



Philippine Normal University
The National Center for Teacher Education

Policy Brief Series

A Special Series on Policy Research | Issue 6 | 2017

Preparing Young Children for the Future through Education and Counseling



Source: https://www.unicef.org/philippines/reallives_12997.html

This policy brief looks at issues pertaining to the education and counseling of young children. Policy recommendations are given in order to equip teachers and guidance counselors in providing quality education and counseling services to prepare young children for the future.

The emergence of day care centers shows that Filipinos value education even for very young children. However, there are still a lot of things about day care centers that need to be improved. For instance, standards as to how day care centers operate need to be established. More formal training also needs to be given to teachers who work in day care centers. While Early Childhood Education courses may prepare teachers to handle preschool children, the children in day care centers are much younger and are in a different developmental stage. Further, the lack of facilities, budget, and other operational needs of a day care center must be addressed, with the help from the government (Abulon, 2010). On a positive note, much support from parents and teachers of children in day care centers, especially in the development of the children's literacy, have been found. Parents seem to be very much involved in their children's literacy development, while teachers are keen on designing activities for literacy (Rungduin, Abulon, Fetalvero, & Suatengco, 2014). With regard to counseling of young children, being able to understand how they view abstract concepts such as forgiveness and death bears important implications. Studies have shown that even at their early age, young children can already understand and make sense of forgiveness (Rungduin, 2010) and death (Macabulos et al., 2015). Forgiving and dying are facts of life



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which children might encounter sooner or later and being able to see these concepts from their perspective is important to come up with programs that could help them deal with experiences involving these. Similar studies on children's cognition and thought processes are important and must be encouraged, as well as be integrated in the development of educational policies that would directly affect young children.

Here is a summary of policy recommendations for these issues:

1. The curriculum for the day care centers should be standardized. The Department of Education (DepEd) should mandate how the operations of these day care centers should be, what learning services they should offer, and how these can be carried out. There should also be needs assessment and monitoring in terms of the competence of teachers, as well as facilities of the day care centers (Abulon 2010).
2. Teachers in day care centers should be given adequate training to carry out activities for young children (e.g., literacy activities; Rungduin et al., 2014). Further, programs for parents can also be designed and implemented to ensure the continuity of learning of the children from day care centers to their homes.
3. In line with the findings on children's perspectives of abstract concepts such as forgiveness (Rungduin, 2010) and death (Macabulos et al., 2015), school counseling programs should be designed and implemented, taking into account how children understand these concepts. Teachers and parents must also be knowledgeable about how children view these things to allow them to provide adequate assistance to children as they experience or witness these facts of life.

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