et al. (2022) discussed this shift that needs to occur from seeing an educator’s wellbeing as a personal issue that they must address themselves to identifying the underlying causes and creating systems within the workplace to address and support their wellbeing. In order to address these underlying causes, we have to start having conversations with educators about the different

components of their wellbeing and if they feel like their wellbeing needs are being met. In this study, educators demonstrated and vocalized an awareness of both positive and negative aspects of wellbeing and their experience was shown in both the deductive and inductive themes. The quantitative results illustrated a positive change in awareness and knowledge of self-care strategies to increase their wellbeing and the qualitative results expressed educators' understanding about the different areas of wellbeing and how they work together or work against their overall wellbeing.

Themes for Research Question 2: Book Study Participation and Change in Knowledge and Awareness of Resilience

The second research question was created to learn more about educators' change in knowledge and awareness about their resilience. Sumison's (2003) article, described resilience in the context of early care and education as "the ability to continue to find deep and sustaining personal and professional satisfaction in one's work as an early care educator despite the presence of multiple adverse factors and circumstances that have led many to leave the field" (p. 143). This definition of resilience was the foundation for the study as well as the areas in which educators could reflect upon to promote their resilience (i.e., Relationships, Internal Beliefs, Initiatives, Self-Control). These areas are outlined in the Devereux Adult Resilience Survey (DARS) which are included in both the quantitative and qualitative aspect of this research question. This survey was developed to support adults as they reflect and gain insight on how to promote their capacity for resilience in themselves. Educators in the current study were asked to reflect on the areas of resilience using a Likert scale of 1(Almost Always), 2 (Sometimes), and 3 (Not Yet); the pre- and post-survey means of items in each area are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Results from Deveureux Adult Resilience Survey

	<i>Pre-Test Mean (SD)</i>	<i>Pre-Test Valid (N)</i>	<i>Post-Test Mean (SD)</i>	<i>Post-Test Valid (N)</i>
Relationships				
<i>I have good friends who support me.</i>	1.58 (.692)	19	1.33 (.492)	12
<i>I have a mentor or someone who shows me the way.</i>	2.00 (.667)	19	2.00 (.775)	11
<i>I provide support to others.</i>	1.26 (.452)	19	1.08 (.289)	12
<i>I am empathetic to others.</i>	1.42 (.507)	19	1.08 (.289)	12
<i>I trust my close friends.</i>	1.63 (.684)	19	1.42 (.515)	12
Internal Beliefs				
<i>My role as a caregiver is important.</i>	1.11 (.315)	19	1.00 (.000)	12
<i>I have personal strengths.</i>	1.32 (.478)	19	1.17 (.389)	12
<i>I am creative.</i>	1.37 (.496)	19	1.42 (.515)	12
<i>I have strong beliefs.</i>	1.26 (.452)	19	1.08 (.289)	12
<i>I am hopeful about the future.</i>	1.32 (.478)	19	1.25 (.452)	12
Initiative				
<i>I communicate effectively with those around me.</i>	1.58 (.507)	19	1.42 (.515)	12
<i>I try many different ways to solve a problem.</i>	1.74 (.562)	19	1.50 (.522)	12
<i>I have a hobby I engage in.</i>	1.95 (.621)	19	1.75 (.754)	12
<i>I seek out new knowledge.</i>	1.47 (.513)	19	1.33 (.492)	12
<i>I am open to new ideas.</i>	1.32 (.478)	19	1.42 (.515)	12
<i>I laugh often.</i>	1.44 (.511)	18	1.25 (.452)	12
<i>I am able to say no.</i>	1.89 (.567)	19	1.73 (.467)	11
<i>I can ask for help.</i>	1.95 (.524)	19	1.55(.522)	11

	Self-Control			
<i>I express my emotions.</i>	1.83 (.618)	18	1.75 (.622)	12
<i>I set limits for myself.</i>	1.95 (.621)	19	1.75 (.452)	12
<i>I am flexible.</i>	1.58 (.692)	19	1.33 (.492)	12
<i>I can calm myself down.</i>	1.44 (.511)	18	1.17 (.389)	12

Overall, educators showed an increase in their awareness of their reflections about how certain aspects such as relationships, internal beliefs, initiative, and self-control contribute to their resilience. Educators' responses both pre- and post- ranged from 1 (Almost Always) to 2 (Sometimes) with the post-test showing slight movement towards educators reporting "Almost Always" as they reflect on these areas as strengths and ways that they are already being resilient. These areas are also represented in the deductive themes. Educators were asked at the beginning of the study what resilience meant to them and defined the process of resilience as,

"Bounce back and become stronger."

"Not giving up."

"Adapt and overcome."

"Persevere."

"To recover."

"Pick up the pieces."

Deductive Themes for RQ 2 Change in Knowledge and Awareness of Resilience

Relationships

Relationships were defined in the DARS survey as "the mutual, long-lasting, back-and-forth bond we have with another person in our lives." Educators showed awareness of how

relationships played a role in their resilience in the quantitative section with overall increases in their reflections as well as in their conversations. For example, Ms. Donna shared,

“I have a lot of friends. I don’t have a lot of support system because I don’t have a lot of family here. My family is really GCD [her job] or should I say children and families.”

Despite not having family in the area, Ms. Donna found camaraderie and friendship at her workplace where she has worked for 13 years. Having a support system in the workplace is vital to wellbeing. At the same time, relationships can be tricky to navigate. Ms. Marie articulated the give and take nature of collegial relationships.

“It’s easy to not show you compassion when I don’t see that you are trying, you don’t care enough. But when I see that you care, it’s like I’m ready to have affection for you.”

Relationships require compassion, empathy, and patience. Ms. Destany, a support staff person who is working towards her Child Development Associate (CDA), felt that in strong relationships, compassion comes naturally.

“People that you care about... you’re gonna have understanding. You’re gonna have compassion as you can relate.”

Internal Beliefs

Internal beliefs were defined in the current study as the feelings and thoughts we have about ourselves and our lives, and how effective we think we are at taking action in life. When it comes to teaching young children, internal beliefs about children’s lives and experiences can guide attitudes, behaviors, and passions. Results from the survey indicated that educators’ reflection on their role as a caregiver being important shifted from educators questioning their role slightly ($M=1.11$, $SD=.315$) to educators completely feeling their role as a caregiver was

important ($M=1.00$, $SD=.000$). Ms. Marie spoke to her role as a caregiver as well as teaching being her passion.

“So knowing at the end of the day that they left... and you made a difference in their life and they're going to remember... you for the rest of their life. So I love seeing their smiles... they love to hug, they love... to kiss your cheek or just come up to you with a story, even if it's off the top of their head. They just want you to know... they wanna know that you care and you love them. And so at the end of the day, you know, you made a difference... in their life. So I think that's literally what I love. My mom had her own home daycare when I was a baby, so I've been around kids pretty much all my life. So yeah... it's always been my passion. “

Educators' core values or areas in which they hold high priority, contribute to their internal beliefs as well. Spirituality and religiosity have the potential to direct behaviors and thoughts, even at the workplace. Ms. Jackie noted,

“I believe my faith, it guides me everywhere... Whatever I do, that's my core value is in my mind that I'm going to do my best to satisfy my belief and my soul...”

Similarly, Ms. Donna shared that even though they have struggled with spirituality over time, they believe that it has reemerged and moved them forward in life.

“My thing is spirituality and I thought I had lost it with life, and marriage, and family, and [my] working career, but, I had to get that back in order for me to go five steps beyond what I am today... If I have that with me, the rest can follow. “

Initiative

Initiative and positive self-direction play into teacher's wellbeing and decision-making skills. The DARS survey described initiative as the ability to make positive choices and

decisions, and act upon them. In the classroom setting, teachers are constantly required to adapt and change depending on the context, children, and personal needs. Educators reported a slight increase towards “Almost Always” from the pre-survey ($M= 1.74$, $SD= .562$) to the post-survey ($M=1.50$, $SD=.522$) in their reflections about trying many different ways to solve a problem.

This shift is also demonstrated by Ms. Veronica’s statement.

“Sometimes in our classroom my co-teacher and I, we will realize that something’s not working. Like [when] we are trying to get all the kids settled to go outside, and they just wanted to come and still dump the toys out. So [trying] different methods until we found something that worked better for our situation with our particular kids.”

After reading the *Riding the Waves of Change* chapter of the book used in the professional development, the student researcher asked educators to reflect on their feelings about change, think about their spheres of influence, how to deal with unwanted change, and what changes they desired. Although educators voiced change as being hard, unpredictable, and unexpected, taking initiative and adapting can help foster resilience in times of change.

“I think [with] experiencing [new] things, you may change how you feel about a certain situation, because you may go into something thinking that you don’t like it, and then, once you try it, you may find that you do like it, or you may grow to like it. So I just feel like... having a try it first attitude helps before you say. Oh, I don’t really want to do that. I don’t really like that.” (Ms. Yolanda)

Ms. Ashleigh spoke to the awareness of the desire to make a change out of the field of early care and education and how reading the *Riding the Waves of Change* chapter has helped her reflect upon the steps she needs to take to make that change. As educators reflected on their capacity for seeking out new knowledge in the survey, the means before the study ($M=1.47$,

$SD = .513$) and after the study ($M = 1.33$, $SD = .492$) demonstrated a lower mean which represented a positive change.

“My mindset as far as like my career, [I] want the career change. So this [book chapter] just helped me out with, you know making more clearer notes for myself and really jotting down what change I want to make professionally.”

A key step in taking initiative is knowing when to ask for assistance especially when it comes to something that is unfamiliar. This demonstrates vulnerability and shows a sense of trust for others to help guide your actions.

“I will ask for help if it's something that's new. Take step by step or ask for help.” (Ms. Tayla)

Self-Control

Self-control is the ability to experience a range of feelings and express them using the words and actions society considers appropriate. The second chapter in the book study covered emotions, where educators learned about emotions, understanding emotional intelligence, negative emotional states (depression, stress, burnout), when to seek help or call a doctor, how emotions manifest in our body, the conditions in which we work, and how to reclaim your emotions. During the session, educators were asked to define emotions in their own words on a poster. The following were some of the group's response to the prompt, “Emotions are...”:

“Personal thoughts and feelings towards something or someone”

“Things that can be controlled and can control your actions”

“Not to be shared”

“Not a stage of feeling (ex. Burnt out or stressed)”

“Reactions to real life situations”

“Are sometimes difficult to control”

“Don’t last forever”

“All over the place, physical responses”

Educators also demonstrated their awareness of the strategies they could use to calm themselves down and voiced those strategies during a discussion. Ms. Marie said, *“Journaling is very relaxing. I like writing, journaling, music too...”* Ms. Cia echoed Ms. Marie’s comment by stating, *“I’m trying to get back into [journaling], because I don’t really have an outlet to say a lot of stuff I want to say. So that’s something I want to get back into...”* Lastly, Ms. Christina felt routines inside and outside of the classroom assisted in her feeling less anxious by saying, *“Routines definitely help me too.”*

Inductive Themes for Research Question 2 Change in Knowledge and Awareness of Resilience

The inductive themes pulled from the data in relation to educators’ knowledge or awareness of resilience were similar to the deductive themes but instead of educators feeling confident in aspects of their resilience, they were questioning their ability to fully trust themselves, unable to set boundaries or say no, and felt they could not express their emotions. Educators also went further to say that there were expectations on how to display or handle their emotions that were deemed appropriate or inappropriate based on their upbringing, societal norms, or cultural expectations.

Questioning Aspects of Resilience

A sense of self-efficacy both personally and professionally feeds into wellbeing and helps cultivate resilience. When educators are unable to trust in their ability and the competence of others it negatively affects their wellbeing and the beliefs they hold about themselves (REF). At

the end of the discussion/ book study session focused on *Emotions*, the student researcher asked educators to reclaim their rights to their emotions. Ms. Ruby wanted to reclaim her trust in herself and others.

“Trusting people and trusting myself, because sometimes I don’t trust myself. If I’m answering something or about to do something, I don’t always trust myself or the people around me. But I’m learning to trust myself, and know that I am able to do more than what I think I can do.”

The majority of educators within the book study spoke to their inability to say no and set boundaries in their personal and professional lives. One educator emphasized their role as a woman and feeling like it is expected of them to nurture and care for others despite their feelings of wanting the same treatment in return.

“I feel like I’m such a giving person I give, I try to bend backwards, I try to go forward.... But I think it’s like you know people take me personally for granted I could do, I could give, I could share, I could.. But time for them to do something for me, which I really it doesn’t really matter sometimes.” (Ms. Marie)

Vulnerability is described in the book as a path toward wholeness and connection. Throughout the book study, educators shared their collective agreement in lacking trust in others specifically when it came to their emotions. In a book study session, educators were asked to complete a workbook page about their beliefs about emotions or what they had been taught about emotions. Ms. Veronica spoke to how she was taught emotions show your vulnerability.

“I feel like emotions show your vulnerability like it lets other people know if they want to get you, where they could get you at.”

Expectations of Emotions (Familial, Cultural, Societal)

The student researcher furthered the discussion about emotions and beliefs by asking what they were taught by their family, their cultures, and society. Several educators commented on what was taught to them about emotions.

“Men shouldn’t cry”

“There’s a right way to feel in every situation”

“Never complain”

“Telling others that I am feeling bad is a sign of weakness. Sometimes I think people will use that against you and.. it’s a trust issue.”

“Women are hyperemotional and sensitive.”

Another educator discussed the expectations placed upon her because she is a black woman in the early care and education field. Ms. Ashleigh spoke about the reality of many educators whose identity intersects with their resilience and how she deals with her emotions.

“We’ve been repressed all the time as a culture so we know how to deal with tough times, we don’t break easy, we don’t fold, we don’t bend. Our culture [black culture] just don’t bend. We’ve been taught to persevere because we’ve had to do it all. We still doing it, we’re fighting it you know, even though we are supposed to be free, we’re still fighting it. And I feel like it’s a fight that we will never win.”

In the early care and education field, 23% of Black women ECE teachers live in poverty and among those with children, 44% are single parents. Edwards et al. (2021) highlighted these statistics and suggested that the wellbeing of Black women in ECE is vulnerable in a field that is constantly increasing the demands placed upon them.

The lack of trust, boundaries, and vulnerability educators discussed within the context of their families, culture, and societal expectations have a huge impact on resilience. Educators are expected to mask these emotions while caring for children who depend on them to show up physically, emotionally, and mentally. The emotions of educators are being utilized as exchange-value instead of use value, resulting in educators using their emotional capital for the service of others and benefiting the employer which provides superficial or temporary attitudes to increase workers performance (Andrew, 2015). The second research question will be discussed more in-depth in the following paragraph.

Similar to wellbeing, there has to be an understanding of the areas that cultivate educators' resilience as well as systems that are in place to support the resilience of educators. This study looked at resilience and wellbeing through the lens of Bronfenbrenner but more so taking into consideration the person-level characteristics and how those characteristics can be used as protective factors. This approach is what Mansfield (2021) characterized as a person-focused perspective to resilience. Mansfield (2021) study aimed to build the capacity of preservice teachers to become resilient as they moved into their teaching careers. Ninety-eight preservice teachers and 168 new graduates participated in this study and were asked, "How would they describe a resilient teacher from the perspective of those at different points in the early stages of their career?" and "What skills, attributes or characteristics would a resilient teacher possess or be able to demonstrate?" The results showed that although participants focused on the personal aspects of teacher resilience, 66% of participants referenced context when describing a resilient teacher. This demonstrates the collaboration that needs to occur among educators, administration, and policymakers because educators are situated in the middle of multiple contexts. Educators need systems that support their individual quests to enhance their

resilience through opportunities to build relationships, examine their internal beliefs, demonstrate initiative, and practice self-control.

Themes for Research Question 3: Book Study Participation and Change in Behavior/ Goal

Setting in Relation to Resilience and Wellbeing

At the start of the book study, educators completed a survey that assessed their readiness to change, wellbeing, resilience, and organizational climate. Educators were asked about their readiness to change through 32 items that were representative of the stages of change (Precontemplation, Contemplation, Preparation (Action), and Maintenance). Readiness to change is defined as where a person, group of individuals, or organization may be at a particular point and this is measured by their willingness and capacity to take on a new or existing practice in the way it is intended (Halle et al., 2019). The University of Rhode Island Change Assessment scale (URICA) was utilized to evaluate what stage educators were in in relation to their readiness to change. The group average was calculated for each educator and their averages were categorized as: Precontemplation (8 or lower); Contemplation (8-11); Preparation (Action) (11-14); and Maintenance (14 and above). Overall, the group average for educators within the book study was ($M= 6.35$, $SD=1.25$). This mean for the group as a whole signifies educators being in the Precontemplation stage of change. The Precontemplation stage is described as a person not thinking they have a problem or not wanting to change. They may have a problem but do not desire to change either because they are not aware or they are ignoring the problem (McConaughy et al., 1983). In this study, it was important to take educators' readiness to change into consideration and use it as a contextual feature if there was any resistance from educators to change. As demonstrated below through educators' action plan goals, and later in research question 5 in what they hoped to gain, exit tickets, satisfaction survey, and final

thoughts, educators were satisfied and utilized the book study process to influence their willingness to change their awareness/knowledge and behavior in relation to their wellbeing and resilience.

As educators were progressing through the book study and participating in workbook activities addressing their wellbeing and resilience, educators started to discuss the change they wanted to implement in their behavior and goals they had for themselves. Educators were gaining more knowledge and awareness about their resilience and wellbeing and started to reflect upon certain areas that needed more attention. As mentioned before, the interconnectedness of wellbeing and resilience was evident throughout the book study. Research questions 2 and 4 were initially separate but were joined to form research question 3 and represent this interconnectedness of behavior change in relation to wellbeing and resilience over the course of the book study. Throughout the book study, educators had conversations about their personal goals, and this was captured through video and audio recordings as well as in the action plan they created halfway through the book study process.

Action Plan Goals

Towards the middle of the book study, educators created an action plan with a goal(s) to continue to cultivate their wellbeing and/or resilience. The student researcher scheduled a time to meet with each educator at least once to discuss the area the educators' goal (s) fit into (wellbeing and/or resilience), the specific goal(s) they wanted to achieve three to five months from now, how they preferred to meet with the student researcher for future meetings, people that needed to be involved in their goal to hold them accountable and to help achieve their goal, identify resources (things, people, time, funds, technology), and specific action steps they needed to take to achieve their goal. An example of this process can be demonstrated through Ms. Cia.

The student researcher met with Ms. Cia, an Early Head Start educator, during her lunch break. A meeting that was supposed to last thirty minutes lasted for almost an hour. The conversation began with Ms. Cia talking about her childhood, the impact of the book study, and the recent challenges she encountered. Based on the conversation, the student research partnered with Ms. Cia to create a couple of goals. Two of the goals we decided to focus on and work towards were Ms. Cia implementing exercise back into her routine and decluttering her living room space. Ms. Cia talked about how she used to walk miles and miles but had stopped due to health challenges. She also had a stationary bike that was now used to hold her clothes. We also discussed Ms. Cia decluttering her living room space so that she could spend time in her living room and enjoy that space. Ms. Cia placed herself and her co-teacher as people that could hold her accountable for working towards these goals. The student researcher suggested some workbook pages in the *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience Among Educators* including activities about “How to Get More Exercise” and “Inside World and Outside World.” Both of these workbook pages were resources and tools to help Ms. Cia focus on her goals. Lastly, we started with action steps Ms. Cia could start completing. In relation to exercise, Ms. Cia was going to start to clean her clothes off of her stationary bike and practice keeping that area free of clothes. Next, we talked about decluttering her living room space and she said she could start that goal by going through her mail in the living room. After this conversation, the student researcher checked in with Ms. Cia about her goals when she visited her program, in book study sessions, and professional learning communities. Educators in the book study went through the same process of creating goals for their action plan. Goals were grouped together based on the topic area educators focused on, as well as how their goals fit into the definitions of wellbeing and

resilience. The goals educators set for themselves are listed in the table and the goals that did not fit under a specific focus area are listed with “Other.

Table 10. Educators' Action Plan Goals

Focus Area	Goals
Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduce feelings of anxiousness ● Not act on emotions and learn to not wear emotions on sleeve ● Better understand my emotions ● Understanding my emotions and processing them before I react
Self-Care	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Physical</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Going to the park or lake ● Adding movement and exercise back into my routine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practicing Yoga ○ Going to spin class <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Nutrition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drinking more water ● Eating less sugar, less sodium, snacking less
Initiative	<p>Other self-care strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drinking wine ● Getting nails done ● Setting boundaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Saying “no”
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finishing my degree ● Making time for family ● Saying yes more to being around family and friends
Other areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time management ● Being here in the now ● Celebrating accomplishments

Halfway through the book study, educators learned about taking care of themselves in Chapter 6. This chapter prompted the discussion and reflection on the resilience and/or wellbeing goals they wanted to begin to focus on. Educators within the book study completed workbook pages in relation to the areas that they felt needed more attention such as sleep, exercise,

nutrition, and setting boundaries. By the end of the book study, nine educators decided to set goals in connection to their self-care while the remaining educators focused on goals in relation to their resilience. Self-care is a component of resilience and is inextricably intertwined with wellbeing. Although the goals above are separated into categories, they are connected to both wellbeing and resilience. Further discussion about research question three is in the following paragraph.

Chapter 6 *Taking Care of Yourself* also discussed why educators do not take care of themselves and outlined four reasons. These reasons were classified into gaps: knowledge gap, skill gap, will gap, and emotional intelligence gap. Educators in the book study were asked by the student researcher, what gap prevented them from taking care of themselves or creating a plan to address their wellbeing and resilience prior to the book study. The response was that all of these gaps prevented them from creating and sticking to their goals. If educators stated they had a *knowledge gap* it meant they were missing information, heard new information, or information they heard before and it prompted them to make a behavior change; *skill gaps* is when educators are unsure of how to start the process of taking care of themselves or what to do; when educators feel like they do not need to take care of themselves so they get the least amount of sleep, teach when they are sick, and worry about themselves later, this is a *will gap*; lastly, educators cited having an *emotional intelligence gap* which is not feeling like they deserved to take care of themselves or not being able to say no to anyone so they take on more work or overcommit (Aquilar, 2018). These gaps explain not only this sample but possible reasons as to why educators in the early care and education field are feeling burnt out, stressed, and emotionally exhausted. Figuring out the gaps and the “why” behind educators not being able to

focus on their wellbeing and resilience allows for systems to be created to help address these areas.

Themes for Research Question 4: Book Study Participation and Commitment to their Program and the Field

“I haven’t lost my passion to work with children, but I’ve lost my passion for teaching.”

An educator’s commitment to the field is characterized by three factors: a strong belief in and alignment with the program’s goals and values, willingness to exert effort, and a desire to stay in their program (Jorde-Bloom, 1988). Educators' commitment to their program and the field was assessed qualitatively and quantitatively in the survey through three questions. Both the pre- and post-survey results will be highlighted. Overall, the post-survey results stayed consistent to the pre-test with the results showcasing despite the participation in the post-test being lower. In the fifth section of the organizational climate survey, educators were asked to identify statements that described how they felt about their organization by choosing the statements that resonated with them the most. In Table 11, each statement displays the percentage of educators who chose that particular statement to describe their commitment to their organization for the pre- and post-survey. The valid N represents the number of educators who completed this section of the survey. For example, out of nineteen educators, 68.4% chose the statement “I feel very committed to this center.”

Table 11. Statements About Commitment to Organization

	<i>Pre-Survey (%)</i>	<i>Pre-test Valid N</i>	<i>Post-Survey (%)</i>	<i>Post-test Valid N</i>
<i>I feel very committed to this center.</i>	68.4%	19	53.8%	13
<i>I often think about quitting.</i>	31.6%	19	23.1%	13
<i>I am just putting in time.</i>	0%	19	7.7%	13
<i>I don't care what happens to this place after I leave.</i>	5.3%	19	7.7%	13
<i>It would be difficult for me to find another job as good as this one.</i>	5.3%	19	7.7%	13
<i>It's hard to feel committed to this place.</i>	15.8%	19	15.4%	13
<i>I sometimes feel trapped in this job.</i>	21.1%	19	7.7%	13
<i>I put a lot of extra effort into my work.</i>	68.4%	19	61.5%	13
<i>I take pride in my center.</i>	47.3%	19	46.2%	13
<i>I intend to work here at least two more years.</i>	47.4%	19	46.2%	13

The next question asked educators on a scale of 1 (not committed) to 10 (very committed), how committed were they to early childhood education as their life's vocation. The average level of commitment for the pre-test survey was $M= 8.18$, $SD= 1.78$ and post-survey results demonstrated an average level of commitment of $M=9.71$, $SD=.756$. Ten educators reported on this item in the pre-survey and seven in the post-survey. The last question about commitment asked educators if they could do it all over again, would they choose a career in early care and education. Seventeen educators in the pre-survey reported "yes," with two educators responding "no" and twelve educators reporting on this question in the post-survey and all of them responding "yes." Within this question, educators were given an opportunity to answer why they would or would not choose early care and education again as a career. Ms. Christina noted the impact Head Start has on families and the resources that are available.

“I would choose the same career field because there are always families that need more resources to help them do better. There is no better feeling than helping someone and seeing them walk away and be witness to their success and growth.”

Ms. Maya spoke to the satisfaction she receives from knowing she has a role in building future generations. This greatly influences her decision to stay in the field.

“I love working with children and being able to say I’m building up our future doctors, lawyers, etc.”

Pay was listed as the second most valued job characteristic for educators within the book study with colleagues being the first most valued job characteristic. The fight for higher pay continues to be a constant battle for early care educators as well as respect for the role early educators play in the lives of young children.

“While I enjoy teaching, I would do something that offers better pay, is acknowledged for the importance to the contribution to society that is being made, and less frustrating.”

As mentioned before, educators were asked in the organizational climate section of the survey to choose three job characteristics they valued the most from a list of fourteen items. The top three items educators chose were: Colleagues-working with people I like (n=13); Pay-earning a good living to pay for the things I need (n=11); and Environment-working in pleasant surroundings (n=10). The following deductive themes showcase some of the values educators shared as well as why they choose early care education as their career.

Deductive Themes for RQ 4 Commitment to their Program and the Field

Passion and love for the job

Outside of pay, educators stay in their program and the field because they share a love and passion for the children in their care. Ms. Cia spoke to this passion and love early care educators share for their job despite the dire need for change at every level.

“If we didn’t love what we do, we wouldn’t be here. And I know I’m not going to stay somewhere where I don’t like it. “

Ms. Yolanda expressed her love for the job by realizing the opportunity she has to impact and witness the growth of children in her care.

“I love the opportunity to be able to grow and to help children build a strong, sound mind. I love to see the growth of the children and all of the perks that come along with being a respectable and loving teacher.”

When early care educators feel like their values align with their program and the organizational climate of their program is conducive to those values and goals, they are more likely to stay with their program. The next set of themes are in relation to organizational climate and demonstrate an area in which their values are aligned (collegiality) and an area (pay) where their values are misaligned, but they still stay committed to their program and the early care and education field.

Collegiality

Ms. Yolanda expressed how her relationship with her co-teacher grew over time and the process it took for trust to be built between them. Ms. Yolanda and her co-teacher were both a part of the book study, and her co-teacher shared her appreciation for Ms. Yolanda allowing her the time to build trust and how Ms. Yolanda became an emotional resource.

“I learned who my co-teacher was. I let her trust me on her own time, and I let her come to me when she felt like it.”

This educator discussed the unity among educators because of their shared experiences. The book study formed a community of practice which allowed educators from three programs within the same company to express their thoughts, feelings, and concerns.

“We [teachers] can agree with each other. We agree to disagree, but we see the same thing, so we have a common ground. We can be in the same room and genuinely care about each other.” (Ms. Yolanda)

Ms. Donna reiterated the love she has for her colleagues.

“I love my CFF [name of their program] family.”

Collegial relationships that are viewed as positive have the potential to reduce the demands of the workplace, reduce the emotional toll of the job, increase commitment, and provide the support needed emotionally, practically, personally, and socially within their programs and in the early care and education field (Beltman et al., 2020).

Pay

At the start of the book study, we talked about the three conversations that need to happen in order for transformation to occur within the field. These conversations were outlined in the *Cultivating Emotional Resilience Among Educators* book as being individual resilience, organizational conditions, and systemic conditions. The pay of early care educators falls under the systemic conditions that need to be addressed and a conversation that needs to be had in order to see change within programs and the field. Ms. Christina displayed individual resilience as she spoke about her desire to be in the classroom.

“We’re here because we want to be here, not because we need a job. Otherwise, I would not be sitting here getting this low pay when I know what I’m worth. “

Ms. Cia highlights the multiple roles and complex responsibilities educators face as they work long hours to meet the needs of the families they serve.

“We are the only profession that people entrust us with their children all day, every day, sometimes 12 hours. But we are the lowest paid. We are doctors, we are lawyers, we are all of this but we are the lowest paid.”

As mentioned before, adequate pay for early care educators has been a never-ending battle. Although this book study focused on the individual resilience of educators and helping educators to realize what is in their sphere of control, the hope is for these conversations of systemic and organizational change to occur alongside addressing the resilience of educators.

Inductive Themes for RQ 4 Commitment to their Program and the Field

Throughout the book study, aspects of organizational climate were embedded into the process due to it being a contextual feature in the study and educators voicing their feelings and thoughts about being an early care educator in Head Start. Some of the themes that constantly arose from discussions were educators feeling they lacked respect from multiple layers of the ecosystem (e.g. administrators, families, society) which is referred to as Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model in the study. Educators communicated they felt a disconnect between the population of children and families that are being served and the people that are making decisions on their behalf, a lack of accountability, and a distrust.

Respect

Respect was a theme that arose at each book study and PLC session. Educators did not feel respected in their role as a teacher, as a professional making decisions in their classroom, and by the families they served.

“Respect because I think they [leadership] need to show more respect to the teachers, and that they have to show up sometimes. They don’t respect exactly what is going on in the classroom.” (Mr. Logan)

Ms. Christina spoke of the lack of respect educators receive at the micro-, meso, and macro levels.

“[us teachers] are so low on the totem pole it doesn’t even make sense.”

The early care and education field is mostly comprised of women which has been associated with the traditional view of women in the home as well as the field itself being of low status, underpaid workers, and employees having little training.

“Sometimes we are the least respected because we deal with other people’s children...”
(Ms. Cia)

Relatable

Throughout the book study, educators raised questions about the disconnect that occurs between people in power and their experience in early care and education. Educators also voiced the disconnect between people in power making decisions in regard to the children and families they serve and their ability to identify to the challenges of the Head Start population.

“You never had to worry about when you get home, if you have dinner or [if] mommy [is] going be home, who’s going [to] pick you up, who’s going [to] be there for you to put

you to bed if you even have anywhere to sleep. So, a lot of people, they've never had to deal with that.” (Ms. Yolanda)

Another educator conveyed the same challenge of feeling the disconnect that occurs between the children in the classroom and the people who make decisions on their behalf.

“They [upper management] don't relate, we can relate, half of them [upper management] have never been in our centers or our rooms.” (Ms. Christina)

Accountability

There is a trickle-down effect that occurs when educators feel supported and valued in their program by leadership. When leadership creates a positive emotional environment for educators and children, educators are able to feel psychologically safe (Beltman et al., 2020).

“It's the lack of support, lack of accountability...” (Ms. Ashleigh)

In the *Understanding Emotions* session, educators were asked to think about their vision for their program. This activity was implemented after discussions about organizational climate occurred in the first book study session. Ms. Cia spoke about her vision for her center.

“I want the [center's] vision to stay the same but the action needs to be behind it. So it's not what you're putting down to work on, you gotta do it too.”

Trust

Ms. Ciera discussed the inability to make decisions and the lack of autonomy given to educators when it comes to the children and families in their classroom. When autonomy is supported, educators feel respected as the individuals who are capable of making decisions with regards to how they teach, curriculum, creativity, and their ability to do this is encouraged and not undermined (Wagner & French, 2010).

“Trust the fact that you hired professionals. You know you sought us out because we had certain skills and certain education, so trust us, or try to include us in those meetings when it has something to do with our parents, our children, our classrooms.”

“My thing is let us teach, you hired us for a reason, because we know how to... Let us do what you hired us to do.” (Ms. Cia)

Early Head Start and Head Start/ NC PreK educators play an important role in making sure the children and families they serve, who are oftentimes overlooked and marginalized, are ready for kindergarten by creating and following rigorous curricula, working with local, state, and federal funding agencies as well as meeting the standards outlined to achieve quality and success (Wiltshire, 2022). Educators in Head Start have complex demands and responsibilities but have little voice in what occurs in their classroom and program, little respect for the role they play in children’s lives, and a lack of support and accountability. The need for educators to feel respected and heard has to occur at all levels of Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model (micro-, meso-, macro-) and coincide with them being able to feel a sense of trust for others, know that there is accountability at all levels, and the interest of children and families in their care are a top priority for everyone.

The first four research questions looked at educators’ change in awareness and their knowledge about wellbeing and resilience over the course of the book study, educators’ change in behavior or goals as a result of the book study, and their level of commitment to their program and the field. The last research question examines the effectiveness of the professional development approach from the educators’ and directors’ perspective.

Themes for Research Question 5: Professional Development Delivery Effectiveness

Personal Goals

Educators were also asked about their personal goals and what goals they wanted to set for themselves. The following responses were some of the goals educators had mentioned at the first session:

“Take time to relax.”

“Eat Healthy”

“Deep breaths”

“Meditation”

“Talking to support system”

“Read”

“Journaling”

“Sleep”

Hope to Gain from Book Study

Educators were also asked what they hoped to gain from the book study process. Their answers are listed below:

“Get to know self better”

“Know what my purpose is”

“Come out of burnout”

“Spiritual.... I talk to God, when I say, I tell him everything”

“Strengths”

“Coping Skills”

Overall, there was an average attendance of 92.4% across all book study sessions and PLCs with the lowest attendance being fifteen educators and the highest with all participants present (n=19). Book study sessions were a mixture of in-person and virtually with PLCs occurring online. Book study sessions were held in the late afternoon and PLCs were held in the evenings. Educators who were unable to attend in-person sessions, were given a virtual option. The attendance, timing of sessions, and the format provides insight into the effectiveness of the professional development opportunity as well as certain aspects of the book study that were assessed throughout the book study including exit tickets, a satisfaction survey at the end of the study, and a final interview with two of the directors of educators who participated in the book study.

Exit Tickets

Exit tickets were a part of the continuous process for improvement in the book study and how we assessed the fidelity of the book study process. The exit tickets helped to inform future sessions and allowed the facilitator to see what educators were completing and how to incorporate it in PLCs. During this process, if an educator stated they were dissatisfied with any of the aspects of the book study, the student researcher followed up with a conversation for clarity. These conversations brought clarity in how educators interact with the technological piece of the book study process and how it could be improved. Table 12 showcases educators' mean scores and the standard deviation of each session except the last session *Chapter 12 Celebrate and Appreciate* where an exit ticket was not required.

Table 12. Exit Ticket Results

	<i>Session Title</i>				
	Chapter 1: Know Yourself (n=18)	Chapter 2: Emotions (n=13)	Chapter 6: Take Care of Yourself (n=16)	Chapter 8: Cultivating Compassion (n=14)	Chapter 11: Riding the Waves of Change (n=14)
	<i>M (SD)</i>				
How satisfied were you with today's session? <i>1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)</i>					
Length of the session	4.53(.62)	4.77(.60)	4.69(1.01)	4.86(.36)	4.79(.43)
Topics being discussed	4.65(.61)	4.85(.55)	4.94(.25)	4.71(.47)	4.86(.36)
Workbook activities	4.53(.62)	4.69(.63)	4.94(.25)	4.71(.73)	4.79(.43)
Format of the book study	4.5(.63)	4.77(.60)	4.88(.34)	4.86(.53)	4.79(.43)
Activities completed or presented during the session	4.53(.62)	4.77(.60)	4.88(.34)	4.86(.53)	4.86(.36)
How useful were the workbook activities? <i>1 (not useful) to 5 (very useful)</i>	4.53(.62)	4.77(.44)	4.94(.25)	4.64(.63)	4.79(.43)
The topic being discussed this month is relevant to me and work as an educator? <i>1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (very satisfied)</i>	4.53(.62)	4.92(.28)	4.94(.25)	4.71(.47)	5(0)

Satisfaction Survey

Educators were asked similar questions at the end of the book study to assess their satisfaction with the book study as a whole. The results are displayed in Table 13.

Table 13. Satisfaction Survey Results

Cultivating Emotional Resilience Among Early Care Educators Satisfaction Survey	
Book Study (n=18)	
How satisfied were you with today’s session? 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)	<i>M(SD)</i>
Book for the Book Study	4.88 (.33)
Length of the Book Study sessions/PLCs	4.82 (.53)
Topics being discussed during book study sessions/PLCs	4.94 (.24)
Workbook activities	4.89(.32)
Format of the Book Study sessions and PLCs	4.82 (.53)
Activities completed or presented during the book study sessions/PLCs	4.94 (.24)
How useful was the “Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience” book?	4.83(.38)
How useful were the workbook activities?	4.89 (.32)
The topic being discussed this month is relevant to me and work as an educator	4.94 (.24)

Final Thoughts from Educators

At the end of the satisfaction survey educators were asked about their final thoughts.

“It was good I enjoyed myself and I would like to do it again I learned a lot and it was very helpful.” (Ms. Amber)

“The book study was amazing. It allowed us to speak our truth without being judged and it gave me new ideas on wellness and other work issues.” (Ms. Ashleigh)

“I enjoyed the fact that I was able to voice my opinions and I loved the fact is that I’m setting goals that are achievable. I would participate in this study again!” (Ms. Cia)

“It’s [book study] helping me to cope on a higher level... to let go of things I cannot control.” (Ms. Donna)

“The entire book study was very well organized, and the topics discussed were very helpful.” (Ms. Yolanda)

Directors’ Perspective About Book Study

Lastly, two of the directors of the educators who participated in the book study were interviewed to gain their perspective on how the book study process impacted their programs. Directors were questioned about this innovative approach to professional development for teachers, the opportunities for similar professional development in relation to wellness, the benefits offered to educators as a part of their compensation package, the changes they have noticed as a result of the book study, their feelings about the topic of emotions and resilience being covered in the book study, the format of the book study, and final thoughts. The questions and directors’ responses are documented below.

Student Researcher: *“How do you believe the implementation of this book study, over the last four months, has served as a newer [professional development] approach for teachers?”*

Director 1: *“I think it gave them a perspective on like.... I’ve heard self-care, self-awareness, mental like your mental capacity, like when enough is enough. So I think sometimes we go at it with the approach of the company. Where we are just run by company rules and regulations. However, I think the book study was more of emotions and how teachers are feeling.”*

Director 2: *“The feedback I got from a lot of the teachers.... They really enjoyed it because it gave them that chance to really look at themselves and really see, oh I really*

do need to take care of myself. These are the ways that I can take care of myself and just knowing that they have certain boundaries when it comes to their self-care. Being able to say no.... I have to put myself first because I have to take care of me so I can take care of the children.”

Student Researcher: *“Have you all had any professional development opportunities that were similar to this before?”*

Director 1: *“We’ve had trainings in self-care as far as like when we do pre-service or you know mental health... we have these [fireside chats] every other Wednesday where teachers can come on and they talk about anything in range of like self-care to challenging behaviors in the classroom, or to give each other advice. “*

Director 2: *“Yeah, they’re called the Fireside chats. It allows them that free space to kind of express certain things that are happening in the classroom. That might be a stressor for them. And the mental health professional really focuses on how to get the teachers back grounded so that they offer the best care and education for these children inside the classroom.”*

Student Researcher: *“Do you feel like topics such as emotions and resilience should be covered more in book studies?”*

Director 1: *“I think it’s needed for people who are in a profession that can be high stress. I think it’s a necessity, and I think with this book study the teachers enjoyed it because it wasn’t connected to CFF [Head Start] and it was an outside source where they can go and feel like they could freely say how they felt without ramifications.”*

Director 2: *“Yeah, I definitely agree. Some of the teachers, they do come to the directors and say how they’re feeling but a lot of the things I know they hold in because they don’t*

want any backlash, and they don't want it to come back on them for how they're feeling. So with the book study, I feel like they were really able to express a lot of things that stress them out and really try to work on those things in an environment that's not going to judge them."

Student Researcher: "Do they also have opportunities to partner with the gym and therapy?"

Director 1: "I think it is Gold's Gym, and then they also have something with the YMCA."

Director 2: "I think it's five free sessions."

Director 1: "Yeah, if you have health insurance with us [Head Start] there are certain therapists that you don't have to pay like there's no copay to go and speak with them like if you've used up the free five sessions, you're able to utilize the therapist, and it's like \$0 to \$10 to go and see the therapist."

Student Researcher: "Have you noticed any changes in your programs since teachers have started the book study?"

Director 1: "I do hear the teachers talking to each other more on what they can do as far as burnout and how they're feeling. I would say the biggest change I've seen is they're more vocal to me about the challenges they're having... I think they are more open in that sense."

Director 2: "They're more open and they do kind of work together to try to figure out just different ways... to promote self-care, and just promote overall health in general. I know here [at her program] they're doing a weight loss challenge. So just really trying to get everybody together trying to work on everybody's physical health, but also the mental

aspect of it as well... going on walks after the children leave, or before the children come. Just really connecting with each other to be that support system throughout the school year and throughout the school day.”

Student Researcher: “What would you like future professional development opportunities to look like outside of regular trainings? We talked about Zoom versus in-person, have you heard from teachers about which one they prefer?”

Director 1: “I feel like I want it to look similar to what you’re [student researcher] doing where you have this study, and you’re doing it off site and where you’re actually given tools to use at home and in the classroom. During their [teachers] lunch break I would see a lot of teachers reading. On my end, the teachers did say they enjoyed the in-person better than the virtual.”

Director 2: “They [teachers] told me that they much prefer the in-person versus the Zoom, even though Zoom is more convenient. And definitely not like forcing it on them to make it seem like it’s mandatory... when you’re forcing somebody to do something, and they don’t really see the value of it.”

Student Researcher: “So from your perspective as directors, what are your takeaways?”

Director 1: “I have positive takeaways from this. I do see the change in mindset because teachers are talking about it, they’re not just it was a training yesterday and then it’s forgotten tomorrow. So, because they’re talking about it, it means that they really care about it. The only negative I heard was a teacher said they wish the teachers would see like more positivity. I do agree with Director 2 you know each year to see what teachers would want to participate in, I think it’s beneficial. So I would like to see it continue.”

Director 2:” *As a director, I think it was a good study. I hope it continues. They [teachers] didn’t have any negative to say. The book was very easy to read, the workbook was really fun to do like they enjoy actually reading the book and doing what was like homework like they actually enjoy doing it. I really think newer teachers just coming into the field of early childhood could really benefit from this... you know they’re new and don’t know what to expect. So I don’t want them to come in and overdo, and then they get stressed out, and then it’s so much.... You know just tools that these seasoned teachers were able to get this year. They really need that coming in, so I hope that you’re able to do it again or somebody is able to do it again.”*

Overall, educators in the book study were satisfied and found different aspects of the book study to be useful. This was evident through the exit tickets, satisfaction survey, and quotes from the educators. By collecting data through exit tickets, it allowed the student researcher to test for implementation fidelity which is the degree in which the book study was delivered as intended and if any adaptations were needed for continuous improvement (Dunst et al., 2013). The satisfaction survey and educators’ thoughts about the book study aligned with the directors’ interview.

The directors in the study are considered facilitative administration which is an element of organization drivers in the Implementation Science framework. Organization drivers are the organization’s infrastructure and their capacity to support their program or staff in implementing practices and strategies with fidelity (Fixen et al., 2016). Directors received the book and workbook that was given to educators in the book study which helped them to support and assist educators in cultivating their resilience while directors could address their own resilience and wellbeing. It was important to interview the directors and partner with them in the book study

process not only to gain their perspective but to also ensure that directors were aware of the content occurring within the book study so that they could continue to have conversations around resilience and create sustainable change. In the interview, directors spoke about the resources that were available to educators such as mental health services (fireside chats and therapy) and ways for educators to address their physical health (Gold gym and YMCA). Educators within the book study spoke about these resources in conversations with the student researcher and through discussions in the book study sessions. The book study provided a space for educators to speak openly and freely about their emotions, self-care, their work environment, and a host of other topics without educators feeling like it was directly connected to Head Start or the children in their care. The book study solely focused on the educator as a person first and an educator second.

Figure 4. Theme Map for Research Questions 1 and 2

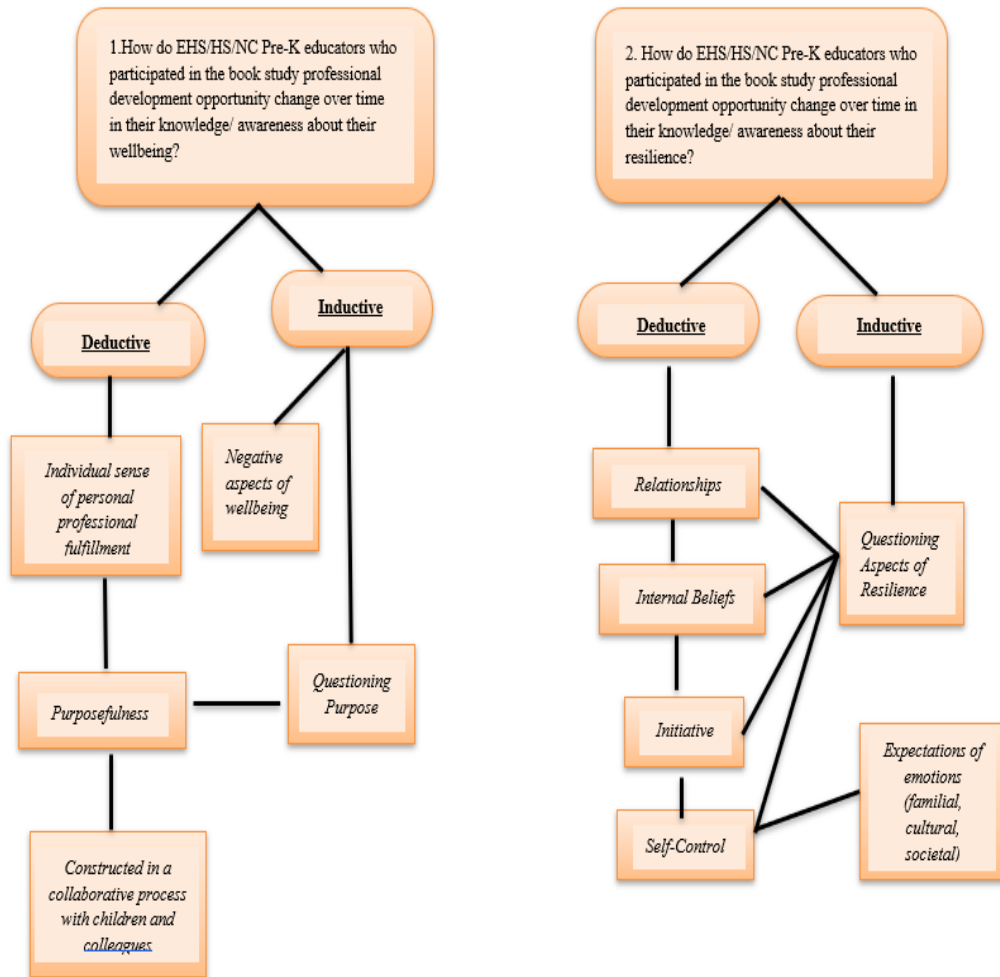


Figure 5. Theme Map for Research Question 3

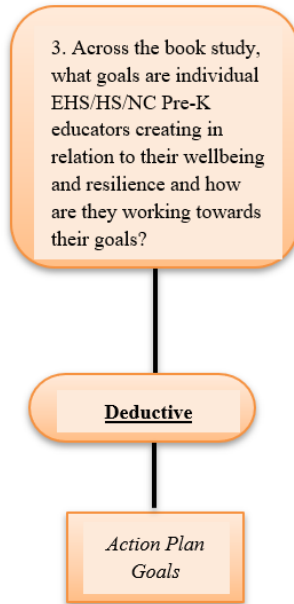


Figure 6. Theme Map for Research Question 4

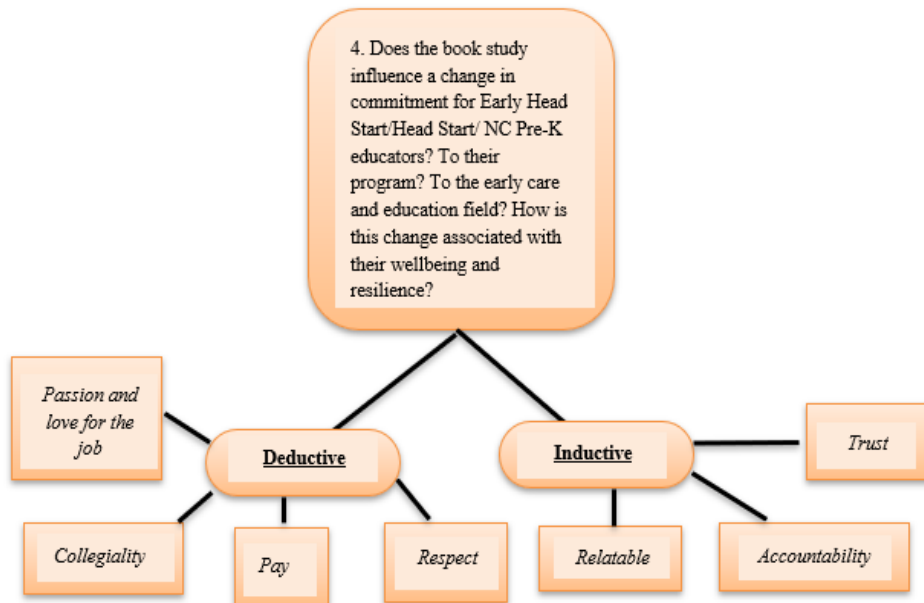
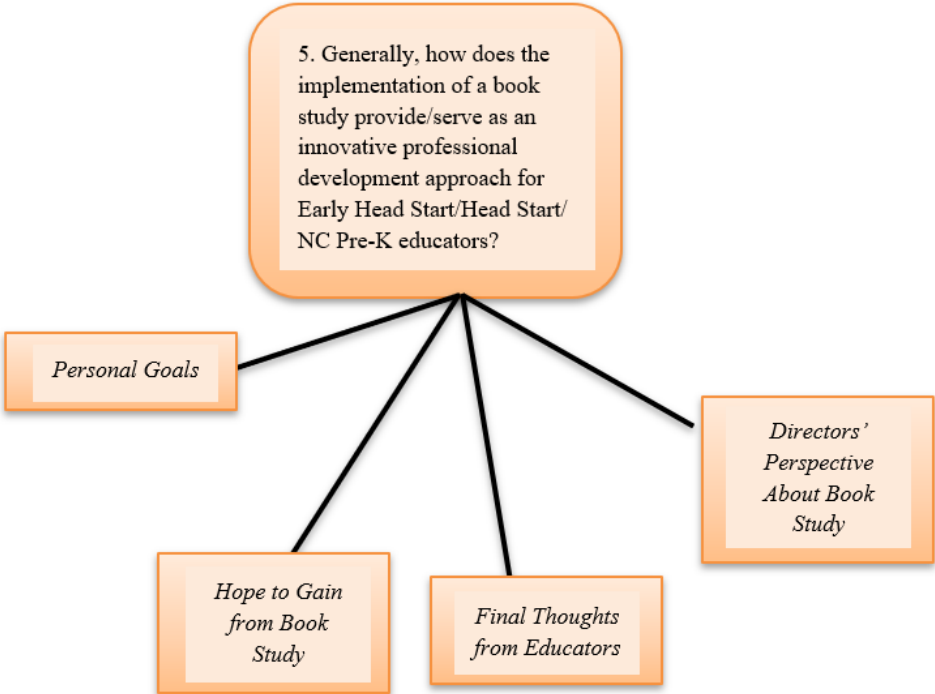


Figure 7. Theme Map for Research Question 5



CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

The current study developed a book study professional development study, discussing how educators' resilience could serve as a protective factor within the context of their program's organizational climate, to cultivate their wellbeing. This study utilized two theoretical approaches; Implementation Science to understand how to create sustainable and innovative professional development to address the wellbeing and resilience of educators within Head Start programs, and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological framework to gain insight on how resilience can be cultivated/enhanced within educators as a result of being a part of and impacted by multiple systems. The sample for this study included Early Head Start (EHS), Head Start (HS)/NC Pre-K lead teachers, co-teachers, assistant teachers, and a floater. Throughout the discussion the sample will be referred to as "educators" to encompass their different roles and age groups. The research questions from the current study included: 1) How do EHS/HS/NC Pre-K educators who participated in the book study professional development opportunity change over time in their knowledge/awareness about their wellbeing? 2) How do EHS/HS/NC Pre-K educators who participated in the book study professional development opportunity change over time in their knowledge/awareness about their resilience? 3) Across the book study, what goals are individual EHS/HS/NC Pre-K educators creating in relation to their wellbeing and resilience and how are they working towards their goals? 4) Does participation in the book study influence a change in reported commitment for EHS/HS/NC Pre-K educators? To their program? To the early care and education field? How is this change associated with their wellbeing and resilience? 5) Generally, how does the implementation of a book study provide/serve as an innovative professional development approach for EHS/HS/NC Pre-K educators? I will provide a summary of the

themes and discussion for each question, the study's connection to theory, limitations, implications, and conclusion in the following sections.

Research Question 1: Book Study Participation and Change in Knowledge and Awareness of Wellbeing

Although the wellbeing of early care educators has received greater attention and has recently been seen as an important aspect of the teaching workforce, it still is a topic that is oftentimes neglected (Kwon et. al, 2021; Kwon et al., 2022). The wellbeing of educators within this study was defined as their “individual sense of personal professional fulfillment, satisfaction, purposefulness and happiness, constructed in a collaborative process with colleagues and students” (Acton & Glasgow, 2015, p.102). Data collected during the 4-month book study indicated that educators not only demonstrated their change in knowledge and awareness of the different components of wellbeing but also in the way they can address goals focused on their self-care both psychologically and emotionally. The deductive themes supporting these findings are summarized below and are drawn from the definition of wellbeing: *individual sense of personal professional fulfillment, purposefulness, and constructed in a collaborative process with colleagues and students.*

It was clear from discussions occurring in book study sessions as well as the deductive themes, that educators found their *sense of personal professional fulfillment* through their love for the children in their care. Educators felt their *purpose* was to “make a difference in children’s lives” and discussed teaching young children as being a divine quality stating, “I know what I’m here on Earth to do” and “I am a very spiritual person and when God told me my purpose, I had no choice but accept it.” The book study book *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience Among Educators* described this divine realization as a kind of sanctification that can provide educators

with motivation, meaning, and satisfaction (Aguilar, 2018). Lastly, educators reiterated their love for the children in their care as well as their colleagues under the theme *constructed in a collaborative process with children and colleagues*. In relation to children, educators mentioned how they “stayed because I loved seeing the children learn and grow” and “instilling the joy of learning in children.” Along with the children in their care, educators valued their colleagues and bonded over sharing similar experiences in and outside of the classroom. The deductive themes established a pattern of educators finding their purpose and fulfillment within the children they teach and more specifically the population of children they serve as well as their colleagues. These results are similar to a past study using the Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey (ECJSS) which found that preschool teachers’ sources of satisfaction were the children and the nature of their work (Jorde-Bloom, 1988). In a study exploring the wellbeing and motivation of forty-eight Head Start teachers, assistant teachers, and aides, interviews were conducted to gain a deeper insight into their lives, values, beliefs, plans, and concerns. In the interviews, Head Start educators spoke about their love for teaching, specifically the enjoyment of working with children and families, and doing the important work of being an early care educator despite their pay, personal health, or the children’s circumstances at home. The inductive themes differed from the deductive themes in that educators *questioned their purpose* and highlighted what happened when wellbeing is neglected or the *negative aspects of wellbeing*.

Although educators spoke about their purpose being fulfilled through the children they teach, some educators *questioned their purpose* and if teaching truly gave them a sense of fulfillment. Educators questioning their purpose discussed feeling as if “teaching was not enough once I leave that environment” and being “completely burnt out of teaching,” which leads into the *negative aspects of wellbeing*. Teaching young children has been found to be one of the most

stressful occupations and early care educators have reported feeling stressed, exhausted, isolated, and burnt out (Jeon et al., 2018). This sample of Early Head Start/Head Start and NC Pre-K educators reported feeling overwhelmed, sad, drained, burnt out, and frustrated. All of these feelings represent what happens when educators' wellbeing is neglected but they also indicate the conflict that occurs internally when educators love what they do but lack the supports to attend to their wellbeing. A study exploring the personal and external demands and resources of Head Start educators and how it impacted their job satisfaction found that compared to a representative sample across professions, Head Start educators' level of perceived stress, depression, and the challenges they face due to staffing were higher than the national average (Farewell et al., 2021).

The deductive and inductive themes for the first research question demonstrated a change in educators' awareness and knowledge about both the positive and negative aspects of wellbeing, while the quantitative portion indicated educators' change in knowledge about the ways they could address their wellbeing through their self-care routines. In a study examining if wellbeing could change over time, found that interventions that promote positive behavioral, cognitive, goals, and intentional activities can lead to a sense of higher sustained wellbeing (Tay & Kuykendall, 2013). The current study implemented the book study professional development opportunity which included activities and discussions directed towards cultivating the resilience and wellbeing of educators through awareness with aims to promote change in educators' knowledge, awareness, and behavior. The second research question is similar in its' approach in observing the change in educators' awareness and knowledge about resilience over the course of the book study.

Research Question 2: Book Study Participation and Change in Knowledge and Awareness of Resilience

Resilience in early care educators is demonstrated in their increased ability to manage stressors, improve their chances for positive outcomes, and enhance their intentions of staying in the field (Prilleltensky et al. 2016; Beltman et al., 2011). On the pre- and post-survey, educators completed a section related to resilience and it asked them to reflect upon certain areas that promote resilience (i.e., Relationships, Internal Beliefs, Initiatives, and Self-Control). These areas of reflection also represented the deductive themes for this research question.

Quantitatively, educator's awareness about the different areas of resilience and how they promote the capacity for resilience in themselves, showed a positive change from before the study to after the book study concluded. Beltman et al. (2020) discussed how resilience could be supported through an ecological framework. Specifically, when looking at the person-level and giving educators the tools to implement problem-focused coping strategies resulted in less stress, higher levels of job satisfaction, and a positive shift in resilience. This awareness about the different areas of resilience was supported through discussions in book study sessions and PLCs which is shown in the deductive themes.

Specifically in the deductive themes, educators indicated the importance of *relationships* by making statements like "I have a lot friends" and "People that you care about, you're gonna have understanding." Educators discussed the relationships they have both in and outside of the classroom. *Internal beliefs* are referred to as the feelings and thoughts we have about ourselves and our lives, and how effective we think we are at taking action in life. Educators within the study reported believing that they were making a difference in their role as a care provider and referenced their core values as being a guide in how they took action in their life. Aguilar (2018)

expressed how internal beliefs translate into self-knowledge. When educators are aware of their values and beliefs, their behaviors as well as their decisions consistently reflect those internal beliefs. A concept closely related to internal beliefs and is often discussed in the literature is self-efficacy. Higher self-efficacy has been seen as a personal resource or protective factor that can result in higher teacher commitment and effectiveness (Huang et al., 2019). *Initiative* was reported in the study through educators' ability to make positive choices and decisions and act upon them in their classroom, when experiencing new things, inquiring about a career change, and asking for help when learning about something new. Lastly, educators supported their change in awareness and knowledge about *self-control* through their ability to define their individual experiences with emotions and the strategies they use to practice self-control. Together, when these different aspects of resilience are promoted at an individual, programmatic, and systemic level, they help to enhance the resilience in educators. When attention is not given to resilience, inductive themes like the ones in the current study appear such as educators *questioning aspects of their resilience*, specifically self-control and how *educators are expected to display emotions based on how they were raised and from society*.

Educators participating in the book study *questioned aspects of their resilience*, specifically their ability to trust themselves and others (internal beliefs), the inability to say no (initiative), and their lack of vulnerability (self-control) during book study discussions and PLCs. Even though this awareness displayed how educators may feel inadequate in their resilience, their discussions and questions showed that these educators were cognizant of the areas that needed more attention. The early care and education field is predominantly women (94%) and is racially and linguistically diverse with 40% being people of color and 22% foreign born (The Early Care and Education Workforce, 2021). Although the book study's sample was much

smaller, it mirrored the gender and ethnicity of educators in the field with 94.7% of the sample being women and out of that percentage, 84.2% were women of color. Educators within the book study made statements about the *expectations of how they should display emotions and* reiterated how these were the expectations of their cultures and the message society has taught them about emotions. The statements educators made in the book study included, “Women are hyperemotional and sensitive” and “We’ve been repressed all the time as a culture [black culture], so we know how to deal with tough times.” A study examined black women in early care and education and discussed the absence of racialized gender in literature and how it interacts with teacher quality and well-being (Edwards et al., 2021). The author continued to explain this omission of Black women as being important to consider due to the stereotype of Black women as “natural” caregivers and experiencing higher stress and depressive symptoms than their white counterparts. There is importance in educators knowing who they are personally, collectively as early care educators, relationally, and professionally when in the field due to their voices being lost and omitted in decisions relevant to them, the children in their care, families, and the field of early care and education. It is just as critical for directors, administrators, and policymakers to be aware of the narrative surrounding early care educators specifically women of color.

Educators in the study demonstrated a change in their knowledge/awareness about resilience both quantitatively and qualitatively through the four components (Relationships, Internal Beliefs, Initiative, Self-Control) that promote resilience. By educators demonstrating their awareness of the components of resilience, they are cultivating and strengthening their resilience to be able to thrive, and not just survive. Sumison (2004) interviewed seven early care educators and believed that the best way to study resilient individuals was to see what they

reported about their own lives and what has sustained them. One key influence contributing to their resilience and to be able to thrive was their ability to be self-reflexive and to find satisfaction and excitement in their work as early care educators. It is important that we are not only helping educators to become aware of their resilience and wellbeing, but we are also giving them the opportunity to change their behaviors and habits to align with their goals to actively address their resilience and wellbeing.

Research Question 3: Book Study Participation and Change in Behavior and Goal Setting in Relation to Resilience and Wellbeing

Before highlighting educators action plan goals, it is important to take into consideration educators' readiness to change. Doyle et al. (2011) discussed readiness to change on an individual level and how it is connected to the level of satisfaction educators have at their workplace as well as their work environment. In the article, authors also mentioned that although existing literature about readiness to change among early care educators is based mainly on educators having a high level of job satisfaction, it could also be attributed to a certain level of dissatisfaction. Educators within the book study communicated their dissatisfaction with certain elements of their job as well as their work environment. This could be a possible explanation for educators being in the *Precontemplation* stage to change their behavior. Another possible explanation of educators not being aware, not thinking they have a problem, or not wanting to change was the timing of the survey. The readiness to change survey was taken before the book study began which could have impacted educators' scores. Educators' experience from past trainings and professional development opportunities could have influenced their willingness to change due to their preconceived notions about how professional development has been offered

to them. Although educators were in this stage of change, they still showed a willingness to change through the action plan goals they set for themselves.

These goals were categorized into the following areas: *Emotions* (Educators set goals to “Better understand my emotions” and “Understanding my emotions and processing them before I react”), *Self-Care* (“Drinking more water” and “Adding movement and exercise back into my routine”), *Initiative* (“Setting boundaries” and “Finishing my degree”), *Relationships* (“Making time for family” and “Saying yes more to being around family and friends”), and *Other* (This included goals that were still connected to wellbeing and resilience but did not fit into the categories. Educators set goals to address “Time management” and ‘Being here in the now.’)

Despite educators being at an early stage of willingness to change, the goals they set for themselves demonstrated their intentionality to set goals and address their individual resilience and wellbeing needs. In order to help educators in the book study build a sense of trust and vulnerability to the book study process, the student researcher continued to build relationships with each educator through frequent visits to their program and classrooms, communicated constantly and consistently giving updates and checking in, and strived to create a safe space during book study sessions and PLCs. As the student researcher started to cultivate relationships with educators, their readiness to change and their awareness of their goals became more evident. Individuals’ readiness to change is made up of their *willingness* to engage in a new activity and their *capacity* to participate in a new activity. This is then impacted by multiple contextual factors such as an educator’s beliefs and attitudes, their relationships and sense of support, current and persistent stressors, and individual and organizational characteristics (Halle et al., 2019). Similar to educators’ commitment to their program and the field, educators had to have a

strong belief in addressing their resilience and wellbeing, a willingness to put in the effort throughout the book study process, and a desire to make it through the book study process.

Research Question 4: Book Study Participation and Commitment to their Program and the Field

Early care educators who feel valued, are resilient, have their wellbeing needs met and supported, and whose organizational climate is conducive and aligns to their values and goals, may exhibit a higher commitment to staying not only in their program but the early care and education field. In the quantitative portion of the study and on the pre- and post-survey, educators were asked about the statements that best identified how they felt about their program, their level of commitment, and if they would do it all over again and why. Educators were consistent in the choosing of statements that best identified how they felt about their program with educators “feeling very committed to their center” and “putting a lot of extra effort into their work.” There were also slight declines in these percentages and most of the statements which could be a result of the amount of participation in the post-survey but could also mean that educators’ commitment to their program changed because of their increase in awareness. Their level of commitment to the field also stayed consistent throughout their participation in the book study. Educators’ responses to whether or not they would choose the early care and education field again, reiterated the importance and value they found in being able to help families with resources (“There are always families that need more resources”) and to work with young children (I’m building up our future doctors, lawyers, etc.) but they also mentioned the recurring issue of pay in the early care and education field (“While I enjoy teaching, I would do something that offers better pay”). Although adequate pay has been the fight of early care educators, it is also important to consider the characteristics educators in the book study chose as

what they valued the most about in a job. Pay was second to colleagues (working with the people I like) and the third characteristic was environment (working in pleasant surroundings). In a previous study, educators were asked about their working conditions and its' relationship to their intentions to remain at their job or the ECE field (Grant et al., 2019). Results showed that educators who perceived their program as having better working conditions were less likely of intending to move or leave their job. Jorde-Bloom (1988) found a mixed reaction to how educators viewed their co-workers. Co-worker relations were viewed as both a source of satisfaction but also a source of frustration. In the current study, educators viewed their relationships with co-workers as positive and listed them as what they valued the most. By knowing the characteristics educators' value in their job, we can focus on areas such as building collegial relationships and making sure the organizational climate of programs is optimal to supporting the wellbeing and resilience of educators.

Similar to the first two research questions, educators' discussions in relation to their commitment to their program and the field were broken into deductive and inductive themes. The deductive themes coincided with the quantitative portion of this question, with themes in relation to the *passion and love for the job* ("If we didn't love what we do, we wouldn't be here"), *collegiality* ("We can be in the same room and genuinely care about each other"), and *pay* ("We are doctors, we are lawyers, we are all of this but we are the lowest paid") supporting what educators had stated as their values. The inductive themes arose from conversations educators had throughout the book study about their individual yet collective experiences about their need for *respect* ("Sometimes we are the least respected because we deal with other people's children"), a sense of *relatedness* between leadership and the population they serve, *accountability* ("It's the lack of support, lack of accountability"), and *trust* ("My thing is let us

teach, you hired us for a reason, because we know how to...”). These themes represent the foundation of what educators need in order to feel valued, seen, and heard in a space that they oftentimes feel are not aligned with their values.

Organizational change occurs when educators feel that they are able to integrate the goals and values of their program into their own needs and values. This impacts their sense of belonging and satisfaction within their program (Humphries, 2018). It is important for educators to feel a sense of belonging, trust, respect, have opportunities to build their collegial relationships, and a work environment that provides a safe space for all of this to occur.

Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory discussed proximal processes as occurring when the environment and the people within that environment have increasingly complex and reciprocal interactions consistently over time (Roberts et al., 2019). The data collected in the book study demonstrated educators’ commitment to the field, but there were some challenges and hesitancy about their commitment to their current program due to the organizational climate. The book study professional development opportunity aimed to be a safe space for educators by creating a separate microsystem where individuals could cultivate their wellbeing and resilience through proximal processes.

Research Question 5: Professional Development Delivery Effectiveness

Professional development opportunities for early care educators are often limited to a single time with no follow up, coaching, or mentoring and this approach has been viewed as ineffective (Schachter et al., 2015). Typical professional development in early care and education often has two objectives, which are to 1) increase the knowledge, skills dispositions, and practices of educators in order to better educate children and support families and 2) to promote ongoing professional growth for both the educator and their systems (Sheridan et al., 2009). A

crucial aspect of the book study process that is not discussed in the professional development literature but was crucial to the success of the book study, is the relationship building that needs to occur between the facilitator and educators prior to the training. Before the start of the book study, the student researcher connected with the educational director, who coordinates trainings and workshops for educators, a year before the implementation of the book study to discuss if she felt wellbeing and resilience would be relevant and helpful topic to educator, if there were supports in place that already these topics, and to connect with educators to survey them about their wellbeing and resilience needs. The student researcher also conducted a needs assessment by sending out a survey to all educators in Head Start and met with the directors of the programs involved in the book study to gauge their level of buy-in to the book study process. Due to the shortened recruitment process, the student researcher was unable to build relationships with educators prior to the book study process. In order to cultivate those relationships, the student researcher took time in the first month of the book study to build a sense of trust with educators and directors. These relationships were built through frequent visits to individual programs, multiple times a week until the student researcher felt she built a sense of trust and openness. This process likely helped educators and directors to be more vulnerable and open during the book study process as well as develop a confidence in the student researcher's ability to facilitate and advocate for educators' wellbeing and resilience needs. The book study professional development in the current study was a 4-month process with consistent communication between the student researcher and educators in the study, opportunities for follow up to individual educators, and as a group through professional learning communities.

Book studies are a form of professional development that allowed educators within this study to engage in a social and intellectual forum where they were able to share ideas, thoughts,

feelings (Burbank et al., 2010) The book *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience Among Educators* used in the current study provided the foundation for discussion and activities focused on resilience and wellbeing. In the book study, educators were able to provide support for one another, reflect, and provide their perspective by forming a community of practice (CoPs). This emerging model known as CoPs are a professional development approach that helps connect educators who have common interests in order to provide support, reflection, and information (Odom, 2009).

The effectiveness of the book study was also examined through three components: exit tickets, a satisfaction survey at the end of the study, and a final interview with directors to gain their perspective of changes they may have observed in educators in their program. Through the exit tickets, the student researcher was able to adapt, modify, and ask educators for clarification about certain aspects of the book study to ensure educators wellbeing and resilience needs were being addressed. Overall educators were satisfied with the book study professional development opportunity, found aspects of the book study useful (workbook activities), and felt the topics being discussed each month were relevant to them as an educator.

In order to understand how the book study process impacted educators and programs, the student researcher interviewed the directors of the programs involved in the book study. Although the directors were not a part of the book study, they received the book and workbook in order to take a look into their own resilience and wellbeing but to also help support educators. Some of the highlights from the interview were that directors' noticing a change in "educators talking to each other more on what they can do as far as burnout and how they they're feeling" and "they are more open, and they do kind of work together to try to figure out just different ways to promote self-care and just promote overall health in general." Directors also felt they

would like similar professional development opportunities” like the book study where it is completed off site and educators are given tools to use at home and in the classroom.” Lastly, directors were asked about their takeaways. One of the directors reiterated the importance of a professional development occurring over time and how “educators are talking about it, they’re not just [saying]it was a training yesterday and then it’s forgotten tomorrow.” The second director felt like this study would be good for “newer teachers just coming into the field of early childhood could really benefit from this.”

This professional development approach gave EHS and HS/NC Pre-K educators the opportunity to focus on themselves specifically their wellbeing and resilience and share concerns, ideas, and strategies. Although educators were given resources to help with their mental health, they had not received a professional development opportunity that continually acknowledged and addressed their resilience and wellbeing. Blanton et al. (2020) discussed the rarity of book studies used as an effective teacher professional development approach but did present information about what makes professional book studies successful. Successful book studies give educators the choice of whether to participate and the choice of materials, opportunities to discuss and learn new strategies and ideas, a space to develop relationships in a trust-filled social group where each member has an equal role, and an extended duration of time compared to traditional professional development. The book study professional development offered in this study recruited educators from Head Start programs and gave them the opportunity to choose whether they wanted to participate once they were aware of the different components of the book study and the book/workbook. Educators were able to learn and discuss new strategies to address their wellbeing and resilience through the book, workbook, and book

study/PLC discussions, and develop relationships with educators from different programs over the course of four months.

The effectiveness, innovativeness, and usefulness of the book study professional development opportunity was assessed by educators in the study and their directors who provided a program level perspective. These two perspectives allowed us to see how multiple levels could be impacted by the implementation of an effective professional development approach. Educators were impacted by becoming more aware and knowledgeable of their wellbeing and resilience and learning how that translated into the goals they set for themselves. As educators are addressing their resilience and wellbeing needs, they are indirectly or directly influencing the children in the classroom and their program. One educator in the book study decided to implement what she was learning in to the children in her classroom in and they started to practice the strategies and concepts they were learning. As teachers and classrooms are transforming, it impacts the program as a whole. In order to support this systems approach and the implementation of this study, Bronfenbrenner and implementation science were used as the theoretical frameworks for this study.

Connection to Theory

This study utilized two theoretical frameworks due to the study's complexity. Bronfenbrenner's theory looks at the individual or educator, their personal characteristics, and the multiple systems the educator is situated in and influenced. Implementation science was used to understand the book study as an innovative professional development approach that could help guide the process of how the knowledge and awareness gained about wellbeing and resilience could be implemented in the context of typical, everyday settings and translated into behavior (Dunst et al., 2013). These frameworks complement each other and support a systems level

approach to better understand the complexities of early care educators' wellbeing and resilience, and how meaningful and sustainable change through an innovative professional development approach might be achieved.

Implementation Science

Implementation science has been defined as “referring to the emerging scientific study of variables that influence the use of new innovations in practice.” (Linland et al., 2015) A major component of this study and of implementation science is fidelity. Fidelity is broken down into the implementation of the study as well as the intervention/professional development.

Implementation fidelity is the extent in which any evidence-based professional development such as coaching, in-service training, or instruction is used as intended and results in the adoption of those intervention practices and intervention fidelity is the extent to which the intervention/ professional development agents such as early childhood practitioners utilize evidence-based intervention practices as intended with the expected benefits (Dunst et al., 2013).

The current study practiced implementation fidelity by asking educators about the specifics of the book study through exit tickets, meeting with individual educators during the book study process to gain their feedback, distributing the satisfaction survey at the end of the book study process, and through the directors' interview. The exit tickets and individual meetings allowed the student researcher to perform a continuous assessment of the book study and its' components and follow-up with educators as needed. Intervention fidelity involved the student researcher's role in implementing and facilitating the book study and how evidence-based intervention/professional development practices were intended to produce the desired outcomes. The student researcher used the *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience Among Educators* book by Elena Aguilar to facilitate the book study. When the book is used in its'

entirety, it assists educators in cultivating their resilience, uncover their true selves, better understand their emotions, use their energy where it counts, adopt a mindful, story-telling approach to communication and community building, and create an environment of collective celebration (Aguilar, 2018). The student researcher utilized the book, workbook, and the companion website to ensure that the resources (downloadable tool and meditations) were used intentionally to produce the desired outcomes of the study which was to ultimately enhance the resilience of educators through this book study professional development opportunity.

Implementation science is not seen as a single event but as a process that involves multiple decisions, actions, and adaptations to help change the structures and conditions in which organizations can support new evidence-based practices, models, innovations, and initiatives (Metz et al., 2013). Due to the time restraints of the current study and acknowledging that to fully go through the implementation science process it takes two to four years, the implementation of the book study was considered the exploration stage. The exploration stage of implementation science included completing the steps that need to occur before a new practice, program, or intervention/professional development opportunity is put into place as well as reassessing what is in place currently and examining if it is best meeting the needs of the targeted population (Metz et al., 2015). By assessing the effectiveness of the book study and its' components, the student researcher was not only able to test for fidelity but also examine if this professional development approach could be brought to scale in the future by offering it to additional Head Start programs in the county as well as across the state. Fully moving through the implementation science stages would include broadening the reach of this professional development approach as a result of seeing the book study's effectiveness in the exploration

stage. Implementation science also discussed educators as well as organizations readiness to change as a precursor to the effectiveness of the professional development/ intervention.

Readiness to change was assessed before the implementation of the book study and allowed the student researcher to see how contextual influences such as preconceived notions about professional development and dissatisfaction of certain elements of the organizational climate can impact an educator's readiness to change. In the current study, readiness to change provided insight about the timing of the when readiness to change should be assessed as well as considering the contextual influences on educators' willingness/readiness to change. Readiness to change ties into the implementation drivers framework which is broken into competency drivers, organization drivers, and leadership.

Competency drivers refers to the selection of the professional development opportunity, the training or professional development approach, and the coaching aspect of the book study. The selection of the professional development approach originated from the student researcher's experience with facilitating book studies, through year-long conversations the student researcher had with the educational director of Head Start in the targeted county, and the survey that was distributed to all Head Start programs in the targeted county in January 2022. The student researcher met with the directors of the targeted programs towards the end of 2022 to assess their interest and buy-in of this professional development approach. This is crucial to the receptiveness of the professional development opportunity by educators because the director's buy-in impacts the sustainability of the practices gained once the professional development opportunity is implemented.

The study focused on two aspects of organization drivers; decision-making and facilitative administration. For the decision-making portion of organization drivers, data was

collected throughout the book study to evaluate progress, if the information, activities, and the strategies were influencing early care and educators' behaviors in and outside of the classroom, and if any adaptations were needed for continuous improvement. Exit tickets were used to help inform whether certain aspects (e.g. in-person vs. Zoom) of the book study needed to be adapted to meet the needs of the educators. Facilitative administration refers to the administrators/directors' role and involvement in the book study process and their use of the data gathered throughout the process. Directors received the book and workbook that educators were given to educators in the book study, communicated with the student researcher frequently about the book study, and participated in the interview at the end of the book study process. The last aspect of organization drivers was leadership. Leadership involved the collaboration among the student researcher, directors, and educational director to ensure the book study was successful. In order to ensure the book study was successful, the student researcher emphasized building up and creating a collaborative environment, constantly involved leadership in the process of the book study, assisted in the development and enhancement of resilience in educators, built strong relationships with educators, and reassured educators of the safety in exploring new practices.

The book study professional development opportunity was successful and achieved fidelity through its' implementation and the professional development. The aims of the study were to examine how educators who participated in the book study demonstrate change in their awareness/knowledge about wellbeing and resilience, set wellbeing and/or resilience goals and work towards them, show a change in commitment to their program and the field, and how did this book study serve as an innovative professional development approach. These questions were addressed and offered insight into how this opportunity could be offered in the future through the next phase of implementation science which is Installation. The book study would have already

been implemented as a pilot professional development approach for a few targeted programs. The next step is to offer this opportunity to additional Head Start programs in the county. The necessary individual and organizational competencies as well as the supporting infrastructure have already been established so that the book study can successfully take place in the near future. Implementation science was used to support and assess the book study and its components, while Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory gives insight into the educator and their personal characteristics as well as the organizational climate of programs.

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory discussed the importance of the individual and the multiple contexts in which they are a part of. Specifically, the current study examined educators' resilience as a personal characteristic that could also serve as a protective factor, influence their wellbeing, and as a resource that educators could carry with them into any social situation. In relation to personal characteristics, resilience can be considered a resource characteristic. As shown in the study, early care educators strengthened their resilience through the study, and were better able to use strategies to help manage their stressors, improve their chances for positive outcomes, and demonstrate their commitment to staying in their program and in the field despite aspects of their organizational climate. An element that was considered a contextual feature of the study was the program's organizational climate.

Organizational climate is considered the context or the environment of the educator. Educators were able to evaluate the organizational climate of their program through Jorde Bloom's work environment scale, but they also were able to talk about it in book study sessions and PLCs. Educators voiced their need for collegiality and higher pay which are two elements of organizational climate, but they also mentioned supervisor support. Russel et al. (2010) wrote

about the support needed from administrators in the early care and education field and how inadequate administrative support could be a significant antecedent of turnover for teachers in the field. Although educators within the study did not fully report on their commitment level to their program and the field in the post-survey, the reported data demonstrated a decline in educators' commitment to their program from before and after the book study, demonstrating the need for the organizational climate of programs to be addressed in order to create true sustainable change. Organizational climate is a part of the context described in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological framework and educators cannot be separated from their work environment which is one of their microsystems. Proximal processes are more positive and greater when individuals are in environments that are reciprocal in nature, advantageous, and stable (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). If these proximal processes are not occurring within the educator's environment, they are neither increasing the wellbeing and resilience of educator nor lessening the negative influences. Even though the current study provided insight, established fidelity, and had strengths, it also had limitations.

Strengths and Limitations

When working with educators in the field of early care and education, it is important to understand their unique circumstances and the complexity of the field. In the current study, there were strengths in relation to the way educators' voices could be embodied qualitatively during the book study, but there were also limitations of data collection during the book study due to the multiple responsibilities' educators have both in and outside of the classroom which limited time educators could dedicate to fulfilling certain aspects of the book study. Educators in Head Start face numerous daily demands include ensuring that instruction is high quality in order to meet the accountability mandates for learning outcomes, creating safe environments both physically

and emotionally, and keeping the line of communication open between colleagues and families (Lawrence et al., 2020). These responsibilities were coupled with educators' demands outside of working in their program such as working second jobs and being caregivers to their own children and aging parents.

One of the strengths of the current study was the innovativeness of the book study professional development approach. Book studies have received increased attention as a form of professional development, and what makes them innovative is the way it provides educators with the opportunity to be together in one space learning and reading about a specific book, share and gain knowledge about topics discussed in the book, and practice what they are learning through workbook activities and goal setting. Specifically, this book study *Cultivating Emotional Resilience Among Early Care Educators* provided educators in Head Start programs an opportunity to participate in a four-month book study to address their emotional resilience and wellbeing. The length of the book study was a strength compared to research regarding traditional professional opportunities and the need for more sustained and intensive professional development (Schachter, 2015).

Another strength was the flexibility of the book study process in terms of the format and timing of the book study sessions and PLCs. Educators were given the option to participate in the book study sessions either virtually or in-person depending on the schedules of individual educators. Most of the book study sessions occurred in the afternoon following the school day, and although the space where the book study sessions were held took place at a central location, the opportunity for educators to join virtually allowed educators to fulfill their responsibilities while still being able to join sessions virtually. In relation to the format of each session, there was a plan in place for activities and discussions, but the student researcher's goal was to

facilitate discussions rather than directing or leading to ensure that book study sessions and PLCs reflected the needs of educators. By creating this kind of microsystem and community of practice, educators felt safe to open up and discuss topics that they may have otherwise overlooked but instead were able to feel a sense of belonging with educators who shared similar experiences. The limitations are a result of the complex demands of the field as well as the nature of the study.

Educators in the study were asked to complete surveys/questionnaires before, during, and after the book study. The student researcher understood the complexity of working in the field so to help combat those challenges, educators in the study received reminders about surveys/questionnaires, book study sessions, and professional learning communities but the student researcher also kept the line of communication open among educators and directors. Although the student researcher tried to lessen the chances of missing data, she also knew the multiple responsibilities of the educators in the book study. Missing data impacted the post-survey but the missing data still helped to shed a light on the impact of the book study on knowledge/awareness and behavior change in relation to resilience and wellbeing, organizational climate and commitment, the innovativeness of this professional development approach, and readiness to change. Originally, directors were going to be recruited to be a part of the study, but due to the high involvement and the multiple people needed to conduct a study of that magnitude, directors were given the book and workbook from the book study, were in consistent contact with the student researcher, and had a final interview with the student researcher. In future book study professional development opportunities, it is important to have directors as well as administration in a separate book study, completing similar activities and discussions. This format could allow for educators and directors/administration to receive the same

information but have separate spaces in order for educators and directors/administrators to feel comfortable discussing topics without fear of judgement and repercussions. The book study created a safe space for educators apart from their individual programs, the same environment can be created for directors. Due to the accelerated pace of the study, the length of the book study was shortened from six months to four months. The same chapters were covered but on a shortened timeline which did not leave much time in between to dive deeper into some of the topics. The book study sessions/PLCs were more than just a workshop or training which is a strength but condensing the exploration of topics was a limitation. Some educators also wished the length of the book study sessions were longer. This was a limitation of the study and informs what future professional development opportunities should consider in terms of format, length, and what is asked of educators. The last limitation of the study was the methodological approach.

Collecting data qualitatively allowed for the voices of educators to be heard and seen through the themes formed by educators' discussions, quotes, and responses to survey questions. This qualitative approach to the data can be seen as a limitation and strength due to qualitative research oftentimes being seen as not verifiable, statistically representative, or exhibiting the same type of rigor but qualitative research also allows for issues to be examined deeper, the ability to revise and adapt the study as new information emerges, and although this data cannot be generalized to a larger sample it can be transferrable to another setting. These limitations and strengths can be utilized to inform implications for policy and future professional development efforts.

Implications

In alignment with the Office of Head Start's COVID-19 updates (ECLKC, 2021), this study contributed to the evidence-base for policymakers and programs to have an increased

understanding for innovative strategies to provide professional development supports for a qualified Early Head Start/ Head Start (EHS/HS) workforce, with a specific and intentional focus on promoting EHS/HS staff wellness and resilience. Results from this study have implications for policy decisions, programs, and professional development/intervention approaches.

Implications for Policy Decisions

Under Head Start policies and regulations, the staff health and wellness performance standard 1302.93 states, “A program must make mental health and wellness information available to staff regarding health issues that may affect their job performance and must provide regularly scheduled opportunities to learn about mental health, wellness, and health education (Head Start ECLKC).” This performance standard has received greater attention due to COVID-19 but there is a need for the wellbeing and resilience of educators to be recognized as a significant protective factor and characteristic of effective teachers and needs to be explicitly addressed in professional development efforts. Data from the current study demonstrated the importance of providing a space for educators to solely focus on their wellbeing and resilience. It is even more crucial that the performance standard 1302.93 includes an aspect where educators are able to choose or have input into what those topics are in relation to their mental health, the type of professional development opportunity offered, and how often those mental health opportunities should occur. A previous study exploring the components of effective professional development activities found that teachers who are given a role in designing their professional development improved ownership and relevancy of activities (Bayar, 2014).

Another policy implication from the current study that has received little attention in the professional development literature, is the influence of an external trainer on the professional

development process versus an internal trainer. Professional development literature seems to emphasize trainers as being the experts and sources of information (Sheridan et al., 2009), but little information centers on the effects of having a trainer who is not connected to the company or the organization on the receptiveness of educators. Future Head Start policies should consider how educators may respond to topics such as wellbeing and mental health when it is facilitated by an internal trainer versus an external trainer and how it may impact educators' openness and willingness to be involved in the process. The data from the current study has the potential to inform policy decisions related to the type of content that is being covered in professional development for educators outside of the typical trainings and workshops, the supports and resources that are needed for early care educators to sustain what they are learning through innovative professional development approaches, and the influence of external and internal trainers on sensitive topics such as wellbeing, resilience, and organizational climate.

Implications for Program/Professional Development Decisions

The components and logistics of the book study that were identified through the exit tickets and satisfaction survey from educators, as well as the interview from directors can be used to inform future professional development opportunities for Early Head Start and Head Start/ NC Pre-K programs. An element of the book study professional development opportunity that has implications for programs were the book, related activities to the book (workbook and activities within sessions), and the goal setting aspect at the end of the book study. The book *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience Among Educators* chosen for the book study was designed to align with the school year and how educators may feel at certain times during the school year (i.e. preparing for winter break and returning from winter break).

Educators in the book study communicated that the timing of the book study helped them make it through the second half of the year. An implication for future professional development is to consider opportunities for educators' personal development and to align it with what educators may be feeling or needing during certain times of the year. Another implication for programs is to consider the demographics of educators within their program and the expectations that are placed on them from multiple levels and how it impacts their wellbeing. The majority of educators within the book study discussed the expectations placed upon them from society, through policies, and in their programs because they are women and more specifically women of color. Hall-Kenyon et al. (2014) stated, "Efforts to improve education for young children should not only emphasize what teachers do when teaching but also who they are and how they are affected by the doing" (p. 153). Programs and policies should consider the realities and identities of the educators in their programs when making decisions regarding not just professional development but how decisions at all levels impact educators' everyday lives.

Typical professional development for early care educators is offered through trainings and workshops and the goal is to teach and enforce various classroom practices for better child outcomes without any follow-up with educators. The current study implemented book study sessions and follow-up opportunities through professional learning communities specifically for the educators within the book study. Educators were able to complete workbook activities outside of these sessions and discuss them during the scheduled book study sessions and PLCs. Goal setting was familiar to early care educators due their professional development plans, but the goals educators were setting for themselves were a result of the book study and were geared towards their wellbeing and resilience. Although the directors in the current study

mentioned having mental health supports in place, it is important to ensure that these opportunities are effective, and its' intention is to meet the mental health needs of educators. Educators and directors mentioned the need for more professional development opportunities geared towards the wellbeing of educators but from an outside contractor that is not connected to Head Start. Directors believed that the success and effectiveness of the book study was due to educators being able to attend book study sessions offsite and discuss topics freely without the fear of judgement and repercussions. The data gathered from the current study can assist administrators of Head Start programs to adapt their current professional development opportunities or implement new and innovative ways to address the wellbeing and resilience needs of educators. The different perspectives given by the educators and directors about the impact of the book study professional development approach allowed for insight on the book study and its' different components.

The current study is significant because it solely focused on the educator and allowed a space for educators' wellbeing and resilience needs to be voiced. The importance of supporting the early care and education workforce and to address staff wellness daily is an implication for Head Start programs. These opportunities can be offered through professional development opportunities such as book studies with the goal of eventually embedding it into the policies of Head Start as well as the curriculum of individual programs.

Conclusion

The current study moved this area of research forward in relation to early care educators' wellbeing, resilience, and professional development, by developing and describing an innovative professional development approach for early care educators and assessing their engagement in the book study. Previous research on professional development has given limited attention to the

protective factors of educators such as wellbeing and resilience. Cumming and Wong (2019) believed that supporting the wellbeing of educators through identified strategies and a holistic approach could help educators to be more responsive to the needs of children. By creating more innovative professional development approaches to focus on the protective factors of educators, this could serve as the foundation for educators to be more receptive of professional development geared towards enhancing children's outcomes because their wellbeing and resilience are being addressed.

The aim of the current study was to understand how early care educators in Early Head Start and Head Start/NC Pre-K engaged in a book study professional development opportunity, changed in their awareness/knowledge of wellbeing and resilience over the course of the study, how educators identified and pursued goals related to wellbeing and/or resilience, how educators participation in the book study professional development opportunity was associated with their commitment to stay in their program and in the field, and the effectiveness of the book study professional development. The current study also shed light on other areas that arose from the book study process. One of those areas of future research included looking at how professional development, specifically in relation to wellbeing and resilience, impacts teaching teams. There was a total of eight educators in the book study who taught in the same classrooms, and they were able to hold each other accountable throughout the book study process. Future research should evaluate how professional development approaches impact teaching teams and if those relationships could be supported.

The results showed the impact of the book study on educators and the multiple layers that are involved in an effective professional development approach to ensure fidelity. Educators in the book study voiced their feelings about how the book study impacted their lives and how

the book study gave them the chance to reflect on the ways they were attending to their wellbeing and resilience. Although the directors of the programs involved in the book study were not a part of the book study sessions and PLCs, their buy-in was needed in order for the book study to be a success. The book study gave educators a sense of control over their wellbeing and resilience as well as the space to actively work towards those goals. The fidelity of the book study and its' components were demonstrated through educators' adoption of strategies within the book study and translating them into goals as well as the student researcher's ability to implement and facilitate the book study and utilize evidence-based professional development practices as intended to produce the desired outcomes of the study.

Implementing and embedding practices that address the wellbeing and resilience of educators in programs, through professional development opportunities, and in policies is key to increasing commitment and lessening turnover in early care and education. Although the center directors of Head Start agencies have a hierarchical structure when it comes to making decisions, they are advocates for addressing the needs and voices of the educators within their program. By taking into consideration the values expressed by educators and enhancing those factors such as finding ways for collegial relationships to be strengthened and creating a work environment that is conducive to the wellbeing and resilience of educators, these aspects are in the sphere of what directors/administration have control over. Both educators and directors in the study communicated their need for more professional development opportunities that focus solely on the educator and in a neutral space that allows for the voices of educators to be valued, appreciated, and respected. This study's findings showed that educators are willing and engaged in professional development when it spans across time and focuses on their needs. Additionally,

this study's findings provide a foundation for exploring professional development and the wellbeing and resilience of early care educators.

REFERENCES

- Acton, R., & Glasgow, P. (2015). Teacher Wellbeing in Neoliberal Contexts: A Review of the Literature. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(8).
<https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2015v40n8.6>
- Aguilar, E. (2018). *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators*. Jossey-Bass, a Wiley Brand. https://books.google.com/books?id=t_tktgEACAAJ
- Andrew, Y. (2015). What we feel and what we do: Emotional capital in early childhood work. *Early Years*, 35(4), 351–365. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2015.1077206>
- Baum, A. C., & King, M. A. (2006). *Creating a Climate of Self-Awareness in Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Programs*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S10643-005-0050-2>
- Bayar, A. (2014). The Components of Effective Professional Development Activities in terms of Teachers' Perspective. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 6, 319–327. <https://doi.org/10.15345/iojes.2014.02.006>
- Beltman, S., Dobson, M. R., Mansfield, C. F., & Jay, J. (2020). 'The thing that keeps me going': Educator resilience in early learning settings. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 28(4), 303–318. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2019.1605885>
- Bernstein, S., Bush, C., Aikens, N., Moiduddin, E., Harding, J.F., Malone, L., Tarullo, L., Cannon, J., Filipczak, K., and Lukashanets, S. (2018). A Portrait of Head Start Classrooms and Programs: FACES Spring 2017 Data Tables and Study Design. OPRE Report 2019-10. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

- Bingham, A.J., & Witkowsky, P. (2022). Deductive and inductive approaches to qualitative data analysis. In C. Vanover, P. Mihas, & J. Saldaña (Eds.), *Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data: After the interview* (pp. 133-146). SAGE Publications.
- Blanton, B. S., Broemmel, A. D., & Rigell, A. (2020). Speaking Volumes: Professional Development Through Book Studies. *American Educational Research Journal*, 57(3), 1014–1044. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219867327>
- Bloom, P. (1996). The Quality of Work Life in NAEYC Accredited and Nonaccredited Early Childhood Programs. *Early Education and Development - EARLY EDUC DEV*, 7, 301–317. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15566935eed0704_1
- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2006). The Bioecological Model of Human Development. In *Handbook of child psychology: Theoretical models of human development, Vol. 1, 6th ed* (pp. 793–828). John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Bullough, R. V., Hall-Kenyon, K. M., & MacKay, K. L. (2012). Head Start Teacher Well-Being: Implications for Policy and Practice. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 40(6), 323–331. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-012-0535-8>
- Cassidy, D. J., King, E. K., Wang, Y. C., Lower, J. K., & Kintner-Duffy, V. L. (2017). Teacher work environments are toddler learning environments: Teacher professional well-being, classroom emotional support, and toddlers’ emotional expressions and behaviours. *Early Child Development and Care*, 187(11), 1666–1678. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2016.1180516>
- Cassidy, D. J., Lippard, C., King, E. K., & Lower, J. K. (2019). Improving the Lives of Teachers in the Early Care and Education Field to Better Support Children and Families. *Family Relations*, 68(3), 288–297. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12362>

Cassidy, D. J., Vardell, R., & Buell, M. J. (1995). If you don't know where you are, how can you get where you're going?: A contextual examination of professional development in the early childhood field. *Child and Youth Care Forum*, 24(3), 151–168.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02128541>

Chang-Kredl, S., & Kingsley, S. (2014). Identity expectations in early childhood teacher education: Pre-service teachers' memories of prior experiences and reasons for entry into the profession. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 43, 27–36.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.05.005>

Cumming, T. (2017). Early Childhood Educators' Well-Being: An Updated Review of the Literature. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 45(5), 583–593.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-016-0818-6>

Cumming, T., & Wong, S. (2019). Towards a holistic conceptualisation of early childhood educators' work-related well-being. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 20(3), 265–281. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1463949118772573>

Cumming, T., Wong, S., & Logan, H. (2020). Early childhood educators' well-being, work environments and 'quality': Possibilities for changing policy and practice. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 46, 183693912097906.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1836939120979064>

Dane, A. V., & Schneider, B. H. (1998). Program integrity in primary and early secondary prevention: Are implementation effects out of control? *Clinical Psychology Review*, 18(1), 23–45. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0272-7358\(97\)00043-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0272-7358(97)00043-3)

- Daniilidou, A., Platsidou, M., & Daniilidou, A. (2018). Teachers' resilience scale: An integrated instrument for assessing protective factors of teachers' resilience. *Hellenic Journal of Psychology, 15*.
- Darling, N. (2007). Ecological Systems Theory: The Person in the Center of the Circles. *Research in Human Development, 4*(3–4), 203–217.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15427600701663023>
- Doyle, O., Logue, C., & McNamara, K. A. (2011). Readiness to Implement a National Quality Framework: Evidence from Irish Early Childhood Care and Education Centres. *Child Care in Practice, 17*(2), 163–184. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13575279.2010.546776>
- Dunst, C. J., Trivette, C. M., & Raab, M. (2013). An Implementation Science Framework for Conceptualizing and Operationalizing Fidelity in Early Childhood Intervention Studies. *Journal of Early Intervention, 35*(2), 85–101. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1053815113502235>
- Eadie, P., Levickis, P., Murray, L., Page, J., Elek, C., & Church, A. (2021). Early Childhood Educators' Wellbeing During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 49*(5), 903–913. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-021-01203-3>
- Edwards, E. B., Terry, N. P., Bingham, G., & Singer, J. L. (2021). Perceptions of classroom quality and well-being among Black women teachers of young children. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 29*(56). <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.29.5964>
- Enthoven, M., & de Bruijn, E. (2010). Beyond locality: The creation of public practice-based knowledge through practitioner research in professional learning communities and communities of practice. A review of three books on practitioner research and professional communities. *Educational Action Research, 18*(2), 289–298.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09650791003741822>

- Farewell, C. V., Quinlan, J., Melnick, E., Powers, J., & Puma, J. (2021). Job Demands and Resources Experienced by the Early Childhood Education Workforce Serving High-Need Populations. *Early Childhood Education Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-020-01143-4>
- Fixsen, D., Blase, K., Naoom, S., & Duda, M. (2016). Implementation Drivers: Assessing Best Practices. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.20415.30885*
- Foundation for Child Development. (2021). Getting it Right: The Conversation Guide for Preparing the Next Generation of Implementation Researchers. New York, NY: Foundation for Child Development. <https://www.fcd-us.org/assets/2021/10/GettingitRightGuideforImplementationResearchers.pdf>
- Franks, R. P., & Schroeder, J. (2013). Implementation science: What do we know and where do we go from here? In *Applying implementation science in early childhood programs and systems* (pp. 5–19). Paul H Brookes Publishing Co.
- Friedman, I. A. (2003). Self-Efficacy and Burnout in Teaching: The Importance of Interpersonal-Relations Efficacy. *Social Psychology of Education*, 6(3), 191–215. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1024723124467>
- Gagnon, S. G., Huelsman, T. J., Kidder-Ashley, P., & Lewis, A. (2019). Preschool Student–Teacher Relationships and Teaching Stress. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 47(2), 217–225. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-018-0920-z>
- Garner, P. W., Parker, T. S., & Prigmore, S. B. (2019). Caregivers’ emotional competence and behavioral responsiveness as correlates of early childcare workers’ relationships with children in their care. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 40(4), 496–512. <https://doi.org/10.1002/imhj.21784>

- Gilford, S. W. (Ed.). (2013). *Learning from head start : A teacher's guide to school readiness*. R&L Education.
- Grant, A. A., Jeon, L., & Buettner, C. K. (2019). Relating early childhood teachers' working conditions and well-being to their turnover intentions. *Educational Psychology*, 39(3), 294–312. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2018.1543856>
- Halle, T., Partika, A., & Nagle, K. (2019). *Measuring Readiness for Change in Early Care and Education. OPRE Research Brief 2019-63*. Administration for Children & Families. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED602847>
- Hannaway, D.-A. M., Steyn, M. G., & Hartell, C. G. (2014). The influence of ecosystemic factors on black student teachers' perceptions and experience of early childhood education. <https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/42226>
- Harding, J. F., Connors, M. C., Krauss, A. F., Aikens, N., Malone, L., & Tarullo, L. (2019). Head Start Teachers' Professional Development, Well-being, Attitudes, and Practices: Understanding Changes Over Time and Predictive Associations. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 63(3–4), 324–337. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12327>
- Hewett, B. S., & La Paro, K. M. (2020). Organizational Climate: Collegiality and Supervisor Support in Early Childhood Education Programs. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 48(4), 415–427. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-019-01003-w>
- Hong, X.-M., & Zhang, M.-Z. (2019). Early childhood teachers' emotional labor: A cross-cultural qualitative study in China and Norway. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 27(4), 479–493. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2019.1634235>

- Hooper, A., & Gaviria-Loaiza, J. (2021). Predictors of Head Start Teachers' Perceived Quality of Relationships with Families. *HS Dialog: The Research to Practice Journal for the Early Childhood Field*, 24(1). <https://journals.charlotte.edu/dialog/article/view/1054>
- Huang, S., Yin, H., & Lv, L. (2019). Job characteristics and teacher well-being: The mediation of teacher self-monitoring and teacher self-efficacy. *Educational Psychology*, 39(3), 313–331. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2018.1543855>
- Humphries, J. (2018). *Commitment and Motivation: Keys to a Program's Overall Success*. 4.
- Hur, E., Jeon, L., & Buettner, C. K. (2016). Preschool Teachers' Child-Centered Beliefs: Direct and Indirect Associations with Work Climate and Job-Related Wellbeing. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 45(3), 451–465. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-015-9338-6>
- Jeon, L., & Wells, M. (2018). An Organizational-Level Analysis of Early Childhood Teachers' Job Attitudes: Workplace Satisfaction Affects Early Head Start and Head Start Teacher Turnover. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 47. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-018-9444-3>
- Jones, C., Hadley, F., Waniganayake, M., & Johnstone, M. (2019). Find your tribe! Early childhood educators defining and identifying key factors that support their workplace wellbeing. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 44(4), 326–338.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1836939119870906>
- Jorde-Bloom, P. (1988). Closing the gap: An analysis of teacher and administrator perceptions of organizational climate in the early childhood setting. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 4(2), 111–120. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X\(88\)90012-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X(88)90012-1)
- Karademas, E. (2006). *Self-efficacy, social support and well-being The mediating role of optimism*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.PAID.2005.10.019>

- Klinkner, J., Riley, D., & Roach, M. (2005). Organizational Climate as a Tool for Child Care Staff Retention. *Young Children*, 60.
- Kwon, K.-A., Ford, T. G., Tsotsoros, J., Randall, K., Malek-Lasater, A., & Kim, S. G. (2022). Challenges in Working Conditions and Well-Being of Early Childhood Teachers by Teaching Modality during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(8), 4919. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19084919>
- Kwon, Kyong-Ah, Horm, Diane M., & Amirault, C. (2021). *Early Childhood Teachers' Well-Being: What We Know and Why We Should Care*. ZERO TO THREE. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/early-childhood-teachers-well-being-what-we-know-and-why-we-should-care/>
- Lang, S. N., Mouzourou, C., Jeon, L., Buettner, C. K., & Hur, E. (2017). Preschool Teachers' Professional Training, Observational Feedback, Child-Centered Beliefs and Motivation: Direct and Indirect Associations with Social and Emotional Responsiveness. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 46(1), 69–90. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-016-9369-7>
- Lawrence, R. C., Bulotsky-Shearer, R. J., Bichay-Awadalla, K., Futterer, J. N., & Bailey, J. (2020). Validation of the Early Childhood Teacher Experiences Scale in Head Start. *Psychology in the Schools*, 57(7), 1132–1154. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22385>
- Linland, E., Fond, M., Haydon, A., Volmert, A., Kendall-Taylor, N. (2015) “*Just Do It*” *Communicating Implementation Science and Practice*. <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/publication/just-do-it-communicating-implementation-science-and-practice>

- Logan, H., Cumming, T., & Wong, S. (2020). Sustaining the Work-Related Wellbeing of Early Childhood Educators: Perspectives from Key Stakeholders in Early Childhood Organisations. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 52(1), 95–113.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13158-020-00264-6>
- Madill, R., Halle, T., Gebhart, T., & Shuey, E. (2018). Supporting the psychological wellbeing of the early care and education workforce: Findings from the National Survey of Early Care and Education. OPRE Report #2018-49. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- McCarthy, C. J., Lambert, R. G., Lineback, S., Fitchett, P., & Baddouh, P. G. (2016). Assessing Teacher Appraisals and Stress in the Classroom: Review of the Classroom Appraisal of Resources and Demands. *Educational Psychology Review*, 28(3), 577–603.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-015-9322-6>
- McCartney, N. (2018). *Early Childhood Education Teachers' Job-Related Well-Being: Examining Protective Factors on Stress and Burnout* [Thesis].
<https://scholarworks.unr.edu//handle/11714/3440>
- McConaughy, E.A., Prochaska, J.O., Velicer, W.F. (1983). Stages of change in psychotherapy: Measurement and sample profiles. *Psychotherapy: Theory , Research and Practice*, 20 (3) 368-375.
- Metz, A., & Bartley, L. (2012). Active Implementation Frameworks for Program Success: How to Use Implementation Science to Improve Outcomes for Children. *Zero to Three (J)*, 32(4), 11–18.

- Metz, A., Halle, T., Bartley, L., & Blasberg, A. (2013). *The Key Components of Successful Implementation* (pp. 21–42).
- Metz, A., Naoom, S. F., Halle, T., & Bartley, L. (2015). An integrated stage-based framework for implementation of early childhood programs and systems (OPRE 2015-48). Retrieved from https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/sites/nirn.fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/OPRE-stage_based_framework_brief_508.pdf.
- Moir, T. (2018). Why Is Implementation Science Important for Intervention Design and Evaluation Within Educational Settings? *Frontiers in Education*, 3. <https://www.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/feduc.2018.00061>
- Moloney, M. (2010). Professional identity in early childhood care and education: Perspectives of pre-school and infant teachers. *Irish Educational Studies*, 29(2), 167–187. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03323311003779068>
- Odom, S. L. (2009). The tie that binds: evidence-based practice, implementation science, and outcomes for children. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 29(1), 53–61.
- Omdal, H., & Roland, P. (2020). Possibilities and challenges in sustained capacity-building in early childhood education and care (ECEC) institutions: ECEC leaders' perspectives. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 28(4), 568–581. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2020.1783929>
- Page, J., & Eadie, P. (2019). Coaching for continuous improvement in collaborative, interdisciplinary early childhood teams. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 44(3), 270–284. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1836939119855542>

- Perry, B., & Dockett, S. (2018). Using a bioecological framework to investigate an early childhood mathematics education intervention. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 26(4), 604–617. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2018.1487161>
- Peterson, S. (2013) Readiness to change effective implementation processes for meeting people where they are. In *Applying implementation science in early childhood programs and systems* (pp. 43–64). Paul H Brookes Publishing Co.
- Prilleltensky, I., Neff, M., & Bessell, A. (2016). Teacher Stress: What It Is, Why It's Important, How It Can be Alleviated. *Theory Into Practice*, 55(2), 104–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2016.1148986>
- Roberts, A. M., Gallagher, K. C., Daro, A. M., Iruka, I. U., & Sarver, S. L. (2019). Workforce well-being: Personal and workplace contributions to early educators' depression across settings. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 61, 4–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2017.09.007>
- Roberts, A., LoCasale-Crouch, J., Hamre, B., & DeCoster, J. (2016). Exploring Teachers' Depressive Symptoms, Interaction Quality, and Children's Social-Emotional Development in Head Start. *Early Education and Development*, 27(5), 642–654. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2016.1127088>
- Rosa, E. M., & Tudge, J. (2013). Urie Bronfenbrenner's Theory of Human Development: Its Evolution From Ecology to Bioecology. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 5(4), 243–258. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12022>
- Russ, S. (2014, April 7). *The Health and Well-Being of Early Childhood Educators: A Need for Compassion and Commitment*. *Child Trends*. <https://www.childtrends.org/blog/the->

[health-and-well-being-of-early-childhood-educators-a-need-for-compassion-and-commitment](#)

- Russell, E. M., Williams, S. W., & Gleason-Gomez, C. (2010). Teachers' Perceptions of Administrative Support and Antecedents of Turnover. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 24*(3), 195–208.
- Ryan, S., & Goffin, S. G. (2008). Missing in Action: Teaching in Early Care and Education. *Early Education and Development, 19*(3), 385–395.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10409280802068688>
- Scarborough, W. J., Collins, C., Ruppner, L., & Landivar, L. C. (2021). Head Start and Families' Recovery From Economic Recession: Policy Recommendations for COVID-19. *Family Relations, 70*(1), 26–42. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12519>
- Schaack, D. D., Le, V.-N., & Stedron, J. (2020). When Fulfillment is Not Enough: Early Childhood Teacher Occupational Burnout and Turnover Intentions from a Job Demands and Resources Perspective. *Early Education and Development, 31*(7), 1011–1030.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2020.1791648>
- Schachter, R., Gerde, H., & Hatton-Bowers, H. (2019). Guidelines for Selecting Professional Development for Early Childhood Teachers. Faculty Publications, Department of Child, Youth, and Family Studies. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/famconfacpub/273>
- Seo, S., & Yuh, J. (2021). Mindfulness and Resilience as Mediators in the Relationship Between Job-Related Stress and Teacher–Child Interaction Among Early Childhood Educators. *Early Childhood Education Journal. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-021-01250-w*

- Shea, C., Jacobs, S., Esserman, D., Bruce, K., & Weiner, B. (2014). Organizational readiness for implementing change: A psychometric assessment of a new measure. *Implementation Science : IS*, 9, 7. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-9-7>
- Sheridan, S. M., Edwards, C. P., Marvin, C. A., & Knoche, L. L. (2009). Professional Development in Early Childhood Programs: Process Issues and Research Needs. *Early Education and Development*, 20(3), 377–401. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409280802582795>
- Siraj-Blatchford, I. (1996). Values, Culture and Identity in Early Childhood Education. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 4(2), 63–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966976960040206>
- Smith, S. W., Daunic, A. P., & Taylor, G. G. (2007). Treatment fidelity in applied educational research: Expanding the adoption and application of measures to ensure evidence-based practice. *Education & Treatment of Children*, 30(4), 121–134. <https://doi.org/10.1353/etc.2007.0033>
- Swigonski, N. L., James, B., Wynns, W., & Casavan, K. (2021). Physical, Mental, and Financial Stress Impacts of COVID-19 on Early Childhood Educators. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 49(5), 799–806. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-021-01223-z>
- Tay, L., & Kuykendall, L. (2013). Promoting happiness: The malleability of individual and societal subjective wellbeing. *International Journal of Psychology*, 48(3), 159–176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207594.2013.779379>
- Tebben, E., Lang, S. N., Sproat, E., Tyree Owens, J., & Helms, S. (2021). Identifying primary and secondary stressors, buffers, and supports that impact ECE teacher wellbeing:

- Implications for teacher education. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 42(2), 143–161. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10901027.2021.1918294>
- The Early Years Workforce Study team, Thorpe, K., Jansen, E., Sullivan, V., Irvine, S., & McDonald, P. (2020). Identifying predictors of retention and professional wellbeing of the early childhood education workforce in a time of change. *Journal of Educational Change*, 21(4), 623–647. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-020-09382-3>
- Totenhagen, C. J., Hawkins, S. A., Casper, D. M., Bosch, L. A., Hawkey, K. R., & Borden, L. M. (2016). Retaining Early Childhood Education Workers: A Review of the Empirical Literature. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 30(4), 585–599. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2016.1214652>
- Tudge, J. R. H., Mokrova, I., Hatfield, B. E., & Karnik, R. B. (2009). Uses and Misuses of Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Theory of Human Development. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 1(4), 198–210. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1756-2589.2009.00026.x>
- Truebridge, S. (2016). Resilience: It Begins With Beliefs. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 52(1), 22–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00228958.2016.1123041>
- Vélez-Agosto, N. M., Soto-Crespo, J. G., Vizcarrondo-Oppenheimer, M., Vega-Molina, S., & García Coll, C. (2017). Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Theory Revision: Moving Culture From the Macro Into the Micro. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 12(5), 900–910. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617704397>
- Wagner, B., & French, L. (2010). Motivation, Work Satisfaction, and Teacher Change Among Early Childhood Teachers. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 24, 152–171. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568541003635268>

- Weiland, C., Greenberg, E., Bassok, D., Markowitz, A., Rosada, P. G., Luetmer, G., Abenavoli, R., Gomez, C., Johnson, A., Jones-Harden, B., Maier, M., McCormick, M., Morris, P., Nores, M., Phillips, D., & Snow, C. (n.d.). HISTORIC CRISIS, HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY: 41.
- Whitaker, R. C., Becker, B. D., Herman, A. N., & Gooze, R. A. (2013). The Physical and Mental Health of Head Start Staff: The Pennsylvania Head Start Staff Wellness Survey, 2012. *Preventing Chronic Disease, 10*, E181. <https://doi.org/10.5888/pcd10.130171>
- Wilson, D., Plesko, C., Brockie, T. N., & Glass, N. (2022). The well-being of head start teachers: A scoping literature review. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, 0*(0), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10901027.2022.2147880>
- Zhang, Q., Yin, J., Chen, H., Zhang, Q., & Wu, W. (2020). Emotional Labor Among Early Childhood Teachers: Frequency, Antecedents, and Consequences. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 34*(2), 288–305. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2019.1675824>
- Zhang, Y., Zhang, S., & Hua, W. (2019). The Impact of Psychological Capital and Occupational Stress on Teacher Burnout: Mediating Role of Coping Styles. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 28*(4), 339–349. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-019-00446-4>
- Zinsser, K. M., Christensen, C. G., & Torres, L. (2016). She’s supporting them; who’s supporting her? Preschool center-level social-emotional supports and teacher well-being. *Journal of School Psychology, 59*, 55–66. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2016.09.001>
- Zinsser, K., & Curby, T. (2014). Understanding Preschool Teachers’ Emotional Support as a Function of Center Climate. *SAGE Open, 4*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244014560728>