



Guiding Growling Minds: Behavioral Management in Day Care Classroom

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the behavioral management practices employed by day care teachers in handling challenging behaviors among young children in San Fernando City, La Union. Using a qualitative phenomenological research design, the study captured the lived experiences of ten day care teachers through semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step thematic analysis to identify common challenges, strategies, and outcomes related to classroom behavior management. Findings revealed that the most common behavioral management challenges included emotional and behavioral dysregulation, attention-seeking behavior, and reduced participation among children. To address these challenges, teachers employed various strategies such as establishing routines, providing early reminders, engaging children through music, storytelling, and group play, modeling positive behavior, and applying fair and consistent discipline through positive reinforcement rather than punishment. The study further found that these strategies led to improved child discipline, including better self-control, increased compliance with classroom rules, and enhanced engagement in learning activities. However, results also highlighted the need for continuous strategy adjustment and ongoing professional training, particularly in managing children with special needs. The study concludes that effective behavioral management in day care classrooms is a dynamic and adaptive process that relies on positive teacher-child relationships, flexibility in strategy use, and continuous professional development. The findings provide valuable insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers in strengthening behavior management practices in early childhood education.

Keywords: behavioral management, Day Care classroom, early childhood education, challenging behaviors, teacher strategies, phenomenological study

INTRODUCTION

Behavioral management is crucial in daycare classrooms where children aged 3-5 develop emotional regulation, social skills, and self-control. At this stage, many exhibit challenging behaviors such as aggression, separation anxiety, tantrums, and attention-seeking that disrupt learning and classroom harmony (Sobeck & Reister, 2020). When unaddressed, these behaviors negatively impact not just individual children but the entire classroom environment, increasing teacher stress and reducing instructional quality (Obee et al., 2023). In inclusive daycare settings, diverse learner needs, limited resources, and inconsistent parental involvement further complicate effective behavior management (Ang & Phoon, 2025). Despite national policies like DepEd Order No. 40 s. 2012 mandating positive discipline, daycare teachers remain underprepared for complex behavioral challenges due to insufficient training and resources (Castino, 2023). While elementary-level studies abound, research specifically targeting daycare behavioral management practices remains limited (Doubet et al., 2024). Recent local studies by Ong (2025) demonstrate that social presence and structured instructional design foster emotional development through caregiver attachment and peer modeling principles directly applicable to daycare settings (Ong & Ancheta, 2024; Ong, 2024).

This study aimed to determine the level of understanding of behavior management strategies employed in day care center in San Fernando City, La Union.

Specifically, it looked to answer the following research question:

1. What are the most common behavioral management challenges in day care setting with children?
2. What specific strategies do teachers use to handle disruptive behaviors among preschool children?
3. What is the effect of these behavior management strategies used by teachers in addressing children's behavior in the classroom?

METHODOLOGY

To understand what strategies of teachers, use to manage children's behavior in the day care classroom, this study employed qualitative phenomenological research. As Bhandari (2020) explains, this involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to gain a deeper understanding of behavioral management.

The participants of this study were day care teachers who are teaching learners in day care classroom in San Fernando City, La Union. A total of ten teachers, male or female, were selected using criterion sampling. The criteria for inclusion are as follows: (1) The teacher must be Filipino. (2) The teacher must be a resident of the province of La Union. (3) The teacher must hold a degree in the field of teaching. (4) They must have at least 2 years of teaching experience in the field of teaching. (5) The teacher must be teaching in Day Care Center. According to Ahmed (2025, as cited in Guest et al., 2022), a reasonable sample size for phenomenological studies typically ranges from 5-25 participants. Through the interview, the participants will help the researchers learn more about the behavioral management in day care classroom.

The study used a semi-structured interview as the main tool for gathering data to explore how behavioral management strategies are practiced in day care classrooms in San Fernando City, La Union.

According to Mondri et al. (2022), this study employed semi-structured interview as the main data collection tool. This method allowed the researchers to begin with guiding questions but also provided flexibility for follow-up questions depending on participants' responses. By doing so, the study was able to capture deeper insights into how childcare providers perceive and handle behavioral challenges.

Five experts confirm the interview guide questions: one (1) principal and four (4) teachers in Day Care Center. The semi-structured questions will also prompt the participants to reveal their own experiences.

The researchers will conduct a pilot test of the semi-structured interview before the actual data. The pilot test will involve five-day care teachers from San Fernando City, La Union. These participants are not included in the actual study. The pilot test aims to ensure the clarity, relevance, and effectiveness of the interview questions. During the interview, participants will be asked about the challenges in behavioral management, strategies of teachers to handle disruptive behavior, and the tactics for managing behavior included in a pre-service teacher training program. The main data collection will involve day care teachers from several schools in San Fernando City, La Union.

The data collection will involve audio recording and writing their answer on paper, letting the researchers note the gathered information without missing any details provided by the participant teachers. Additionally, the recordings ensure that no information is missing from what participants said during the interview (McMullin, 2021). The pilot test results revealed that the respondents could respond to the interview questions in a manner that is appropriate and clear, and this means that the instrument is valid and reliable and can be used in the collection of actual data.

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results of the data gathered by the researchers through interview were presented, analyzed, and interpreted with reference to the aim of the study which is to understand the behavioral

management practices used by day care teachers in handling challenging behaviors among young children in San Fernando City, La Union. The thematic analysis focuses on the most common behavioral management challenges in day care setting with children, specific strategies use by teachers use to handle disruptive behaviors among preschool children, and what are the of these behavior management strategies used by teachers in addressing children's behavior in the classroom.

Most Common Behavioral Management Challenges

The identified themes are: (1) *Emotional and Behavioral Dysregulation*, (2) *Attention-Seeking Behavior*, (3) *Reduced Participation*

Emotional and Behavioral Dysregulation. Emotional and Behavioral Dysregulation refers to the challenge of controlling actions and managing behaviors in ways that are proper to different situation. In day care classroom, this may be seen through frequent tantrums, impulsive behavior, or difficulty following rules and routines.

During the interview Participant 1 talks about her experience, she shared that she finds it challenging to manage the emotions of the children, *"There are different behaviors of children. Some hurt others, some say inappropriate words, some are polite, but usually children are still immature"* Participant 1 said that there are times when 1 or 2 children show a harmful behavior, which might be because their parents allow them to act that way. This statement tells that children's behavioral differences in the classroom can be influenced or they experience at home and the way they are raised. The study by Zhang, et al. (2021), discovered that easygoing parenting can caused a poor social development and problems with behavior. Additionally, their research highlighted how children's self-control plays a key role in how parenting style shapes their behavior.

On the other hand, Participant 2 also talk about her experience in managing the behavior of young learners. *"For me the most common behavioral management challenges in day care setting with the children ages 3 to 4 years old is the social interactions, particularly Aggression and Defiance"*. Participant 2's observation that children ages 3 to 4 commonly display aggression and defiance during social interactions is supported by recent research. Cai, et al. (2020) discovered that aggressive preschoolers have different and less adaptive emotion-regulation strategies than their non-aggressive counterparts, which means that they tend to express themselves in a more aggressive manner through hitting, defiance, or opposition. This evidence reinforces that aggression and defiance during early childhood are usually due to not well-developed emotional and self-regulation capabilities, which is consistent with the behavioral problems outlined by Participant 2.

Participant 5 also shared her experience, saying that she finds it challenging to manage the emotions of the children. *"Some children cry, refuse to take part when separated from their parents"* Participant 5 tries to provide a supportive environment for each one of his students. She acknowledged that it can be difficult at times, too, particularly when some kids cry or will not cooperate when their parents are not around. Silkenbeumer, et al. (2024) study corroborates the results of the current research, especially with the experience of Participant 5 in working with the emotionally distressed children. The authors emphasized the role of emotion socialization by preschool teachers in helping young children to manage their emotions in difficult circumstances.

Participants 3, 4, 9, and 10 shared that children in the daycare setting tended to have frequent tantrums. Participant 3 and Participant 4 both noted *tantrums as a common behavior in the classroom* with tantrums being rated by Participant 3 as the most frequent behavioral issue and Tantrums as Participant 4 showed it as one of the most frequent behavioral challenges in the classroom. On the same note, Participant 9 said that she experienced *tantrums and other behavioral issues*, and Participant 10 explained that *tantrums are the major difficulty she had to face when working with young children*. It implies that this is a common challenge that will have a direct impact on classroom management and day-to-day practices within the daycare context. Regular tantrums can interfere with the learning process, demand more attention of the teacher and deny children the chance to interact positively with others. This has been supported by Flores, et al. (2025) who discovered that behavioral issues among the learners in a daycare create a significant impact on the classroom

environment and learning processes, and thus the significance of behavioral issues in a daycare learning environment

According to Attachment Theory, tantrums can be a result of the inability of children to manage stress or unmet needs due to the lack of emotional sources. Teacher-child relationships should be secure and supportive in a way that allows reducing emotional outbursts through emotional regulation and feeling of safety

Attention- Seeking Behavior refers to the behavior happens when children misbehave to get noticed or gain attention from teachers. In daycare, this can appear as crying, interrupting, or misbehaving to capture the teacher's focus. Such behavior shows the child's need for emotional support and guidance in expressing their feelings appropriately.

As the interview continues, Participant 1 shared her experience as a day care teacher, *"What I usually do when a child does not pay attention, I always play a song or some music to get their attention. When I see that the child is starting to get anxious or moving the chairs around, I play songs with actions so they can move along and refocus their energy in a positive way."* The emphasis in this approach is that the teacher plays an intentional role of supporting self-regulation by refocusing children's attention using engaging and developmentally relevant activities rather than using punitive approaches. This is supported by Stuart Shanker (2020), who emphasizes that co-regulation techniques, including music and movement are useful in improving the management of stress and attention in kids.

Social Learning Theory is the theory that children acquire proper means of seeking attention based on responses of adults. Children acquire good ways of interaction and attention-seeking when teachers positively react to them by involving them in activities that they find enjoyable.

Participant 4 also showed that, when children are not paid attention to, they want to do it negatively by screaming, crying, and interrupting other people. This shows that children whose needs are not met in terms of attention can resort to manifesting their needs in disruptive manners instead of communicating with people in a proper manner. This result is consistent with the explanation given by the American Psychological Association (2021) that children tend to seek negative attention more often when their emotional and relationship needs are not fulfilled.

Participant 7 mentioned that *"They can be very noisy. There are those kids screaming, and others who run up to you and drag you. This is normal among children, particularly those who are unable to talk. Whenever they meet you, they drag you or call the teacher. Most of the time, they shout."* The study Non-Verbal Communication by Autistic Children (2020) justifies these observations by saying that children with limited verbal abilities use non-verbal and behavioral communication. The study points to shouting, loud voice and physically directing adults as typical strategies that are employed to communicate need, draw attention, or start interaction. These behaviors are not thought of as misbehavior but implying adaptive responses in communication in cases where a verbal language is restricted, and in this regard, Participant 7 is correct in that noisy and physically expressive behaviors are common in the classroom when children are not able to speak.

Reduced Participation refers to a decrease in the level of involvement, engagement, or contribution by individuals, groups, or entities in a specific activity, process, or system.

In the interview, Participant 2 said that *"Based on my observation children usually act when they are bored during my lesson, they feel sleepy and sometimes they cry and feel hungry."* Children's level of engagement and physical demands have a significant impact on how they behave in class. The study by Rusanti, et al. (2024) is strongly connected to the present research as it highlights the role of engagement in shaping children's behavior in class. According to the authors, educational resources like pop-up books, which offer interactive, tactile, and visual stimulation, boost kids' focus and participation in class, which lowers boredom and disengagement.

In the interview when Participant 3 was asked about her observations in class with her children, she remarked that *"they are not doing their activities, and they are not paying attention. So, they prefer to play with their friends or continue to look around."* This behavior can be a sign of disinterest or interest, meaning that the activities could be not as interesting or relevant to the interests and development requirements of children. This aligns with the findings of a meta-analysis by Zhang et al. (2023), which emphasized that the level of engagement in students depends on the teaching methods, the classroom, and the degree to which the activities align with the level of development and interest of the students. According to Operant Conditioning Theory, children tend to do what is reinforced or seen as rewarding. Any activity that cannot be reinforced or does not appeal may lead to disengagement.

As participant 7 also said, *"Some children are in their own world, others grab a toy, others bother classmates, others stare at the teacher, others even sleep in classroom."* This may be a sign of uninterest, lack of stimulation or failure to support attention and this may affect their overall attendance and learning a sign of uninterest, lack of stimulation or failure to support attention and this may affect their overall attendance and learning. This observation can be related to the results of the study conducted by Schneider and Preckel (2020), which highlights that poor behavioral engagement has a negative effect on motivation and academic performance of students.

Specific Strategies to Handle Disruptive Behaviors

The researchers showed three (3) themes that were based on the data collected during the process of conducting the interview. The Strategies to Handle Disruptive Behavior in a day care setting were divided into **(1) Behavior Management Approaches, (2) Modeling Good Behavior, and (3) Fair Behavior Management.**

Behavior Management Approaches can be defined as the strategies and techniques applied by teachers to guide and support the behavior of children positively and appropriately.

Participant 1 explained that *"My approach to dealing with that type of behavior is to confront it early, most times in the morning, because that is when I tend to notice it. I remind the child at once by telling them, such as, do not do anything bad again today the child normally answers by saying, yes, teacher. I remind them daily because at times when they start playing, they forget what was said."* This preventive measure acts as a friendly reminder that can be used to prove clear expectations for the day. The teacher reinforces positive behavior and limits the chances of repeating misbehavior, as frequent communication with the child on arrival will help him to remember that he should not repeat certain actions though young children tend to forget the warnings easily when they are in the middle of playing. As explained by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2020), proactive approaches such as clear routines and pre-correction should be employed to promote engagement and curb misbehavior using effective classroom management.

As shared by Participant 2 and 6, "Allowing children to work together in a group example playing clay duo or singing together, giving blocks and having a story telling." it highlights the importance of collaborative and interactive activities in managing children's behavior. Through play, music, and storytelling children are given meaningful learning opportunities to express themselves. According to Tang and Nakunsong (2024), storytelling activities enhance children's emotional expression and emotional intelligence, while Lense and Camarata (2020) said that group musical engagement promotes social interaction and cooperative behavior among young children.

According to multiple participants, Participants 3, 7, and 10, *"believe that class rules are embedded in everyday routines and that teachers provide specific guidelines for behavior, listening, activities, and play in order to keep children's attention."* Teachers provide structure and predictability by proving clear rules for behavior, listening, activities, and play. This helps children pay attention, minimizes confusion, and promotes proper involvement in class activities. According to B.F. Skinner, behavior is created by reinforcement and consistency. Teachers can increase the chances that students will adhere to rules and pay attention in class by showing clear guidelines and reminding them of expected behaviors on a regular basis.

Modeling Good Behavior is an instructional practice where teachers or caregivers purposely show, using positive models, positive behaviors, attitudes, and responses, which they expect children to develop. Children learn to watch how adults talk, obey, handle their emotional states, and treat others with respect by exchanging their daily interactions.

Participant 1 said that *"It is important to be patient and kind to encourage children to come to school. This does not imply spoiling them and giving them all they want. Children just love star rewards and therefore I will not give them a star without first completing the task. I also show them the task then reward them, but the most crucial thing is to have patience, without it, nothing would happen."* Recent research supports this statement by highlighting the value of teacher patience, kindness, and appropriate application of rewards in early childhood education. Sun (2021) discovered that teacher caring and praise are effective in enhancing the engagement rates, motivation, and participation of the children in classroom activities. The research emphasizes that positive reinforcement, administered at the end of completing a task and supported by encouraging and patient pedagogic behavior, motivates children to obey the instructions and be motivated at school. This supports the thoughts expressed by the Participant 1 concerning the idea that rewards must not be handed easily and must be put into perspective and that time is an important element in the development of good behavior.

Several participants, such as Participants 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 10 shared that *"In the case of a teacher working in a day care environment, good behavior can be modeled by using polite expressions like "po and opo" to show respect."* The concentration on good values rather than reading, numbers, or the alphabet is the reason day care is a subset of informal education. Having learned to respect the elders at an early age, teachers reinforce their belief in this practice by being polite, listening to children, and praising them when they show good behavior, which is supported by the Social Learning Theory proposed by Albert Bandura, which states that children learn to do something by observing and imitating important adults. Children tend to learn to behave in a comparable manner when they see teachers using a respectful language and behavior repeatedly.

Participant 7 explained that *"As teachers, we set an example by responding with kindness and modeling respectful behavior. Through daily routines such as praying, promoting polite communication, resolving conflicts with apologies, and guiding children to line up and wait their turn, teachers reinforce values like respect, responsibility, and gratitude in everyday classroom interactions."* This is emphasized by how guided experiences in everyday life can be effective pathways to instructing moral and social behavior, meaning that children can be taught good behavior by seeing, practicing, and repeating what they see in the supportive classroom. This is supported by Longobardi et al. (2020), who highlighted the fact that positive teacher child interactions and classroom social management helps pro-social and respectful behaviors among children by modeling teacher actions and supporting children in daily activities.

Fair behavior Management it refers to a is a balanced way of managing the behavior of children, which is applied in the same manner to everyone, logical consequences connected to the action (with clear explanations) are used, children are listened to, and teaching is prioritized over punishment or favoritism to establish trust and self-regulation and the creation of a harmonious classroom.

Participants 1, 5, 8, and 10 said that *" calm and positive communication, such as using polite words, gentle reminders, explanations, and even affectionate gestures like hugs"*. These strategies are able to make children correct their behavior without losing the supportive and nurturing environment. According to Rae Pica (2021) supports this idea through describing positive strategies of verbal communication such as polite speech, active listening, and encouragement to build the connections and guide behavior, and Ethos Learn (2020) presents the idea of using praise (as encouragement), polite modeling, and emotional regulation in routines to encourage children to develop through positive communication.

Participants 2, 3, 4, and 9 mentioned that *"they should tell children the reasons why they behave wrongly, listen to them and make them understand why some actions are wrong"*. They emphasized that one must be fair and non-judgmental, treat rules equally, and emphasize that it is necessary to correct the behavior rather than a child. This is in line with Raising Children Network (2024), who promotes applying logical

consequences such as quiet time or loss of privilege to provide behavior lessons in a fair manner with explanations to help children relate actions to consequences without being humiliated. This is supported by research by Robichaud et al. (2020) who revealed that logical consequences (explaining effects and listening to perceptions) are better in reducing impact and listening views than punishment or simple reasoning by encouraging cognitive reappraisal and rule-following rather than judgment. The Operant Conditioning Theory indicates that behavior is influenced by the consistent consequences. Once there are clear explanations of logical and fair consequences, children are better placed to relate their actions with consequences and change their behavior as a result.

Participants 6 and 7 stated that *“they do not treat or favor any child differently because they pay equal attention to them throughout the activities and apply the rules equally”*. This strengthens equity and discourages disagreements and creates a peaceful atmosphere in the classroom. Hong et al. (2022) support this strategy because their results indicated that fairness behaviors of teachers alleviate maladaptive behaviors in students such as bullying and disengagement by designing a trusting and equitable relationship.

The Effect of Behavior Management Strategies

This part shows the effects of the behavior management strategies used by teachers in addressing children's behavior in the classroom. The researchers found that there are three (3) themes using the data collected in conducting the interviews (1) **Improved Child Discipline**, (2) **Strategy Adjustment**, (3) **Teacher Learning Needs**.

Improved Child Discipline is the positive behavioral changes in children in the classroom evident due to positive behavior management strategies. These approaches are the constant use of classroom regulations, positive reinforcement, and positive teacher-child relationships. When these practices are implemented, children are able to show better self-control, greater obedience to classroom routines, less disruptive behavior, and help to create a more favorable and well-organized learning environment.

The participants 2, 5 and 8 all stated that *“behavioral strategies can be effective when they are always observed to change the behavior of children positively”*. They have pointed out that the increase of discipline, listening, obedience and compliance to classroom rules are positive indications that the strategies in place are effective and need to be maintained with monitoring on a regular basis. Those strategies contributed to the establishment of a more organized and supportive classroom atmosphere, which allowed students to grasp expectations and instructions better and engage actively in learning tasks. The significance of continuous observation as the strategy effectiveness indicator is also justified by the results by Karlberg et al. (2024), who discovered that positive behavior support interventions cause visible changes in student behavior. Similarly, Salama et al. (2025) and Karasova and Nehyba (2023) also confirmed that both classroom and teacher behavior strategies are effective in increasing discipline, paying attention, adherence to rules, and student engagement, which enhance a learning environment that is more focused and productive.

Strategy Adjustments is defined as the capacity of such a teacher to alter or adjust a behavior management strategy in the situations when it no longer works or when a behavior management strategy is negatively responded to by children. Through these observations, teachers will be able to substitute ineffective or threatening techniques with positive and more proper techniques that will help children to feel well emotionally and behave positively.

Participant 1 said that *“she tries different strategies”* when dealing with the behavior of children as in the daycare, educators are not allowed to become angry and must exercise much patience. Singing, running, and counting are some of the activities she uses instead of being angry. These strategies are employed in the daily routine of the children and classroom policies. With the help of these activities, the children can learn to follow instructions and control their behavior better. Williams et al. (2023) support this idea, showing that rhythm- and movement-based activities (e.g., music, coordinated motion) contribute to enhancing the self-regulation and positive behavior of young children in an early childhood environment.

Participant 5 said that *“In case the strategy fails, she will switch”*. As a teacher, I need to know that not every child reacts in a comparable manner to a single discipline method. That is why teachers should closely check the behavior of children to understand whether a strategy works or not. This is aligned with the expectations of Howard et al. (2020), who said that flexible, routine-based, and adaptive teaching strategies can be used to enhance self-regulation and behavior of children. In their research, they emphasize that it is imperative to change strategies depending on the reactions of children to foster positive behavior in early childhood environments.

Participant 7 also explained that *“In case a discipline strategy instills fear in a child, he/she will stop using the strategy at once. They still use the same strategy but change it with a more pleasant and quiet method of getting the child.”* This is to make sure that the discipline is positive and supportive as opposed to being intimidating. Powell, Dunlap, and Fox (2020) support this practice and pointed out that discipline in early childhood must be grounded in positive, responsive, and relationship-oriented strategies to avoid challenging behavior and lead to emotional safety among children.

Teacher Learning Needs is the skills, knowledge, and strategies that teachers desire or require to develop in an attempt to enhance their practice of teaching, manage classrooms successfully, and help children to learn and behave.

Participant 3 mentioned that *“Any strategy will do for me if I can learn other approaches that I can apply to the children. I am willing to try different strategies to see which ones can effectively catch the children’s attention. However, if a strategy does not work despite repeated attempts, I will stop using it. I am open to various strategies, especially as teaching continues to progress from traditional to modern approaches. This is why training and seminars are important, as they help us learn which strategies can be applied in the daycare setting, including modern tools such as television or YouTube to engage children.”* This can be corroborated by Gilay and Anga (2025), who underscored the fact that professional training promotes better incorporation of technology by educators, which enables a greater involvement of learners in early childhood classrooms.

Participant 6 shared her teaching experience in day care *“We use simple strategies at Sevilla Daycare Center, e hope future trainings will focus on more challenging conditions such as autism and ADHD, which require specialized approaches to manage effectively in the classroom. This is supported by Petersson-Bloom, Leifler, and Holmqvist (2023), who emphasized that professional development specifically designed for teaching students with autism enhances teachers’ knowledge and practice-based skills, enabling them to address the diverse and complex learning needs of these students effectively.*

Participant 7 talked about her experience of teaching daycare *“On my part, as I mentioned, we do not reject children despite being non-trained. I would so much like us to be trained in dealing with children such that we know what to do and we can be trained on various strategies.”* Professional development requirements in daycare refer to the training, skill, and knowledge that daycare teachers or care givers require to enhance their job and to be better able to support learning, behavior, and safety of children. Research supports this need by stating that professional training of early education teachers is an important resource that contributes to better knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy of teachers in supporting the learning and behavior of children; in other words, professional training can improve the performance of early education teachers (Frontiersin.org, 2022).

Summary

The aim of the study was to learn how day care teachers handle the behavior of kids in early childhood environments, such as their experiences, approaches, and modifications in addressing misbehavior using patience, positive discipline, and leeway in selecting the right strategies. Although a few studies have focused on behavior management in early childhood education, there are still no local studies that analyze the lived experiences of day care teachers in San Fernando City, La Union, particularly in terms of how they adapt their strategies once some methods prove to be ineffective or lead to adverse reactions among children. To fulfill this research gap, the study adopted qualitative research design where interview was used as the main form of

data collection in order to get deeper insights into the experiences and views of the teachers. The research aimed to provide answers to the questions related to the frequent behavioral management issues at day care, the particular strategies that are employed by teachers to deal with disruptive behaviors, and the impacts of such strategies on the classroom behavior of children. The collection of data was done by interviewing a few day care teachers in San Fernando City, La Union, where the selected teachers were interviewed on their practices, experiences and thoughts on behavior management. The data were collected were analyzed with thematic analysis where the responses were carefully coded and put into thematic patterns and perspectives that depicted the common patterns and perspectives such as patience, use of routines, positive discipline, and adjusting strategies depending on the response of the children.

FINDINGS reveal that:

1. Emotional and behavioral dysregulation, attention-seeking behavior, and reduced participation are common challenges encountered by daycare teachers. Children were often tantrums, aggressive, cries, defiant, hyperactive and inattentive. The behaviors were determined by the stage of development, emotional needs, parenting techniques and the classroom environment of children.

2. The strategies used by daycare teachers were divided into behavior management strategies, modeling good behavior and fair behavior management strategies. These were clear routines, reminders, interesting activities, positive communication, positive reinforcement, consistent implementation of rules and equal treatment of children. The approaches were directed at guidance and emotional assurance as opposed to punishment.

3. The strategies led to better child discipline, participation and self-regulation among the children. Teachers were also flexible in how they adapted strategies that were not effective and they recognized the necessity to be able to continuously develop professionally especially in dealing with children who have special needs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the given findings, the following conclusions were made:

1. Emotional and behavioral dysregulation, attention seeking behavior and reduced participation are typical of daycare environment, and normal in young children. These actions indicate the emotional needs of children, their level of maturity, the condition of their home, and the conditions of their classroom instead of being deliberately misbehaved.

2. Daycare teachers can also manage the behavior of children effectively by use of structured routines, positive reinforcement, modeling of appropriate behavior and fair and consistent classroom management. These approaches are based on counseling, support, and affirmative interpersonal relations instead of punishment.

3. Positive and adaptive behavior management practices help in enhancing the disciplines, involvement, and self-regulation among children. But, efficient behavior management needs flexibility and life long learning, particularly when attending to the needs of the children with special needs.

Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Daycare teachers will be challenged to deal with dysregulation of emotions and behavior, attention-seeking behavior, and reduced participation using developmentally appropriate and emotionally supportive interventions. It is advised to enhance cooperation between teachers and parents to maintain the consistency with behavioral guidance both at home and in the daycare.

2. The daycare teachers are encouraged to maintain the approach of structured routines, positive reinforcement, modeling of good behaviors and balanced approaches to behavior management. It is suggested to introduce the combination of interactive activities, including music, movement, narrative, as well as play-based learning, to encourage positive behavior and active engagement among children.

3. Teachers should also be encouraged by daycare administrators through offering them continuous professional development. It is recommended to conduct trainings and seminars related to managing behaviors and emotions and inclusive education, especially when it comes to working with children with special needs, to improve the skills and confidence of teachers.

4. It is advisable that future researchers carry out the same studies with respect to other daycare environments or areas in order to expand the knowledge on behavior management practices. It is also possible that in future studies the researchers can use children with special needs or analyze the long-term impacts of the behavior management strategies on the social and emotional development of children.

Declarations

Funding:

The study, “Guiding Growing Minds: Behavioral Management in Day Care Classrooms,” explored how teachers manage and guide children’s behaviors in early childhood settings. Findings revealed that children in daycare often display behaviors linked to emotional regulation difficulties, attention-seeking tendencies, and a lack of focus or control. Teachers address these challenges through strategies such as social-emotional support, positive reinforcement, consistent routines, and modeling appropriate behavior. The results highlighted that effective behavior management is achieved through consistency, emotional connection, and structured classroom practices. Teachers emphasized that building trust and showing respect foster positive relationships, leading to improved discipline, cooperation, and classroom harmony.

Ethics Statement

The research was presented to the DMMMSU Research Ethics Committee to obtain ethical clearance and followed all ethical codes and research policies in this study. This assures that the study met ethical standards including informed consent as the researchers were provided with a certificate and an approval code RETC code: 2025-1197- Behavioral Management. Before the study was carried out, the relevant authorities were approached with a consent form, and the day care teachers were advised that data collection would be done in a decent and confidential manner, and the information obtained would only be used in research purposes. Safety, privacy, and free will of the participants were ensured throughout the participation.

The face-to-face interviews were scheduled based on the availability of the participants. Every participant was reminded that they were free to withdraw out of the study whenever they wanted without consequences. All information and responses were also kept confidential with access by the research team only.

The researchers went to the sampled barangays to recruit participants through coordination with local authorities. To enable ease in the collection of data, the research group has been separated into two teams. Interviews were performed on the pre-determined schedule to prevent the interference with the daycare classes. During the whole process of data collection, the researchers ensured that they respected, conducted professionally and with integrity towards the daycare teachers. All the answers were recorded correctly, honestly, and honestly, which guarantees the quality of the information gathered.

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