

## PRE-KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION PROGRAM (PTP) FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT WORKERS (CDWs)

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### ABSTRACT

Utilizing the descriptive research design, integrating the Research & Development (R&D) methodology, this study developed the Pre-kindergarten Transition Program (PTP) for Child Development Workers (CDWs) based on the identified factors that affect common adjustment issues of pre-kindergartners and the various experiences of CDWs in handling adjustment issues during transition period. The study was conducted in the five districts of Child Development Centers (CDCs) in Laoag City. Using purposive sampling technique, this study involved 19 CDWs and three experts in the field of early childhood education (ECE). A structured interview guide for the Focus Group discussion (FGD) and a validation tool adapted from Valdez (2023) were used in gathering data. Data gathered from the FGD were analyzed using Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis while mean was used to determine the validity of the PTP. Findings reveal that the factors that affect the common adjustment issues of pre-kindergartners during transition period are lack of social exposure, separation anxiety, time and routine adjustments, and excessive use of gadgets at home. On the other hand, the CDWs employ interactive learning activities, open communication, and parental involvement and support in handling adjustment issues during transition period. Findings also reveal that the developed PTP is highly valid in terms of objectives (3.77), content (3.88), staff/persons involved (3.66), duration (4.00), and assessment/evaluative technique (3.78) along with the overall mean of 3.82. Thus, the PTP is recommended to be implemented to capacitate the CDWs in managing effectively the common adjustment issues of pre-kindergartners during transition period.

**Keywords:** Child Development Workers (CDWs), Common adjustment issues, Pre-kindergarten Transition Program (PTP), Transition period.

## INTRODUCTION

No person is naturally balanced; the ability to adapt varies significantly among individuals, especially children, who are particularly vulnerable during transitions. Besi and Sakellario (2019) highlighted that the shift from home to school is a crucial time for children's development. Margetts (2014) and Mior and Johnson (2021) noted that this transition is complex and can inhibit adjustment. Marković and Kuterovac (2021) identified it as a major developmental milestone requiring adjustments to new social and academic demands, which benefits overall educational progress (Bowes et al., 2019). They suggested exploring the determinants of effective school transitions to help children reach their full potential.

Adjustment during this process fosters social bonds (Al-Yagon, 2020), enhances cognitive abilities (Karaman & Cobb, 2022), and aids emotional regulation (Skinner, 2018), supporting the Attachment Theory which emphasizes social interaction. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory elaborates on how children's microsystems and mesosystems connect through social interactions in school. These theoretical frameworks are echoed in international research; for example, the OECD's Starting Strong reports (OECD, 2017) emphasize the importance of supportive relationships and responsive environments in early childhood transitions globally.

Adjustment does not end on the first school day; Pomerantz et al. (2011) found it typically takes about six weeks for pre-kindergartners to adjust. Difficulties during this period can lead to socializing issues, anxiety (Saadvedra, 2022; Silk et al., 2022), and aggression (Guerra & Huesmann, 2022). Besi and Sakellario (2019) also noted that adjustment issues can affect sleep, appetite, and emotions, leading to anxiety, fear, anger, sadness, and withdrawal. These findings align with international studies such as those by Dockett and Perry (2014), who documented that children's emotional and behavioral responses during school transitions are influenced by the quality of transition support and family involvement.

In the Philippines, children aged 4.0 to 4.11 receive early learning services through the Early Childhood and Care and Development (ECCD) Council, which oversees programs implemented by Local Government Units (LGUs) and monitored by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). Child Development Centers (CDCs) provide these early learning experiences, with Child Development Workers (CDWs) playing a vital role in supporting children's transition from home to school (Sheridan, 2019). CDWs foster nurturing environments, build relationships, and assist in social-emotional development, aiming for smooth adjustments.

Transition programs implemented by the DSWD in CDCs help mitigate challenges associated with moving to school, creating a bridge between home and school to foster positive beginnings. However, literature on transition programs at the pre-kindergarten level is scarce (Villareal et al., 2015), along with studies on factors affecting children's adjustment in the Philippines (Bowes et al., 2019). This gap mirrors challenges identified in other low- and middle-income countries, where transition frameworks are often underdeveloped or poorly documented (UNICEF, 2019).

Globally, transition frameworks such as the UK's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Australia's Transition to School initiatives emphasize a holistic approach involving families, educators, and communities to support children's adjustment (Department for Education UK, 2021; Australian Government Department of Education, 2018). These frameworks highlight the importance of continuity, communication, and individualized support, which can inform the development of culturally responsive transition programs in the Philippines.

This research aimed to analyze perceived factors affecting common adjustment issues among pre-kindergartners, providing a foundation for developing a transition program to empower CDWs in addressing these challenges effectively. Integrating international best

practices and adapting global transition frameworks to the Philippine context can enhance the efficacy of such programs, ensuring they are culturally relevant and responsive to the unique needs of Filipino children and families.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study developed the Pre-kindergarten Transition Program (PTP) for Child Development Workers (CDWs). Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the factors that affect the common adjustment issues that pre-kindergartners experience during transition period as perceived by the CDWs?
2. What are the experiences of the CDWs in handling the common adjustment issues of pre-kindergartners?
3. What program can be developed to capacitate the CDWs in handling the common adjustment issues of pre-kindergartners during transition period?
4. How valid is the developed program along; objectives, content, staff/person involved, duration, and assessment/evaluative techniques?

### **Significance of the Study**

The study aims to capacitate Child Development Workers (CDWs) to address common adjustment challenges faced by pre-kindergartners during their transition. It is expected to benefit pre-kindergartners, parents, Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) administrators, policymakers, local government units (LGUs), and researchers. The outputs from the study will aid CDWs in supporting pre-kindergartners in adapting to their new environment, reducing the stress on parents whose children struggle with adjustment. Additionally, the findings could inform ECCD Council administrators and policymakers in developing curricula and training programs for CDWs to facilitate a smooth transition for pre-kindergartners across various Child Development Centers (CDCs) in the country. The research also aims to assist LGUs, particularly the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) and/or City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), in ensuring a seamless transition from home to school. Lastly, the study could encourage further research that addresses broader issues related to pre-kindergarten implementation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is based on Malcolm Knowles' Adult Learning Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. Adult Learning Theory, or andragogy, emphasizes the unique characteristics of adult learners, contrasting with the pedagogy of child education (Ancho, 2021). Suarez (2022) notes that adult learners' self-concept and readiness to learn differ significantly from those of children, particularly regarding their societal roles.

Non-ECE graduates working as Child Development Workers (CDWs) face challenges with pre-kindergartners due to their limited skills in facilitating learning (Borreguero et al., 2022). This lack of proficiency can hinder their ability to meet educational needs, affecting students' holistic development. By applying Adult Learning Theory and implementing a Professional Transition Program (PTP), CDWs can enhance their skills and professionalism in transition programs for pre-kindergartners. Additionally, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provides a framework for understanding children's transitions between environments, highlighting the interaction of various systems in child development (Early &

Pianta, 2023). This theory underscores the importance of teachers planning for all environmental systems (micro, meso, exo, macro, and chronosystems) that support children during transitions (Early, 2023).

Integrating this theory allows CDWs to become more aware and skilled in supporting preschoolers during transitions. Understanding Ecological Systems Theory equips parents and educators to provide effective support during this critical phase. The developed PTP, informed by both Adult Learning Theory and Ecological Systems Theory, aims to enhance CDWs' skills, fostering a supportive school environment that helps children develop coping skills and strong home-school relationships (Pianta & Mashburn, 2006).

## Conceptual Framework

The Input-Process-Output (IPO) model is used as the framework of the study as shown in Figure 1. The input includes the factors perceived by CDWs that affect common adjustment issues of pre-kindergartners, CDWs experiences in handling common adjustment issues during the transition period, and the Adult Learning Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. Moreover, the process involves the Designing, Writing, and Validating (DWW) model, encompassing designing, writing, and validating the PTP to capacitate CDWs in effectively managing the common adjustment issues of pre-kindergartners during transition period. Lastly, the PTP for CDWs represents the anticipated outcome of this research.

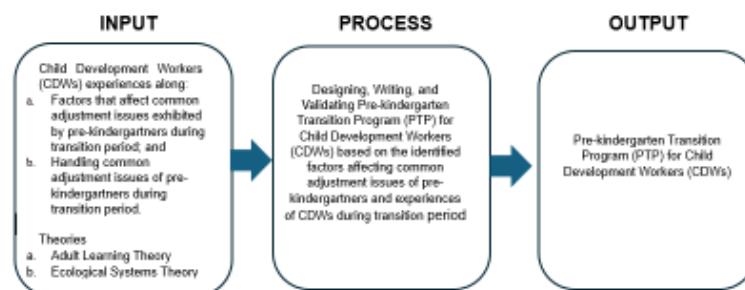


Figure 1. Research Paradigm.

## Research Design

This study employed the descriptive research design integrating the Research and Development (R & D) methodology to develop a PTP for CDWs. It is descriptive as the researcher analyzed thematically the factors affecting common adjustment issues of pre-kindergartners and the experiences of CDWs during transition period. Moreover, this study focused on three key stages in the R&D process: planning, development, and the final stage. Figure 2 illustrates the schematic diagram that outlines the steps involved in the PTP for CDWs. Additionally, the program underwent validation by a pool of experts in the field of ECE. The final stage involved the revision of the PTP based on the feedback from the validators and the advisory committee, ensuring its completeness and effectiveness.

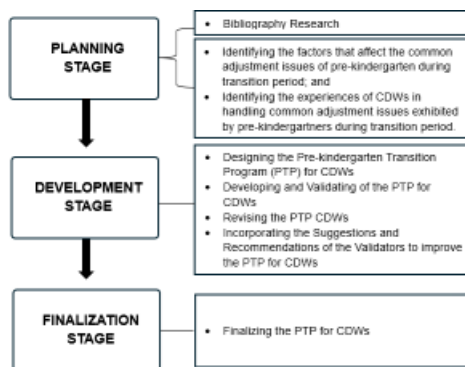


Figure 2. Schematic Diagram Showing the Steps in the Development and Validation of the Pre-kindergarten Transition Program (PTP) for Child Development Workers (CDWs).

## Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in the five districts of the CDCs in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte. CDWs are working in the different CDCs where pre-kindergartners experience transition from home to school. There are 17 CDCs in Poblacion 1 district, 21 CDCs in Poblacion 2 district, 20 CDCs in Northwest district, 20 CDCs in the East district, and 20 CDCs in the South district. The districts were grouped according to the city's distance and geographic location. The CSWDO of Laoag City oversees CDCs.

## Population and Sampling Procedure

Using purposive sampling technique, this study involved two sets of respondents, 19 CDWs from the five districts of CDCs in Laoag City who met the criteria, and three validators who are experts in the field of ECE. The inclusion criteria in selecting the CDWs are: 1) currently serving as CDWs in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte; 2) have experienced the common adjustment behaviors and attitudes that preschoolers exhibited during the transition period; 3) with at least five years and above working experiences as CDWs; and 4) were willing to participate in the study. Only those who have met these inclusion criteria were considered as part of the study. However, the small sample size and focus on a single locality limit the generalizability of the findings. The purposive sampling and local context may also affect the diversity of perspectives. Future studies with larger, more varied samples across different regions are recommended to strengthen and broaden these insights.

## Research Instruments

This study utilized two instruments in gathering the data. First was a researcher made interview guide which questions were translated in Ilokano and content validated by two experts in the field of ECE and one expert in the Ilokano language. This tool was used during the conduct of the FGD. Furthermore, the participants of the FGD spent an hour to answer the questions in the interview guide.

Second was a validation tool which was adapted from Valdez (2023) and was used to determine the level of validity of the PTP for CDWs. The said tool has five indicators which include the program's objectives, content, staff/persons involved, duration, and assessment/evaluative techniques, wherein each item was rated using the following scale:

Range of Means	Descriptive Interpretation (DI)
3.51 – 4.00	Highly Valid (HV)
2.51 – 3.50	Moderately Valid (MV)
1.51 – 2.50	Slightly Valid (SV)
1.00 – 1.50	Not Valid (NV)

## Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher followed specific steps to gather data for the study. After defending the proposal, they obtained clearance from the MMSU University Research Ethics Review Board (MMSU URERB). Following this, a request letter was sent to the City Mayor for permission to conduct the study, coordinating with the Social Welfare and Development Officer of Laoag City. The focus group discussion (FGD) commenced a week after obtaining clearance and concluded the following week. Respondents could choose whether to answer questions and could withdraw at any time. Questions were translated into the respondents' preferred language. Responses were thematically organized and analyzed, with audit trails conducted by three qualitative specialists. After coding, theming, and finalizing the analysis, gathered data was printed and secured in a storage cabinet. In compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, all gathered data will be discarded, online data deleted, and printed materials shredded after the study.

## Statistical Treatment and Analysis of Data

The study examined factors influencing adjustment issues of pre-kindergartners, as perceived by Child Development Workers (CDWs), during the transition period. Utilizing Braun and Clark's (2006) Thematic Analysis framework, the research followed a six-step method for effective investigation. To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher adhered to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) and Nowell et al.'s (2017) criteria, and the research process was reviewed by three qualitative experts prior to journal submission. The findings from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) informed the conceptualization and development of a Professional Training Program (PTP) for CDWs. This PTP was validated by three early childhood education experts using an adapted tool from Valdez (2023), which assessed objectives, content, personnel, duration, and evaluation techniques. The validity was quantified using mean scores and interpreted via a 4-point Likert scale.

Range of Means	Descriptive Interpretation (DI)	Descriptors
3.51 – 4.00	Highly Valid (HV)	The developed program exhibits exceptional components to capacitate CDWs
2.51 – 3.50	Moderately Valid (MV)	The developed program exhibits excellent components to capacitate CDWs
1.51 – 2.50	Slightly Valid (SV)	The developed program exhibits good components to capacitate CDWs
1.00 – 1.50	Not Valid (NV)	The developed program exhibits poor components to capacitate CDWs

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter, the various experiences of CDWs in handling common adjustment issues exhibited by pre-kindergartners during the transition period are discussed, analyzed, and interpreted. This study also explored the factors influencing the common adjustment issues and examined the experiences of the CDWs in handling the common adjustment issues faced by pre-kindergartners during the transition period.

## **Factors Affecting the Common Adjustment Issues of Pre-kindergartners during Transition Period**

The study identifies key themes influencing pre-kindergartners' adjustment issues during their transition, as observed by Child Development Workers (CDWs) in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The main factors include: 1) limited social exposure, 2) separation anxiety, 3) adjustments to time and routines, and 4) excessive use of gadgets at home.

### **Limited Social Exposure**

The theme of limited social exposure significantly impacts pre-kindergartners' adjustment during their transition to school. Besi and Sakellariou (2019) emphasize that exposure is crucial for children's adaptation. Participants in the study identified several areas of limited exposure, including: 1) socialization, 2) home activities, 3) learning environments, 4) unfamiliarity with teachers, and 5) inadequate parent-child orientation.

A key issue is the lack of socialization during the lockdown, which restricted peer interactions (Dphil et al., 2020). This lack of play and movement has been echoed in focus group discussions. Redmon et al. (2017) found that deprivation of basic needs affects children's well-being, while Barger et al. (2019) noted that 50% of pre-kindergartners faced temperament challenges during transitions. Similarly, international studies during the COVID-19 pandemic reported increased social withdrawal and anxiety in young children due to reduced peer contact and play opportunities.

Limited exposure to home activities, essential for skill development, was another finding. Parents often engage their children inadequately before school (Slicker et al., 2017), and even provided activities may not be age-appropriate. Such limitations hinder social competence and can obstruct friendship formation and emotional adjustment (Balayan et al., 2022; Tobin et al., 2020).

Children lacking exposure to learning environments face developmental challenges, including fear and tantrums (Evans et al., 2011). Wilmshurst (2012) corroborates this, linking poor adjustment to negative emotions in unfamiliar settings. Unfamiliarity with teachers also affects students' adjustment, as negative behaviors can stem from teachers' voices and expressions (Roorda et al., 2017). Caciopo and Hawkey (2015) noted that social isolation and unfamiliar teacher interactions can lead to misbehavior and emotional struggles.

Finally, inadequate parent-child orientation is critical; parents play a vital role in helping children adjust to new routines and environments (Li, 2023; Lara & Saracostti, 2019). However, many parents do not follow transition guidelines, which can cause children to feel alienated and pressured, leading to anxiety and learning disorders (Hornby, 2011; Gray, 2023). These factors can have long-term developmental impacts.

### **Separation Anxiety**

Separation anxiety is a common adjustment issue for pre-kindergartners during their transition period. Ali et al. (2021) highlight the importance of the bond between young children and their primary caregivers for social, cognitive, and emotional development. Disruptions in this attachment, such as starting prekindergarten, can lead to feelings of fear or distress when separated from caregivers (Guy-Evans, 2023). This often results in crying as a coping mechanism (Pepito & Montalbo, 2019).

Emotions like worry, anguish, and fear contribute to separation anxiety, with Feriane et al. (2023) identifying them as precursors to Separation Anxiety Disorder (SAD). Extreme

concern about separation can lead to SAD in children, which Milrod et al. (2014) note may result in adult panic disorder and other anxiety issues. Separation anxiety is particularly pronounced when children are apart from their mothers. However, this finding contrasts with studies by Fernandes et al. (2021) and Kamza (2019), which suggest that understanding child development requires considering the influences of both mother and father attachment relationships collectively.

Fishtrom et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of secure attachment bonds with both caregivers, stating that the quality of these attachments significantly affects a child's well-being and their ability to manage separation and anxiety.

### **Time and Routine Adjustments**

The themes of time and routine adjustments significantly impact pre-kindergartners' adjustment issues during their transition period. Establishing a routine is crucial as children develop habits (Arlinghaus & Johnston, 2018). Etheraged (2023) notes that children may struggle with adjustments in time and routine during this period. Changes in time and sleep patterns often leave pre-kindergartners feeling tired and unable to adapt to new schedules, making participation in activities challenging. This aligns with findings from Schlieber and Han (2021), which highlight that alterations in schedules can disrupt young children's sleep patterns, negatively affecting their well-being and daily functioning. Lack of sleep exacerbates the difficulties children face during transitions.

### **Excessive Use of Gadgets at Home**

Excessive gadget use at home is a significant issue affecting pre-kindergartners during their transition period. Mupalla et al. (2023) describe this as the disproportionate time children spend on devices like televisions, computers, and smartphones, often regulated by parents, although some allow extended use. This behavior leads to pre-kindergartners devoting excessive hours to screen time for gaming and entertainment. McArthur et al. (2022) support this by linking screen time to developmental challenges, noting that longer exposure correlates with negative outcomes in language and behavior.

Concerns arise as excessive screen time can adversely affect children's well-being, growth, and adjustment, as observed by CDWs and echoed in Mupalla (2023), where reliance on screen media raises health concerns impacting behavior and cognitive skills. Additionally, high gadget use is associated with an increased risk of behavioral issues, including conduct problems and hyperactivity/inattention. Hosokawa (2018) further highlights that non-educational gadget use correlates with behavioral problems in early childhood.

Complementing these observations, Hinkley et al. (2019) report that excessive screen time is linked with reduced physical activity and social interaction, both critical for healthy development. Furthermore, Madigan et al. (2019) found that early excessive screen exposure predicts poorer executive functioning and self-regulation skills, which are essential for successful school adjustment.

## **Child Development Workers' (CDWs) Experiences in Handling the Common Adjustment Issues of Pre-kindergartners during the Transition Period**

CDWs possess firsthand experience in teaching, assisting, planning, implementing programs, and supervising pre-kindergartners in the CDC. They have utilized interventions to address common adjustment issues faced by pre-kindergartners during the transition period. This study examined how CDWs manage these adjustment challenges. The findings revealed that interactive learning activities and parental involvement emerged as key themes in addressing these issues, as highlighted by participants' shared statements.

### **Application of Interactive Learning Activities**

The theme of applying interactive learning activities is vital for addressing adjustment issues during transition periods for pre-kindergartners. Child Development Workers (CDWs) utilize engaging activities and maintain open communication to mitigate these challenges. Engaging tasks, as noted by Butler and Ostrosky (2018), actively involve children in stimulating activities, such as songs, storytelling, and play-based interactions, which aid in establishing routines (McIntosh et al., 2004).

Storytelling, especially with technology, serves as an effective communication tool, helping children adapt to new cultures (Ramamurthy et al., 2023). CDWs create organized learning environments that engage even shy pre-kindergartners, sustaining their interest (Slattery et al., 2022). Mirana (2022) emphasizes the learning environment as a second home for emotional development, aligning with Rusticus et al. (2023), who discuss the positive impacts of creative environments on growth. Furthermore, developmentally appropriate materials and practices enhance children's adaptation (Lee and Lee, 2023).

Maintaining open communication is crucial, as CDWs use simple actions to gauge pre-kindergartners' experiences during transitions, fostering strong connections. Active listening and understanding of children's thoughts and emotions are essential (Johnson, 2024), reinforcing the importance of effective communication in building relationships and supporting cognitive and emotional development.

### **Parental Involvement and Support**

The home and school play vital roles in creating a supportive environment for children, especially during their transition period. Parental involvement is crucial in addressing adjustment issues faced by pre-kindergartners. Experiences shared by Child Development Workers (CDWs) highlight the importance of parental support during this phase. This is supported by the study by Tao and Lau (2022), "Coparenting and Parental Involvement during School Transition among Chinese Mothers and Fathers: Children's School Liking as a Moderator," which found a strong link between parental support and children's academic and social success.

### **Pre-kindergarten Transition Program (PTP) for Child Development Workers (CDWs)**

The PTP for CDWs is named STEP-UP, which stands for "Smooth Transition for Early Learners' Progress in Unveiling Potentials." This four-day program aims to enhance the skills of CDWs in various CDCs in Laoag City and manage adjustment issues for pre-kindergartners during their transition to school. Each day consists of at least three sessions, including workshops and presentations, led by experts in early childhood education.

Day 1: Focuses on the importance of transitions and creating a supportive environment for pre-kindergartners; Day 2: Named "CONNECT," it helps CDWs improve problem-solving skills to support children with separation anxiety and other needs during transition s; Day 3: Equips CDWs with tools for managing time and routine adjustments, including activity planning; and Day 4: Emphasizes inclusivity and parental involvement, addressing support for children with special needs and collaboration with parents.

Participants will present their outputs daily for evaluation using rubrics. The materials and procedures developed will standardize activities for CDWs during transitional periods, ultimately aiming to help them manage common adjustment issues among pre-kindergartners

### **Validity of the Pre-kindergarten Transition Program (PTP) for Child Development Workers (CDWs)**

This section presents the validity of the developed PTP for CDWs in terms of its objectives, content, staff/persons involved, duration, and assessment/evaluative techniques. The mean ratings of the validity of the developed PTP for CDWs are explicitly presented in Table 3 on the succeeding page.

*Table 3. Mean ratings of the validity of the PTP for CDWs.*

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>DI</b>
Objectives	3.77	HV
Content	3.88	HV
Staff/Persons Involved	3.66	HV
Duration	4.00	HV
Assessment/Evaluative Techniques	3.78	HV
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.82</b>	<b>HV</b>

The developed PTP received an overall weighted mean of 3.82, indicating high validity in assisting CDWs with pre-kindergartners' transition issues. The training met its objectives with a composite mean of 3.77, confirming alignment with SMART criteria and the ECCD Council's standards for effective CDW training. This alignment enhances goal clarity and participant engagement (Roberts et al., 2020; Anderson et al., 2019).

Validators rated the training content highly valid with a composite mean of 3.88, reflecting its relevance and effective knowledge transfer (Brown et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2019). The resource persons scored a mean of 3.66, suggesting they are respected and effectively engage participants (Borreguero et al., 2022; Ancho, 2021). The training duration was rated 4.00, indicating sufficient time for effective presentations, supporting the recommendation for concise sessions (Gallardo et al., 2021) and allowing time for participant questions (Almasa, 2020). The training assessment achieved a mean of 3.78, indicating that activities effectively utilized participants' abilities and evaluated CDWs' handling of transition issues. Feedback collection is crucial for improving critical thinking skills (Perez et al., 2019; Martinez et al., 2020). Validators provided recommendations to enhance the PTP, including a floor plan output for the CDC and a simulation activity for the transition period, while one validator had no suggestions.

The following statements are the validators' comments for the developed PTP for CDWs:

The topics discussed are beneficial for Child Development Workers (CDWs) as they provide strategies for children's development (Validator 1).

This project is significant for CDWs in Laoag City, and a terminal report must be submitted to the School Division upon implementation (Validator 2).

The resource speakers are highly qualified, ensuring participants gain knowledge and strategies to support pre-kindergartners during their transition period (Validator 3).

## **DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS**

The data gathered were carefully analyzed, evaluated, and presented. Subsequent to this, this chapter presents the findings, the conclusions, and the proposed recommendations of the researcher.

### **Discussions**

Findings indicate that CDWs have identified several factors impacting adjustment issues of pre-kindergartners during the transition period, including: 1) limited social exposure; 2) separation anxiety; 3) adjustments to time and routines; and 4) excessive gadget use at home. CDWs also reported varied experiences in addressing these issues, utilizing interactive activities and parental support, which informed the development of a PTP for CDWs. The PTP was rated highly valid in terms of objectives (3.77), content (3.88), staff/persons involved (3.66), duration (4.00), and assessment techniques (3.78), resulting in an overall weighted mean validity rating of 3.82.

### **Conclusions**

The themes of limited social exposure, separation anxiety, routine adjustments, and excessive gadget use, as perceived by Child Development Workers (CDWs), contribute to adjustment issues faced by pre-kindergartners during their transition period. CDWs utilize interactive learning activities and parental support to address these challenges, emphasizing their vital role in facilitating smooth transitions and positive outcomes.

The findings suggest that CDWs require a transition program (PTP) tailored to address these factors and diverse experiences related to pre-kindergartners' adjustment issues. Expert evaluations affirm the PTP's high validity, equipping CDWs to tackle common challenges effectively. The PTP aligns with Adult Learning Theory (andragogy), which acknowledges the distinct learning needs of adults compared to children. This training enhances CDWs' capabilities in managing pre-kindergartners' adjustment issues during transitions. Additionally, the PTP reflects Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, offering a framework for understanding the impact of various environmental systems on a child's adjustment to pre-kindergarten. This understanding aids parents and educators in providing effective support during this critical phase.

### **Recommendations**

Considering the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded. The PTP is recommended to be presented to the higher authorities of the ECCD Council for immediate implementation to test its effectiveness in capacitating CDWs in Laoag City. Likewise, strong collaboration between CDWs and parents is suggested to provide ample exposure to socialization and home activities, establish routines, manage screen time, and create a supportive environment for a smooth transition for pre-kindergartners. Moreso, the

DSWD may coordinate with the ECCD Council to develop relevant early experiences and programs for pre-kindergartners, as well as competency-based programs specifically addressing adjustment issues of pre-kindergartners in the different CDCs across the country. Lastly, further studies by other researchers may be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the PTP.

To expand the reach of the PTP, it is recommended to pilot and adapt the program in other regions, considering local contexts. Regional training for CDWs and partnerships with local governments can support scaling. Incorporating digital tools may also improve accessibility. Future research should assess the program's impact across diverse settings to guide wider implementation.

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