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This qualitative study was conducted to explore children's social-emotional behaviors in the classroom. The participants in this study were 39 children in three different classrooms across three different preschool programs. Data were collected during morning time for one week in each classroom. This study proceeded by observing children's social-emotional behaviors during play in their classrooms, interpreting their interactions with peers, categorizing and combining them with meaningful themes, and finding relationships between the emergent themes and contextual factors.

First, this study began with descriptions of and reflections on the classrooms for understanding each classroom context. Second, children's general social-emotional behaviors during play in their classrooms were described. Children exhibited both prosocial and conflict behaviors as well as positive and negative emotions. Third, among children's diverse behaviors, there were some significant, frequent, and evident behaviors in their peer interactions. These were power, teamwork, and social-emotional difficulties. Then, the associations between these themes and contextual factors were addressed.

This qualitative study of children's social-emotional behaviors in their classrooms provides information and knowledge that can be used to inform teachers about young children's peer interactions in the classroom. Its results can help increase teachers' understandings of patterns in children's behaviors and their associations with features of classroom contexts.

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL BEHAVIORS  
IN THE CLASSROOM

by

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**CHAPTER I**  
**THE IMPORTANCE OF**  
**CHILDREN’S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The history of studying social-emotional development is not as long as the history of cognitive developmental studies or the studies on academic achievement. However, concentrated studies on social-emotional development during recent years show the importance of understanding children’s social-emotional development (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Eggum, 2010; Gross, 2007). Parlakian defined social-emotional development as “children's growing ability to experience, regulate, and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; explore the environment and learn” (2003, p.2). One of the main reasons for the increase in social-emotional developmental studies is recent researchers’ enlightenment on not only its importance as a basis of inter-relationships between individuals but also intra-relationships within an individual. The abilities associated with inter-relationships are expressed in social skills, communication abilities, and interactions as means for building relationships while reflecting children’s social competence and cognitive abilities. The capacities associated with intra-relationships work in self-regulatory processes. Because research has revealed that children’s self-regulation abilities have significant effects on their future successes (Caspi, Elder, & Bem, 1987), there has been increased interest in the study of children’s social-emotional development.

Children's social-emotional development is significantly associated with their environments, and social-emotional relationships are bidirectional because they deal with interactions (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). As young developing individuals, children grow from vulnerable beings to effective ones both physically and relationally as they expand their environments and relationships. Depending on children's biological, dispositional, and environmental factors as well as their social relationships, children show both adaptive and maladaptive developmental outcomes throughout their lives (Eisenberg et al., 2010). Children's positive social-emotional development is the outcome of harmonious relationships, and at the same time, as they grow older, their positive social-emotional development becomes a key in their abilities to form functional relationships and continue to contribute to their society. On the other hand, children's maladaptive social-emotional development is the result of discordant relationships in their environments and can become at-risk and alarming factors in their abilities to maintain and support a society. The Abecedarian Project shows how subtle differences in early social-emotional development affect children's future personal successes, physical health, relationship problems, and even economic and societal outcomes through its longitudinal study (Campbell & Ramey, 2010).

Numerous research has argued the importance of children's social-emotional development, pointing out early interventions for promoting children's social-emotional development. However, that research shows limited understanding of children's social-emotional behaviors in their daily lives and development. If not observed and described in their natural contexts, children's social-emotional behaviors may not be fully

understood or may be interpreted differently. Understanding children's social-emotional behaviors by considering the contextual factors in their natural environment should be the basis of the social-emotional developmental study. By doing this first, teachers can understand their children better and help them more properly. If not, children's initial social-emotional difficulties are likely to continue and negatively affect the children themselves, their friends and teachers, their families, and even their society.

It is important to observe how children grow and develop socially and emotionally through their daily lives in order to understand their social-emotional development. As developing individuals from vulnerable to influential, children commonly start and share their experiences in their first society, the classroom. Thus, through this study, we will trace children's social-emotional growth and development by describing children's social-emotional behaviors in the classroom and determine meaningful patterns in children's social-emotional behaviors across different contexts. By doing so, both in-service teachers and pre-service teachers will deepen their understanding of social-emotional development and support children better.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Acknowledging that children's observations and experiences will become the basis of social-emotional development, this study builds on Vygotsky's Social Development Theory (1978) and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1997, 2001). Social Development Theory posits that the importance of interactions with a developmentally advanced person as a catalyst of development. Social Cognitive Theory focuses on the bidirectional relationships between human, environment, behavior, and especially the influence of personal environment.

#### **Vygotsky's Social Development Theory**

Vygotsky stresses language and interaction in children's development. Vygotsky (1978) posits language as a tool and a process of thinking. Language is an individual's external word that reflects his or her internal thoughts (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) argues that reflections from interactions are not just added to children's thoughts but establish in children new versions of thoughts which are personal and individual. When language is expressed as a form of interaction, and as interactions become repeated, richer, and deeper, children's thoughts are changed, compromised, developed, and socially constructed within relationships (Vygotsky, 1978). This means that as children grow their increased language ability helps them understand social

relationships and perceive their own and others' feelings. Knowing that language is both the process and mirror of children's thinking, it is vital to listen to their daily interactions with their teachers and peers because those relationships are repeated, getting richer and deeper, and influence each other.

While pointing to children's expanding ability of symbolic self-soothing strategies by the language development, Kopp (1989) supported Vygotsky's perspective on language. Developing their linguistic abilities assists children to explain their own feelings and thoughts and guides children to take the proper regulatory strategy through understanding verbal feedback (Kopp, 1989; Vygotsky, 1978). In this sense, children's use of language and their interactions with teachers or peers in the classroom will show both their self-regulatory abilities and limitations. Teachers may give different verbal feedback depending on children's language abilities and children may show different levels of understanding of teachers' feedback or reactions, depending on their language abilities. Beside the linguistic interactions, it is crucial to consider children's facial or behavioral expressions, too. In addition, there may be other contextual factors to look at. Because many young children cannot fully explain their emotions or thoughts exclusively by language in their interactions, contextual factors should always be considered to understand children's self-regulation ability and development. By looking at the children's experiences and contexts, this study will help teachers understand children's abilities and limitations and will help them provide the proper assistance and environment for children who are in social-emotional difficulties.

Moreover, Vygotsky (1978) stresses inner speech in the development of children's language and thought, which starts from "egocentric" and then it develops into strategies to accomplish the goal. Self-directed speech assists children's processes of planning, making a hypothesis, and drawing inferences. It also assists children in modulating themselves by restricting impulsiveness and spontaneity (Vygotsky, 1978). These processes are also applied to children's self-regulation processes by guiding themselves in situations that require children's understanding and self-direction. (Flavell, Green, Flavell, & Grossman, 1997). Berk (1992) demonstrated that children's private speech helped them to maintain on-task behaviors and prevent off-task behaviors. Nevertheless, it will not be easy to capture children's private speech in a natural context. However, it is important to keep in mind and see under which contexts children may show private speech as well as how it affects their self-regulatory strategies and helps them to overcome their social-emotional difficulties.

As Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes, the classroom is a place where children's play occurs. If children are not able to remember and delay gratifying their desires, they may not fulfill their desires through play. Play often requires following the rules, taking turns, and forming relationships with peers. In this sense, for children who enjoy and utilize play, it is a tool to resolve their needs and, at the same time, an indicator to show children's regulatory abilities through maintaining their drives and altering their needs and behaviors. In other words, children's play is both a resource and a demonstration of their self-regulation development and status. Therefore, describing children's play with their peers will be a promising start in understanding children's social-emotional

development. Also, children expand their relationships through their play in the classroom. Through expanded relationships during their natural play, they experience a collaborative network that requires more regulation than solitary or parallel play.

Apart from home, as children start their social life, they meet and relate with new caregivers or teachers. The purpose of teachers is child development, and thus they usually interact with children with intent. Vygotsky points out this intention as a purpose of interaction between teacher and children (1978). Teachers play roles as guiders and facilitators of the “Zone of Proximal Development,” which is children’s potential and latent developmental area (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). In other words, teachers point out different ways of thinking and encourage the children to have experiences and interactions, then reflect on them. Through interactions and activities, teachers provide diverse social-emotional opportunities to children in their classrooms and self-regulation strategies to children who are in demanding situations. Teachers sometimes tell their experiences as self-regulation lessons to children like storytellers or comfort children like parents. These experiences, both direct and indirect, which are through personal experiences and observations in the classroom, influence children’s own self-regulation strategies and experiences. In this sense, teachers become significant influences for children’s social-emotional development as guiding leaders and role models through the proximal process.

The classroom is a dynamic place where interactions are occurred, and children’s thoughts are exchanged. Through interactions, children discover how different and similar their thoughts are from the thoughts of their teachers and peers. Children

internalize these differences and similarities in thought (Vygotsky, 1986). Therefore, looking into a classroom and observing children's interactions and experiences will help teachers understand children's self-regulation development and the context in which collaborative development occurs. Nevertheless, children cannot express their thoughts exclusively in language. Their emotions and behaviors might not all be revealed in the form of language. Thus, observation and description of the context, which this study is pursuing, would help address the limitation of children's language expression in studying children's social-emotional development and self-regulation experiences.

### **Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory**

While considering human activity, Bandura tries to find relationships between thoughts and actions, to know how human plans and expectations regulate behavior and the principle of the functional circuit from forethought to self-reflection (2001). As children's cognitive abilities grow, their expectations and planning abilities will grow. Increasing their experiences and understanding of natural causal relationships will make children feel stable, secure, and comfortable (Bandura, 2001). These increased experiences may encourage children to do new things and adventure in a new environment. Children's expanded experiences and deepened understanding also develop together with reflective thinking (Bandura, 2001). Bandura (2001) explains that children come to realize that they have abilities to influence, choose, and construct their own environments from imposed ones. Bandura (2001) points out that expectation abilities,

planning abilities, self-appraisal, and self-reflection are deeply related to the self-regulation process and become the basis for self-regulation development.

In addition, Bandura explains the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1973). Early childhood classrooms are special places in that they are places to assemble children who are on similar levels of development, but not the same, and the children have their own diverse social-emotional difficulties. Children have their own experiences in the classroom while showing their social-emotional difficulties to their peers. They become “observers” of friends’ difficulties. By observing their teachers and peers, they try to emulate, learn, and feel others’ feelings, while feeling their own emotions and regulating behaviors (Bandura, 1973). Both Bandura’s Social Learning Theory and Vygotsky’s Social Development Theory emphasize the important role of teachers in children’s developmental environment. Bandura (1973) explains that observation is the beginning of learning and a way of internalizing. Children observe others’ self-regulation levels and reactions to demanding situations. These observations become a foundation to understand human life in a society. They come to realize that without regulating themselves for achieving goals or forming relationships with other people, it is hard to be a reliable member of a society. For survival in a society, children try to imitate others’ self-regulation behavior, listen to others’ regulating feedback, and practice and internalize regulation strategies in a more flexible way to adjust to various contexts.

Bandura also explains self-efficacy. Repeated successful experiences strengthen children’s self-efficacy and perpetual failures lower self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Even through vicarious experiences and others’ persuasion, the self-efficacy of the children

could be influenced (Bandura, 1997). When children experience challenging situations, they try to regulate themselves. Children's high self-efficacy for regulation buffers themselves from maladjustment and becomes a stepping stone for developing self-regulation, which helps them overcome diverse troubles. In other words, children's high self-efficacy and self-regulation success become a cultivator of further self-efficacy development. On the other hand, lowered self-efficacies do not help children respond in a more flexible and successful way in challenging situations. Thus, self-regulation and self-efficacy have bidirectional relationships, and these associations are studied through diverse factors (Bouffard, Bouchard, Goulet, Denoncourt, & Couture, 2005; Usher & Pajares, 2008).

## **CHAPTER III**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Children's Social-Emotional Development**

Social-emotional development for young children is so important for their future success (Lengua, 2003; McClelland, Cameron, & Farris, 2007; Menting, Van, & Koot, 2011) as well as their relationships (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Ladd, 2006). For studying children's social-emotional development, several distinct aspects of social-emotional development should be understood first.

#### **Self-Regulation**

The theoretical concept of self-regulation contains diverse and complicated processes. Perceiving information, guessing which choices bring about what consequences, and making decisions to obtain a particular goal (McClelland, John Geldhof, Cameron, & Wanless, 2015) are included in the self-regulation processes. However, these processes are barely seen explicitly. We may understand children's self-regulation process not through their internal process of regulation but by observing emotional or behavior self-regulation processes. Thus, some researchers give the same weight to observable emotion and behavior. They define self-regulation as one's own ability to concentrate attention, manage emotions, and control behaviors to cope with environmental demands and their purposes (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004; Calkins &

Williford, 2009; Rimm-Kaufman, Curby, Grimm, Nathanson, & Brock, 2009; Thompson, 2009). Research has been done to study self-regulation by measuring attention period or measuring the time that the children control emotional or behavioral arousal, sometimes both. However, the scope of self-regulation is more complicated in real life, and the goal that the children are pursuing may not be reflected by the experimental methods that the researcher designed. Self-regulation requires a specific attention and strategy under each different context.

The preschool period is considered a critical period for children's self-regulation development (Williford, Vick Whittaker, Vitiello, & Downer, 2013). Understanding that one's emotional capacity develops throughout one's life, researchers especially emphasize the years between a child's third year to entry into kindergarten because during this period, children gain emotional understanding (Cole, Dennis, Smith-Simon, & Cohen, 2009). Through this period, children understand how certain situations evoke particular emotions, how those particular emotions are expressed in certain facial expressions, and how sometimes the evoked emotions lead to specific behaviors, and how the specific facial expressions or behaviors influence others' emotions and behaviors (Bartsch & Wellman, 1995; Dunn, 1991; Dunn & Brown, 1991; Frye, & Moore, 1990; Garber, & Dodge, 1991; Harris, 1994; Lagattuta., Wellman, & Flavell, 1997).

Research explains that explicit awareness of emotion regulation strategies commonly begins between ages 3 to 5 (Barrett & Salovey, 2002; Denham, 1998; Denham, Caverly, Schmidt, & Blair, 2002; Dunham & Kochanoff, 2002). In this period, children's typical emotion regulation strategies rely on altering the situation, such as

removing themselves from a frustrating situation, rather than modulating internal states (Banerjee 1997; Brown, 1991). In the meantime, they utilize both appropriate and inappropriate self-regulation strategies to regulate their negative emotional states (Denham, 1998; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1992; McCoy, & Masters, 1985; Saarni, 1997). While experiencing trials and errors due to their limited understanding and knowledge of regulation strategies, children in this period develop their self-regulation. Research on children's inhibitory control shows that inhibitive behavior on tasks such as "Simon Says" improved progressively from 36 to 48 months of age. Specifically, from 36 to 41 months children showed the most significant improvement in their inhibitive behavior (Reed, Pien, & Rothbart, 1984). In these preschool years, children show and develop several abilities related to self-regulation strategies including the Theory of Mind (Wellman, Cross, & Watson, 2001), which is related to perspective taking ability (Cole, 1986). These developmental and social abilities predict later mental health and well-being (Denham, 1998; Parker & Asher, 1987).

### **Emotional Expression**

Children express diverse emotions and learn various emotional skills through their daily experiences.

Saarni (1999) suggests eight basic emotional skills:

- Awareness of one's own emotional state
- Ability to discern others' emotions
- Ability to understand and describe emotions verbally

- Capacity to empathize with others' emotional experiences
  - Ability to realize the difference between inner emotional states and outward expressions
  - Capacity for adaptive coping with aversive emotions
  - Awareness of the role of emotions in the structure of relationships
  - Emotional self-efficacy, or sense that one is capable of coping
- (Saarni, 1999)

These emotional skills could be explained three ways: emotion expression, emotion understanding, and emotion regulation. Children express many emotions. They might be happy, sad, angry, surprised, embarrassed, or fearful. When they recognize their feelings, they try to express these emotions. At first, children begin to express diverse emotions without any regulation. Then, children begin to discern and understand not only their own emotions but also others' emotions. They might modulate their emotions in response to others' emotions. Research emphasize the importance of children's emotional understanding, associating it with children's social-emotional competence and future adjustment (Halberstadt, Denham, & Dunsmore, 2001; Saarni, 1999). Children who understand their own emotions respond pro-socially to their peers, are rated as socially competent by their teachers, and are loved by their peers as playmates (Denham, 1986; Strayer, 1980). Children who can read the expressions of their peers' faces and discern their emotions are more likely to react according to the peers' emotions, and this appropriate reaction to the peers' emotions supports firmer peer relationships (Denham et al., 2003).

Emotion regulation is the next step in children's emotional expression and understanding. Children try to regulate or control their emotions in order to achieve their goals or in order to build relationships with others. When the intensity, duration, and

extent of emotional expression is excessive or limited, children need to regulate their emotions (Denham et al., 2003). Emotion regulation is a children's developmental process to gain more autonomy and through practice it can be improved (Calkins, 2010).

Through the preschool period, children's emotion regulation is one of the crucial developmental tasks for children to become a member of the society of their classroom, and children of this age are capable of regulating their emotions to varying degrees (Denham, 1998; Lewis, Sullivan, & Vasen, 1987). Children use emotion regulation strategies for inhibiting the emotion arousal that is socially less acceptable or unfavorable in their social lives. They sometimes require external aids such as help from their parents for calming down or sometimes regulate their emotions by using their internal strategies by themselves (Thompson & Lagattuta, 2006).

### **Social Development**

Children show diverse behaviors and learn various social skills while interacting with others. They may show different behaviors depending on the people they are with, the contexts where they are, or on their thoughts or feelings. When children form continuous relationships, they will have diverse opportunities to lead and follow. Children's play creates the opportunities naturally. Children's leadership is under-theorized and received less attention compared to adult and youth leadership. Though there are a few studies related to young children's leadership, their main focuses are more peer acceptance, aggression, social competence, and popularity (Crosby, Fireman, &

Clopton, 2011; Giles & Heyman, 2005; Junttila, Voeten, Kaukiainen, & Vauras, 2006; Pedersen, Vitaro, Barker, & Borge, 2007).

Nevertheless, studies focusing on young children's leadership are emerging slowly. Trawick-Smith (1988) suggested typical behaviors of successful leaders and forceful leaders. Successful leaders often lead play to more complex level by suggesting new roles, bringing new play themes, and describing play more specifically while forceful leaders often controlling the roles in play (Trawick-Smith, 1988). He also pointed out that effective leaders exhibit both leading and following behaviors in their play (Trawick-Smith, 1988). Lee, Recchia, and Shin (2005) showed different leadership styles of four young leaders through their qualitative study based on teacher interviews and classroom observation. They found that children displayed idiosyncratic leadership styles reflecting their age group or classroom contexts, though there were also common characteristics in their leadership behaviors (Lee, Recchia, & Shin, 2005). Mawson (2011) focused on children's leadership styles by observing children's collaborative play in their classroom. Through his interpretivist study, Mawson (2011) pointed out the significance of individual and cultural experiences and contextual factors in children's leadership rather than gender-focused explanation regarding young children's leadership styles.

Lee and Recchia (2008) examined children's power dynamics in the classroom from a different angle. They found that children exerting power in their play had both positive and negative influences in their teacher-child and peer relationships. These influences include leading their peers to more interesting play and a higher level of play

or domineering over their peers by controlling them in their play (Lee & Recchia, 2008). In this study, Lee and Recchia suggested to consider changing the term “child-centered” to “community-centered,” which highlighted the shared power while pointing out the importance of including many children who did not often exert their power in their peer relationships (2008). Löfdahl (2006) also pointed out some less positive developmental aspects of hierarchy in children’s play. She emphasized equity for the children who are unpleasant and struggling because of power and have discomfort in their play relationships as much as the importance of leadership for their development (Löfdahl, 2006)

In addition, Ghafouri and Wien (2005) focused on children’s social literacy in their observational study. Different from social skills, social literacy is a means protect and sustain their play. Social literacy helps children build firmer relationships with peers who play together and develop the play further. Moreover, social literacy has the function of protecting children’s play from other peers who are not in their play. They found that children displayed social literacy in their play by managing play episodes and roles, supporting peers’ emotions in their playgroup, making rules, resolving conflict, or protecting the playgroup from intruders who are outside of their playgroup.

### **Behavior Regulation**

Behavior regulation could be understood easily as impulse regulation. This is an ability to inhibit and resist the inclination to act instantly without considering more proper behavioral options or expecting the consequences that might rise from the

spontaneous behavior (Thompson, 2009). One of the skills of behavior regulation is the delay of gratification. This is the ability to defer immediate gratification in order to accomplish future goals (Shoda, Mischel, & Peake, 1990). There is much research to show how children's behavior regulation, more specifically, delay of gratification is related to their future academic abilities and success (McClelland., Cameron, & Farris, 2007; Miller, Gouley, Seifer, Dickstein., & Shields, 2004). Moreover, research proved associations between children's behavior regulation and later behavioral competence and social skills (Eisenberg et al., 2000; Howse, Calkins., Anastopoulos, Keane., & Shelton, 2003). Behavior regulation is an important factor in academic success and peer relationships taken together (Montroy, Bowles, Skibbe, & Foster, 2016; Von Suchodoletz & Gunzenhauser, 2013).

Children's behavior regulation problems are often observed as problem behaviors in the classroom (Eiden, Edwards, & Leonard, 2007; Eisenberg, Cumberland, Spinrad, & Fabes, 2001).

Some of the problem behaviors are listed below (Blair, Fox, & Lentini, 2010).

- Leaving seat or designated area without teacher permission to be out of activity, except to move closer to the teacher to view teaching materials, or closer to peers for positive social interaction related to the activity.
- Walking around the room without engaging in activities.
- Engaging in any verbal or motor activity not directly related to the activity or task at hand, such as making noise or talking to peers/ adults, touching peers, teasing peers, playing with own clothes, body parts or other materials, lying on the floor, or leaning against the teacher and interfering with teaching activity.
- Crying or screaming while dropping to the floor, throwing objects, or kicking
- Hitting peers with fists, open hands, or objects
- Scratching peers with fingernails

- Biting or attempting to bite peers
- Ignoring teacher requests or refusing to comply with directions within a 5-s interval, saying no, crossing arms, or prolonged staring at teachers
- Pushing, pulling or taking materials from peers
- Yelling directed toward peers or adults.

Eiden, Edwards, and Leonard (2007) found that there are negative associations between children's self-regulation abilities at age 3 and their externalizing problem behaviors in kindergarten. Lower attention and inhibitory control predict children's externalizing problem behaviors in toddler and preschool years (Hill, Degnan, Calkins, & Keane, 2006; Lengua, 2003).

There are different kinds of behavior regulation problems. Whereas under-controlled behaviors are shown externally and assessed problematic, some behavior problems do not look problematic at first. Over-controlling emotions or behaviors may be due to internalizing problems. Children's internalizing problems are emotional or behavior problems that involve over-controlling their emotions or behaviors. Children who have internalizing problems show excessive anxious, depressive, or withdrawn behavior and complain about their somatic problems immoderately (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Eggum, 2010). Researchers who study children's internalizing problems argue that children's over-controlled behavior is involuntary and reactive (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Morris, 2002).

### **Classroom as a Context in which to Observe Children's Social-Emotional Behaviors**

Kindergarten teachers who are observers of classrooms report that children's social-emotional development is more important than children's academic readiness or

success through a national survey (Boyd, Barnett, Bodrova, Leong, & Gomby, 2005). However, most research conducted in early childhood is focused on children's future academic achievements or positive school outcomes (Dagli-Yesil, & Jones, 2013; Jung, 2016; Mägi, Lerkkanen, Poikkeus, Rasku-Puttonen & Nurmi, 2011). Nevertheless, there are some efforts to find the etiology of children's school readiness and success from children's relationships and social skills (Burchinal et al., 2008; Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Pianta, Sheri, & Bennett, 1997). Furthermore, research has been conducted to elucidate how the personal (Arbeau, Coplan, & Weeks, 2010) and environmental factors (La Paro, Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2007; Werthamer-Larsson, Kellam, & Wheeler, 1991) interact with children's development (Milkie & Warner, 2011).

Most of children's social-emotional difficulties at home are accepted or understood by their family members or parents (Corsaro, 1988), or they may not consider them seriously because of a lack of comparison, or in some cases, families are vaguely concerned about the children's future. Moreover, parents may have different skills in handling the children's social-emotional difficulties, or sometimes they face other types of their children's social-emotional difficulties that are different from difficulties children have in other environments (Hope & Bierman, 1998). In this respect, the classroom is a very special place, because children face their social-emotional difficulties by meeting new friends who have similar levels of development as well as caregivers who are professionals and may be objective observers (Arbeau, Coplan, & Weeks, 2010; Milkie & Warner, 2011). Even though a classroom provides attractive toys and opportunities to play with peers, it also requires children to have a more structured and routinized

schedule than their home life. This could evoke stress in children and demand self-regulation (Miller et al., 2004).

Nevertheless, the classroom environment provides developmentally appropriate materials and toys and allows children to experience diverse relationships and various social practices through play. Play is a natural means for resolving children's needs and an essential process to learn diverse social skills. Stetsenko and Ho (2015) suggested that play provides important opportunities for children to develop and practice their own agency, identity, and voice. Moreover, the classroom context provides children possibilities for practicing collaboration, which is helpful to learn how to interact and share mutual goals together through their play. Research proved that collaboration between peers during play helps children develop their thoughts, improve verbal negotiation, and solve problems (Holmes-Lonergan, 2003; Tudge, 1992).

In spite of these promising expectations in children's development, in preschool or kindergarten classrooms, it is very natural to observe children who fight with their friends frequently, throw tantrums often, behave aggressively, try to win every game and do not accept losing, do not show any interest in their friends but only try to get teachers' or adults' attention, show longer separation anxiety, do not concentrate well and have difficulty listening to others, are reactive without their own opinion, cannot regulate their temper when they are upset, etc. These social-emotional difficulties and problem behaviors have the potential to become more serious behavior problems.

Children's social-emotional difficulties change to social-emotional problems and behavior problems, while expanding their social relationships with others. Children's

social-emotional difficulties can become more serious in their school environment, becoming maladjusted behaviors, behavior problems, and relationship problems with teachers and peers. These behavior problems and relationship problems are not unidirectional but bidirectional (Portilla, Ballard, Adler, Boyce, & Obradovic, 2014; Zhang & Sun, 2011). Moreover, in children's social lives at school, there are diverse relationships that draw out children's behavioral outcomes. It is hard to separate the relationships that are entangled in children's school life. However, much research has studied the relationships separately (Hamre, & Pianta, 2005; Ladd, 2006; O'Conner & McCartney, 2007)

Research related to children's social-emotional behaviors in the classroom attempts to draw conclusions about their future academic achievements or school outcomes (Dagli-Yesil et al., 2013; Jung, 2016; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Mägi et al., 2011). Schools are purpose-oriented places and emphasize children's cognitive development. Nonetheless, if there is too much weight on academic or individual outcomes, children's social-emotional development and their social-emotional behaviors might be overlooked. Social-emotional development could be a better predictor of future success such as positive mental health, individual well-being, and successful relationships.

Vygotsky's Developmental Theory emphasizes children's meaningful interactions with individuals such as parents, teachers, and their peers as a part of their self-regulation developmental process (Stetsenko & Vianna, 2009; Vygotsky, 1986). Of course, development and learning occur through interactions with materials and curriculum.

However, children develop and learn through interacting with people, teachers, and peers rather than exclusively through high-quality learning materials in the classroom context (Morrison, Ponitz, & McClelland, 2010). Children naturally experience diverse interactions and build relationships with teachers and peers in their classroom. As an individual, each child learns and develops through their shared experiences and relationships in the classroom.

A classroom dynamic is unpredictable because the combination of teachers and children in each classroom is new to them. Nevertheless, each child has a role in the whole dynamic, and children grow and develop through their relationship dynamics in their classroom. However, numerous studies that target classroom contexts and relationships separate the relationships into teacher-student or peer relationships. In addition, the majority of them are about teacher-student relationships. For a better understanding of children's experience in classroom dynamics, we need to listen carefully to the classroom interactions and look at their behaviors without separating relationships in the classroom. Through this, we could better understand why relationships with teachers and peers are important to children's social-emotional development, as Vygotsky emphasizes.

When children try to adjust to a new school environment, they meet diverse challenges, and one of the most important challenges is forming relationships with their teachers. Positive relationships with teachers are connected to children's positive school lives (Hamre et al., 2005); negative relationships with teachers predict children's maladjustment in school. Moreover, children's maladjusted behavior relates to negative

teacher-child relationships. Therefore, there is a bidirectional relationship between teacher-child relationships and children's school adjustment. O'Conner and McCartney (2007) found that positive teacher-child relationships fostered children's achievement. Children with negative relationships with teachers had more behavior problems and lower academic achievement (Hamre et al., 2001). First grade negative teacher-child relationships predict decreasing children's prosocial behavior (Birch & Ladd, 1997). This research also demonstrates not only directional relationships but also bidirectional associations between teacher-child relationships and children's behavior problems. Children's behavior affects the teacher-child relationships, and these relationships influence children's subsequent behavior. This means that teacher-child relationships may decrease children's maladjusted behaviors or may increase these behaviors. When children who had internalizing and externalizing behavior problems formed emotionally supportive teacher-child relationships and developed close relationships with their teachers, they did not develop more conflictual relationships (Buyse, Verschueren, Doumen, Van, & Maes, 2008).

Children's positive and supportive relationships with their teachers predict children's future academic success, improvement of social-emotional development, and development of self-regulation (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Pianta, 1999; Trentacosta & Izard, 2007). When teachers' relationships with children are positive, children are better able to regulate emotions (Shields et al., 2001) and have a higher level of social confidence and fewer problem behaviors (Mashburn et al., 2008). However, negative relationships between teachers and children do not support children's self-regulation development

(Birch & Ladd, 1997). Positive relationships with teachers are also associated with children's engagement with classroom tasks and activities. Children's positive engagement with classroom activities is related to higher attention abilities and capacities to regulate impulsive behavior (Bierman, Torres, Domitrovich, Welsh, & Gest, 2009; Chang & Burns, 2005). Furthermore, teachers' self-regulation training influences children's self-regulation development. The Perel, Merget-Kullmann, Wende, Schmitz, and Buchbinder (2009) study shows that kindergarten teachers' self-regulation training has a significant effect on children's self-regulatory skills in their classroom. Perry's observational study (1998) explains that depending on the way that teachers ask questions, the types of activities that teachers provide, and teachers' self-regulatory strategies, children's self-regulation strategies and abilities can be increased. For example, open-ended questions, challenging activities that give children opportunities to control themselves, and teachers' strategies for children facing challenging situations affect children's self-regulation abilities. Moreover, children's interest and engagement in activities predict aspects of self-regulation development, such as inhibitory control and attention ability (Pessoa, 2009).

In addition, there are bidirectional relationships between children's social-emotional development and peer relationships. Peer rejection met with children's aggressiveness predicts children's externalizing and internalizing behavior problems (Ladd, 2006). Specifically, for children who have poorer language skills, there are increasing possibilities of behavior problems. Menting, Van, and Koot (2011) studied the development of children who have poorer receptive language skills from kindergarten to

fourth grade. The study finds that children with lower language abilities show increasing externalizing behaviors and experience frequent peer rejection. Williford, Whittaker, Vitiello, and Downer (2013) explain engagement with peers positively related to children's self-regulation development through their observational study. Children in the classroom with boisterous peers and peers who have low social skills display more externalizing and internalizing problems (Milkie & Warner, 2011). The study done by Hope et al. (1998) reveals that children who have more deviant peers exhibit more school conduct problems. Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the importance of peer interaction during make-believe play with regard to children's self-regulation development. Observation research targeting the play behaviors of preschool aged children supports Vygotsky's view and reveals that complex sociodramatic play helps to increase children's on-task behavior (Elias & Berk, 2002). When children have higher self-regulation and social skills, they are able to extend their peer network, to establish positive peer relationships, and finally to experience successful school adjustment (Downer & Pianta, 2006). Because positive or negative relationships with their teachers and peers are bidirectional, children who have higher self-regulation abilities have more success in their school, tasks, and maintaining positive mental health (Kangas, Ojala, & Venninen, 2015).

Lastly, there are latent influences on children's social-emotional development by school environmental factors. In their Norwegian day-care centers study, Skalická, Belsky, Stenseng, and Wichstrøm (2015) find that the children from open-group centers experience less teacher-child closeness, more teacher-child conflicts, and more problem

behaviors in preschool than the children from traditionally organized centers. With regard to classroom environmental factors, children who are in especially negative school environments, such as classrooms with fewer material resources and whose teachers receive less respect from their colleagues, show more externalizing, internalizing, and interpersonal problems (Milkie et al., 2011). Also, the Werthamer-Larsson et al. (1991) study finds that children in low-achieving classrooms show significantly higher shy and aggressive behavior through teacher ratings of child behavior.

### **The Study of Children's Social-Emotional Behaviors**

Children who exhibit social-emotional difficulties have the potential to have negative developmental outcomes (Sutherland, Conroy, Abrams, & Vo, 2010). Moreover, these problem behaviors can be a challenge to parents, teachers, and peers and can make developing relationships harder (Skalická, Belsky, Stenseng, & Wichstrøm, 2015; Zhang & Sun., 2011). The association of social emotional difficulties and relationships may contribute to more serious behavior problems (Portilla, Ballard, Adler, Boyce, & Obradovic, 2014).

Much conducted research has used standardized measures to classify and diagnose children's behavior problems (Eiden et al., 2007; Zhang et al., 2011). There also exist methodological difficulties to studying children's development in the classroom because of children's poor verbal skills, limited understanding, memory abilities, as well as a lack of capacity of experimental tasks to study humans and so on (Whitebread et al., 2009). Other research relied on interviews with a child using puppet play which was

meant to evoke empathy in the child through emotion-provoking scenarios (Cole, Dennis, Smith-Simon, & Cohen, 2009). Their results relied on children's abilities to respond to hypothetical questions; however, these results were not drawn from real or natural situations of children's own experiences.

This current study does not pursue any experimental methods for finding the results, but it makes use of observed descriptions of children's behaviors in natural environments and use them when analyzing and interpreting the results. The purpose of this study is to examine children's social-emotional development in the classroom by looking into their social-emotional behaviors descriptively and qualitatively.

Even though some research used the person-centered approach for the benefit of showing children's diverse characters in their diverse contexts (O'Connor, Collins, & Supplee, 2012), they did not describe children's social-emotional behaviors in the classroom. What social-emotional behaviors do children exhibit in the classroom? When do they experience difficulties? How do they express their social-emotional difficulties? In what contexts do children show certain social-emotional behaviors? How are their social-emotional behaviors accepted or rejected by their friends or teachers? Answers to these questions could help teachers to understand and clarify children's social-emotional behaviors in the classroom and support teachers and parents in regards to children's social-emotional development. In spite of existing dynamics and differences depending on the child's genetic and environmental factors, teacher characteristics, peer personality, classroom climates, and situational conditions, there

should be a common understanding of children's social-emotional behaviors in the classroom through observing children's behavior in classroom contexts.

Unfortunately, there has been little research about social-emotional behaviors in the classroom. Identifying and clarifying children's social-emotional behaviors in the classroom may be an essential point of departure in investigation. In this sense, typology is one of many methods to identify and describe children's social-emotional behaviors and their behavior problems in the classroom (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, & Smith, 1979). Nevertheless, conducted research focusing on children's behavior problems by using typological methods usually relied on demographic descriptions or classifications. The results were based on the data collected from parents and teachers. Thus, there is no descriptive explanation regarding children's social-emotional development (Algozzine, Christian, Matt, McClanahan, & White, 2008; Mindrila, 2016).

Even though demographic descriptions and typology could give a more individual explanation and broader perspectives on children's social-emotional behaviors, they rarely associated children's social-emotional behaviors and contextual factors. To fill this void, qualitative analyses based on observation would help teachers better understand children's social-emotional behaviors and interaction processes in the classroom. Winne and Perry (2000) point out the benefits of observational methods in studying children's self-regulation. Observational methods show what children really do rather than recalling previous experiences or answering hypothetical questions. Such methods also provide the context regarding the children's reaction or response, and they do not exclusively rely

on children's verbal expressions. Therefore, an observation methodology in studying children's development and social-emotional behaviors in the classroom context provides a basis for understanding children and can offer guidance for teachers on how to support children's social-emotional development.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The purpose of this study is to explore 3 to 5 year-old-children's social-emotional behaviors in the classroom. More specifically, this study examines two major questions.

1. In 3 to 5 year-old-classrooms, what types of social-emotional behaviors do children exhibit during play in varying contexts?

2. Are there patterns in children's social-emotional behaviors? And if there are patterns, are the patterns related to features of the context?

## **CHAPTER V**

### **METHODS**

#### **Participants**

Participants were 39 children in three classrooms across three different preschool programs located in a medium-sized city in the southeastern US. The criteria for selecting the classrooms were: 1) the program served children who were between the ages of three to five years old; 2) the classroom had at least one lead teacher who had been with the children from the beginning of the academic year; 3) the classroom enrollment was between 10 and 23 children. English was the primary language used in the classroom.

#### **Data Collection**

Observation and video recording were conducted four or five times in each of the three classrooms, and field notes were completed after each observation. The researcher visited the classroom in the morning for each 2-hour observation. The observation and recording time for data collection was a total of 20 hours across all classrooms. During the video recordings, children and teachers in the classroom engaged in their daily routines and activities as usual. To reduce the effects of the observer in the classroom, the investigator did not join the children's play, or did not do anything that could influence children's behavior. Recording took place only inside the classroom. If the

class left for outdoor activities, the investigator stopped recording the video. Outdoor activities were excluded from the study because it was difficult to observe in outdoor places. There was a possibility that classrooms would share the space, and children who were not participating in this study might be present. As soon as the children and teachers came back to their classrooms, the observation and video recording continued; all observations and recording concluded by lunch time.

Observation and video recording during free choice play covered all areas of the classroom. Only children's free choice play time was included as data; circle time, snacks, cleanup, transitions, and meals were excluded from data analyses. Circle time, transitions, and other activities were more teacher-oriented than free play. During those activities, children displayed more teacher-directed behaviors than revealing children's behaviors with peers. Using a classroom map, the investigator discussed with the teacher which sections of the room were used for which types of activities. Based on this, the researcher made a plan for video recording rotation.

The researcher worked with the classroom teacher to determine the time of the day when over half of the children in the classroom were typically present. For an observation, the researcher arrived at that designated time, confirmed that at least half of the children were present, and then began the observation. The video recording began with whatever activity was going on at that time based on the following plan.

Free choice play covered child initiated play time, when children independently selected activities such as dramatic play, blocks, art, games, or computers. During the free play time, the main investigator started the observation and video recording in the

area where the greatest number of children were present. This first area was video recorded for 10 minutes. The researcher then moved to a different area after finishing 10 minutes, moving in a clockwise direction to the next area. If there was no child or only one child in the next area, the researcher skipped the area and went to the following area. The observation and recording were started if at least two children were in the play area so that social interaction might occur. The researcher followed the plan, moving from one area to the next regardless of the activity taking place in each area. In other words, even if there were small group activities with teachers occurring, if it was the planned area to observe, the investigator observed and recorded the video in that area for 10 minutes. The researcher kept recording video for 10 minutes per area until the end of free play time.

Adding to the video recording, there were field notes with reminders and reflections to add to the observations and recordings. There were no formal tools or specific formats for the field notes, but they included a simple description of the context, details related to interactions that were recorded, short reflections, or things that should be remembered for the next data collection.

### **Exclusion Criteria**

Children whose parents did not consent for this study were not included. If there were over 40% of children whose parents did not agree to participate in this study, the classroom was not included. Though the observed classrooms which had over a 60% consent rate, if there were children whose parents did not want to consent, the

investigator tried to keep them out of the videotaping. The investigator observed and focused the recording on the children whose parents gave consent. If only children whose parents did not consent were playing in the play area, the investigator skipped the area. In another area, if there were children whose parents did not consent mixed with other children playing together, the investigator only focused and recorded the group of children whose parents consented.

### **Procedure**

A pilot study was conducted to gain initial understanding of dynamics in the classroom, including children's social-emotional behaviors which were often exhibited concurrently. The pilot study also afforded the opportunity to find possible constraints while recording the classroom. Pilot observations were conducted twice in two different preschool classrooms (07/18/2017, 07/20/2017, 3 hours in each classroom, for a total of 6 hours). Based on this pilot study, the plan for this study and study procedures were developed.

This study was approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). Because the targets of this study were children, the consent of the children's parents was required for the observation and video recording. Also, because the observation and video recording were conducted in the classroom, the classroom teachers' consent was needed. The general description and purpose of this study, research questions, research plan, recruitment letter, parental and teacher consent letter, follow-up letter, and teacher questionnaire were submitted to the IRB to get approval.

After approval of the IRB, the investigator of this study identified three programs that served older preschoolers. The researcher sent a recruitment emails to the directors of the preschool programs. The researcher then followed-up with phone calls to explain the study and determined if the director was interested in participating. The investigator attempted to recruit six different preschool programs. Two programs refused to participate in this study, three programs wanted to participate, and the last program showed interested in participating, but the data collection did not proceed because at that point the required amount of eligible programs was already recruited.

The main investigator also asked how many 3-5 year-old classrooms were in the program and whether the older preschool classrooms had at least one lead teacher and the teacher had been with the children from the start of the academic year. Responses to these questions were used to determine the number of classrooms and the programs that met the eligibility criteria for this study.

For programs with eligible classrooms, the main investigator made an appointment to visit the program to explain this study more specifically and to listen to their questions or concerns about this study. To maximize the likelihood of having sufficient participation, all preschool classrooms that met the eligibility requirements were included at this stage of this study. If the director and teachers agreed to participate in the study, the researcher asked the director and teachers to send a letter that explained this research and two consent letters to the children's parents. The researcher visited the program in about a week and discussed the possible classrooms with the director and teachers and determined the number of parental consent letters collected in each

classroom. Based on the number of consent forms returned, the main investigator determined the percentage of consent forms returned for each classroom. The classroom with the highest percentage of consent forms returned was selected for the study.

After selecting the classroom for this study, the investigator made a schedule for pre-visits and data collection days with the program director and classroom teachers, then started pre-visit and data collection. The first step was to visit the classroom and take pictures as well as make drawings of the classroom's physical layout. The researcher also provided a questionnaire to the classroom teachers before the pre-visit. The questionnaire included questions about the classroom curriculum, special emphasis of the classroom curriculum or program, children's age range, the number of children in the classroom, the proportion of boys and girls, the number of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), the number of children who use a language other than English at home, and a typical daily schedule. In addition, the classroom teacher was asked to look at the classroom map prepared by the researcher and label classroom activity areas.

There were pre-visits before the actual data collection began. The pre-visits served a number of purposes: so the researcher could become accustomed to the classroom's context; to reduce children's possible confusion or curiosity with a visiting strange observer in the classroom; to make children feel more familiar with the researcher's presence and camera; to find any possible problems with data recording in the classroom; and to refine the skills for recording, such as camera angle, researcher's placement, and movement in the classroom for best capturing children's social-emotional behaviors without disrupting children's emotion or behavior. The investigator also asked

the classroom teacher to identify the children whose parents did not consent, so that the investigator knew not to record them.

After the pre-visit, each classroom was observed four or five times over a one to two weeks period. The subsequent visits for observation and video recording were conducted within the same or following week as the first visit. After gathering the data, the principal investigator shared the data and field notes with two advisors.

### **Description of Sample**

Below are descriptions of each program, including the layout of the classroom setting, the schedule that the classroom teacher provided, composition of the classroom (teachers and children), and additional characteristics of the classroom. These descriptions were based on the teacher's report from the teacher questionnaire that the study provided for program information.

#### **Program A**

Program A was a preschool classroom affiliated with a university lab school. There were 15 children in that classroom, and among them, 10 parental consents were returned (three boys and seven girls, 66.7%). Six children were four years old, and four children were three years old. There was no child who had an IEP. Two children used language other than English at home. There were typically three teachers in this classroom, two lead teachers and one student worker as a support. In addition, because this program was affiliated with the university, there were regularly one or two additional

adults (student, assistant teacher, or therapist) every day. These adults observed children, reported, played with children, interacted with children or teachers, or helped with children's needs.

This program used the Creative Curriculum mainly, and the North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development was consulted when they planned their curriculum goals or teaching objectives. The program uses an observation based planning approach, reflecting children's interests, and teachers plan and prepare the next activities or toys every day using those observations. The teachers reported that their emphasis was social-emotional guidance.

The following is the classroom schedule as the classroom teacher provided.

- 7:30-9:30 Children arriving
- 9:30-10:00 Morning snack
- 10:00-11:00 Free play
- 11:00-12:30 Outside time
- 12:30-1:15 Lunch
- 1:15-1:30 Toileting/diapering
- 1:30-3:30 Rest time and toileting as children wake up
- 3:30-4:00 Afternoon snack
- 4:00-4:30 Free play
- 4:30-5:50 Free play available indoors and/or outside

The data were collected for four days at the end of February, 2018. Data for this study were collected mostly from 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM.

The following is a map of the classroom, followed by a description of the classroom layout and types of materials available.

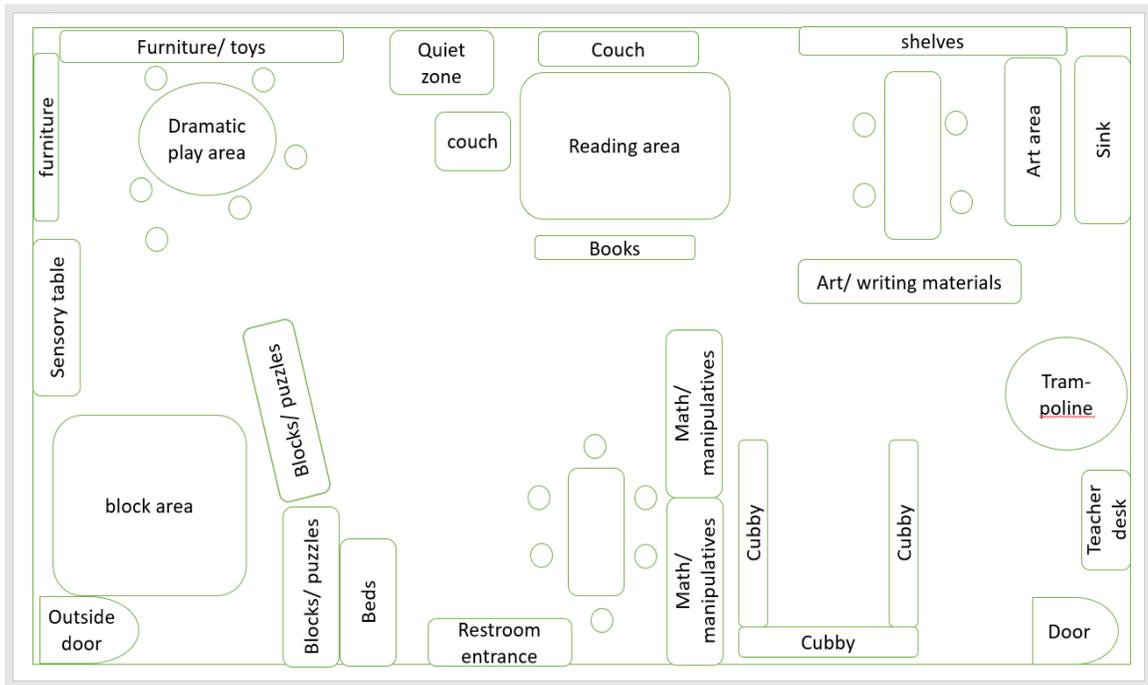


Figure 1. Map of the Classroom of Program A

There was a door where children and their parents entered the classroom (right bottom of the map). They greeted their teacher and put their bags, toys, or outer clothes in their cubby. Near the cubby, there was a trampoline, the art and writing area, and the sink. Children washed hands in the sink and started their play. Next to the art area, there was a quiet zone and the reading area, so children took a rest in the couch or read some books there. Next to the reading area, there was the dramatic play area including closets, kitchen furniture, refrigerator, table, and chairs. Next to it, there was a sensory shelf and the block area. In the block area, there was a carpet and individual beds for their napping time. There was a door to the outdoor play area around the block area, so children and teachers used this door when they went to playground. Next to the block area, there were

math/manipulative play area, table, and chairs. There was a restroom next to the math/manipulative play area, which was shared with the next classroom.

One limitation of observation in this program was that there was less opportunity to observe boys. Because the boys' parental consent rate was relatively lower than girls, there were relatively fewer chances to observe, analyze, and interpret boys' play behaviors.

### **Program B**

Program B was a privately run preschool in the same city. The curriculum of this program was a combination of Project Approach and Creative Curriculum. The focus of this program was children's social-emotional development and inclusion of children with disabilities. The composition of children was different depending on the day. To be more specific, there were three different groups of children. The total number of enrolled children was 23. However, because there were some children who came on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, some children who came on Tuesday and Thursday, and children who came every day, the number of children present each day was 17. Among the total of 23 children enrolled, 19 children returned the consent letters (82.6%). The children were between three to five years old, but the majority were four years old. Seven children were English Language Learners (ELLs). There were children who spoke other languages than English at home. Some of these ELL children were born in different countries and adopted, so they no longer used the language both at home and

school that they used one or two years ago. Two children had IEPs. In this classroom, there were two teachers and two floaters for additional support.

The following is the classroom schedule as the classroom teacher provided.

- 8:00-10:30 Free choice centers and small groups  
(snack groups, stories/language, math/science)
- (8:45-9:00) Morning meeting
- 10:00-10:40 Clean up
- 10:40-11:00 Outside
- 12:00-12:30 Lunch
- 12:30-12:45 Transition home or to rest/ quiet time
- 12:45-2:30 Quiet time
- 2:30-3:00 Transition and snack
- 3:00-4:30 Outside play
- 4:30-5:30 Centers/ activities

Data was collected from the time of arrival until the time of large group meeting.

Data were collected for five days in early March, 2018.

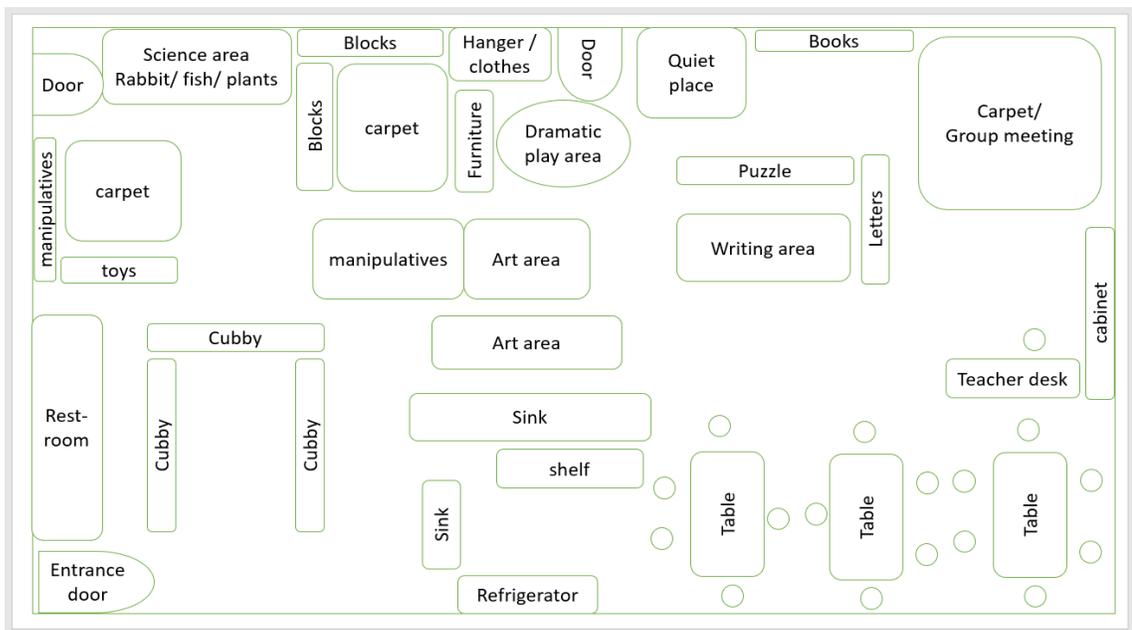


Figure 2. Map of the Classroom of Program B

The classroom of program B was oriented as shown above. The entrance door was located at the bottom left of the map. When the children arrived at the classroom, they put their clothes in their cubby, greeted their teachers and peers, and played. Next to the cubby area, there was a carpeted manipulative play area. Next to this, there was a science area with the beans that the children planted, some plants, fish, and two rabbits. Next to the science area, there was a carpeted block area. Next to this block area, there was a dramatic play area with diverse toys and a cube like a little house. The reading area was connected to the dramatic play area and the group meeting area. In the middle part of the classroom, there was the writing area and the art area. Using the tables, which were in the right bottom of the classroom map, children ate their snack and lunch.

### **Program C**

Program C was a Christian-affiliated preschool in the same city. The curriculum was a faith-based developmentally appropriate program. There were 10 children in this classroom, and except for one child who was 4 years old, all children were 5 years old. Because most of the children were at the end of the preschool year, this classroom emphasized kindergarten preparation, social interaction, developmentally appropriate writing, letter recognition, phonics, development of fine motor skills, as well as faith-based prayer.

The total enrollment in the classroom was 10, 4 boys and 6 girls. No child had an IEP. All children used English both at home and in the classroom. All children in this classroom returned parental consent letters (100%).

There was one lead teacher and one assistant teacher in this classroom. Two or three times a week, resource teachers visited the classroom, and children spent time with them for 20-40 minutes. The teachers taught music with diverse instruments, movement, or dance. There was a regular story time in the children's library and a service in the chapel. Only the time with the classroom teachers was included as data.

The following is the classroom schedule as the classroom teacher provided.

- 8:50-9:00 Arrive, wash hands, sign-in
- 9:00-10:15 Art, centers, free play
- 10:15-10:30 Clean-up, wash hands for snack
- 10:30-11:00 Snack, bathroom, free reading
- 11:00-11:30 Group time, group activities
- 11:30-12:10 Playground or gym
- 12:10-12:40 Lunch
- 12:40 Go back outside or group activity

The data were collected for five days beginning in mid-March from the children's arrival to the group time. The map below shows the classroom layout. There were two doors in this classroom, and children normally used the door shown at the left bottom of the map. The cubbies were next to the entrance, outside of the classroom. When the children entered the classroom, they put their lunch box at the basket and their water bottle in another basket. Near the entrance door, tables 1 and 2 were used for multiple purposes. During the play time, the teacher put manipulative toys or play dough on those tables for play, and during snack and lunch time, those tables were used for serving food. Next to the table, there was an art area with an easel and a sink. Next to the sink, there were two separate bathrooms, which were the same space and design. Next to bathroom 2 there was a carpeted reading area with a padded cushion and a little chair. At

the other side of the classroom, there was a manipulative play/science area and a carpeted block area. Next to it, there was a large group area. Close the reading area, there was a home living area with diverse toys and materials.

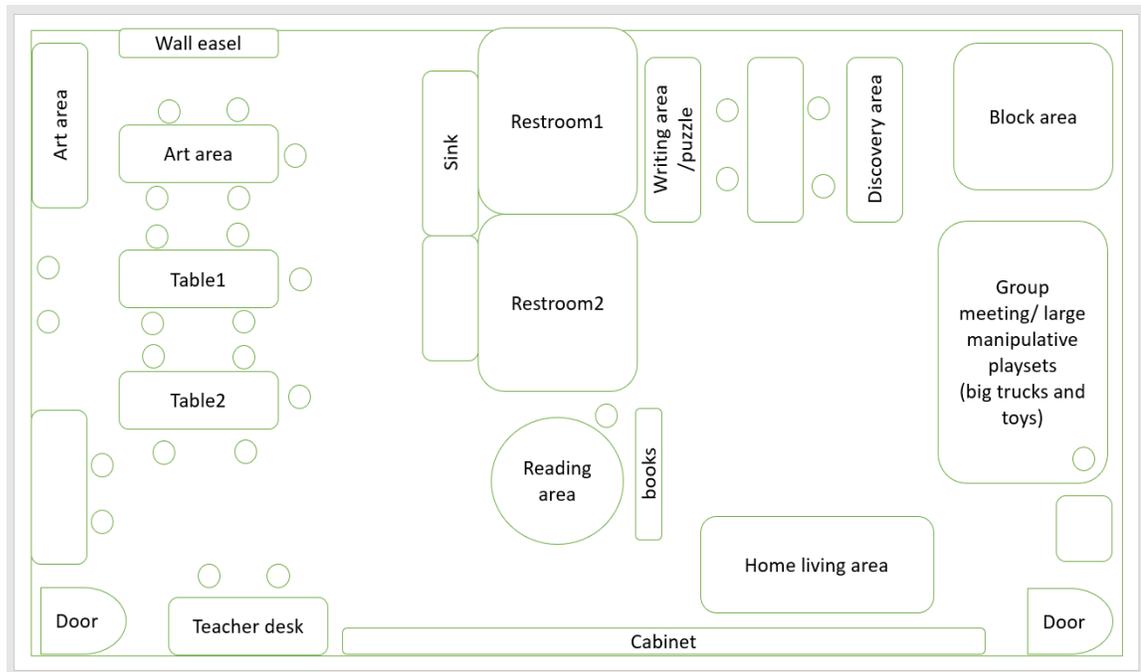


Figure 3. Map of the Classroom of Program C

## Data Analysis

### Preparations for Data Analysis

Because this is a qualitative study, there were several steps taken to address the reliability and validity of the data. The first step was to write a researcher's bias statement. The first bias statement that the first investigator wrote was more like a teaching philosophy or educational perspective. The two advisors advised to focus on the possible biases that the first investigator may have had through her experiences and

cultural background. The research team shared relevant research articles for preparing the researcher's bias statement. Then, the first investigator rewrote the statement and shared it again. Because the first investigator was a kindergarten teacher for several years and lived in countries other than the US., the rewritten bias statement was more based on these personal experiences and the possible biases from those experiences. This researcher's bias statement guided the whole data analysis process, and the first investigator often reviewed the statement to reduce possible biases during the data analysis process. The researcher's bias statement is attached as Appendix 2.

Second, in order to gain a deeper understanding and to complete holistic descriptions of children's social-emotional behaviors in the classroom, both field notes and two kinds of observations (natural and video recording) were used as data triangulation methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In the field notes, the first investigator documented where the play episodes were initiated and who were the main children in those episodes. The first investigator also described the behaviors or conversations that children shared before, during, and after their play. Most of the information in the field notes was things that video recording could not capture. In addition, the first investigator's short reflections or things that should be remembered for the next video recording were documented in the field notes. Moreover, though video was recorded for approximately 2 hours a day, the first investigator stayed and observed children for about 4 hours a day. Even during group meeting times, transition times, snack times, or outdoor play times, the first investigator observed children's interactions to gain a better understanding of the spatiotemporal contexts.

Third, the repeated reviewing of data and a consensus process within the research team helped to reduce possible biases and increase the reliability of this study. The recording of data gave the team opportunities to review the data multiple times. This repeated review process allowed the team to interpret and analyze the data from diverse perspectives. Furthermore, by sharing the data with research team, each member could review independently. In addition, the research team had discussions for reaching consensus. This consensus process proceeded over 6 months through online communications and off-line interactions. In cases when the research team did not reach consensus, the team reviewed the data together and discussed repeatedly until consensus was met. All these series of procedures helped to reduce possible biases and to ensure the reliability and validity of this study.

### **Phase 1: Initial Plan of Analysis 1: Coding**

For the first step of the coding process, the research team planned to find and designate the meaningful unit among the raw data. The research team defined the meaningful unit as the minimum amount of unit for representing children's social-emotional interactions and behaviors. For finding the meaningful units, the principal investigator and advisors planned to review all the video recordings repeatedly and independently and take notes to come to an agreement on meaningful units.

As the second step of the coding process, the research team intended to transcribe the meaningful units as verbatim as possible. This transcription, a running record, was expected to include the exact time and process of the meaningful segments, the

description of the context such as play area or kinds of play, children's physical and linguistic interactions, and the other children's or teacher's response regarding the interaction, etc. Field notes were also expected to be referred to for additional details regarding the episode. After completing running records, each meaningful unit was expected to be labeled and prepared to be coded.

As the third step of the coding process, the research team planned to develop coding categories based on the data collected and operationally define each category. For this work, the research team was expected to create categories and codes that fell into three general classifications: individual children's behavior (physical and emotional expression, verbalization), nature of the interactions (such as what happened before and after the interaction, duration of the interaction, intensity of emotions ), and context (time of day, classroom area, type of play or activity, number of children, the proximity of teachers, gender of children).

As the final step of coding process, the research team planned to re-watch the video and use the coding categories developed in step three to code the data. Two members of the team expected to code video separately and compare their codes. In instances where there might be disagreement on the code, the team members planned to come to an agreement through a consensus process on the code.

### **Phase 2: Initial Plan of Analysis 2: Interpreting the Data**

The main investigator planned to review the codes to describe the types and frequencies of children's social-emotional behaviors. The first step was to examine the

frequencies of different codes to determine what behaviors were observed most often. The second step was to look at the context of codes to identify meaningful patterns in children's observed behaviors. Specifically, for the first research question,

1. In 3 to 5 year-old-classrooms, what types of social-emotional behaviors do children exhibit during play in varying contexts?

The research team planned to examine the codes with children's behaviors and the codes regarding the nature of interaction to describe the types and frequencies of behaviors observed. Also, the research team planned to examine the context codes to determine what behaviors were evident in different contexts.

For the second research question,

2. Are there patterns in children's social-emotional behaviors? And if there are patterns, are the patterns related to features of the context?

The research team planned to look across the program settings, the children's behavior codes, codes regarding the nature of interaction, and the context codes. All the codes were expected to be examined if there were patterns.

### **Phase 3: Actual Procedure 1: Finding and Designating the Meaningful Unit**

As the actual first step, the research team discussed how to define and decide the children's social-emotional behaviors among raw data. The research team agreed that it would be an eligible datum if there were social interactions between peers such as dialogue, if a child's interactions or behaviors affected their peers or were affected by one of them, or if social or emotional delivery or exchange happened during the interactions.

Then, as planned, the research team reviewed the recorded data several times independently and took notes regarding the meaningful units. Each member selected the meaningful units among the raw data, brought their own table that was written with the timestamps of the meaningful units, discussed them, and compared them with each other.

The team sometimes reviewed the data together and interacted with each other for clarifying and qualifying of the meaningful unit from each other's understanding and tried to reach agreement on the timestamps of meaningful units. In this process, the research team faced the difficulties in designating meaningful units and questioned the function of meaningful unit. Sometimes, it was confusing to agree on meaningful units. For example, if two children played together for 30 seconds and one of them left the area to use the bathroom and returned to the play 1 minute later, how would this unit be measured? Should the unit be separated or combined together? Also, if there were two children playing together, soon after, there were one or two more children who came to them and naturally joined the play, how could this unit be designated? Should the two children's meaningful unit be separated from the third and fourth children's meaningful unit, or should the meaningful unit be understood as expanded without considering the joining children in the play? Or, if the recorded data were repeated starting and ending just because of the child passed by who did not return the consent letter, should this data be connected and understood as one meaningful unit or not? Together with the effort to get consensus on each researcher's timestamps of the meaningful units, these questions and doubts kept emerging and waited for resolution.

The conclusion of the research team regarding these questions was not to care about trivial changes, such as if the play was continued and the initial members were still related to their play. For example, even though one child left the play just because they needed to clean his or her nose and got back, it was understood as one meaningful unit regardless of a short break as the play continued and proceeded.

#### **Phase 4: Actual Procedure 2: Emerging Themes**

The decision not to be tied to each segment unit with timestamps, but to understand the play as a whole led this study to a new direction of analysis that was different from the original analysis plan. The first investigator reviewed the data not focusing on separating the units (any time line), but in a chronological order for getting more sense of contextual factors. At first, the researcher viewed the data to get a general understanding of children's play, interaction, behavior, and context, then briefly described them. Then, the researcher viewed the data from the individual child's perspective. For example, if there were two children in the unit, the researcher viewed the unit several times while focusing on each individual's perspective. These processes allowed important themes to emerge. There were unique and frequent behaviors in children's play relationships. The first investigator shared these themes with advisors. To get agreement on each theme, the first investigator designated several data and asked the team to review those data. Each researcher separately reported and developed themes while reviewing those data. Then, the research team met again and shared, exchanged, and compared ideas about the data and relevant themes. If there were differences

between the research team, there were discussions for coming to an agreement on them. In this process, the research team discussed the themes repeatedly while reviewing relevant data examples, examining how each datum fit each theme, then trying to define the theme together. Frequent, evident, and comprehensive themes were acknowledged as important.

After this process, the primary investigator summarized the description of the data in accordance with the themes. Then, the research team decided which data could represent or show each theme better and effectively. After picking up the most representative data, the primary investigator started to document the running record. Field notes were also referred for additional details regarding the data.

In addition to the decision regarding the meaningful units, there was another decision that was changed from the original plan of the study. At first, the study planned to address all of children's natural social-emotional behaviors during morning schedule including group meeting, snack, or transitions. However, some data were overlapped with the examples of data that children showed during their play. In some cases, the data except the free play were not evenly collected across programs. Sometimes, the data did not show children's natural social-emotional behaviors because teachers guided and made the children do specific behaviors, and in these cases, there needed another analysis plan for interpreting children's behaviors during group time, transitions or snack. Eventually, only children's free play time was analyzed as data.

### **Phase 5: Actual Procedure 3: Findings through General Descriptions and Themes**

The following types of analysis were conducted for each research question:

1. In 3 to 5 year-old-classrooms, what types of social-emotional behaviors do children exhibit during play in varying contexts?

The general descriptions and reflections of the classroom were described to explain the classroom context and its uniqueness, such as the composition of groups of children, classroom organization, teachers' involvement in children's play and guidance, and children's play patterns in each separate classroom. In addition, children's frequent social behaviors and emotional expressions were described. Both social behaviors and emotional expressions were classified, categorized, and elaborated with specific behaviors and expressions. Examples were provided for better understanding.

2. Are there patterns in children's social-emotional behaviors? And if there are patterns, are the patterns related to features of the context?

Several themes were emerged from children's interactions in play across programs. These themes were applied to analyze and explain both unique and common children's play behaviors across programs. Meaningful relationships between the themes and contextual factors were drawn and described.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **RESULTS**

The results are provided below according to research questions including data from observations and field notes. First is a description of the context based on the investigator notes and reflections. Then, the descriptions of children's behaviors summarize what types of social-emotional behaviors were displayed in each classroom from different preschool programs to address Research Question 1. The second section focuses on Research Question 2 and presents descriptions based on the themes of children's social-emotional behaviors and patterns between the emerged themes and contextual factors.

#### **Program Descriptions**

##### **Program A**

Program A is located on a university campus, so there were many people passing by outside. Besides the classroom teachers and parents, there were administrative workers, university students, therapists, and many assistants in the program. Children were accustomed to being with new and diverse adults, and they did not care about the investigator much. However, some children showed interest in the camcorder (they thought that it was a camera) or the investigator because the investigator did not interact with the children, which was different from other adults. The classroom teacher did not

introduce the investigator to the children, and some children's curiosity did not continue that long.

The classroom schedule seemed relatively flexible. There was no small or large group meeting times during the data collection period. During the data collection, the children spent more time outside of the classroom than the classroom schedule allotted. The children played outside even though it was raining. Some days, children played outside twice before lunch time. Often, there was a lot of time spent transitioning from one activity to another, such as from snack time to outdoor play; this lessened children's free play time.

Children came to the classroom at various times. Some children arrived at the classroom before 8 AM., and some children arrived at around 10 AM. Some parents spent time with their children for a while until their children felt more comfortable. Around 10 AM, most of the children arrived and had snack time. Children ate their snacks together. Children were expected to clean their seats after finishing their snacks, but some of them left their food on the table or under the table. After the snack time, children played in the classroom or outside.

The two classroom teachers' roles were equal, and they both led the children, though their roles changed each day. They interacted with parents, checked the children's conditions, interacted with the university students or assistant teachers, discussed the classroom schedule, did some activities such as painting or writing, changed diapers, prepared snacks and lunch, wrote curriculums, intervened in children's problems, and calmed down or helped children who needed help.

Children enjoyed playing in the block area, dramatic play area, or playing with manipulative toys. Especially girls enjoyed playing in the dramatic play area, and boys enjoyed playing in the block area. Children did not play in the art, reading, or writing areas as often, or there were less children in these areas. Teachers prepared and provided different toys in two or three days but did not introduce the toys to the children. Mostly, toys that the teacher prepared were new manipulative toys or puzzles. Most children seemed to enjoy the free play this class allowed.

Children enjoyed repetition in their play. They woke up and slept repeatedly in their play or put the baby to sleep again and again. It seemed like their routine observation and practice might develop their understanding and social skills. In other words, children who engaged in dramatic play, reflecting daily home lives, might be keen observers and active trainees in other situations. Also, children were easily influenced by others' behaviors while playing. As modeling, children followed the peers' behaviors naturally while playing. For example, one child petted his or her animal toys, and another child did the same. These imitating behaviors came from observation both conscious or unconscious and seemed to make the children be more engaged in their play, as well as solidified the social relationships. In addition, because girls used more interactions and eye contact while playing, imitating behaviors were more prominent in girls' play than boys.'

Children often changed toys, roles, activities, play areas, or their emotional states during play. Children often moved to different play areas, changed activities or toys in the middle of play, or changed their emotional states quite quickly. Children showed

their emotional state or arousal often and naturally. They rarely withheld their emotions and motives, so their responses were spontaneous, and they tended to put feelings ahead of plans. Children showed aggressive behaviors and frank emotional expressions when they felt anger or sadness. Since children quickly demonstrated their feelings, they easily changed their emotional states. Children cried and quickly changed their sad emotions during play. Some children interacted with others while playing, but some children played without interaction. Their focus was play or toys rather than interactions or forming relationships. When others took their toys, these children were very angry and became aggressive.

It was interesting that children formed and kept playmate relationships with the peers with whom they started to play on that day. Children in this program arrived at different times. So, their choice of playmate seemed to be affected by their arrival time. For example, A arrived at 9 AM and B arrived at 9:05 AM; they started to play together, and this relationship mostly kept on all day.

Children preferred cozy spaces, so they played in the cube, under the table, or sometimes inside the toy shelf. The cozy space seemed to make the children feel comfortable, in control, close to their peers, and able to share a secret with only the friends who were in the space. These reasons seemed to make the cozy space more attractive.

Children rarely used comforting words to peers who were crying or feeling sad. They seemed not to take care of others' feelings. Even though the peers who played

in the same area or in their play cried and showed social-emotional difficulties, children neither reported this to the teacher nor stopped their play.

### **Program B**

Program B is located in a quite quiet neighborhood. The program director was the classroom teacher. The classroom composition was different depending on days. Each child's schedule was different, too. Some children went home before lunch, some went after lunch, and the others stayed until around 5 PM. Nevertheless, children arrived at the classroom around 8:30 AM. The teacher interacted with the parents briefly, but the parents did not stay or play with their child in the classroom.

The children showed interest in the investigator. However, when the classroom teacher introduced the investigator and told them the investigator was not playing with them but working, the children showed less interest and did not talk to the investigator.

There were two group meetings before lunch. The first group meeting was short and took around 10 minutes. The second group meeting took around 25 minutes. Most children listened to the teacher during the group time, though the teacher gave the children several chances to speak. Some children had difficulties in sitting still and listening to someone. The teacher introduced new toys and showed them how to play, and the children greeted each other, talked about the date, day, and weather, or listened to story books during the group time.

The schedule and routine of the classroom provided diverse opportunities to meet and be familiar with various peers and experience different responsibilities. For example,

the teacher called several children for their snacks, while the other children kept playing. Snack groups enabled children to become familiar with different peers who were in the same snack group, and at the same time, the children who were not in the group could meet different playmates they had not played with before. In addition, feeding plants and animals, preparing snacks by turns, and experiencing responsibility for their own actions (e.g. sweeping out the dirt when a child dropped the vase) seemed like natural practices in their daily lives.

Children enjoyed playing in the dramatic play area and art area. The reading and writing areas were less popular than other areas. Children who played in the dramatic play area tended to embrace the peers who wanted to join them, but the children who played in the block area tended to limit the friends who they played with, and the toys, too. It seemed like children formed their relationships depending on the choice of play rather than their favor of peers. Some children seemed to prefer playing with a certain playmate, but this was a rare case.

The importance of classroom settings and toys was noticeable. Depending on the choice of toys, children's interactions were changed. If the children chose a certain toy that had more regulations or purposes such as Montessori toy, they would focus on their own toy and rarely use interactive words between peers. In addition, many Montessori toys were restricted to one player. They prevented not only peer conflict, but also prevented children from practicing and developing social skills. If the children chose the dramatic play area and toys, they created diverse contexts and situations in their imagination. Especially in this classroom, the materials in the dramatic play area were

diverse. They were not just kitchen things and dolls, but there were many kinds of dresses, scarves, and things that might stir the imagination. In addition, children were easily assimilated to the situation and prompted to play in the imaginary space and time. Nevertheless, the children used not only their imaginations but also problem-solving abilities, strategies for reasonable solutions, and their cognitive understanding in their dramatic play. In this classroom, the choice of toys showed this difference dramatically.

Children's play seemed relatively less repetitive and more creative. Especially, girls enjoyed playing in the dramatic play area and they often said, "Let's pretend ...". They suggested new ideas and themes for imaginary situations and showed some modeling while suggesting. The other peers followed the story, added a new story to it, or proposed a different story. They seemed satisfied with their creative play and seemed not to repeat the same pattern or play the next time.

Girls used more language and interactions, and thus their play was richer, funnier, more diverse, and engaging. Boys' play was repetitive, monotonous, less creative, and sometimes mimicked the girl's play patterns. The boys' dramatic play did not expand their stories as much as girls' play or boys did not collaborate with others as much as the girls. In addition, the boys' play often did not last as long as the girls.'

### **Program C**

Program C is located in the church. There were several classrooms in the church. There was one lead teacher and one assistant teacher in this classroom. The lead teacher

prepared activities and led the classroom. Mostly, the assistant teacher prepared art activities and was with the children in the art area. Also, she prepared snacks.

Children showed interest in about the camera, and most of them knew that the investigator took pictures. However, after the teacher told them the investigator was working, the children did not ask questions or try to interact with the investigator.

Children and parents arrived in the classroom around 9 AM. Most of the parents did not enter the classroom. They briefly interacted with the teacher and left. At the same time, children put their lunch boxes and water bottles in the baskets in the classroom by themselves.

The classroom schedule was set up, and the teacher helped children to follow the schedule. There were two group meeting times: one was shorter, while the other one took around 30 minutes. Children seemed to relatively be accustomed to sitting still and listening to the teacher. During the group time, one of the children introduced the date, day, and weather by taking turns. They prayed before snack, read one verse in the Bible, listened to a story book, and had a show and tell time during the group time. The teacher introduced Today's letter to them and children talked about the letters starting with today's letter. There was a regular self-reading time before the large group meeting.

Children seemed to enjoy playing with manipulative toys and there were many options of these toys. The teacher provided different kinds of manipulative toys every other day or so, so children experienced diverse toys. Children enjoyed playing in the block area, too. Except the required art activity for individual work, children chose their favorite play freely.

Children often played together. They played in a cooperative way, and girls tended to play together more with each other. Naturally, cooperative play needed more interactions and exchanges of opinions, and girls used these skills more than boys when they were playing with girls and with boys. On the other hand, boys tended to focus on the toy itself rather than interacting with their peers.

Children showed the responsibility regarding what was wrong and right. For example, their instant and self-centered decision could be changed when they thought that the teacher would know this, and thus, they revoked the initial decision and tried to resolve the problem in a more moral and idealistic way. Moreover, they participated in cleaning the classroom voluntarily the day when a Leprechaun visited and messed up the room. Even when it was a play time, most of the children cleaned up the classroom without the teachers' request or recommendation.

Children often showed empathetic and sympathetic behaviors. Facing a situation when someone was upset or sad, they tried to calm them down by making them laugh or providing comforting words to them. If they saw a friend in need, they voluntarily stopped their playing and tried to help the child.

Children's play seemed realistic, complicated, plausible, and like everyday life. When they played in the dramatic play area, they cooked while taking care of babies, packed the bag while answering the phone, or prepared meals for the family and their pet. When children played in the block area, they expected how the block would fit, compared how blocks fit, suggested ideas for constructing something together, and discussed the possibility of suggested ideas. When children played in the reading area,

though they did not read words, they spent quite a long time in the reading area. They described the pictures in the book and shared opinions, thoughts, and their own experiences. When they played with the fire engines, they played a role, such as a firefighter, reporter, or rescuer.

Children's attention duration when playing with a specific toy, in a specific area, and with a specific playmate seemed relatively long. They stayed and played in one area over 20-30 minutes with the same playmates. Sometimes, they sustained and developed their play episode with the same playmates in one area during the whole play time.

Children often used negotiating words during play, such as, "Guys, what about this?" Though they did not always come to an agreement or compromise their opinions easily, they were practicing negotiations often.

Some children showed a more static relationship with a particular child. They designated their playmate and showed more comfortable and stable behavior when they were together. They played together almost always and interacted more closely than with others (e.g. They often whispered to each other when they were with other children.). Most of them were the same gender, such as two boys, or two girls.

### **Types of Children's Social-Emotional Behaviors**

The program description is based on the researcher's reflections about the classroom. Research question 1 is addressed through the general types of social-emotional behavior observed in the classrooms. The general types of social-emotional

behavior fall into social behaviors and emotional expressions. Each of these types of behaviors are described below.

### **Social Behaviors**

A variety of social-emotional behaviors were observed during play in the classrooms. Social behaviors during play could be categorized broadly as prosocial or conflict behaviors.

### **Prosocial Behaviors**

Shaffer defines prosocial behaviors as any benevolent actions, such as sharing, comforting or rescuing, cooperating or helping, or making others feel good (2009). However, based on the observed data through this study, this study defines prosocial behaviors as children's considerate behaviors, such as cooperating, sharing, or caring behaviors during play. For this definition and categorization, all of the children's social behaviors were collected from running records and data summaries, examined, analyzed, and categorized. Prosocial behaviors that were observed included the following: cooperating, sharing, and caring behaviors.

Cooperating behaviors include suggesting ideas or opinions, accepting peers' suggestions, taking turns, requesting or asking peers for permission to play or toys, providing options to peers, requesting help, asking opinions, asking to play a role, deciding roles together, negotiating, suggesting trading, and constructing or making things together. During cooperative play, children suggest ideas, request help, take turns,

negotiate, and make something together. Children respect each other's role in their play and maintain the play together. Children consider peers in their play as much as themselves.

Sharing behaviors are a step further than cooperating behaviors, in that children often initiate the play or relationships. Sharing behaviors include accepting peers into a playgroup, sharing toys or things, showing their accomplishments, and responding to peers' accomplishments. Children open and offer opportunities to the peers who are not currently in their play. They regard other peers who do not belong to their playgroup as much as themselves.

Caring behaviors are exhibited in explaining or guiding how to play, waiting for peers' turn together, yielding, agreeing to a request from a peer, taking care of peers' emotions, helping peers, caring for peers who need help, comforting, protecting peers from hurting, making peers have fun, encouraging peers, complimenting peers, showing thumbs up posture, clapping hands, or nodding head in agreement. Caring behaviors are considered the most benevolent behaviors and a step further than sharing in that children often value others' emotions more than themselves and work for others by taking the peers' perspectives.

One example of prosocial behavior occurred in the art area. Child K and I were drawing their own paintings in the same table. They talked about to whom they wanted to give their paintings. While talking about this, they realized that they all could be each other's best friends and one friend could be the best friend of both of them. At first, they drew separately on their own paper, then, they agreed with each other about drawing

together. K and I kept interacting while listening to and responding to each other. I offered and shared her paper with K gladly and this made K share hers with I. They played together and had fun while making their mutual work.

K and I were in the art area. They both were drawing something with paint. K said, "This is for C" while looking at her picture. Then, I said, "Yes, but she is my best friend." K said, "She is my best friend." When K said this, she emphasized "my" while putting her right hand on her heart. One of the friends who was in the art area, N said, "It doesn't matter, guys. She is. We are all best friends." The friend explained they all could be the best friend of each other. I said, "Now, C is my best friend, K's best friend, and your best friend" while pointing to K and N in the art area. I said, "You and you and me are best friends" while pointing to both K and N. After saying this, I dotted on her paper. K was listening to them and dotted once on I's paper. I nodded her head while smiling and K looked at I. The dot which K drew was bigger than I's. K asked, "Perfect?" I answered, "Yes." K suggested, "Let's make it together." I answered soon, "Yes." They started to draw together on I's paper. K said, "I will share this" and brought the purple paint to I's side. I said, "You can also use this, if you want." I put the green color paint closer to K. K said, "That doesn't mix. I need another brush." Then, K brought another brush and dipped the brush into the green paint. K dotted several times with green color paint on I's paper. I started to dot with orange paint and shouted, "Look. Look at this color. I made it all by myself" while pointing at one of her dots. K watched and responded, "Wow." Then, K dotted with green color on I's paper and said, "Look at this." I watched it and responded, "Um." K said, "That's green." K and I dipped and

drew some dots on I's paper for a while. I laughed while looking at their painting. I asked, "It's fun, right?" K answered, "Right." (Program B, day 4, play 1.2, 0000-00206)

When K dotted on I's paper, I did not feel upset about this, nevertheless the painting was different from her previous painting. After dotting on I's paper, K waited for I's response. I shared her paper and expressed her acceptance with a smile and by nodding her head. I's positive response made K share the color and I shared hers, too. When I showed her work to K, K responded positively, and I responded as well when K showed hers.

### **Conflict Behaviors**

Children also exhibited behaviors associated with conflict. Shantz and Hartup (1992) define conflict as a hostile and opposite state between each other. In this study, children's behaviors associated with conflict are defined as a contrary concept to prosocial behaviors and classified as physical conflict and relational conflict. Physical conflict behaviors that were observed included aggressive behaviors such as fighting, hitting, pushing, kicking, shaking, pressing, scratching, snatching, stamping feet, pinching, spitting, yelling, shouting, screaming, throwing toys, teasing, disturbing, making peers cry, or upsetting peers. Physical conflict is more explicit, direct, aggressive, abrupt, unregulated, and momentary, but the influence of these behaviors lasts longer to the peers' emotions.

On the other hand, relational conflict is relatively implicit, indirect, and often purposeful and deliberate with the intention of dominating and controlling peer

relationships. Relational conflict was observed through the following behaviors: blocking, resisting peers joining in the play, refusing to allow other children to join in the play, arguing over toys, hiding toys, taking peers' toys, ignoring peers, rejecting peers' thoughts or opinions, criticizing, not caring about peers' emotions or feelings, insisting upon their own opinions regardless of the context, ordering, directing without asking opinions, warning, threatening, scaring, or glaring at peers.

One of the examples of conflict behaviors occurred in the reading area. Two children fought over the same toy, phone. Child W wanted to get the phone and child G did not yield it. W did not give up and tried to take it away without G's permission. During this tussle, G hit W. They both did not understand, listen to, wait for, yield, or ask for help.

G laid down on the reading area floor, and W was sitting in front of G. G was holding a phone in her right hand. G stretched both her legs and kicked W's face, neck, and shoulder. G was wearing sandals. The kicking continued until W broke into tears. W defended against the kicking with his hands, but soon after, he started to cry. As soon as W cried, G stopped kicking and sat. W cried more loudly, and he was getting calm. W wiped his eyes with a hand. Still crying, W said, "Put it down. I want it." W pulled the phone that G had, and G pulled it for keeping. They pulled the phone from each other. Then, W took the phone except the battery. It seemed like W got most of the phone, but he did not get the battery. G held the battery and hit W with the battery. Then, G crouched down and hid the battery at her stomach. W stretched his arm and tried to take the battery (Program A, day 1, play 9, 0000-0150).

## **Emotional Expressions**

There were a variety of emotions that children exhibited. The emotions broadly were divided into two big categories, positive and negative emotions. Positive emotions exhibited through smiling or laughing. Negative emotions were mostly anger, sadness, distress. The negative emotions were expressed through crying, yelling, or physical aggression.

## **Positive Emotions**

Positive emotions were more commonly observed than negative ones. Positive emotions that were observed included the following.

- Happy (enjoyed, delighted, satisfied, accomplished something)
- Excited
- Awed

One example of positive emotions happened in the block area. There were four children, C, K, S, and E. They were discussing what to make together with wood blocks. Children suggested their own ideas and listened to each other. While S suggested his idea, he moved a little bit, and the block in front of him fell. E and C saw this and laughed. S laughed, too. All looked at each other while laughing. E said, "Look at this." She made the wood block hit the toy figurine, and the toy figurine was buried by the block. S piled one long block on another block. S slightly hit the bottom block and made the upper fall. E and C looked at this and laughed. While S kept making the blocks fall and piling them, children laughed whenever the upper block was falling (Program C, day

4, play 2, 0000-0230). At first, the children tried to decide what to make together. They could not reach agreement on what to make, then they made each other laugh and laughed together.

### **Negative Emotions**

Negative emotions that were observed included the following.

- Sad
- Angry
- Nervous
- Distressed

There was an example of children's negative emotions in the dramatic play area. There were three children A, B, and W. A was holding a baby tiger toy with both her arms and looked like she soothed a fretful baby. W suggested the idea that they mail the tiger, but A did not accept this idea. W suggested his idea again, but it was refused again. A and B teamed up against W. B said that A and B would mail W rather than the baby tiger toy. W rejected this strongly while saying "No." This made B angry and B hit, shook, and grabbed W's arm roughly. W looked threatened by B and B's reaction and later said "I will never be with you." W hid himself behind the cushion. He looked relieved soon, but they still argued about it, and A threw a toy at W (Program A, day 1, play 3, 0345-0757). In this example, when W's idea was rejected, and his peers threatened him, he became sad and nervous.

## **Description Based on the Themes**

The second purpose of this study was to discern any patterns that might be evident in children's play. Specifically, the second research question was: Are there patterns in children's social-emotional behaviors?

Within the observations, there were three patterns or major themes in children's social-emotional behaviors across classrooms of three different programs. The themes are power, teamwork, and social-emotional difficulties. In the section below, these themes are described, and some specific behavioral observations are provided to illustrate the theme. A complete record of all behaviors classified under each theme is provided in the appendix.

### **Power**

Power is a differential in peer interactions, in that one or more children direct(s) others to follow their lead, ideas, and/or play. Children may use language, play plan, voice, facial expression, and toys as leverage of their power in the peer interactions. Explaining or speaking their play plan but not accepting the others' suggestions, using a loud voice, threatening face, and monopolizing an important toy and limiting it from others are examples of power that children with power show. Power does not include negotiation or decision making. Rather the child with the power is "in charge" of what happens during play and how the play unfolds or occurs. Children without the power or with less power may check in with the children with power about what they can do, what

toys they can play with, and how the play should happen. Below are some examples of how children exhibited power during play.

### **Leading Play by Commanding, Ordering, Controlling, and Ignoring**

Children with power often commanded and ordered their peers regarding what they needed to do, interrupted them, and ignored peers' ideas or opinions that might change their original play plan. These behaviors allowed the children with power to solidify their play plan and made the children without power conform to the direction of the children with power. For example, in the interaction described below, child A led the play by ordering B what to do, ignoring B's thoughts, and interrupting B. The children were playing in the dramatic play area with a mailbox, baby tiger toy, and an envelope when the following interactions were observed.

-A showed her runny nose to B, and B laughed. A ordered B, "Go get a tissue for me, please." Soon, B ran to get the tissue and came back with it.

-B tried to say something. At this moment, A interrupted her by saying, "Guess what?" louder (Program A, day 1, play 2, 0000-0607).

The second example of a child exhibiting power by planning and directing play sequence occurred when child C and G were playing with the student helper in the dramatic play area. They acted like they were a waitress and customers. C planned and directed the whole play sequence and designated G and the adult their roles and turns in the play. For instance, C ordered G or the student helper to cook the food. G played a role as a cook. Next, C ordered the student helper into the cook role, saying "You have

to cook.” C directed the roles, turns, the length of each role, and the whole play (Program A, day 1, play 4, 0000-1012).

An additional example of a child exhibiting power by making the peers follow the play plan occurred among child D and other peers, I and A, playing with the alphabet puzzle. After finishing a dramatic play, I and D sat next to the puzzle shelf. D designated the puzzle for I, saying “You do this, and I do this.” D quickly finished her puzzle. Then, D picked up the alphabet puzzle, and showed the other girls, I and A, how to play with the puzzle in her way (finding the spot for a piece of alphabet puzzle with three steps while shouting, “Tick tack tock”). D corrected I and A when they did not do it in her way (“No, no, no. Don’t do it. I will show you. Like this.” Then D took the puzzle piece from them and demonstrated her way of playing), and encouraged them to follow (“Yes, that’s how you do it.”). The other two children, I and A, naturally imitated D’s way of doing and D kept explaining and leading while they completed the puzzle (Program B, day 3, play 2.5, 0424-1001).

One observed difference between the third example and the other examples is that in the third case, child D acknowledged when peers accorded with her way of playing. Child D tried to show, fix, or compliment peers when they followed her ways of playing. This seemed less directive than other children’s exercise of power because she often acknowledged other children’s way of playing rather than ignoring all attempts except hers.

### **Monopolizing Important Toys and Not Allowing Others to Play**

Children with power often owned and monopolized important toys in their play and restricted others from playing with them. Owning practical toys and controlling the toy gave the children more power and discretion than the children without power. Children with power rarely shared the toy with peers, and sometimes they took toys from children without power without asking their permission. The following example showed how child A owned the baby tiger toy and a card throughout the play and did not allow her peer B to play with them. Though B found a stethoscope and told A how to apply it as a leash for the baby tiger toy, A took the stethoscope from B without asking permission. A had the baby tiger, card, and stethoscope until the play ended. A and B played in the dramatic play area as they exhibited these interactions.

-As soon as B touched the top of the mailbox, A stood up and pulled the mailbox away from B, and this made B take her hands off the mailbox and step back from it.

-When A showed the card to B, B smiled and stretched both her arms to get the card, but A drew her arm back to keep the card away from B.

-B wanted to touch the baby tiger toy and stretched her arms slowly toward the baby tiger toy. A blocked it by closing the mailbox where the tiger toy was. Then, A said, "You can't."

-Then, when A put the tiger toy in front of the mailbox, B tried to put the tiger back into the mailbox. A yelled, "No, no. I will put him."

-One boy approached the mailbox and tried to open it. A stood up and yelled, "No."

-A held the baby tiger toy in her arm, and B looked at A with envious eyes.

-B picked up the stethoscope and showed it to A, and said, “This is the leash.” A approached B, took the stethoscope from B, and showed how to put the tiger head through the stethoscope. B tried to get the stethoscope back, but A pulled it to herself (Program A, day 1, play 2, 0000-0607).

Another example showed how child A controlled and limited child J’s role and J’s chances to play with the toys during play. The interaction occurred in the manipulative area. As A started the slide play with manipulative toys and the baby tiger toy, J often watched A and joined the play naturally. However, A limited J’s role. A did not allow J to touch or hold the baby tiger toy or manipulate the slide. J picked up the tiger and returned it to A only when A dropped the tiger. J touched the end of the slide cautiously and quickly only when she needed to (Program A, day 3, play 5, 0112-0940).

These examples showed how the children with power made the children without power play a passive role in the relationship by limiting their roles in the play and chances of playing with toys.

### **Using Aggressive Voices and Facial Expressions**

Children with power often yelled at their peers and showed a stubborn or threatening face to exert power. These behaviors scared the children without power or made them follow the children with power. On the other hand, these behaviors made the children with power look stronger and gave them more authority. Moreover, these behaviors made the children’s words sound more decisive and bold.

The first example between child A and child B showed how A responded when B and a new boy approached A's toy. A and B played in the dramatic play area with a baby tiger toy and a mailbox. While A looked at the card, B tried to put the tiger toy back into the mailbox. As soon as A noticed this, she yelled, "No, no. I will put him." Also, one boy approached the mailbox and tried to open it. A stood up and yelled with a threatening face, "No." B and the new boy looked surprised and cowered at A's facial expression and voice. They stopped what they were doing and watched A or left the area when they heard A yelling (Program A, day 1, play 2, 0000-0607).

The second example of exhibiting power occurred in the reading area. This showed how children used their facial expressions to overpower their peers. When R and H finished reading the first book that R selected, R looked excited to choose the next book and H looked a little exhausted. When R saw H was half-hearted about continuing to read, R glared at H. H lowered her shoulders, sighed slightly, and joined to read the book R chose (Program C, day 1, play 3, 0000-1001).

Another example that showed children's powering behavior with their facial expression was observed in the dramatic play area. Child K was a pet owner and V was her cat. K prepared the food and V followed her. After preparing, K sat on the chair and started to eat. K told V to eat with a firm voice and glaring eyes. V did not talk to K in this way. V followed K's direction and order (Program C, day 1, play 4, 0000-1001).

The observed difference between the first example and the others was that the first child was more obvious and explicit in expressing or arguing her point. The first child, A, exhibited and used more menacing faces and a loud voice explicitly while using

her whole face for expressing herself and yelling, and the latter children used more decisive words and tones for defining their positions while using their eyes rather than their whole faces.

### **Teamwork**

Teamwork includes behaviors which come out of consideration for others. Children value not only the opinions or feelings of themselves but also consider opinions and feelings of the peers near them. Children exhibiting teamwork may work as a group to make decisions together and pursue common goals as well as taking turns. For this theme, children may use negotiation, mutual decision making, or suggest options for others. Children exhibit teamwork by including their peers and acknowledging and accepting their roles in the play. Teamwork is also shown in children's cooperative play when they act out their roles in the play while respecting peers' roles. Teamwork involves prosocial behaviors such as helping and comforting peers voluntarily.

### **Accepting Others into Their Play, Sharing Toys with Peers**

Children sometimes accepted new friends into their play and engaged with them. Children made a space for them and shared toys with them. Sometimes, accepting friends and sharing toys seemed so natural. Without asking permission verbally or without giving permission verbally, children naturally accepted and were accepted by the friends and joined the play. In this case, there seemed a need for children to display some social strategies, such as observing or showing responses to their peers.

The first example occurred near the block area. This example showed how child H shared his toys with his friends. A, W, and H were next to the window with dinosaur miniatures. It looked like H had all of the miniatures, around 20 dinosaur miniatures, and W and A were watching H displaying the dinosaurs on the window shelf. When W said he knew one of the dinosaurs, pointing to the blue one, H gave it to W. Then, H picked up three more miniatures. W asked A what she wanted. A said one of dinosaurs that H already picked. At first, H said “No,” holding the dinosaurs in his arms. Then, he looked down and seemed to count the dinosaurs that he had. He asked her how many she wanted and shared one with her. They started to play with their dinosaurs (Program A, day 1, play 5, 0000-0134). Though H did not share his toys with his peers from the beginning, H started sharing gradually. This sharing allowed the two children, who were initially observers of the play, to become participants in the play.

Another instance of children working together was when child E accepted child A in their play. A wept for some reason, and no one tried to comfort her. She comforted herself while walking in the classroom and looking for something fun. A found B and E playing in the reading area. They pretended that under the table was a jail and covered the four sides of the table with four cushions. When A approached B and E, she asked about the play and if she could play with them. E explained their play to her and allowed A to join the play. A looked happy (Program A, day 3, transition 2, 0310-0600). A asked E’s permission, and E allowed A to join the play. As A joined the play, the play became funnier and expanded with more roles and ideas. In addition, A felt better.

The next example showed how child K shared a variety of toys with her peers. K, V, and N were playing with manipulative toys. V seemed like she did not know what to do. K started to play and asked V to be involved. Then, N asked K and V to give the pizza toy to him, and they did. A little later, K found a toy broom in the basket and tried to give the broom to N. At that time, K noticed that V wanted the broom. K gave it to V, and V played with the broom for a while (Program C, day 2, play 6, 0000-0448).

One observed difference between the first example and the third one was that the child in the first example hesitated or refused to share at first and changed his mind gradually. On the other hand, the child in the last example did not hesitate to share toys. Moreover, the child in the first example owned many miniatures, and thus, even though he shared one dinosaur for each child, he still had many dinosaurs compared to the two children. However, the child in the third example owned only one each, a pizza toy and a toy broom, and she did not hesitate to share the toys. The third observed difference between these two instances was the child in the first example did not look at his peers when he decided to share, and instead, he looked at the toys that he had and counted them before he shared them with peers. The child in the third example looked at V's face and noticed that V wanted to play with the toy and shared it. It might be because the child in the third example knew and was more accustomed to the sharing rule in the classroom through her experiences (socialized), focused on the relationship rather than owning a toy, or it was just a difference of child characteristics.

### **Taking Turns, Waiting for their Turns or their Peers**

There were several occasions when children needed to wait for their turns or take turns to play with certain toys. Because of children's preferences for playing with specific toys or limited toys, taking turns was required at times. In this case, children needed some strategies to wait for their turns. Children sometimes assisted their peers to wait for their turns. Children sometimes let their peers know how many minutes or times they had left until their turns and kept interacting with them, so that their peers would get their turns. These behaviors encouraged their peers who waited for their turns to maintain mutual trust and their relationships.

The first example happened in the trampoline area. Child B and child A waited for each other while playing on the trampoline because the mini trampoline limited play to only one child. Child B was jumping on the trampoline with the baby tiger toy, and child A was waiting for her turn while watching B. As B showed off a spin, A said she also could do the spin and showed her spin, too. B said that she was almost done and needed three more minutes. They interacted with each other and followed each other's behaviors. When A sat on the floor, B sat on the trampoline. When B hopped on one foot, A followed her. After B played for a few more minutes on the trampoline, she gave a turn to A, and A started to play on the trampoline. While A played on the trampoline, B watched A and waited for her in front of the trampoline. After finishing playing on the trampoline, B played one more time. Then they decided what to play next together and moved (Program A, day 2, play 4, 0000-0722).

Next, the following interaction was between child R and child E. They were playing in the manipulative area with two other children. Child R waited for her turn to play with the toy which child E had. R was clear about what she wanted, and E expressed to R that she needed to wait for her turn. R waited for her turn while joining the guessing game with other peers, and finally E gave the toy to R (Program C, day 5, play 8, 0000-0940).

Children who wanted to play with certain toys but needed to wait for their turns often exhibited strategies such as interacting with their peers or finding alternative play while waiting for their turn, so that they could successfully obtain and play with the toys without any conflict. Also, children who played with the toys which their peers wanted, often helped their peers while exhibiting strategies such as interacting with them or telling them how much time they had left before their turns.

### **Using Skills of Negotiation or Mutual Decision Making**

Children interacted with each other in a ping-pong way. Children did not disregard or ignore others' opinions or remarks. Children responded to each other's words, and this showed how they listened to each other and waited for each other's responses, opinions, and thoughts, showing that they respected others and valued others' thoughts. Also, when children needed their peers to do something, they did not command or order but asked peers and let them decide. This was a respectful way of asking others for help and different from when children demonstrated their power in their play. In addition, even though the peers' suggested ideas or opinions might change the play plan,

children did not appear upset and often returned positive feedback to their peers. Or, when they suggested new ideas, they waited for others' responses and tried to accept them rather than standing by their own opinion.

Children often used the word "we" rather than "I." Children pursued their mutual goals through their play, so they waited for others' responses, and sometimes tried to persuade others with words. Children seemed to enjoy the pleasures of being together, doing things together, and playing together. In spite of children knowing that they would need to have more patience and make sacrifices when playing "with others" rather than "alone", they still tried to play together rather than separate themselves.

Some examples showed how children tried to suggest their ideas, listen to each other, respond, keep suggesting, and negotiate as decision making processes. In the first example, children kept suggesting ideas for building something together using wooden blocks. Four children, C, K, S, and E were playing in the block area. Wooden blocks were spread on the floor, and S sat on the wooden block. K suggested, "Guys, how about we make a playpark. If we make a playpark, then we can do whatever we want in the playpark?" C said, "Guys, I have an idea. What about making a huge block house with all those long blocks?" E said, "How about we make a block hiding place?" S and C laughed about this. S said, "There is no such a thing." C suggested his idea again, "How about we get all the long blocks and make a house?" S laughed and said, "No. We can't make a house. It will take forever" (Program C, day 4, play 2, 0000-1013). After they suggested their ideas, children listened to others' opinions of them. They spent some

time to discuss and decide what to make, though it was not easy to compromise and decide on something together.

The second incident happened in the block area. There were two children, E and R. R had many kinds of miniature toys, and E tried to join the play. When E came to R, R expressed that she did not want E to play with her. R blocked E when she came close to her. E asked R not to push her and reminded her to share toys. Then, R shared several toys with her. R showed interest in the dog E had, and E suggested R trade. E suggested that if R gave the toy dog to her, she could give one dog and a cat back. R agreed with this and traded. They both looked satisfied because they got something that they each wanted (Program C, day 1, play 5, 0326-0751). In this example, child E tried to negotiate for getting the toy that she wanted. She neither took the toy from R, nor asked the teacher for help. Nevertheless, she successfully joined the play and got the toy that she wanted by explaining and suggesting trading ideas.

In pursuing common goals or mutual satisfaction in their play, children interacted with each other more often while listening to, responding, agreeing, asking others' opinions, requesting, and rejecting other's thoughts less. Children showed that they valued their peers' as much as their own decisions, opinions, and plans, while they kept communicating during play and acknowledging their peers in their play.

### **Acting Out Roles in the Play while Respecting Peers' Roles**

Children played cooperatively. In play, there were diverse roles and children enjoyed taking various roles. Though children might have an obvious agreement process

for taking roles, in many cases, the agreement process was not shown explicitly which meant taking roles seemed natural and agreeable. For example, when three children played together, each child might or might not claim what they want to do in the play, or one child might suggest each child's role and explain what they were expected to do in the play. In the latter case, the one child often led the play by explaining the story to others, and other children followed the play plan and enjoyed playing their roles. In any case, once the children had roles in the play, they carried out their roles in the play cooperatively.

The first example of cooperative role play occurred in the dramatic play area. Child G and B took their roles, a puppy and its owner, and changed their roles naturally while playing. G was standing close to the kitchen, and B was next to the mailbox. They looked for what to play with. B suggested that she could be a puppy, and then she laid down. G approached her and petted B's neck and face softly. Spontaneously, G played the pet owner, and B played the dog. They cared for each other, especially, the pet owner, G, as she took care of the dog, B. She brought toys and food, prepared the bed, and soothed B when she got peevish before sleep. Their roles changed naturally in their play, and B also showed her caring side to G when B was the pet owner and G became the dog. B prepared food for G and gave G her favorite toy, a baby tiger, when G wanted it (Program A, day 3, play 3, 0000-0740). In this example, children took their roles without discussion or any formal decision-making process. B's suggestion, "I can be a puppy" as well as lying down led G to be a pet owner. In the middle of the play, they changed their roles. The way they play their roles seemed to influence each other. They

showed the same pattern as before. For example, when the puppy laid down, the owner prepared the meal, soothed the puppy before bed time, and provided some toys for the puppy.

The second example was the play between four children. There were one or two children who led the play by describing or explaining their imaginary situation, which was a moon landing, and other children seemed to enjoy following the story. Their cube was a spaceship and the area around them was outer space. They reached the moon and Pluto and pretended to move on the moon when they reached it. A, T, O, and H were in the dramatic play area. They all were in the cube. A shouted, “We are on the moon!” A escaped the cube first and the other children followed. As A moved slowly like an astronaut, the other children followed. Then, T shouted that they needed to get on the spaceship because there was an alien. Other children came back to the cube except O. O danced and spun around the group meeting area. While looking at O dancing, T shouted, “Come on, mom!” with a worried voice. T told the other children that she would search the moon for the mom and the other children followed. After searching, they came back to the cube, while still worried about mom, O. Then, A and T started to argue if Pluto was a planet or not. A said that Pluto was not a planet anymore because it was too small. T suggested they go to Pluto to check it out and A agreed with this. Their spaceship took off and they said goodbye to their mom, O. When they arrived on Pluto, T got out of the spaceship and danced. The two children followed T (Program B, day 1, play 2.3, 0000-1038). In this example, though two children led while others followed, all of the children

listened to each other carefully and followed the story altogether. Their play was connected and developed naturally.

In the third example, Child K, V, and R played with the fire engine toys. K had a big fire engine and two miniature policewomen. R had a small fire engine, and V had a fire extinguisher. K explained something to R, and V let K know that there was a fire behind her and pointed at the fire. R yelled, “Mommy, mommy,” and K was ready to go. K went to the scene of the fire and tried to extinguish the fire. A small fire engine escaped the area. V connected the hose of the fire extinguisher and made a sound. V grabbed the walkie-talkie and asked K to grab hers. They talked through the walkie-talkies (Program C, day 3, play 6, 0219-0630). Children played their roles depending on what they had. For example, if a child had the fire toy, they threw the fire toy, another child who had a phone or walkie-talkie yelled or reported the fire, and the other ran to the place to put out the fire. Sometimes there was a child who took the responsibility for describing or explaining the situation. All children understood the situation quite well and participated in the play together while taking their own roles in the play.

In order to take on roles and act out the roles in the play, children observed, listened to what their peers said, responded to peers’ requests or explanations of the story context, and acted properly or creatively. In order to continue and maintain their play, children were attentive, receptive, responsive, reflective, and prompt.

### **Helping and Comforting Peers Voluntarily**

When children were asked to help their peers, they often chose to help at their discretion. These helping behaviors seemed to be bi-directional because they often connected, continued, and exchanged with helping behaviors. For example, when one child got help from the other, they tried to return the favor or help the other later. Moreover, children were concerned and responded to their peers' emotions; they did not ignore or dismiss their peers' emotions. They showed empathetic and sympathetic behaviors in their own way when their peers were sad and tried to comfort their peers.

The first example showed how child B chose to help his peer, J, at his discretion when J requested help. J and B were playing in the reading area. J asked B if he could help her, and B responded that he could help her without hesitation.

-J put the cushion and the baby tiger toy on the couch and moved to the next area. While moving, J asked B, "B, do you help me?" B watched her and readily answered, "Sure." (Program A, day 2, play 2, 0000-0209).

Another interaction showed how children tried to comfort their peers when the peers cried and looked sad. The incident occurred when children were in the block area. Child E was crying because one of her playmates called her "little baby." Children around E stopped playing and watched E crying. C said, "We are not young." R was writing something on the board next to them and approached E and shared her experience, saying, "Somebody called me a baby but now I am four and five." Soon, children called each other "little girl" or "little boy" because they knew this joke made E

feel better and laugh (Program C, day 3, play 7). Children tried to comfort their friend in their own way. One child tried to comfort her while saying that they were not little, another child tried to comfort her while sharing her own experience, and all of the children around her stopped playing and focused on the crying child's emotions. As they noticed that jokes made her laugh and feel better, all of them made a joke and laughed.

The third example also revealed children's comforting behaviors, as child V cared for her peer K when she was sad. They were playing with manipulative toys. They were playing on the carpet and it was very quiet. K looked sad and depressed. V looked at K and gave her one of her toys. It did not help K feel better. K cried a little without a sound. V came close to K and sat next her. V listened to K for a while. Soon, K looked better. They started to play with toys and K laughed sometimes. When K found it difficult to dress her toy, V tried to help her. However, it did not work. Then, V took off the clothes from her toy and gave it to K (Program C, day 1, play 7, 0135-0905). As V noticed K was sad/frustrated, V tried to comfort and please K. V listened to K carefully and sat next to K. V helped K to dress the toy in clothes and offered her own toy clothes to K.

Children who helped or comforted their peers considered others' emotions. They were willing to stop their own play and cared about peers' feelings which might mean that they prioritized peers' emotions over their own emotions or pleasure. They tried to help them to feel better in various ways. They comforted their peers with words, by being next to them, listening to them carefully, playing with them, and making them laugh.

### **Social-Emotional Difficulties**

Social-emotional difficulties are various difficulties that children exhibit in their social-emotional interactions and relationships. Social-emotional difficulties can be applied if at least one child exhibits distress or difficulties in their peer interactions. Difficulties may include children's unregulated behaviors such as not being able to control their emotions or behaviors and acting aggressively toward their peers around them. These children may not consider others' feelings or emotions resulting from their behaviors. In addition, children's distress caused by their playmates' aggressive behaviors toward them is included in social-emotional difficulties. Moreover, children who witness their peers' aggressive behaviors or distress but disregard or not take care of others' feelings and behave indifferently, exhibit social-emotional difficulties. For instance, if A, B, and C are playing together, if A hits B, and B cries, and C ignores the A's hitting and B's emotions, the three children all experience social-emotional difficulties in different ways.

### **Conflict over Toys**

Children sometimes fought over the same toy. The conflict became more serious when neither of them yielded the toy, waited for their turn, suggested alternatives for sharing the toy, or asked for help from others. Though there were various toys and options of toys in the classroom, there seemed to be a priority on certain toys. Some children tried to get the toy immediately without considering their peers or situations, and take the toy by all means, sometimes using physical means. Some children tried to use

words, asking to share, or requesting peers yield, but still did not accept others' refusal and eventually became aggressive.

The first example of children's conflict over toys occurred in the reading area. Two children, G and W, fought over the toy phone. G had a phone, and W wanted to get the phone. When W approached G and tried to take the phone from G, G showed her unwillingness, anger, and resistance by kicking W's face and neck. W cried and yelled when he was attacked. Nevertheless, he did not give up, saying, "I wanna that phone." W grabbed the phone while holding her, though he did not hit her. W finally got the phone except for the battery. G held the battery in one hand, hit W, and pinched his arm with her other hand. After this tussle, W finally got the phone and the battery (Program A, day 1, play 9, 0000-0104). Because both G and W did not yield, they became more aggressive over the toy. One hit, kicked, and pinched their peer, and the other took the toy from their peer.

The second incident happened in the manipulative area. Child E, child G, the classroom teacher, and other children were in the same area. E played with different kinds of miniature dinosaurs. When E picked one of them, the teacher said the name of the dinosaur. E and the classroom teacher repeated this several times. G was playing with different toys next to them and showed interest in the dinosaur game. G approached E and her dinosaur toys. G picked up one of them and asked the teacher for the name of the dinosaur. The teacher let her know the dinosaur's name, and G repeated this, too. As the teacher left the area, G tried to take a couple of toys from E. E resisted G and wrapped her toys with her body, keeping them away from G. G pushed and pressed E's

neck with the purpose of getting more toys. The more E tried not to lose her toys and yelled, G's aggression became stronger (Program A, day 3, play 6, 0000-0242).

Another conflict over toys between child C and O occurred in the manipulative area. The two children C and O played together with the same flower blocks. When C asked O to give pink or purple pieces of blocks, O did not share and used more pink and purple pieces for her own toy. This made C upset and angry. C yelled that she wouldn't play with O and threw some pieces of toys in the direction where O was sitting (Program B, day 1, play 2.12, 0000-0448).

The observed difference between the last example and the other examples was children's physical aggression became more serious in the former cases, and the classroom teacher had to run to them hastily to intervene. In the latter case, child C threw a couple of toys at O, but it did not hurt her. C expressed her feelings and the reason for her feelings more specifically, and O listened to her. Though not immediately, O shared some toys later with C without the teacher's intervention.

### **Uncontrolled Behaviors, Aggressive Behaviors**

Children sometimes showed uncontrolled and aggressive behaviors. When children had different thoughts about something than other friends, they sometimes expressed this by yelling, showing threatening faces, or behaving aggressively. There were some children who showed their arousals or aggressive behaviors more often than others, regardless of context.

In the first example described below, two children were arguing in the reading area. Child G yelled to child W, “Go away,” several times with a threatening face. As G kept yelling this at W, W raised a cushion next to him. As soon as G saw this, she raised her hand and tried to defend herself. Then G shouted, “Put that down.” W put the cushion down at once. G yelled, “Put that down” again, even though the cushion was already down. Then, W grabbed the cushion, raised it again and buried his face in the cushion. G kept yelling, “Put that down.” W put the cushion in front of G. G shouted, “Put that down” more loudly. Then, G scratched W’s face. W started crying and wiped his face (Program A, day 1, play 11, 0000-0109). Though W put the cushion down at the request of G, it was G who yelled and scratched W’s face. Furthermore, G exhibited aggressive behaviors to W several times before this incident. G showed aggressive behaviors to certain peers but did not show any aggressive behaviors to other peers. W’s particular behaviors might have triggered G’s aggressiveness, or G might have been aggressive to certain peers including W.

The second example was the fighting between child W and child C. W lay down on the puzzle carpet, and C pushed him while shouting his name. C leaned against him and kept pushing him. W shouted, “Help me.” C pushed W almost to the end of the puzzle carpet, and at last W sat up. W pushed C’s head softly because her head was on his leg. C cried and yelled fiercely. W picked his leg up and moved (Program A, day 4, play 24, 0000-0056). In this example, two children fought over a space. C pushed W away from the puzzle carpet. C strangled W, and W tried to resist her force. When W tried to take C’s head from his leg, C screamed and cried fiercely.

The next example showed N's aggressive behaviors toward V. They were not playing together. V was walking slowly in the classroom pretending to be a dinosaur. V did not make a dinosaur sound, but his arms were stretched out in front of him. He was pretending to be a dinosaur with very careful movements. When he reached the group meeting area, there was N. N made a dinosaur sound and scared one child who was playing on the carpet, and V watched this. V was behind N and followed N's frightening behavior. Then, N quickly turned back and scratched V's face. V looked surprised and frustrated because it was sudden and very quick. N ran and hid himself in the cube. V watched N and looked upset (Program B, day 4, play 2.13, 0000-0127).

The observed difference between the latter example and the other examples was in the last example, there was no interaction before the sudden attack (scratching a face) between the two boys, V and N. They did not fight, argue over toys, squabble, or play together. Because V did not report this to the teacher, no one knew about this except the two children, V and N. This showed children's unprovoked attacks or aggressive behaviors sometimes happened in the classroom.

### **Feeling Distress because of Peers' Behaviors**

Some children felt distress because of peers' certain behaviors around them. In some cases, children seemed uncomfortable and anxious because peers yelled, screamed, or fought. These environments did not allow the children to have fun or enjoy playing. Some children wanted to join a playgroup, but when they were not allowed to join them, they felt distress. Children also felt distress when there was a misunderstanding between

their peers which started from a trivial misunderstanding. Some children often teased or bothered their peers around them and seemed to enjoy this. In this case, children felt distress because of the teasing and bothering.

In the following example, there were three children in the reading area. G and W were yelling at each other, and J was sitting between them. J looked uncomfortable. She covered her ears with her hands between the two yelling children. When G and W noticed that J was covering her ears, they stopped yelling. Then, J noticed that her peers stopped yelling. J uncovered her ears and said, “Is it we are talking?” (Program A, day 1, play 10, 0000-0122).

Then, the classroom teacher came to them and asked what happened. G answered that the yelling was W’s fault, but W did not answer. The classroom teacher asked W again if he was okay. W said, “I have no friend anymore.” The classroom teacher did not understand what W said because it was low and quiet. The classroom teacher asked W again, picked him up, and said something to him (Program A, day 1, play 10, 0000-0122). It seemed like W wanted to play with the two children, G and J. However, G did not accept W in their play. G’s aggressive behaviors and W’s crying were repeated while refused W. Moreover, W seemed like he did not know how to handle it. Their troubles were repeated.

The following interaction was between child S and child C. They were drawing something on the whiteboard. S often showed aggressive behaviors toward C. Whenever C drew something on the board, S erased C’s work or disturbed him while scribbling something over C’s drawing. When C got the eraser, S took it from him. S pulled C’s

ear and spat at him. C looked uncomfortable and distressed. When C stood and drew, S stood and drew. When C sat down, S followed him, and when C left the area, S followed him (Program C, day 1, play 8, 0000-0223). It seemed like S liked C and wanted to play with C, but he teased C a lot.

Children sometimes did not know how to deal with their emotions when they wanted to play with their peers, and their behaviors often made their peers distressed. Regrettably, the children repeatedly felt distress because they also did not know how to deal with those types of repeated and distressing interactions.

### **Apathetic Behaviors**

Children sometimes exhibited apathetic behaviors, like being different bystanders, when their peers were in trouble. Even though their peers were fighting, yelling, crying, or hitting each other, they did not report this to the teachers or anyone else, try to help them, or ask for help from others. They seemed to want to avoid getting involved in the tussles.

In the following example, child A and child J ignored child E and child G's tussle while witnessing them and playing on the same table. E played with different kinds of dinosaur miniatures. G showed interest in a toy that E played with and approached E and her dinosaurs. G tried to take E's dinosaurs without asking for permission. G pushed and pressed E's neck as E resisted her, not allowing G to take her toys. E yelled, and G's aggression became stronger. A and J were playing on the same table from the beginning and witnessed E and G's tussle and heard E's yelling. Though G and E yelled and

behaved aggressively next to them, , A and J did not do anything to stop them, did not pay attention to them, and , and kept on with their play (Program A, day 3, play 6, 0000-0242).

In the second example, child G and child W tussled with each other to get the toy phone in the reading area. G kicked W's face and neck to keep the toy. W cried and yelled. G hit W with a battery, hand, and pinched his arm. J saw this tussle. However, J did not mention the conflict and started to play with G (Program A, day 1, play 9, 0000-0104).

In the last example, child A was crying and looked sad. A walked and lingered around the classroom holding dolls in both her arms. No child asked about it or gave a word of comfort, even when A yelled while crying. A put her dolls in her cubby, stood in the middle of the classroom, and yelled. She went to the cubby, took her dolls, sat, and cried again (Program A, day 3, transition 2, 0000-0254).

It was not clear why children sometimes did not show interest or care about others' feelings, especially when they witnessed their peers who needed help. It might be that they became indifferent because they observed them often, because they simply did not know what to do and how to respond, or maybe there are other reasons.

### **Relationships between Themes and Contextual Factors**

For Research Question 2, important themes (patterns) are described above. The relationships between themes and contextual factors would be addressed as follows.

## **Differences in Children's Social-Emotional Behaviors Depending on Play Area**

Typically, children exhibited different social-emotional behaviors depending on play area. In certain areas, children interacted socially and played together in ways that were both positive and negative. Children tended to exhibit power, teamwork, and social-emotional difficulties in the dramatic play area or the block area. When children played in the dramatic play area, in many cases the interactions between children were interpreted as the themes, which were teamwork, power, or social-emotional difficulties. However, for example, when children played in the art area or played with certain toys such as Montessori toys, puzzles, or rubber band games that were limited to one player for the toy and did not allow children to play together, they focused on their own work or play. When children played in those area or played with those toys, there were fewer social interactions, even though they were in the same area or shared the space together.

For example, when children played in the art area drawing on the individual chalkboard, there were few interactions and conflicts (Program A, day 4, play 21, 0000-0617). On the other hand, children who played in the dramatic play area tried to create diverse stories that needed various roles, induced many interactions, and fostered cooperative play rather than playing alone (Program B, day 1, play 2.3, 0000-1038). In addition, depending on the choice of the toys, the frequency and tendencies of children's interactions were changed. When the children chose one of the Montessori toys with obvious objectives for developing and refining diverse senses and promoting independence by limiting to one player, they focused on their own toy and rarely used

interactive words between peers (Program B, day 3, play 2.1, 0000-0131). In many cases, toys for self-correcting usually had specific ways of playing and rules that were not flexible. Children needed to follow these ways and rules when they played with those toys.

### **Teachers' Role in Children's Social-Emotional Behaviors**

Teachers' role was important in children's play. As teachers had more work and responsibilities besides supervising play, interacting with children, and intervening in children's play, children exhibited social-emotional difficulties and power patterns often, and teamwork was less observed in their play. Teachers' interaction time with parents was extended if the range of children's arrival time was longer, and parents stayed in the classroom longer. Teachers sometimes needed to interact with other teachers, school administrators, college students, or adults who visited the classroom. Teachers sometimes filled out particular forms that were related to each child's development or the different curricular, such as lesson plans. Sometimes teachers helped with each child's physiological needs, such as preparing individualized food or changing diapers. As teachers had to do ancillary work besides play supervision, playing with children, or interacting with children, children exhibited social-emotional difficulties often, and they were repeated.

For example, though the conflict over toys between child G and child W was repeated, and G hit W several times, the teacher did not intervene with them immediately. W cried several times, and the teacher came to them. However, the teacher repeatedly

left, came to them, and asked what happened (Program A, day 1, play 9, 0000-0104; play 10, 0000-0110; play 11, 0000-0117). G and W kept yelling, G hit W again, and W cried again. Their conflicts were not solved until their play time finished.

On the other hand, when the teacher was near to the children or played with them, this helped teachers respond immediately to children's initial social-emotional difficulties. Children's social-emotional difficulties were not repeated anymore.

When child M, child J, and child L were playing with Lego blocks and dolls, they fought over the Lego blocks and argued that those blocks were theirs. They yelled each other, then the teacher came close to them immediately and intervened in their play (Program B, day 2, play 2.7, 0000-0959). When two boys, N and L, were arguing about toys, the teacher intervened with them immediately (Program B, day 2, play 2.16, 0000-0319). When child S teased child E about what she said, some girls started to complain about him, then the teacher told S to make a card in a different area (Program C, day 3, play 5, 0000-0634).

Teachers' strategies regarding children's social-emotional difficulties were different depending on the teachers, children, or contexts. For example, two children yelled at each other because of toys, the teacher came close to them, listened to them, taught them how to play, provided more toys to each of them to play with, watched over them to see how they played after her intervention, and intervened further (Program B, day 2, play 2.7, 0000-0959). In a similar situation, child L and child N were arguing over toys, then the teacher guided L to ask and wait until N was done with the toy. The teacher helped L practice how to talk in that situation (Program B, day 2, play 2.16, 0000-

0319). Sometimes, the teacher gave a different activity to the child who caused the problem and separated the child from other children (Program C, day 3, play 5, 0000-0634).

Teachers' quick responses, proximity, and intervention when children exhibited their initial and minor difficulties during play prevented children's more serious or repeating social-emotional difficulties. On the other hand, teachers' lack of activity, proximity, sensitivity, responsiveness to children's difficulties, and passive involvement with children's initial difficulties led children to repeat their social-emotional difficulties and worsen peer relationships. Teachers' understanding of their roles and classroom contexts, teaching strategies for children's behaviors as well as the understanding and assistance of parents and children worked together when teachers performed their roles.

### **Children's Age and Social-Emotional Behaviors**

Children in the classroom composed of older children exhibited teamwork often in their play. Playing together was often observed in this classroom, and children often suggested ideas, discussed, negotiated, traded with each other, and tried to find common ground in their play. Three or four children often played together in this classroom. However, in the younger children's classroom, they played alone or pairs. It was rare if three or four children played together in the youngest children's classroom. Even though they played in groups of three or four, the relationships did not keep long, or there were fewer interactions among them.

It seemed that as relatively older children naturally had more experiences in diverse situations and developed social understandings and skills. These social experiences and skills helped children exhibit teamwork in their play, while also exhibiting less power and social-emotional difficulties in their play. In addition, older children had more interactions and expressed themselves in language, which prevented lack of understanding and helped children to better understand each other while playing together.

Children in the classroom of the Program C often played together and in a cooperative way. Naturally, cooperative play needed more interactions and exchanges of opinions. When child R and child C played together in the block area, they interacted a lot to find better matching blocks for building fences. They suggested ideas or blocks, compared them, and when C found the block that R needed, R said “Okay. That’s it.”, and these words made them play more cooperatively (Program C, day 3, play 3, 0000-0311). Children also used more negotiating words during play, such as, “Guys, what about this?” Though they did not compromise with the words or narrow down their opinions easily, they were practicing negotiations more often. When E wanted a certain toy that R had, she suggested if R gave the toy, she would give R hers. In this way, they got to know how to satisfy each other and obtained something they each wanted (Program C, day 1, play 5, 0000-1000).

In addition, in the younger children’s classroom, children’s play partners tended to change almost every day. Depending on their arrival time, they decided their play partner for the day and kept playing with that peer all day long. It seemed that children

did not play with any particular close or consistent friend every day. Also, children often asked their peers in the beginning or in the middle of the play, “Are you my friend?” They did not continue their conversation about this if peers answered “Yes.” If peers answered, “No,” the children who heard this tried to find another playmate and did not seem to care about it. On the other hand, children from two different classrooms, tended to form closer relationships with certain peers and often played with them. They did not ask confirmation questions to their friends during play. Teamwork was often observed between the children who did not ask about their relationships and who could start play immediately.

Interestingly, most of the children who exhibited social-emotional difficulties, more specifically physical conflict with their peers, were in the classroom with the youngest children, Program A. This implies that children’s age and physical conflict behaviors might be related, and an association between children’s characteristics such as language development and self-regulation.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **DISCUSSION**

Vygotsky's social development theory (1978) is an important foundation for understanding children's interactions in the classroom and in line with this study in his emphasis on language during play. In children's interactions, language is used as a tool and a process of thinking. Interactions between close relationships such as with teachers or peers reflected their unique social-emotional behaviors and contextual factors. As Vygotsky (1978) notes, the classroom is a place where children's interactions occur naturally in their play. Moreover, play with over two children often requires following the rules, listening to each other, taking turns, and forming relationships with peers. Children's interactions in their play reflect these features naturally.

This descriptive study of children's social-emotional behaviors in three classrooms provided information and knowledge that can be used to inform teachers about young children's peer interactions in the classroom. Results can help increase teachers' understandings of patterns in children's behaviors and their associations with features of classroom contexts. Without fixed tools for observation or established settings, this study pursued observation of children's behaviors in their classroom environment. Because this study started with an open-ended and qualitative approach, the findings were descriptive and thorough, which could be informative for teachers.

Teachers are more interested in the social-emotional behaviors that children exhibit in their play and their relationships with contextual factors (Boyd, Barnett, Bodrova, Leong, & Gomby, 2005; Burchinal et al., 2008; Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Pianta, Sheri, & Bennett, 1997; Stetsenko & Vianna, 2009; Vygotsky, 1986). Teachers want to understand and predict children's diverse behaviors in order to encourage positive behaviors or intervene to facilitate them. Through this study, the important roles of teachers as co-creators of the classroom context, intervenors in children's social-emotional behaviors, and decision makers in the classroom would be acknowledged. To teachers, this study will provide new and discerning perspectives for understanding children's social-emotional behaviors in their play. Deepened understanding of children's social-emotional behaviors in the classroom and new insights will help teachers perform at their best in their roles as co-creators of the classroom context, intervenors in children's difficulties, and decision makers in their classroom.

### **Summary of Findings**

Findings are separated into largely four parts: program descriptions, children's general social-emotional behaviors, theme behaviors across the classrooms, and patterns between theme behaviors and contexts.

First, program descriptions of each classroom are provided. Because this study is a qualitative study and patterns between children's behaviors and their contexts are expected to be drawn, classroom descriptions are provided for helping get a better understanding of each classroom context. Different from the sample descriptions,

program descriptions were not taken from the information in teacher questionnaires but from the first investigator's observations and reflections during the data collection period in each classroom. Three classrooms' general and distinctive features such as the age of the children were described.

Second, types of children's social-emotional behaviors were described.

Children's general social-emotional behaviors could be separated into social behaviors and emotional expressions. Social behaviors included prosocial behaviors and conflict behaviors. Prosocial behaviors were children's considerate behaviors, such as cooperating, sharing, or caring behaviors during play. Conflict behaviors were classified as physical conflict and relational conflict. Physical conflict included aggressive behaviors, and relational conflict was relatively implicit, indirect, often purposeful, and deliberate with the intention of dominating and controlling peer relationships. Children's emotional expressions were divided into positive and negative. Compared to behaviors, emotions were hard to catch. Positive emotions were happy, excited, and awed, while negative emotions were sad, angry, distressed, and nervous.

Third, themes emerged that were evident in children's social-emotional behaviors during play across classrooms. The emerged themes were power, teamwork, and social-emotional difficulties. Power was a differential in peer interactions, in that one or more children directed others to follow their lead, ideas, and/or play. Children used language, play plans, voices, facial expressions, and toys as leverage of their power in the peer interactions. Leading play by commanding, ordering, controlling, ignoring others, monopolizing important toys, and using loud voices and domineering facial expressions

were common behaviors of power. Teamwork included behaviors that came out of consideration for others. Accepting others into their play, sharing toys with peers, taking turns, using skills of negotiation or mutual decision making, acting out roles, and helping and comforting peers were the representative teamwork behaviors. Social-emotional difficulties were exhibited in various social-emotional interactions. Social-emotional difficulties applied if at least one child exhibits distress or difficulties in their peer interactions. Difficulties may include conflict over toys, exhibiting uncontrolled or aggressive behaviors, feeling distressed because of peers' behaviors, and exhibiting apathetic behaviors when witnessing peers' social-emotional difficulties.

Lastly, associations between the themes and contextual factors were addressed. Children often exhibited different social-emotional behaviors depending on play areas. Social interactions were commonly observed in the dramatic play or block areas and not commonly observed in other areas such as writing or art areas. Children exhibited power, teamwork, and social-emotional difficulties more often in dramatic play or block areas than writing or art areas. In art or writing areas, children focused on their own work or play and were observed less often interacting with others, though they were in the same area. In addition, the observed teachers' proximity or teaching strategies were important to children's social-emotional behaviors. When teachers cared for children's initial difficulties and were near to the children, children tended to practice teamwork often and did not repeat their initial social-emotional difficulties. Furthermore, children's ages also related to their observed play behaviors. In the classroom that was composed of relatively younger children, they showed power and social-emotional difficulties often,

and in the classroom that was composed of relatively older children, children exhibited teamwork often.

### **Discussion of Themes and Implications**

With the discussion of each theme, its implications of the findings will be provided. The findings and implications will support teachers when they reflect on their professional roles and responsibilities by broadening their understanding of children's social-emotional behaviors and deepening understanding of them.

#### **Theme of Power**

Power emerged as one of the theme behaviors in young children's play. Children used language, play plans, voices, facial expressions, and toys as leverage of power in their play. For example, dominant children tended to use relatively more language than others by explaining or designing the play, establishing the regulations or limitations of the play, providing directions, ordering ideas. In terms of behaviors, they tended to show modeling behaviors, look down on others, ignore the ideas of others, use more confident and louder voices, and monopolize the toys or materials that were important in their play. The findings regarding the use of language go along with Kyratzis (2004) in that she also emphasized power in young children's peer cultures and pointed out verbal fluency as an important element of leadership. Also, the findings regarding using important toys for exerting power are in line with Mawson (2011) in that he explained that children often attempted to take possession of significant objects as aggressive

strategies to enter the playgroup. Children knew the importance of significant toys and used them as tools to maintain their power or challenge the playgroup. On the other hand, the children who were in the playgroup exhibited behaviors such as listening to the dominant peer, following the rules and regulations that their peer set, responding to questions or orders, showing the same behaviors that the peer showed to them or expected, and using relatively less language than the dominant peer. In short, the dominant peers played more active roles and the other peers played more passive roles in their play.

The findings regarding the power theme have some similarities with the findings of Shin, Recchia, Lee, Lee, and Mullarkey (2004). Shin and her colleagues (2004) described the leaders as having dynamic, charismatic, and possessive personalities. Children who exhibited power in this study also showed dynamic, charismatic, and possessive behaviors by making play plans, controlling play episodes, and owning important toys. In addition, Mawson (2011) and Lee et al.'s (2005) studies focus on young children's leadership. Lee et al. (2005) started their study with teacher interviews that asked who the leaders were in their classrooms and how they showed their leadership strategies in each classroom. They described different leadership styles (the director, the free spirit, the manager, and the power man) of designated leaders through teacher interviews and observations (Lee et al., 2005). Mawson's (2011) study was more interested in children's differing leadership styles depending on children's characteristics, such as how boys' and girls' leadership styles were different from each other. Mawson

(2011) found that leadership in boys' play was very hierarchical while girls' play was less hierarchical.

While those studies tried to describe and distinguish how each child implements different strategies when they exert leadership, the power theme in this study is revealed by describing children's interactions and contexts. Different from those studies, in this study the power theme emerged in children's natural play, not by focusing on only a few children, but by observing all of the children who participated in this study. This study did not rely on teachers' interpretations but relied on an open-ended and theme-emerging qualitative approach and reflection on the relationships between children's behaviors and play contexts. In spite of slightly different study angles, this study is in line with Lee and her colleagues' study (2005) in that power has its positive and negative behavioral features that imply its both positive and negative potentials in children's development.

### **Implications**

Power has both positive and negative potentials. Löfdahl (2006) found that children with high-status positions had better abilities in carrying out negotiations, which meant children with power might use their abilities to lead their group. On the other hand, this study found that if children with power exert it for sticking to their own agenda and controlling others by using relational assertiveness, they are more likely to show the negative potentials of power. Classroom teachers perceived young leaders who exerted power both as catalysts for steering the group and as problems when they tried to maintain and control their classrooms (Lee & Recchia, 2008; Mullarkey, Recchia, Lee,

Shin, & Lee, 2005). It is important for teachers to know both the positive and negative potentials of power in children's development.

If teachers observe children's relationships in their play with the framework of power, they may find some children who are struggling with relationship problems in their play. For example, there might be children who are sitting in a one-sided peer relationship seesaw that is neither balanced nor moving, one is almost always leading and the other is under control. There might be children who sit in a broken relationship seesaw where interactions between peers are not connected, each insisting on their own opinion and not listening to the other. There might be children who do not want to sit in a relationship seesaw at all, such as those who insist on playing by themselves.

This framework would allow teachers to consider how to approach relationship seesaws. In many cases, relationship seesaws would not move without outer influence such as teachers' intervention. If teachers know the features of power and its positive and negative potentials, they may give children more opportunities to think about others' emotions, feelings, thoughts, and think from others' perspectives. Through these experiences, children who often exhibit power behaviors are getting to understand peers' perspectives and getting to be accustomed to listen to others. Children who often follow the children exerting power will practice speaking their feelings and thoughts.

### **Theme of Teamwork**

Next, one of the evident theme behaviors of children's play was teamwork.

Children showed diverse behaviors related to teamwork in their play. Children exhibited teamwork by valuing others' opinions or feelings, making decisions together for the mutual goals, accepting peers in their play and sharing toys with them, helping others voluntarily, and comforting peers who needed it. Ghafouri and Wein (2007) used the term *social literacies* to indicate children's skills such as maintaining play episodes, harmonizing and cooperating, and resolving conflicts with peers in their study. Some features of teamwork are in line with the concept of *social literacies*, but Ghafouri and Wein (2007) focused more on children's effort to protect and sustain their play exclusively in their playgroup and not allow others to engage. Different from Ghafouri and Wein (2007), this study showed children's teamwork behaviors by describing children's accepting, sharing, and caring behaviors that were not limited to their own playgroup. In addition, Mawson (2011) saw the condition when no child performed as a leader as a "power vacuum." In contrast, this study did not understand children's play exclusively through the framework of leadership hierarchy and showed teamwork not as power vacuum but children's pursuing equity and harmony in their natural play.

Though there are some common children's behaviors that overlap the distinguished two themes, power and teamwork--such as leading the play, explaining the play plan to peers, or establishing goals of the play--there is one obvious feature that makes them different. The continuous review of data led to finding the distinguished feature, the "asking moment." Children with power had skills as leaders, they did not ask

about or reflect on others' emotions, thoughts, or opinions. Asking is a behavior that presupposes listening to others, in some cases including one's self. Asking may require stopping something they are doing, opening discussion of what the group wants, looking back, reflecting, or taking a short examination of their play direction. Eventually, the asking moment provides the children not just a moment to stop play but also to find a better direction for their play. This makes all of the children in the play feel they are playing "together," which is the kernel of teamwork. The theme teamwork especially illustrates Vygotsky's (1978) points regarding the diverse functions of children's play with others in their development of language or self-regulatory abilities. Taking these ideas, a step further, this study made his theory concrete by illustrating children's natural play behaviors and connecting children's behaviors with contextual factors like those highlighted by Bandura (1997, 2001).

### **Implications**

As teachers, it is important to think about what helps children develop teamwork because there are many benefits of developing teamwork in children's play. Teamwork helps children develop language abilities like interacting with peers, develop social abilities and skills like considering others' perspectives and views, and develop self-regulatory abilities by taking turns or delaying their gratifications (Feldhusen & Pleiss, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978). In addition, teamwork will prevent possible conflicts and problem behaviors in play and promote more healthy and pleasant environments for both children and teachers (Bandura, 2001). Moreover, teamwork helps children maintain and

form long term relationships that lead to more complex play by encouraging prosocial and cooperative interactions (Elgas, 2003). Also, improving social skills lead children to reduce misbehaviors (Sawyer et al., 1997).

Teachers could provide opportunities for children to experience teamwork in their daily lives. Teachers may often ask children how they feel, how they think, if they are satisfied about their mutual decision rather than just notifying or ordering them. Teachers will value children's thoughts and acknowledge them by giving verbal compliments or showing positive feedback such as nodding or listening to them carefully. Teachers may provide diverse opportunities to mingle with various peers so that children experience and learn from each other in their peer group. If teachers notice some issues in their classroom, they may discuss them with the class. Before going home or in their group time, teachers and children can reflect on their day and have time to say thank you or sorry to their peers. These experiences will allow children to realize the importance of people around them and listen to them more carefully.

### **Theme of Social-Emotional Difficulties**

Third, children sometimes exhibited social-emotional difficulties during play. Children might exhibit their social-emotional difficulties clearly, or social-emotional difficulties might not be revealed obviously. Children exhibited social-emotional difficulties through uncontrolled behaviors such as aggression, feeling distressed by peers' aggressive behaviors, or showing apathetic behaviors to peers who had difficulties. If one child showed aggressive behaviors to another, and this child felt

distressed, then another child ignored them and did not pay attention to them, they exhibited social-emotional difficulties in different ways. In this study, children who exhibited social-emotional difficulties such as aggressive behaviors made their peers feel distressed. This showed that they were not in good relationships. The findings regarding social-emotional difficulties are consistent with the findings of Portilla et al. (2014) and Zhang et al. (2011) in that relationship problems are bidirectional. In their study, teachers and peers who experienced children's social-emotional difficulties such as aggressiveness or problem behaviors also rated their relationships as poor (Portilla et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2011). They perceived social-emotional difficulties as both behavioral problems and relationship problems (Zhang et al., 2011).

### **Implications**

The children who behave aggressively, the children who are struggling because of peers' aggressive behaviors, and the children who are with them but are taking an indifferent attitude are all in the circle of bidirectional social-emotional difficulties. Teachers should contemplate how to approach this relationship circle if they recognize it. Timler, Olswang, and Coggins (2005) also pointed out the importance of intervention for those children who exhibit social-emotional difficulties in their play because they would ultimately be rejected from entering into playgroup without any intervention.

Several examples related to the theme of social-emotional difficulties might lead teachers to have the impression of troublemakers when they think of the aggressive children. But, they are not troublemakers. They are the children who have social-

emotional difficulties (Gartrell, 1995). They may negatively express their emotions or thoughts to their peers because they need to learn how to express their emotions and need to practice how to control themselves. To help them, teachers should listen to these children. However, listening is not enough. Teachers need to observe them, especially for young children. Young children do not express themselves verbally and fully. This might be the reason that they exhibit more problem behaviors. In addition, their difficulties are often continued and repeated. This means that teachers' observations and interventions should be continued and repeated, too. After careful listening and observation, teachers will find what these children want to express. Teachers should show them how to express themselves in better ways, help them practice, and encourage them to do so by themselves repeatedly.

Through repeated interactions in their classrooms, children are influencing each other both directly and indirectly (Bandura, 1973; Hope et al., 1998; Milkie, & Warner, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978). They co-existed in the classroom and shared the same space, and finally formed the cultural context of the classroom together. Teachers should also consider the children around the children who display problem behaviors. They may not be the children who are directly involved in the problem behaviors. Teachers should keep in mind that these children could be both bystanders of a peer's social-emotional difficulties and latent learners through the experiences (Bandura, 1973). As teachers, it is important to know the boundaries and kinds of children's social-emotional difficulties as well as to be sensitive and responsive to their difficulties because children are reflections of teachers, and they keep developing (Pessoa, 2009; Perel et al., 2009; Perry, 1998;).

## **Discussion of Associations between Themes and Contexts with Implications**

In addition to the children's distinct behavioral patterns, there were certain relationships between social-emotional behavioral patterns and contexts. Contexts such as children's age, which may be related to language abilities and social experiences, classroom areas such as dramatic play area versus art area, and teachers' role in the classroom were related to children's social-emotional behavioral patterns.

### **Association between Themes and Age**

There were slight differences in children's ages in the three classrooms, though the children's age range was 3 to 5 years old. The classroom of older children exhibited teamwork often. Power and social-emotional difficulties were less observed in this classroom. On the other hand, the children in the classroom composed of relatively younger children often exhibited power and social-emotional difficulties. They exhibited teamwork less often. As children get older, experience more social contexts, such as classroom experiences, and develop language abilities and social skills, they show more prosocial behaviors such as teamwork while acknowledging peers in play and fewer social-emotional difficulties.

Nonetheless, there were limitations in making conclusions about the associations between the theme behaviors and age. Because this study was not designed purposefully like an experiment, the composition of children, the number of children, and children's age range had more flexibility, though the recruitment eligibility was all met. To be more specific, the classrooms were not recruited by children's ages. Within the classrooms,

there was a slight difference in children's age, and children tended to exhibit different social-emotional behaviors depending on their age.

In addition, children chose their play partner differently. In the classroom with more younger children, though children tended to play with one playmate in one day, children's playmate tended to change almost every day. Children chose their playmate based on who arrived in the classroom around the same time as them and kept playing with that peer. They often asked their peers in the beginning or in the middle of the play, "Are you my friend?" On the other hand, children from other classrooms formed more close relationships with certain peers and often played with them. They did not ask those types of validating questions to their friends during play. Diverse children's ages meant diverse developmental features such as their language development and social behaviors, but also their different behaviors based on their understanding of friends and friendship. Teamwork was often observed between the children who did not doubt their friendship, who formed more consistent relationships, and who could start play immediately.

In spite of some limitations, the findings of this study support Vygotsky's social development theory (1978) by identifying the relationships between children's ages and their play behaviors. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized children's interactions during play and explained that children's growing language abilities help children improve their social relationships. Also, findings related with children's age and children's social emotional behaviors generally align with Corsaro's study (1988), in that younger children show initial understanding of friendship while asking each other, "Are you my friend?" meaning "Are we in this together just now?" On the other hand, as children get older,

they have qualitatively different perspectives on friendship while seeing their friends as members of a shared cultural contexts (Corsaro, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978).

### **Implications**

Teachers know that it is important for children to meet and play with diverse friends. Findings of this study also show that children exhibit different social-emotional behaviors depending on ages. Older children tended to show more teamwork that shares similarities with prosocial skills. Teachers of classrooms with young children may provide more opportunities for young children to meet and play with older children so that they can learn from each other. If this is not available, teachers help children play with different playmates or groups in their classroom.

In addition, children's differing behaviors depending on age suggest that teachers need to practice different teaching strategies depending on children's age. Teachers could show, teach, explain to younger children what to do and how to do it more directly, and could give open-opportunities to older children so they can experience and explore on their own.

### **Association between Themes and Play Area**

Moreover, children showed different behavioral patterns depending on play areas or kinds of toys that they were playing with. Certain areas such as the dramatic play or block areas encouraged children play together and the behaviors exhibited in these areas were easily drawn as themes, such as power, teamwork, and social-emotional

difficulties. Compared to playing alone, playing together required social interactions and these interactions were often interpreted as one of these theme behaviors. On the other hand, in certain areas such as the writing or art areas, children were less interactive and more focused on their individual work, thus exhibiting less theme behavioral patterns. These findings are in line with Broadhead's finding (2009) in that in her study, she also pointed out that children were likely to play socially and interactively in role play area, large, or small construction area than in other areas.

Besides the play area, children's behavioral patterns were affected by their choice of toys. For example, certain toys that had more regulations such as limiting the player to one person and had purposeful intentions such as growing self-help skills by practicing and repeating, naturally led children to play alone and be less interactive. Though there are not many studies about play areas in a natural classroom environment, studies related to the classroom play areas are mainly focused on specific play areas such as the dramatic play area or focused on only specific skills such as language learning.

### **Implications**

As teachers, it is important to understand the features of play areas. Certain areas such as the dramatic play area encourage children to play together and interact with each other. When they play together and interact, they may exhibit social-emotional difficulties often, as this study finding suggests. Teachers may prefer when children play in the writing or art areas and do not make any trouble to when children play in the dramatic or block areas and make distressing problems. However, teachers should think

of this from diverse angles. Children need balanced experiences by practicing social skills and being engrossed in their own work. Even experiencing social-emotional difficulties is important and necessary in that children may find how to deal with social-emotional difficulties through their own experiences. With this understanding in mind, teachers should observe children and their classroom areas. If there are children who are playing in the same area every time, if certain toys make children have conflict, if a certain area is too crowded, or if children do not play in a certain area, teachers should reflect on the children, classroom areas, and toys. Teachers should compose and provide classroom environments for children to learn through experiences, stimulations, and play while interacting with diverse friends. Also, teachers should encourage children to experience those various opportunities.

### **Association between Themes and Teachers' Roles**

The classroom teachers' roles were also one of the important contextual factors related to children's social-emotional behaviors. Teacher's proximity with children, availability, and responsiveness to children's social-emotional behaviors were considered as teachers' roles because these were closely related to children's behaviors during play and observable. As teachers were more responsive to children's social-emotional behaviors, were near to children, were more free from helping and interacting with other adults, teachers had more time for observing children and focusing on supervising children's play. As a result, children exhibited more teamwork and less power and social-emotional difficulties.

Numerous studies emphasize teacher-child relationships in their classroom. According to those studies focused on teacher-child relationships, teacher-child relationships are indicators of children's current development (Bierman et al., 2009; Chang & Burns, 2005; Shields et al., 2001) and predictors of children's future success (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Pianta, 1999; Trentacosta & Izard, 2007). Most of those studies were completed only by teachers or adult evaluators, so one-directional. Though children are young, there is a great limitation when we consider and interpret relationships from onese. In addition, there is a lack of studies with qualitative approaches focused on teachers' observable behaviors such as responsiveness or intervention.

The findings of this observational study did not determine teacher-child relationships but indirectly showed the contexts of teacher-child relationships. This was done by describing teachers' responses when children exhibited diverse social-emotional behaviors during play. Teachers were co-creators of classroom contexts with children as well as important decision makers, intervenors, helpers, guardians, and models.

### **Implications**

Teachers are so important for children. When teachers are in the classroom, they might think that every day is repeated and feel frustrated because of their workload. Though the days may seem repeated, children grow and develop every day, and each have different experiences. Never-ending work for teachers means that they are performing diverse and continuing roles inside and outside of the classroom. Teachers should note their important roles in every child's development and be more active. This

does not mean just teaching something to children or intervening in children directly. Rather, teachers should be more observant of children's social-emotional behaviors, sensitive to each child's needs, responsive when children need help or have difficulties, and stay near to children. If teachers find any obstacle hinders performing those roles, they should solve the problem or ask for others' advice and support in order to better implement their roles. Without understanding and support from parents and programs, it is hard for teachers to perform those significant roles well.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

Though there were several distinct findings through this descriptive and qualitative study, the results should be considered in light of the limitations. First, because this study is a qualitative study, the vulnerability of subjectivity should be acknowledged. Because the first investigator of this study is from a different cultural background, there might be several limitations and biases to study young children's classroom experiences. To address potential biases, the investigator wrote their researcher's biases down at the beginning of the study then shared them with the research team and discussed them. Also, the data was repeatedly viewed and discussed with the research team to gain the most accurate understanding of children's behaviors. Second, the findings are difficult to generalize about due to the limitations related to the sample. Because the participants of this study were not randomly selected, the sample may not represent all preschool children's social-emotional behaviors or general characteristics of all classroom contexts. Because most of the programs of this study are affiliated with the

research team's university, they may not represent the range of program quality available to young children. Third, the data were collected during a specific portion of each day, morning. Morning time is an important part of a day, and there must be some repeated patterns of children's behaviors during morning and afternoon. Nonetheless, this did not capture the full day of children's behaviors. Children may show different behaviors and/or behavioral patterns depending on time. Fourth, this study collected data exclusively in the classroom. Like the limitation of time, limited boundaries of data collection will provide a limited understanding of children's social-emotional behaviors. Children may exhibit different behaviors in different places such as outdoor play area or transition area. Lastly, video recording had a lot of benefits in this study. It allowed the research team to get a deeper understanding of children's behaviors by providing opportunities to review the data multiple times and to share the data among the research team. Nevertheless, the video recording was only focused on a small group of children in the classroom and may have missed other children's behaviors happening in different areas of the classroom. To address these limitations as well as associated research questions, future study areas are discussed below.

First, to overcome the coverage limitations of one camera and expand the amount of data collected at one time, multiple cameras including fixed recording tools could be considered. If future research could get the consent of the whole classroom, several fixed cameras will be utilized to broaden the scope of the recording area at the same time. This recording method will allow better observations the whole group of children's social-emotional behaviors without missing behaviors and interactions, to follow an individual

child's preference on play area or a child's unique play behaviors, and to figure out peer relationships through their peer group during play. In addition, researchers will be able to see what is happening throughout the classrooms allowing them to include features and events in the contexts and their associations with children's behaviors.

Second, this research focused on children's behaviors only during free playtime. Including transitions, outdoor play time, snacks, lunch, and children's afternoon time will provide more connectable dots to help better understand children's social-emotional behaviors and development. To look into children's whole day of experiences in the classroom will help teachers understand teacher-child relationships, children's understanding of rules and sanctions, and children's adaptations and accommodations in their society, the classroom. In addition, as one of the other possible contextual factors, there was a classroom schedule. In classrooms with a stable and predictable schedule, children tended to exhibit teamwork often, exhibit power and social-emotional difficulties less often. A routine and regular schedule seemed to help children expect the activities that followed and feel more stable during the play. To expand the observation time, observation could start as the children are arriving and continue until they come back home while including outdoor play, group meeting time, etc. If future research includes children's continued experiences in the classroom, it will show how their previous peer relationships or schedules influence children's social-emotional behaviors.

Third, the focus of the current study is to understand children's social-emotional behaviors, and the main participants were children. Nevertheless, the findings of this study also point out the importance of teachers' roles in the classroom. Moreover, all of

the study findings of this study could be used by teachers. Future research should keep exploring children's social-emotional behaviors and their diverse experiences in the classroom, which include teachers. Without teachers' thorough understanding and reflection on observed children's behaviors, teachers' interventions may not work, though teachers have enough proximity and availability. If future research includes teachers' post-observations and the reflections between researcher and teacher on children's behaviors, it will provide teachers a better understanding of children's behaviors. In addition, classroom teachers' reflections will provide themselves a better opportunity to develop as professional early childhood teachers by considering their behaviors when they respond to children's social-emotional behaviors. This can allow them to find better ways to perform their roles.

Lastly, one of the themes, power, is interesting in that it shares several common features with both teamwork and social-emotional difficulties. The children who exhibited power have the potential to exhibit teamwork or social-emotional difficulties in their near future. In other words, children who show power patterns in their play may be team leaders, may become aggressive and show more problem behaviors, or indifferent to others' emotions. In addition, it was observed that children exhibited the same behaviors often and repeatedly. For example, the children who led play by commanding often exhibited monopolizing behaviors and used loud voices while playing. To follow the trajectories of children who often exhibit power will provide new perspectives on how they influence and are influenced by contextual factors. As important contextual factors, understanding how teachers' behaviors and classroom culture influence the children who

show power would be informative and helpful to teachers. Through observing and describing children's relationships in the classroom, future research could determine how those children who often exhibit power patterns in their play commit themselves to one of the two different paths.

## **Conclusion**

Young children's social-emotional development is essential to their future. To understand their social-emotional behaviors in their classroom is important for teachers to better support them. This descriptive study of children's social-emotional behaviors in three classrooms provided information and knowledge that can inform teachers about young children's behaviors and peer relationships during play.

First, this study started from descriptions of and reflections on the classroom context. Before describing children's social-emotional behaviors, understanding its contextual features was an important process. Second, children exhibited diverse social-emotional behaviors under different contexts. Children's both prosocial and conflict behaviors as well as positive and negative emotions were described. Third, among children's diverse behaviors, there were some significant, frequent, and evident behaviors in their peer interactions. The themes that emerged indicated that there were different types of peer interactions during play and that contextual factors may be associated with different types of play and behaviors. Future studies will help investigate this area.

This qualitative study proceeded by observing and collecting children's social-emotional behaviors in their classrooms, interpreting their interactions with peers,

categorizing and combining them with meaningful themes, and finding relationships between emerged themes and contextual factors. Through this study, teachers will get a general sense of children's social-emotional behaviors in the classroom. They may apply the theme framework to understand their children's social-emotional behaviors, compare their children's behaviors with the findings of this study, or modify and construct a new framework based on the procedures and findings. In many ways, this study will help teachers understand and support children in their classrooms.

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APPENDIX A

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Classroom Teachers,

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study: Children's Social-Emotional Behaviors in the Classroom. Your understanding and assistance will be helpful for conducting this study. Below are several questions and I hope to receive a more detailed description of classroom context.

Question 1: What is your classroom/ program curriculum? Please provide a brief description about your curriculum in 2-3 sentences.

Question 2: Is there any special emphasis within your program or curriculum? If there is, what is your emphasis? (ex. Nature friendly education, preparation for kindergarten, parental involvement, etc.)

Question 3: How many children are in your classroom? How many boys and girls does your classroom have? If English Language Learners are in your classroom, how many children are ELLs?

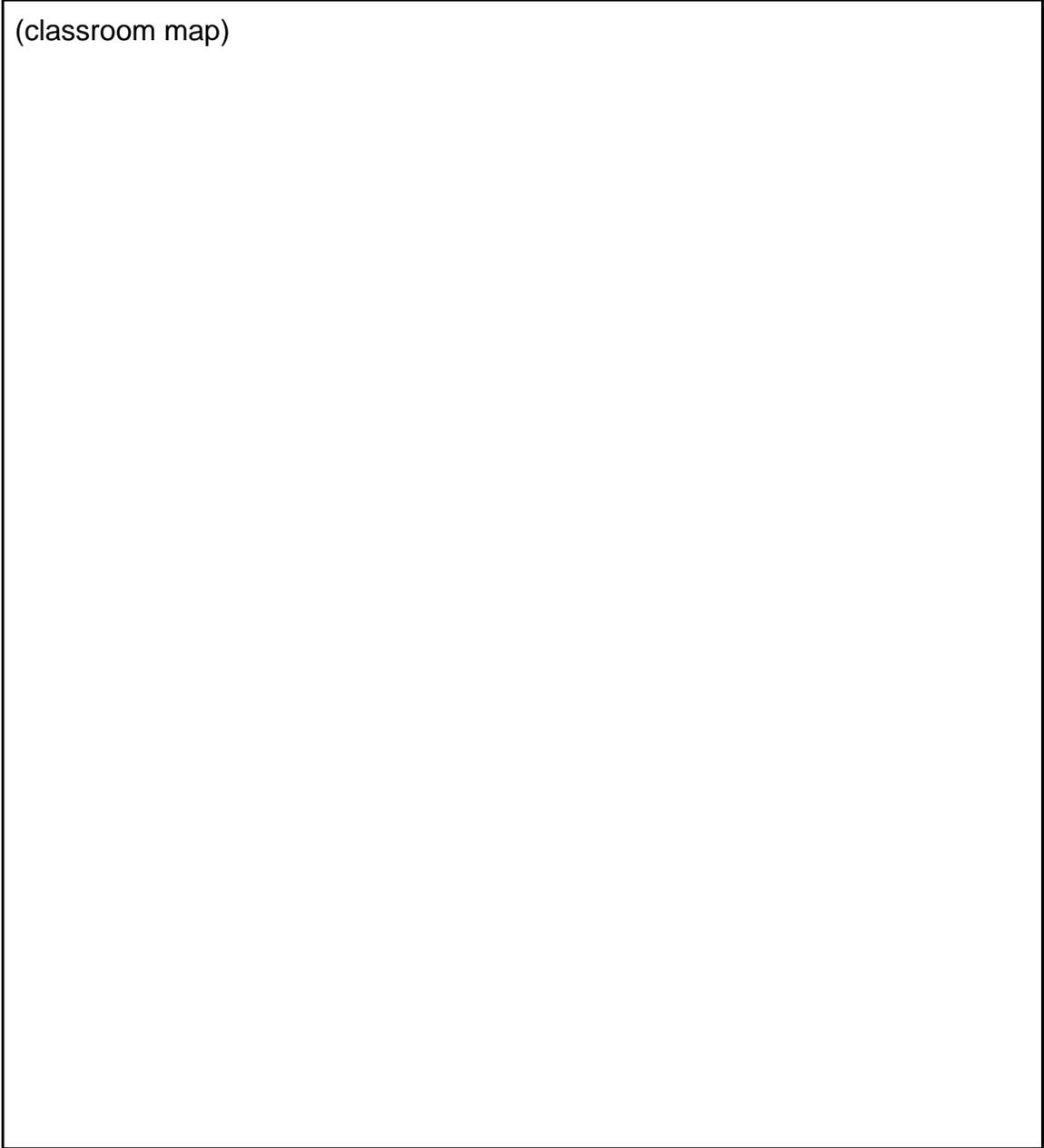
Boys	Girls	Total	ELLs

Question 4: How many teachers or adult assistants are in your classroom besides you? What is their duty?

Question 5: Is there any specific day for special teachers to visit? If there is, when is the day and what do they teach?

Question 6: Please confirm your classroom map which describes the play area including large group meeting places and the location of the entrance. In addition, what is your opinion on children's preferences of where to play within the play area?

(classroom map)



Question 7: Please provide a copy of the typical schedule of your classroom.

## APPENDIX B

### RESEARCHER'S BIAS STATEMENT

As I worked in a kindergarten, taught young children, and mentored pre-service teachers, I may compare, analyze, assess, or judge classroom teachers' behaviors while observing and interpreting the classroom context.

As I worked in a kindergarten and am studying early childhood education, I may have my own standards for classroom organization and management that could differ from the primary teacher's. For example, while reviewing the classroom schedule or observing the classroom, I may think to myself that this classroom schedule addresses children's physical needs well or not.

As I am studying and reading books and articles related to effective teaching and the quality of classroom environments, I may observe the classroom with bias and a judgmental perspective.

As I was a kindergarten teacher and have had experiences consulting with parents, I may ascribe children's behaviors to their parenting styles.

As I was a kindergarten teacher and have experienced diverse teachers as colleagues, I may ascribe children's behaviors to the classroom teacher's behaviors.

As I observed for about a week or more in one classroom context, I may judge children's behaviors with limited contextual factors. Without continuous observation, broader contextual factors, such as familial, physical, emotional, and social environments may have not been attended to.

As I observed for limited time periods, my observations may be short-sighted. For example, because my observations covered most of the morning play time and snack time, I may have less understanding about nap time or afternoon play time.

As my observations and recordings are pre-planned with specific purposes, I may miss important children's interactions that I did not plan and thus may lead me to different interpretations.

As my subjects of interest are children's social-emotional behaviors, I may give more attention to the children who showed social-emotional behaviors explicitly. I may not have given the same attention to the children who did not show their social-emotional difficulties explicitly or children who did not have difficulties.

As I worked a kindergarten in Korea, which are different from my current observational cultural contexts, I may confuse the contextual factors with cultural differences from my experiences.

As I am a foreigner and not a native English speaker, my understanding and interpretation of observations may be limited, or I may misunderstand teachers' and children's behaviors.

Since my observations and recordings are from the limited programs where I received permission from directors, teachers, and parents, my observations may not represent typical preschool children's behaviors in the classroom on a grand scale.

APPENDIX C  
DATA SUMMARY

Theme	Description/ Examples
Power	<p>Power is a differential in peer interactions, in that one or more children direct(s) others to follow their lead, ideas, and/or play. Children may use language, play plan, voice, facial expression, and toys as leverage of their power in the peer interactions. Explaining or speaking their play plan but not accepting the others' suggestions, using a loud voice, threatening face, and monopolizing an important toy and limiting it from others are examples of power that children with power show. Power does not include negotiation or decision making. Rather the child with the power is "in charge" of what happens during play and how the play unfolds or occurs. Children without the power or with less power may check in with the children with power about what they can do, what toys they can play with, and how the play should happen. Below are some examples of how children exhibited power during play.</p>
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A and B played together in the dramatic play area; A held and owned the toy (baby tiger, card, mailbox) almost all the time, and A said "You can't. No. I will put him in" when B wanted to put the toy in the mailbox. B tried to get permission from A to pet the toy, studied A's face, tried to hide that she petted it, and showed more responsive behaviors to A, such as picking up toys for A, bringing a tissue for A, or giving a stethoscope to A that B found. On the other hand, A did not show any responsive behaviors regarding B's initiation. When B gave a piece of bread to the baby tiger and told this to A, A ignored what B was saying and took the stethoscope that B found without asking her (Program A, day 1, play 2, 0000-0505).</li> <li>● When a new boy joined A and B's play, he suggested an imaginary situation ("Maybe, there's someone else. Look!"), A did not accept the direction that he intended by shaking her head and did not pay any attention to it. A similar situation happened again. W suggested an idea to mail a toy with an excited voice, but A shortly declined this saying "No"(Program A, day 1, play 3, 0000-0019, 0400-0405).</li> <li>● A was controlling and not letting other children play with the baby tiger and showed this to B and W. A grabbed the tiger strongly and hit the mailbox and shelf with the toy roughly with a threatening face. When she showed this, the other two children, B and W tilted their heads back. Then A changed the mood soon and showed them a funny tiger, pretending the tiger was dancing and made them laugh. B and W were not active but responsive. When A dropped the tiger, B picked up the toy quickly and returned it with both hands to A (Program A, day 1, play 3, 0211-0237).</li> <li>● C and G played with the student helper in the dramatic play area. C acted like she was a waitress in a restaurant and this led G and the student helper to act as customers. C handed a baby to them and directed them to</li> </ul>

take care of the baby. C asked them what they would like to have and introduced what she had, but did not allow G to touch the food. When C found glasses, she put the glasses on G without asking G. When the student helper ordered a food, taco, C put the taco on the plate. However, without listening to the order, C kept putting the food on the plate, so it ended up the student helper introduced what C put on the plate. After finishing eating the food, C ordered G or the student helper to cook the food. G played a role as a cook. Next, C ordered the student helper into the cook role, saying "You have to cook." C directed the roles, turns, the length of role, and the whole play (Program A, day 1, play 4, 0000-1012).

- B and E were playing with magnets. B was close to the toys and she built the bottom of the rectangle. E was watching how B built up. E approached to the magnets and picked four or five pieces of magnets. B said, "Now, we need one more. Just one more." Though B limited E to one more magnet piece, E added more, and B was fine with this. When E added one or two pieces of magnets, B added seven or eight of them. While they built together, one side of the rectangle collapsed, and they laughed together. Though E wanted to be getting a more active role to build, still B planned and designed the play, decided the start and the end of the play. E followed B's plan and behavior. When B completed playing with her toy, she said, "We are done." and directed E how to clean up the toy. While they cleaned, B left the area first, and E played longer. When E found that B left, she followed B and left (Program A, day 2, play 7, 0000-0722).
- A and J played in the same area, manipulative play area, however they played separately with different toys. J often watched what A was doing and listened to the interaction between A and the teacher. A told the teacher that she could count to one hundred, and J said she could also do it. J showed them "One, two, one hundred." First, A laughed and said to J, "One hundred is a big number. It's not how to count one hundred." with a threatening face. J looked daunted. As A showed how long and big her toys were, J made more space for the toys by moving a toy basket from the table. J also was awed by the length of A's toys. When A started the slide play, J joined the play naturally. However, A limited J's role. A did not allow J to touch, hold the baby tiger, or manipulate the slide. J picked up the tiger and returned it to A only when A dropped the tiger and touched the end of the slide cautiously and quickly. A planned the play and explained this to J. J suggested some ideas, but A did not accept her idea and taught J her rule (when the baby tiger fell from the slide, they needed to pick up the tiger by its whisker and save him) in their play. A ordered J to pick the tiger up and throw it to her. J followed A's direction (Program A, day 3, play 5, 0112-0940).
- A and J played together in the dramatic play area with dolls. They both had two dolls each. The two dolls that A had were the favorites in the classroom, the baby tiger and the rabbit, and the two dolls that J had were normal dolls, donkey and looking less attractive rabbit. They pretended they sent their pets to pet school. A decided when to leave the school and J followed A. When they moved to mailbox, J found a phone in the box. However, A did not show any response about this, and left to the pet

school. J was looking for A, put the phone back in the mailbox, and brought the doll like A did. Then, they came to the reading area. A pretended to feed and eat food on the table and J followed this. After this, A opened the cloth cover of the box and put the doll in the box. J followed this, too. They both pretended to sleep, but soon, A said that she heard some crying sound. They both picked up the dolls and soothed the dolls. Then, they repeated this again. It was A again who planned and led the story. This time, when they soothed the dolls, A controlled the basket with the two dolls, shook it smoothly, and J was just watching her. They went back to the bed and as A shouted, "Wake up time," J woke up and repeated the behavior that A did (Program A, day 3, play 9, 0000-0450).

- H was sitting on the chair and wrapping a long scarf rounded his neck and putting three beanbags on his knees. O ordered H to put the beanbag on his knees whether he wanted or not. H could not move his arms or posture. If he moved, O approached him, shouted, "Stop," put the beanbag on again, and pushed the beanbag on H's knees. H laughed first and then, he looked less happy (Program B, day 1, play 2.9, 0000-0021/ 2.10, 0000-0038).
- U picked up one book from the book shelf and R was next to him. They moved to the carpet and sat together. The book was on U's lap, and U turned the pages of the book with his pace and finished the book. Then, U stood up and chose another book. R had no chance to choose (Program B, day 2, play 2.5, 0000-0228).
- After finishing unicorn play, I and D sat next to the puzzle shelf. D designated the puzzle for I, "You do this, and I do this." D quickly finished her puzzle while I and E interacted each other about the shirt that E wore. After completing her puzzle, D explained the puzzle to them. They started the alphabet puzzle game and E watched them sometimes. A joined the puzzle when they started the alphabet puzzle. D taught I and A how to do the alphabet puzzle in her way (find the spot for the piece of puzzle with three steps while shouting, "tick tack tock"). D corrected them when they did not do it her way ("No, no, no. Don't do it. I will show you. Like this." Then D took the puzzle piece) and encouraged to follow (Yes, that's how you do it). The other two children, I and A, naturally imitated D's way of doing and D kept explaining and leading while they completed the puzzle (Program B, day 3, play 2.5, 0424-1001).
- T and K played together next to the cube. T made a new space next to the cube by moving two baskets. When K watched her, T showed the way and told her, "That's the way you come here." K hovered around the cube and C moved the basket and explained that it was a secret door. As K sat next to her, T closed the space with the basket. Then T picked up one puzzle and told other girls to come to their secret place. The other girls left them because it was almost snack time. T taught K her hide and seek game and ordered K what to do. After finishing another game that K suggested, T ordered what to do next. T said, "I will get in my bed and you go to your house." K followed as T's order. When T said, "Good night" K and T slept for a while. Then, they woke up, K suggested to bring another puzzle (they said the puzzle was food) and T designated what puzzle K needed to pick

up. K brought a puzzle and showed it to T to make sure it was the right thing. Then T ordered again how to put the puzzle together. K gave a rabbit to T, but T said that it was not hers. T threw the rabbit to K and picked another rabbit for her. They lay down and shouted, "Go to sleep." After they woke up, T explained new story and shouted, "O, come on." They called O together and ordered K to get her. K suggested to play puzzle and wanted to be first. However, T left and when they came back, T led the play again (Program B, day 3, play 2.6, 0000-1001).

- A and T played with Lego blocks. T explained A the story that T planned, and A followed her. As O came to them, T took a toy from A and gave it to O. O refused the toy and A picked it up again. T traveled with her toy and came back to A. T started to build something together, but T took some toys from A and used them when she built. T sometimes asked A what she needed. T kept explaining her plan and asked A to pretend something and did not wait for A's opinion. Then A focused on her play and did not listen to her, T kicked A softly so she would listen to her (Program B, day 4, play 2.17, 0000-0450).
- When R and H read a book together in the reading area, the book was in front of R, R turned the pages of the book, chose the next book, and did not accept H's choice when H chose a book for her next reading. When they finished reading the first book, R looked excited to choose the next book and H looked a little exhausted. When R saw H was halfhearted about continuing to read, R signaled H with short glaring eyes while opening her eyes wide. R still listened to H, but R was more active in explaining or describing the book. R's active role was the same after joining new peer C. As C lay down between R and H, R stood up and ordered H and C to sit back and listen to her. C asked R to read her book. However, R did not listen to her and chose another book. C looked a little disappointed (Program C, day 1, play 3, 0000-1001).
- K and V played together in the dramatic play area. K was a pet owner and V was her cat. K prepared food, and V followed her. V was sitting on the ground and got the food that K prepared. K explained the food that she prepared and asked V what she liked. After preparing, K sat on the chair and started to eat. V grabbed the food and ate on the ground. K ordered V to eat, opened the lid of the can, and ordered to get in the room with a firm voice and glaring eyes. V did not talk to K in this way (Program C, day 1, play 4, 0000-1001).
- Y was playing with the pizza machine toy. S and C came to Y, and S picked some pizzas. Y said he started the play first, but S argued two people could play together with the toy. S moved the toy and got the pizza without discussion. S joined later than Y, he owned most of the toy and manipulated. Y looked a little frustrated about this because S hid some toys and controlled the toys without giving Y a chance (Program C, day 2, play 8, 0000-0304).
- S, C, and Y played with a pizza toy. After losing interest in the pizza toy play, S explained a guessing game to C and Y. S hid a letter or number behind him and asked C and Y to guess. When he explained the rule for

	the game, S yelled with threatening voice and pushed Y several times (Program C, day 2, play 8, 0327-0750).
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Theme	Description
Teamwork	<p>Teamwork includes behaviors which come out of consideration for others. Children value not only the opinions or feelings of themselves but also consider opinions and feelings of the peers near them. Children exhibiting teamwork may work as a group to make decisions together and pursue common goals as well as taking turns. For this theme, children may use negotiation, mutual decision making, or suggest options for others. Children exhibit teamwork by including their peers and acknowledging and accepting their roles in the play. Teamwork is also shown in children's cooperative play when they act out their roles in the play while respecting peers' roles. Teamwork involves prosocial behaviors such as helping and comforting peers voluntarily.</p>
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A, W, and H were playing next to the window with dinosaur miniatures. It looked like H had all the miniatures and W and A were watching the dinosaurs displayed on the window shelf. When W said he knew one of the dinosaurs pointing at the blue one, H gave it to W. Then, H picked up three more miniatures. W asked A what she wanted. A said one of dinosaurs that H already picked. At first, H said "No" holding the dinosaurs in his arms. Soon, he made sure how many she wanted and shared one with her. They started to play with their own dinosaurs (Program A, day 1, play 5, 0000-0134)</li> <li>● J and B were in the reading area. J asked B if he could help her to clean up. B said, "Sure" and joined her. J cleaned up the puzzle she played with, and B joined the cleaning up. B said that the cleaning up was tough, and J agreed with him. After cleaning up, they came back to the reading area and said it was time to sleep. They said good night to each other and pretended to sleep (Program A, day 2, play 2, 0000-0209).</li> <li>● B and J repeated sleeping and waking up while saying good night several times to each other. J woke up B asking him if he heard the noise. B woke up and searched and J whistled with her fingers. Then, she said, "It's stopped." Then, B showed her his card that he found in the dramatic play area. J asked him to find one more card for her. B asked her to whistle one more time, and J whistled several times for him. B started to find another card, and J joined the finding. They couldn't find more cards, but B found a rabbit toy on the shelf. J picked up the toy and looked happy. They came back to the reading area. B shared the card with J, so J played with the card when she wanted. B stretched his hands without any word, and J returned the card to him. They looked and listened to each other for a long time while playing with the card (Program A, day 2, play 3, 0000-1000).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● B was jumping on the trampoline with the baby tiger toy, and A was waiting for her turn while watching B. As B showed off a spin, A said she also could do the spin and showed her spin, too. B said that she was almost done and needed three more minutes. They interacted with each other and followed each other's behavior. When A sat on the floor, B sat on the trampoline. When B hopped on one foot, A followed her, too. After B played for a few more minutes on the trampoline, she gave a chance to A, and A started to play on the trampoline. While A played on the trampoline, B watched A and waited for her in front of the trampoline. After finishing playing with the trampoline, B played one more time shortly on the trampoline. Then, they decided what to play next together and moved (Program A, day 2, play 4, 0000-0722).</li> <li>● G and B were in the dramatic play area. G was close to the kitchen and B was next to the mailbox. They were looking for what to play. B suggested that she could be a puppy and lay down. G approached her and petted B's neck and face softly. G played as the pet owner and B played as the dog. They cared for each other, especially, the pet owner G took care of the dog, B. She brought toys and food, prepared the bed, and soothed B when she got peevish before sleep. Their roles changed naturally in their play, and B also showed her caring roles to G when B was a pet owner and G became a dog. B prepared food for G and gave G her favorite toy, a baby tiger, when G wanted (Program A, day 3, play 3, 0000-0740).</li> <li>● A comforted herself while walking in the classroom and looking for something fun. A found B and E playing in the reading area. They pretended that under the table was a jail and covered the four sides of the table with cushions. When A approached them and asked about the play, E explained their play to her and allowed A to join the play. They decided their roles together and pretended they were witches and their dolls as witch pets. A shared one of her dolls with B. First, E went to the jail, and A and B covered the jail with cushions quickly. A and B laughed at E when they finished covering the jail walls. E tried to escape the jail by kicking the cushion. Soon, E escaped, and B said, "Put her back in." B chased E, but she could not catch her. Then, A suggested B's turn in the jail. B accepted A's idea quickly and called E to come back and told this to her. B entered under the table. A and E covered the table with the cushions, again (Program A, day 3, transition 2, 0310-0600).</li> <li>● K, A, I, and H were in the art area. H was picking up one marker from the case. O called and said to H that they needed to share the marker, so he needed to put the marker in the middle of the table. A told O not to blame her because she did not use any markers. I looked at them and passed several markers to O and other friends to use. H left the area (Program B, day 1, play 1.1, 0000-0110).</li> <li>● A, T, O, I, and H were in the dramatic play area. They all were in the cube. As I left the cube, A shouted, "We are on the moon." A escaped the cube first, and the other children followed. As A moved away while skipping, the other children followed. Then, T shouted that they needed to get on the spaceship because there was an alien. Other children came back to the cube except O. O danced and turned herself into the group</li> </ul>
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	<p>meeting area. While looking at the dancing O, T shouted, “Come on, mom” with weeping voice. T told the other children that she would search the moon, and the other children followed, too. After searching, they came back to the cube, but still worried the mom, O. A and T argued if Pluto was a planet or not. A said that Pluto was not a planet anymore because it was too small. T suggested to go to Pluto to check it, and A agreed with this. Their spaceship took off, and they said goodbye to their mom, O. When they arrived at Pluto, C got out of the spaceship and danced. The two children followed T. T led almost all of the play while listening to others, and other children followed and joined this play (Program B, day 1, play 2.3, 0000-1038).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I was playing with diverse scarves, and E was watching her when E passed by. I suggested to play with her, and E joined her. E looked like he did not know what to do and I explained the play. I let E grab the end of the scarf, hold and put it down. Sometimes E was distracted, but I called him to back to her. I started to do the same work, but this time, the scarf was very big. I encouraged E, explained how to put the scarf straight, and waited for him. E also waited for her until I set the other scarves up. They talked about the printed dogs on the scarf for a while (Program B, day 1, play 2.11, 0037-0926).</li> <li>● I was stacking Legos next to J and E. Several times, when J turned or moved, I’s toy was shaking. When J found I’s toy and stacked it higher with his Legos, I shouted, “No.” Then, J stood up next to I’s toy and said, “It’s almost taller than me.” I stacked again, and J said, “Not yet. Is it growing?” Though at first, I did not want J to stack on her toys, but she laughed soon because J engaged the stacking so naturally. I laughed and hopped while staking and said, “It’s almost taller than you.” Other children around them watched together and looked happy. Later, when J stacked more Legos, it collapsed. I did not seem to be upset about it (Program B, day 2, play 2.6, 0000-0138).</li> <li>● U and R kept playing in the block area. R kept hammering and prepared the blocks for building. When R passed blocks to U, U accepted and used the block for building. As U asked R to give the block for hammering, R gave the block that he had and found another one for him. R showed sawing while making a sawing sound. U passed more blocks to R for sawing and it looked like he was asking him to saw more blocks. R sawed and passed them to U. U started building something. Though, most of the part was built and collapsed by U, R added some blocks on it and U did not remove the block R added or reject R’s idea (Program B, day 2, play 2.10, 0000-0647).</li> <li>● G and L were matching an alphabet puzzle together. Whenever he found the right place for each puzzle, G shouted or laughed. When they completed the puzzle together, they looked delighted with it. L clapped his hands and wanted to show the puzzle (Program B, day 2, play 2.11, 0000-0227).</li> <li>● B and I sat on the floor in the dramatic play area. They were holding one toy each and sang the same song for the sleeping baby. They looked at</li> </ul>
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	<p>each other while singing and interacted with each other after the song (Program B, day 2, play 2.18, 0023-0132).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● B was packing a bag for the baby, and I was dressing the baby. After packing some food, B came to I and showed the food, “This is for dinner and this is for dessert.” I was focusing on buttoning up of her baby’s clothes. B explained to I that Santa would be coming, so they needed to decorate for Santa and prepare some presents. When B said how excited she was to meet Santa, I agreed with her. B asked I if she was almost finished, and soon, I finished putting clothes on the baby. Then, they took care of the baby together (Program B, day 2, play 2.19, 0000-0344).</li> <li>● D was sitting on the group meeting area. D told her friends that she was a unicorn. There was no response about this, and D called the friends around her. She said that they could be unicorns, too. I came to her, and A and T were in there. D taught A and I their roles. T was around them but, did not join the play. A and I suggested different situations and D did as well. They moved around the classroom and pretended they were in different situations (Program B, day 3, play 2.5, 0036-0423).</li> <li>● T, A, and K were playing in the group meeting area. As T and A threw the dolls and got them, K watched and followed them. T and A started to dance with the dolls and K followed. Then, T suggested to them to make a stage with pieces of carpet for dance, and they all collected the carpet pieces together. After collecting the carpet pieces, they started to dance on the stage (Program B, day 3, play 2.9, 0000-0250).</li> <li>● K and I were in the art area. They said that they both were drawing paintings for their friend, T. They said the friend T was their best friend, and knew that she could be both their best friends, not only one of them. K dotted on I’s paper and looked at I. I nodded her head and smiled. K asked if it was perfect and I said yes. K suggested to I that they make it together, and I accepted it. They started to draw together on I’s paper. K shared her purple paint ,and I shared hers as well. I said it was fun, and K agreed with this (Program B, day 4, play 1.2, 0000-00206).</li> <li>● E, H, and T were sitting in the reading area. They were watching E’s book that he brought from home. While E was pointing at some pictures, they laughed and interacted with each other. T told E she wanted to be done, and they all left the area (Program B, day 4, play 2.1, 0000-0500).</li> <li>● T and O played with manipulative toys. They were making their own toys. O shouted, “Heart, heart.” Her toy looked like a number three shape (looked like a heart except the bottom). T suggested O to make a heart together, and O accepted this. They started to make a heart together. While making the heart, O asked for help, and T helped her quickly (Program B, day 4, play 2.2, 0000-0123).</li> <li>● O, D, and T played in the dramatic play area. It seemed like D was a pet owner and O and T were cats. T asked D to pet her stomach, and O did as well. D introduced their house, and they found that there were some rice grains on the table and the carpet. They reported this to the</li> </ul>
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teacher. The teacher asked them, "What happened? What can we do about it?" O brought a broom and dustpan and started to sweep. Though it was not their work or fault, the teacher gave them the opportunity to think and this made them clean up by themselves. D and T kept playing, and O quit cleaning and joined them. T found a dress and tried to wear it. D was playing with the cat, O. D found a puzzle in the middle of the play and tried to play with it. The teacher told her to put her bag in the dramatic play area before playing with the puzzle so that they would not lose any puzzle pieces. D put her bag in the dramatic play area and started to sweep the floor. T came close to D and sat back. D zipped up her dress and showed T the dust (Program B, day 5, play 2.1, 0000-0700).

- O, D, and T played in the dramatic play area. D and T were sitting on the table and eating something. The cat, O, was under the table and was pretending to be upset. T yielded the chair to O and brought a new chair for her. O looked happy. The mom, D, prepared food and shared the food. T suggested her ideas often, and D suggested her ideas, too. D left the area for snack, and T explained her plan to O. T picked up two bags and gave another bag to O. O refused the bag and expressed that she wanted the bag T chose. T yielded her bag again and O looked satisfied. T suggested a new idea and picked several scarves from the closet. O suggested help, but T refused it. T suggested to cover the table with scarves, and O helped her. T brought more beanbags and fixed the scarves with beanbags. They built together their own comfort house and entered under the table when they finished (Program B, day 5, play 2.6, 0000-1002).
- D and T were playing under the table in the dramatic play area. T kept suggesting new ideas. T brought an apron and said it was a skate. T put the apron on the floor and pretended skating. She showed different dances to the friends near her. She explained her skills to them, and they showed their skills, too. D danced with slippers, and T wanted to dance with D's slippers. D yielded hers and gave the opportunity to T. T spun, danced across the classroom, and came back to D (Program B, day 5, play 2.8, 0240-0652).
- I, A, and D played in the group meeting area. D lay down on the floor, and A and I woke her up. All three girls suggested a story or described some situations, and they followed it altogether (Program B, day 5, play 2.10, 0000-0210).
- R and C played with manipulative toys. E came to them, and R did not want E to play with her. R blocked E when she came close to her. E asked R not to push her and reminded her to share the toys. R shared several toys with her. C expressed she wanted to play with her. E wanted one more animal, and R gave her one cat. R showed interest in the dog E had, and E suggested R to trade. E suggested that if R gave the toy, she could give one dog and a cat. They both looked satisfied because they got something they each wanted. In addition, E reminded R of the sharing rule when she wanted to play in the doll's house (Program C, day 1, play 5, 0326-0751).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● K and V played with manipulative toys. K looked sad and depressed. V looked at her and gave one toy that she had. It did not help K feel better. K cried a little without a sound. V came close to K and sat next her. V listened to K for a while. Soon, K looked better. They started to play with toys, and K laughed sometimes. When K had trouble dressing her toy, V tried to help her. V took off the clothes of her toys and gave it to K (Program C, day 1, play 7, 0135-0905).</li> <li>● When four boys were writing or drawing on the whiteboard, S kept disturbing C by erasing or overwriting on his work. This made C upset, and E had a chance to watch this. She showed thumb up posture to C and came close to him and patted C's shoulder (Program C, day 1, play 8, 0110-0145).</li> <li>● K, V, and N were playing with manipulative toys. V seemed like she did not know what to do. K made a situation and led V to be involved. N asked them to give the pizza toy, and K and V gave the pizza toy to him. K found a broom in the basket and tried to give the broom to N. Then, K noticed that V wanted to play with the broom. K gave it to V, and V played with the broom for a while (Program C, day 2, play 6, 0000-0448).</li> <li>● C and L played with fire engine toys. C asked L to make a fire, and L made a fire with a fire extinguisher. L explained how he made a fire with the fire extinguisher. After L made a fire, C yelled through a loudspeaker and sounded the alarm for the fire. C brought a water hose and put the fire out, and L operated the fire extinguisher next to C (Program C, day 3, play 1, 0000-0233).</li> <li>● R and C played in the block area. They played with diverse people miniatures and built a fence for the miniatures. C suggested two possible options (bigger or smaller fence) for the fence and explained this to R. R chose one option. R brought more wood blocks for their fence, and C sometimes matched them if it fit well in their fence. If R brought a smaller block, C told R it was too little and if R brought the right size block, C told R it fit well. C watched R while R built the fence, and R did as well (Program C, day 3, play 3, 0000-0311).</li> <li>● E and C were in the block area. C started to spread the wood blocks and suggested an idea to step on them. E disagreed with her, but E already stepped on the blocks and walked on them. C kept spreading the blocks, and E helped C. E suggested different situations and they kept building. E told C they needed water to connect the wood blocks all together. Then, H came to them shouting, "Water, water, I will get the water" with her fire engine (Program C, day 3, play 5, 0106-0419).</li> <li>● As girls left the block area, Y ran to the block area and so did L and C. L suggested they make a giant spaceship, and C agreed with it. C asked if he could play with them, and Y accepted him. C suggested they make a big spaceship, and L liked this idea. C suggested taking all the wood blocks first, and L and Y sang the Star Wars song while building a spaceship. C suggested a new idea, and L and Y explained what they</li> </ul>
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	<p>wanted to make. C made the back of the spaceship, and L completed the wing of the spaceship. Y made a sound and complemented them, saying their work was special (Program C, day 3, play 5, 0831-1519).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● K, V, and R played with the fire engine toys. K had a big fire engine and two policewomen miniatures; R had a small fire engine, and V had a fire extinguisher. K explained something to R, and V let K know that there was a fire behind her and pointed at the fire. R yelled, “Mommy, mommy”, and K was ready to go. K went to the scene of the fire and tried to extinguish the fire. A small fire engine escaped the area. V connected the hose of the fire extinguisher and made a sound. V grabbed the walkie-talkie and asked K to grab hers. They talked through the walkie-talkies. V prepared another fire, and K responded to the call (Program C, day 3, play 6, 0219-0630).</li> <li>● Four children exchanged opinions before making something together. C suggested they make a play park. E made a sound with wood blocks and let them hear it. C suggested to make a huge block house. After they suggested their ideas, they listened to each other’s opinions. They spent some time to discuss and decide what to make. It was not easy to compromise and decide something together. Then, their goal was changed. At first, they tried to make something, but later, their goal was to use the blocks and have fun with the blocks. E, C, and S showed how their blocks were falling down one by one, and whatever they watched they laughed. They tried to make diverse shapes and different types of buildings (Program C, day 4, play 2, 0000-1013)</li> <li>● H, C, and S were in the block area. They played with wood blocks and people miniatures. They were building a castle together and discussed how to build it. Then, they heard some sound that came from upstairs. H asked what the sound was, and S answered it was chairs. C looked scared because of the sound, yelled, and laid down on H’s knees. H hugged him and petted his hair until he felt better (Program C, day 4, play 5, 0437-0539)</li> <li>● S, H, C, and E played with wooden blocks. They built a castle. C told them what he made. After listening to this, E said to C that he was not supposed to do it. Then E asked who the person in charge of the castle was. Everyone suggested different ideas and disagreed. While discussing, S hit his head and made a noise. As he first hit, E stretched her arm and tried to protect him. E concluded they all were in charge, and S’s sound (hitting noise) made them all laugh (Program C, day 4, play 5, 0814-0942)</li> <li>● C was watching the fire extinguisher. S joined him and suggested C to do fire fighter play. E and H wanted to join, too. H put the fire near the house. S’s and E’s fire engine arrived quickly. C used the fire extinguisher. They all made an alarming sound and worked cooperatively to put out the fire in their roles. This pattern was repeated several times and their roles were changed depending on situations. For this, they discussed and interacted with each other during the play, though it</li> </ul>
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	<p>seemed to be difficult to let everybody be included in the play at the same time (Program C, day 4, play 7, 0053-0750).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● C and R played in the dramatic play area. C held two baby dolls and said she was R's mom. C asked R if she needed a baby, and R held three babies. They talked about babies for a while. C told her two babies were real babies because they were young. As C gave one baby to R, R held the baby in her arm. R looked for some milk for her baby, and C gave her baby bottle to R. After feeding the baby, they interacted for a while, and R returned the baby to C. R put another baby under her shirt and looked pregnant. C did the same as R. They continued their play (Program C, day 5, play 1, 0000-1000).</li> <li>● Y and L played with fire fighter play. As Y yelled, "Help" while holding a toy in one hand, L's doll who was a firefighter, ran the fire engine and saved Y's doll. Y said thanks to L (Program C, day 5, play 3, 0000-0115).</li> <li>● E and L were playing in the block area. E explained to C what they built, and C joined the play. S approached them humorously with funny gestures and joined the play naturally. They filled the bottom with wood blocks and discussed what to make and how to make it. Though they did not draw any conclusion about that, they laughed and enjoyed the time while repeating some behaviors and making some sounds together (Program C, day 5, play 4, 0000-1000).</li> <li>● H and O played in the dramatic play area. O cooked food and H helped O to find some materials for cooking. O grilled some food and cooked more food. While O left the grill, H watched the grill. As O found different kinds of spatulas, she also gave one of them to H. O tried to find baby food, and H helped her to find it. O kept cooking, and H prepared for going out. O asked H why she did not help her and did not clean the table. H suggested she just arrived at home. H made a bell sound, and O opened the door. There were more interactions about their roles (Program C, day 5, play 6, 0045-1001).</li> <li>● S, C, R, and E played together with little cars. S and C played this first, and E and R sometimes joined the play. While one child held a little car in one hand, the other children guessed which hand held the car. If one's guess was right, the child who hid the car gave the car to the others. They did this game by taking turns. In the meantime, R wanted to play with the toy that E had. E had a manipulative toy, and E told R she could yield other toys to her. R wanted the toy that E was playing with. So, E told R that she needed the toy for three more minutes. R waited for her turn while joining the guessing game and finally, E gave the toy to R (Program C, day 5, play 8, 0000-0940).</li> <li>● L and Y were playing with fire engine toys. L's fire engine was broken down, and Y ran into it to save it. L led and described the situations, and Y followed the story. Then, S and C wanted to play with them. At first, L and Y looked like they did not want to play with them. However, soon they played together. Y played with S, and L played with C. Y and S ran</li> </ul>
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	a car race together. S and C made an emergency story and rescued together (Program C, day 5, play 9, 0000-0648).
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Theme	Description
Social-emotional difficulties	<p>Social-emotional difficulties are various difficulties that children exhibit in their social-emotional interactions and relationships. Social-emotional difficulties can be applied if at least one child exhibits distress or difficulties in their peer interactions. Difficulties may include children’s unregulated behaviors such as not being able to control their emotions or behaviors and acting aggressively toward their peers around them. These children may not consider others’ feelings or emotions resulting from their behaviors. In addition, children’s distress caused by their playmates’ aggressive behaviors toward them is included in social-emotional difficulties. Moreover, children who witness their peers’ aggressive behaviors or distress but disregard or not take care of others’ feelings and behave indifferently, exhibit social-emotional difficulties. For instance, if A, B, and C are playing together, if A hits B, and B cries, and C ignores the A’s hitting and B’s emotions, the three children all experience social-emotional difficulties in different ways.</p>
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A, B, and W were playing in the dramatic play area. A was holding a baby tiger with both her arms and looked like she was soothing a fretful baby. W suggested the idea that they mail the tiger toy, but A did not accept this idea. W suggested his idea again, but it was refused again. They divided over this. B said that A and B would mail him rather than the baby tiger. W rejected this strongly while saying “No.” This made B angry, and B hit, shook, and grabbed W’s arm roughly. W looked threatened by her and later said “I will never be with you.” W hid himself behind the cushion. He looked relieved soon, but they still argued about it, and A threw a toy at W (Program A, day 1, play 3, 0345-0757).</li> <li>• G had a phone and W wanted to get the phone. G showed her unwillingness, anger, and power by kicking W’s face and neck. W cried and yelled. Nevertheless, he did not give up, saying, “I wanna that phone.” W pulled up the phone and the battery and held her, but he did not hit her. G hit him with a battery, hand, and pinched his arm. After a tussle, he finally got the phone. J joined them and saw this tussle. However, she pretended not to see anything and did not mention about the conflict between G and W (Program A, day 1, play 9, 0000-0104).</li> <li>• G and W yelled at each other. G yelled, “Yes” and W yelled “No” to her. J sat between them, closed her ears, and looked uncomfortable. The teacher came and asked what happened between them. G defended herself, and W did not give any response to the teacher. The teacher asked if he was okay, again (Program A, day 1, play 10, 0000-0110).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● G yelled to W, “Go away” several times, and then W was upset. W raised the cushion and G yelled to W, “Put that down.” As soon as he put down the cushion, G scratched W’s face. W cried, and the teacher came up to them and asked what happened between them. G explained that W put down the cushion in front of her. W did not answer, and the teacher took him. W went to another area (Program A, day 1, play 11, 0000-0117).</li> <li>● E played with different kinds of dinosaur miniatures. When E picked one of them, the teacher told the name of the dinosaur. They repeated this several times. G showed interest about this and approached E and her dinosaurs. G picked up one of them and asked the teacher. She repeated this. As the teacher left the area, E resisted G to take her toys and wrapped her toys with her body. G pushed and pressed E’s neck with the purpose of getting the toys, and as E kept her toys and yelled, G’s aggression became stronger. The teacher came back and stopped her. The other two girl, A and J did not care about this and kept playing (Program A, day 3, play 6, 0000-0242).</li> <li>● W approached the manipulative area and watched the toy, the slide, that A and J played with. A and J left the slide and showed interest in the magnets. When W said something pointing at the slide, A yelled at him with a threatening voice, pushed him, and kicked him several times, warning him not to approach to their toy (Program A, day 3, play 7, 0000-0054).</li> <li>● When A and J played with dolls, B was watching them sitting on the couch. B touched the cushion that A used, and A ran to her while shouting, “No. That’s my bed.” A returned to the play. Then, B touched the cushion again. A ran to her and grabbed B’s arms strongly. B yelled shortly, but J pretended not to see this. Then, E approached them and sat on the cushion. A pulled the cushion, and this made E fall down. A moved the cushion away from them (Program A, day 3, play 9, 0451-0628).</li> <li>● A cried and looked sad. A walked and hovered in the classroom holding dolls in her both arms. No child asked about it or gave a word of comfort, even when A yelled. A put her dolls in her cubby and stood in the middle of the classroom and yelled. She went to the cubby, took her dolls, and sat and cried again (Program A, day 3, transition 2, 0000-0254).</li> <li>● J was playing on the trampoline, and A was waiting for her turn sitting in the chair next to the trampoline. They interacted with each other, and as J talked to A, A covered J’s face with a book. By then, they both laughed. Then, A dropped the book on the trampoline. J picked up it and threw the book off of the trampoline. A kicked the book several times and threw the book on the chair. As J said something to A, A pinched J’s arm with a smile. J looked uncomfortable and upset, and she waited for the teacher to see them (Program A, day 4, play 5, 0142-0302).</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● B was playing on the trampoline, E was sitting in front of the trampoline, and C was sitting on the chair next to the trampoline. C had just arrived in the classroom. B and E interacted with each other while B was playing, and C was watching them. C took off her shoes and went to the cubby to hang up her coat. As she came back to them, C said that she was waiting her turn. E said she was waiting and laid down on the chair. C tickled E and snatched the little ring that B wanted to return to E. B yelled, "No" with frustrated voice. C returned the ring to B quickly, but B tried to hit C. C defended herself with her right hand, and B hit C's hand softly. However, C yelled and stamped her feet. B said, "I am sorry. Are you okay?" looking at C and toward to the teacher. E was dancing in front of them. The assistant teacher came to them and asked what happened. B and C defended themselves (Program A, day 4, play 15, 0000-0204).</li> <li>● W laid down on the puzzle carpet and C pushed him while shouting his name. C leaned against him and kept pushing him. W shouted, "Help me" under C. C pushed W almost at the end of the puzzle carpet, and W sat up. W pushed C's head softly because her head was on his leg. C cried and yelled fiercely. W picked his leg up and moved. The classroom teacher approached and asked them what happened. A child around them saw this, but did not pay attention to it. The other child laid down on W (Program A, day 4, play 24, 0000-0056).</li> <li>● C and O played together with the same flower blocks. When C asked O to give pink or purple pieces of blocks, O did not share and used more pink and purple pieces for her own toy. This made C upset and angry. C yelled that she wouldn't play with O and threw some pieces of toys (Program B, day 1, play 2.12, 0000-0448).</li> <li>● As U and R played with the manipulative toys, they listened to a yelling voice near them. It sounded like someone wanted to join the play, but he was not accepted. They kept watching him. Then, U said to the teacher that he did not want to play with the children who made a mess (Program B, day 2, play 1.1, 0111-0426).</li> <li>● J, E, and L played with Legos. Though they played with the same toy and the same area, they played separately. J tried to take the Legos that L held in his left hand. When J took it, L called the teacher. J argued that it was his. The teacher came to them and explained to L and J, they each had a toy of their own while pointing at them. Then, the teacher taught and let L practice how to ask for his turn (Program B, day 2, play 2.7, 0000-0135).</li> <li>● N was playing with manipulative toys. N extended the blocks. L sat next to him and was complemented N when he saw N's work. L had two pieces of toys the same as N's. When N saw L was looking at his, N tried to take the block in L's hand and pushed L from his work. L screamed and cried. The teacher came to them and intervened. The teacher taught and made L practice the sentence that he needed to learn in this situation (Program B, day 2, play 2.16, 0000-0223).</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● T and O played in the manipulative play area. T suggested O to connect their own work together. As their work connected, they both looked happy. Then, T suggested O to separate and make their own work. O separated the toy. T cried and looked sad while saying O had more than her. O did not agree with this, and they argued (Program B, day 4, play 2.4, 0000-0221).</li> <li>● V was walking slowly in the classroom pretending to be a dinosaur. N scared D, and V watched this. V was behind N and he scared D, too. N quickly turned back and scratched V's face. V scared N and looked frustrated. N ran and hid himself in the cube. V watched him and looked upset. N came out of the cube and V stretched his arm against N. N showed a bag to V, and V turned and left the area (Program B, day 4, play 2.13, 0000-0127).</li> <li>● J was playing in the block area. J constructed a building with wood blocks. N approached him and asked what J was doing. J answered him. Q came and watched J, too. N and Q sat close to J's work and played with J's work. J did not allow them to play with his work. J blocked N's and Q's car entering into his building and shouted, "Stop." The teacher intervened and explained to N and Q that J did not want them to touch his toy. The teacher told J to use a 'saving star' to keep his work while eating snack. N left him, but Q played around him. J left the area for the snack group, and he looked worried. J came back and took Q's toy from Q and said, "It's my work, not yours." J almost cried and told Q to stop playing around his toys. J left the area, and Q played again. Soon, J came back and shouted it was his work. J came back one more time and looked unstable (Program B, day 4, play 2.14, 0000-0351).</li> <li>● N was collecting white beans among black beans with a spoon. As Q came to N, N hit him with the spoon. Q protected himself with his elbow and said he was not hurt. N hit him again with the spoon and his hand. Q left him (Program B, day 5, play 2.4, 0000-0010).</li> <li>● J drew on Q with a pen, and I was near them. As J drew, Q left and ran away. J came back and did the same thing to I. I looked like she did not like this. I called J, but he ignored her. The teacher intervened and explained to J that I did not want him to draw something on her (Program B, day 5, play 2.5, 0000-0139).</li> <li>● J, Q, and A found the secret place that O and T built with scarves and beanbags. They wanted to make their own secret place under the cube. J took the scarves. As A said they needed beanbags, J sneaked up on O's and T's work and took their beanbags. A took another beanbag from them and said they needed the beanbags. As O went to them to take back the beanbag, J took it from her again (Program B, day 5, play 2.7, 0000-0140).</li> <li>● S showed aggressive behavior to C. Whenever C drew something on the board, S erased C's work and disturbed him when they were playing with the board. When C got the eraser, S took it from him. S pulled C's</li> </ul>
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	<p>ear and spat at C. When C stood and drew, S stood and drew. When C sat down, S followed him, and when C left the area, S followed him (Program C, day 1, play 8, 0000-0223).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E was crying because one of her playmates called her “little baby”. Children around E stopped playing and watched E crying. C said, “We are not young,” S said, “we are all young,” R was writing something on the board but stopped writing and approached E and shared her experience, “Daddy called me a baby, but now I am five”. Soon, children called each other little girl or little boy. This made E feel better and laugh (Program C, day 3, play 7, 0000-0217).</li></ul>
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