

# **[Japan] Practices and Backgrounds for Nurturing Social-Emotional Skills and Resilience in Early Childhood Education and Care in Japan**

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## **<Overview>**

This country report aims to clarify those childcare practices that promote "social-emotional skills" and "resilience" in early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Japan. It also seeks to explore the perspectives and policies of ECEC teachers behind these practices. Section 1 provides an overview of the history of ECEC in Japan, along with the current official guidelines and instructions. It explains how early childhood education and care is seen as the basic foundation for personality development, and how "social-emotional skills" and "resilience" are reflected in these guidelines and instructions (Section 1: Author Sachiko Kitano). Section 2 reports on the results of the preliminary survey, which conducted interviews with ECEC principals, facility managers and senior teachers regarding their understanding and practices for "social-emotional skills" and "resilience." Section 3 reports on the results of the main survey targeting ECEC teachers, which was prepared based on the preliminary survey results. It gives details of ECEC teachers' understanding and current practices for "social-emotional skills" and "resilience." Section 4 discusses how these concepts are integrated into ECEC teachers' childcare policies and how they are implemented in their daily childcare activities practiced with children. In addition, through analysis with the perspectives of social and emotional learning (SEL), we provide insights into how ECEC teachers support and promote children's resilience (Sections 2 to 4: Author Tomomi Sato). Section 5 is a designated discussion on how the concept of resilience relates to the development of young children from a long-term perspective (Section 5: Author Miwako Hoshi).

To sum up, this country report provides empirical findings and considerations that will contribute to the understanding and practice of "social-emotional skills" and "resilience" in ECEC in Japan.

## **Section 1: Introduction- Political, educational, and cultural backgrounds on early childhood education and care (ECEC) from birth to school age**

The current national curriculum guidelines in Japan, the "Guidelines for Nursery Care and Education at Day Nurseries," the "National Curriculum Standard for Kindergartens," and the "Guidelines for Education and Childcare at ECEC Centers," were issued in 2017. Following the Meiji Restoration, the Education System Order was enacted as Japan's first education law in 1872, envisioning group education at ECEC facilities. In 1875, a kindergarten, referred to as a *youchiyukijo* (a young children's playground), was established next to an elementary school (but closed after a year and a half). From the start, the education system aimed to assist children in their growth and learning through play. The autonomous activities of children have always been highly valued, as indicated by the use of the word "guidance," which was basically provided through ECEC environments.

While inheriting the traditions passed down since the Meiji era, all current guidelines and instructions (enacted in 2017) position early childhood education as an essential factor fostering the foundation for lifelong personality development. These guidelines stipulate that educational curriculum and methods should be determined based on the special characteristics of early childhood development. It is important to note that the term "resilience" is not used in these guidelines. However, the preamble to the National Curriculum Standard for Kindergartens states, "Kindergartens in future must also foster the foundation necessary to enable children to become the creators of a sustainable society. This can be achieved by encouraging each young child to recognize his/her goodness and potential, respect all others as worthy individuals, collaborate with diverse people while overcoming various social changes, and clear the path for a rich life in the future." It explicitly states that kindergartens should encourage children to collaborate while respecting each child's dignity, cope with social changes, and become the creators of a sustainable society; in other words, to foster a zest for living, including resilience.

The National Curriculum Standard for Kindergartens (2017) lists the following three educational priorities in kindergarten education (see Table 1). Important keywords here include "emotional stability," "voluntary activities," "play as a spontaneous activity," and "individualized education tailored to each child's characteristics (individually optimized education)." In other words, Japanese kindergartens are expected to provide an early childhood education that will lay the foundation for personality development, taking into account the special characteristics of early childhood development. In fact, the guidelines state that such special characteristics include "acquiring a growing sense of individual identity, the existence of others, and self-control." This statement indirectly implies the elements of resilience.

**Table 1: Points to be Emphasized in Kindergarten Education**

1. Encouraging children to undertake voluntary activities and allowing them to lead a life appropriate to early childhood, based on the idea that young children utilize experiences essential to their development through fully demonstrating their abilities in an emotionally stable manner.
2. Ensuring that the aims outlined in Chapter 2 are comprehensively achieved through play-centered instruction by taking into account the idea that play—a spontaneous activity of children—is an important aspect of learning which cultivates a foundation for the balanced development of both physical and mental aspects.
3. Ensuring that instruction in line with developmental issues is carried out based on the individual characteristics of each child by taking into consideration that early childhood development is achieved through diverse processes and interactions between various aspects of both physical and mental elements, and that the life experiences of each child are diverse.

For childcare, Japan's national curriculum guidelines emphasize qualities and competencies over subject-focused, content-based education for elementary schools and beyond. The guidelines describe "Qualities and Competencies to Nurture" in kindergarten and "Ideal Image by the End of Childhood." For the former, kindergartens are expected to nurture all of the following three qualities and competencies (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Qualities and Competencies to Nurture**

- (1) A "foundation of knowledge and skills" that enables one to feel, realize, understand, and become able to do things through rich experiences
- (2) A "Basic abilities of thinking, judgment, and expression, etc." that enables one to think, try, devise, and express using what one realizes or becomes capable of doing
- (3) The "Learning dispositions and humanity, etc. to advance towards learning" that endeavors to maintain a better life while emotions, motivation, and attitudes develop

For the latter, the national curriculum guidelines describe the "Ideal Image by the End of Childhood" (see Table 3). In Japan's guidelines and instructions, the objectives of qualities and competencies that kindergartens are expected to foster in their education are identified based on children's daily lives. To achieve these "objectives," instructions on educational content are listed in five areas (health, interpersonal relationships, environment, language, and expression). Furthermore, unlike education conducted according to the content of subjects, these objectives should be interconnected and gradually achieved through various experiences that children gain throughout their entire kindergarten life. In addition, the "Ideal Image by the End of Childhood" contains some elements deeply related to resilience. For instance, Item (2) "Independence" entails "accomplishing without giving up," while Item (4) "Fostering morality and normative consciousness" involves "controlling one's feelings and compromise with friends."

**Table 3: Ideal Image by the End of Childhood**

(1) Sound mind and body	Within kindergarten life, use one's mind and body to the fullest with a sense of fulfillment towards what they want to do, act with foresight, and create a healthy and safe way of living on their own.
(2) Independence	Through voluntary involvement in a familiar environment and enjoying various activities, be aware of what needs to be done, think and devise on their own what to do, be creative, accomplish without giving up and feel a sense of accomplishment, and act with confidence.
(3) Cooperativity	While interacting with friends, share ideas and thoughts with each other and think, devise, and cooperate to realize a common goal with a sense of fulfillment.
(4) Fostering of morality and normative consciousness	While gaining various experiences with friends, come to understand right from wrong, control one's feelings and compromise with friends, and act with empathy towards others. Also, become able to make and abide by rules while understanding the necessity of obeying them controlling one's own feelings, and compromising with friends.
(5) Social participation	In addition to caring about their own families, become familiar with the community by noticing various aspects of involvement with people, considering the feeling of others, and feeling the joy of being useful when interacting with people in the community. Also, in relation to various environments inside and outside the kindergarten, be able to act while making use of information such as making judgments based on said information and communicating and utilizing it by adopting information necessary for play and daily life. At the same time, become conscious of connections with society by using public facilities with respect.
(6) Fostering of thinking abilities	Through being actively involved in familiar events, they will feel, notice, think, anticipate and devise the nature and structure of things and come to enjoy various interactions. Also, while getting to know various ideas of friends, they will improve on their own ideas by noticing the existence of ideas different from their own and making judgments, rethinking ideas and deriving pleasure from creating new thoughts.
(7) Connection to nature and respect for life	Through experiences of getting close to and being moved by nature, they will have a love and reverence of nature as well as feel more interest in familiar events while sensing changes therein and expressing their interests and curiosity through words and other means. Being moved by living things close by in addition to being aware of the wonder and preciousness of life while thinking about how to interact with familiar animals and plants, cherish life and learn to treat them accordingly.
(8) Interests in and sensitivity to quantity, figures, signs and letters, etc.	

In play and in life, repeated experiences by becoming familiar with quantities, figures, signs and letters, noticing the role of signs and letters, and utilizing these based on their sense of necessity, they will become interested in and gain a sense of them.

(9) Mutual verbal communication

While communicating with teachers and friends, they will enjoy communicating with words by acquiring a wealth of vocabulary and expressions, communicating their experiences and thoughts through words, and listening carefully to what others have to say while enjoying picture books and narratives.

(10) Rich sensitivity and expression

While experiencing moving events and developing sensitivity, they will notice the characteristics and forms of expression for various subjects, learn to express their feelings and thoughts, enjoy the process of expression among friends, learn the pleasure of expression and become motivated.

In April 2023, the Japanese government established the Children and Families Agency to oversee comprehensive child-related policies based on the Constitution of Japan and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Before this, the government had only implemented guidelines and instructions for group childcare at kindergartens. In December 2023, a cabinet decision was made to issue the "Essential Vision for Early Childhood Development (The First 100 Months of Growth Vision)" to enhance the well-being of all children in every family, childcare facility, and regional area. In these guidelines, five visions are presented (see Table 4). In particular, Item (2) indicates that, like the conventional instructions and guidelines, enriched play activities and experiences are essential, highlighting the importance of "grit," "the ability to cope with others and real situations," "the experience of conflicts and disputes," and "trial and error."

**Table 4: Five Visions for Early Childhood Development**

- (1) Protecting children's rights and dignity
- (2) Enhancing children's well-being through a cycle of security and challenge
- (3) Seamlessly supporting children's development from before their birth
- (4) Supporting and encouraging the well-being and development of parents and caregivers
- (5) Enriching the environment and society that supports children's development

As discussed above, Japan's national curriculum guidelines and the recently issued child development visions clearly state the importance of early childhood education and care that fosters the foundation for personality development, placing emphasis on the development of qualities and competencies. Although these guidelines do not directly use the word "resilience," they clearly contain its elements. Educational objectives for Japanese childcare facilities should be gradually achieved through accumulating various experiences, not in isolation but in an interrelated way. Therefore, specific activities are not necessarily required to develop particular qualities and competencies, such as "resilience." Instead, resilience will gradually develop, interrelated with other qualities and competencies. In this context, ECEC teachers are expected to provide an environment that supports play as a spontaneous activity for children.

**[Sachiko Kitano]**

## **Section 2: Preliminary Survey - Interview with ECEC facility managers and senior teachers**

Before conducting the main survey, we carried out a preliminary survey. The purpose of the preliminary survey was to understand the extent to which the concepts of "resilience" and "social-emotional skills" are present and practiced in each childcare facility. First, we conducted interviews with ECEC facility managers and senior teachers to hear about practice situations at their kindergartens and daycare facilities. Based on the preliminary survey findings, we examined the questions and methods to be used in the interviews with ECEC teachers for the main survey.

The preliminary survey took place in September 2023. Table 6 shows the attributes of the survey participants. Zoom was used to conduct interviews in groups of two people, each lasting approximately one hour. The participants received an explanation about the preliminary survey and were asked to complete a consent form before taking the survey. In addition, at the beginning of the survey, the participants were informed that the interviews were voluntary and that there would be no disadvantage if they stopped midway. First, we asked about their career backgrounds, then conducted a semi-structured interview, asking the following questions (see Table 5). This survey was approved through the ethical review process at Aichi Shukutoku University (ethical review number: 2023-004).

**Table 5: Questionnaire Items Used in the Preliminary Survey**

### **Question 1: Have you heard of the term "social-emotional skills"?**

- 1 I have heard of the term and know the meaning well.
- 2 I have heard of the term and know a little what it means.
- 3 I have heard of the term, but do not know what it means.
- 4 I have never heard of the term, nor do I know what it means.

For those who answered 1 or 2...

- How do you understand the term "social-emotional skills"?
- What would a child with high social-emotional skills be like?
- Do you think nurturing children's social-emotional skills is important?
- What kind of social-emotional skills do you think is essential to nurture?

<Explanation provided>

Social-emotional skills are defined as the ability of "emotional regulation," "self-control," or "engaging with others."

### **Question 2: Do you think the teachers of your facility have heard of the term "social-emotional skills"?**

- 1 I think they have heard of the term and know the meaning well.
- 2 I think they have heard of the term and know a little what it means.
- 3 I think they have heard of the term, but do not know what it means.
- 4 I think they have never heard of the term, nor know what it means.

For those who answered 1 or 2...

- How do you think the teachers of your facility understand the term "social-emotional skills"?

**Question 3: Have you heard of the term "resilience"?**

- 1 I have heard of the term and know the meaning well.
- 2 I have heard of the term and know a little what it means.
- 3 I have heard of the term, but do not know what it means.
- 4 I have never heard of the term, nor do I know what it means.

For those who answered 1 or 2...

- How do you understand the term "resilience"?
- What would a child with resilience be like?
- Do you think nurturing children's resilience is important?

<Explanation provided>

#Expressions provided by the CRNA Secretariat to all board members of eight countries as phrases to explain the broad concept of resilience:

1- The process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances, recover from catastrophic events, growth after trauma, successful growth despite the high risk of failure or maladjustment (Masten)

2- Dealing with failure and rejection, and moving forward despite of adversity (OECD)

#Expressions close to the concept of resilience (confirmed by Prof. Kitano) from "the Ideal Image by the End of Childhood" stated in The National Curriculum Standard for Kindergartens/Childcare Guidelines for Daycare Centers (Japan):

“Accomplish without giving up” stated in (2) Independence

“Control one’s feelings and compromise with friends” stated in (4) Fostering of morality and normative consciousness

**Question 4: Do you think the teachers of your facility have heard of the term "resilience"?**

- 1 I think they have heard of the term and know the meaning well.
- 2 I think they have heard of the term and know a little what it means.
- 3 I think they have heard of the term, but do not know what it means.
- 4 I think they have never heard of the term, nor know what it means.

For those who answered 1 or 2...

- How do you think the teachers of your facility understand the term "resilience"?

**Question 5: Regarding practices to nurture “resilience”**

- Do the teachers at your facility implement activities to develop "resilience" and relevant "social-emotional skills," regardless of their knowledge of the terms?
- In such cases, we would like to ask about the activities in the main interview survey. What would be the appropriate phrasing to ask this to your teachers?

For example, would they understand the following expressions--i.e. "emotional regulation," "engaging with others" "collaboration," "ability to bounce back and recover from hardship"? Dealing with failure and rejection, facing adversity and moving forward, regulating your feelings and coming to terms with friends/problems, and persevering without giving up.

**Question 6: Regarding “resilience” and “social and emotional skills”**

- From your point of view, what kind of approach do the teachers of your facility take to develop resilience and relevant social-emotional skills in your children? Please describe what you know about the specific activities and practices.
- If you use any programs or educational materials to nurture children's resilience and relevant social-emotional skills at your facility, please provide information about them.

**Table 6: Attributes of Four Participants from Different ECEC Facilities**

Participant	ECEC facility type	Current position	Length of service	Qualification	Gender	Age group
A	Administrative institution	Municipal officer	32 years	Kindergarten teacher's license / daycare teacher's certification	Female	50's
B	Private daycare center	Senior teacher	15 years	Kindergarten teacher's license / daycare teacher's certification	Female	30's
C	Private daycare center	Senior teacher	13 years	Kindergarten teacher's license / daycare teacher's certification	Female	30's
D	ECEC center (kindergarten-type)	Vice-principal	9 years	Kindergarten teacher's license / daycare teacher's certification	Male	30's



### **Question 1: Have you heard of the term “social-emotional skills”?**

Two out of four participants answered, “I have heard of the term and know the meaning well,” and the remaining two answered, “I have heard of the term and know a little what it means.” Then, we asked the participants how they perceived the term, and they responded as follows:

- Interviewee (A): We have created the "Infancy, Toddlerhood, and Early Childhood Education Vision," referring to materials from the OECD and others. Similar to non-cognitive skills. Considering the fact that these skills will be required for children of this time and age, we referred to it when creating the Vision. Social-emotional skills include curiosity, exploratory mind, self-esteem, sense of competence, the ability to value oneself, compassion, and the attitudes of learning to learn. The most important is autonomy.
- Interviewee (B): I have heard of the word, but may not understand it in detail. I have an ambiguous understanding that not giving up and self-regulation skills are important as social skills.
- Interviewee (C): I have heard the word being used a lot lately in teacher trainings, etc., but have not really digested it to the point where I can use it effectively on a daily basis. In childcare settings, we get the impression it concerns emotional control. As more parents and families have diverse backgrounds, the number of children who have difficulties in social-emotional aspects or collective activities is increasing. We have all come to make efforts to accommodate and face the diverse needs of children throughout the facility.
- Interviewee (D): I understand the meaning based on the OECD definition. However, I get the impression the term "social-emotional skills" is only used at teacher training sessions. The term "non-cognitive skills" seems more common. That said, I personally feel it is a problem that the definition of "non-cognitive skills" remains vague. Children with high social-emotional skills are more communicative, collaborative, and play cooperatively. It is important to nurture these skills through early childhood education for children to live well in human society. I think it is important to nurture skills to proceed along with peers and the group community while making self-assertions or developing self-control.

It is confirmed that, among ECEC facility managers and senior teachers, the recognition of “social-emotional skills” varied. Some recognized the term as an essential skill for children’s future education, while others only knew the terminology and roughly understood the term. Although there was a consensus on the significance of these skills, few responses were given regarding their definition or specific application in practice.

### **Question 2: How do you think the teachers of your facility understand the term “social-emotional skills”?**

Out of four participants, two answered, “I think they have heard of the term and know a little what it means,” while the remaining two said, “I think they have heard of the term, but do not know what it means.” In addition, we asked the participants how they think the ECEC teachers of their facility

perceived the term “social-emotional skills.” Their answers were as follows:

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| Interviewee (A): | Not sure if they understand it as a term. It's difficult. Since our city advocates autonomy in our Vision, they feel the importance of it. The awareness differs depending on each facility. Not sure if everyone understands it, as autonomy is a broad definition. It is essential for children to have autonomy. The Vision also emphasizes communication skills. |
| Interviewee (B): | Respecting each child's pace is something we practice at our daycare center as well. First comes the child's desire to want to do it him/herself, then we try to get their friends to join; childcare workers try to interact in small steps.  |
| Interviewee (C): | Those who do know tend to think of it in terms of communication.   |
| Interviewee (D): | Many of them use it under the contexts related to communication, how to manage in personal relationships, how to express or speak up what to say. It is viewed in the context of interpersonal relationships rather than self-compassion that exists within each child.  |

### **Question 3: Have you heard of the term "resilience"?**

One participant answered, “I have heard of the term and know the meaning well,” while the remaining three answered, “I have heard of the term and know a little what it means.” When we asked them how they perceived the term, they responded as follows:

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| Interviewee (A): | It came up in an elementary school study group. I understand it as the skill to adjust one's feelings (self-regulation), rebuild one's feelings, and compromise one's feelings. I'm concerned that it may be misunderstood as the ability to endure.  |
| Interviewee (B): | I only hear about it a little during teacher trainings on developmental psychology. I think it is the ability to overcome hardship.   |
| Interviewee (C): | I haven't been able to use the words on a daily basis. I get the impression of a flexible child.  |
| Interviewee (D): | It reminds me of rubber that bounces back and adapts. Squeeze it tightly and it will expand again. Being able to bounce back and take on challenges even when faced with difficulties in different environments. When I think of a resilient child, in the context of transition from kindergarten to elementary school, s/he is willing to do his/her best even when it is not fun, and can do it even when it is tough, as classes are taught in various styles at school. An essential element for surviving through the stressful society in the future, and am paying close attention to it. |

Different expressions were seen explaining their understanding of the term "resilience" according to the different levels of education. Although there was a common understanding of overcoming adversities and coping with difficulties, one participant noted that the term could be mistaken for simply “endurance”. Therefore, the term should be treated carefully in this research.

#### **Question 4: Do you think the teachers of your facility have heard of the term "resilience"?**

After explaining the definition of "resilience" established by the CRNA secretariat to the participants, we asked them the above question. One out of four participants responded, "I think they have heard of the term, but do not know what it means," while the remaining three said, "I don't think they have ever heard of the term, nor do they know what it means." Then, we asked how they think about it, and their responses were as follows:

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| Interviewee (A): | They probably don't know much about it. It is well understood when viewed in terms of the "the Ideal Image by the End of Childhood" stated in The National Curriculum Standard for Kindergartens/Childcare Guidelines for Daycare Centers. Children should also experience failure, and from there, think of another way to do it, taking on challenges, and try once more, and learn that it is okay to fail, which may lead to independence and emotional learning. |
| Interviewee (B): | When the word "resilience" is used, I don't think they understand it. However, in terms of overcoming and accomplishing something, we value these in the support we provide at the daycare center.  |
| Interviewee (C): | Although we don't use the word "resilience," (after hearing the explanation of resilience) we are very conscious of children's flexibility and the ability to work without giving up in our daily childcare. In preparation for elementary school, we encourage children to try things that they are not good at without giving up, and learn their weak areas, in our daily childcare settings.  |
| Interviewee (D): | I have used the term in a staff meeting. I think they have heard of it before, but need to review the meaning of it. Resilience is often used in the context of trying to do things even under difficult situations, but I sometimes feel teachers are unconsciously or unintentionally talking about resilience. For example, if a child has attachment issues or problems within the family, the teacher may discuss how the child can deal with the issues.        |

The participants answered that most ECEC teachers of their facility might not be familiar with the term "resilience," but the concept itself may be practiced in their daily childcare activities, as outlined in the specific behaviors and attitudes of the "Ideal Image by the End of Childhood." Activities that can help develop the ability to overcome failures, attempt to overcome difficulties, and act independently are understood to nurture resilience. In fact, most ECEC teachers value the ability to act flexibly, attempt to overcome problems, and help children cope positively with difficult situations.

#### **Question 5: Regarding practices to nurture "resilience"**

We asked the participants the following two questions, and they responded as follows:

- Do the teachers at your facility implement activities to develop "resilience" and relevant "social-emotional skills," regardless of their knowledge of the terms?
- In such cases, we would like to ask about the activities in the main interview survey. What would be the appropriate phrasing to ask this to your teachers? For example, would they understand the following expressions--i.e. "emotional regulation," "engaging with others" "collaboration," "ability to bounce back and recover from hardship"?

- Interviewee (A): We wait and watch over until children figure it out on their own, rather than trying to make them avoid making mistakes. Childcare/education is not about asking for correct answers, etc. Supporting children's feelings helps them discover what they like and want to do through activities, which leads to play and autonomy. ECEC teachers figure out what the child likes and is interested in and arrange the environment for him/her. Teachers wait to see what the child wants to do and value friends.
- Interviewee (B): If asked for "activities," it is difficult to answer. We believe that the basis of a child's growth is built on teachers' support so that children grow through play, find a play the child likes, and s/he can be immersed in it. Regarding "Can you think of any opportunities for children to overcome difficulties?" - It is our basic policy to teach that through play. Children cannot express their feelings well in groups, have a hard time putting it into words, and sometimes push their friends. We also explain to children through a game for small groups using cards, the kind of words that are used in particular situations. It all comes about through play. For example, by playing in order, you can experience waiting for your turn. Being asked in terms of "activities" is difficult, but may be easier to understand if you ask "how childcare workers interact, or how they want to be involved."
- Interviewee (C): The term is not recognized as a word so much in my facility. Academic words that appear in teacher-trainings often do not connect with the practical childcare settings. However, if you look deeper into it, childcare workers definitely incorporate it in childcare. (After hearing examples of expressions from the interviewer) I think it's easier to understand if you break it down to this level, but they are probably not aware that all of these skills are connected. They are mostly focused on each of the skills separately.
- Interviewee (D): We have sufficient activities that lead to nurturing these skills. I understand the bottom four lines (expressions that capture resilience), but I'm concerned about the expression "controlling emotions" written at the beginning. Control includes both assertion and restraint, but many childcare workers think of it as endurance (restraint), and it may not include the part of trying to balance things out on your own while talking back (assertion). Thus further explanation may make it easier to understand. It is difficult to distinguish between "self-control" and "emotional control". Isn't *kyodo* (collaboration) expressed differently in Chinese characters in the Course of Study for Kindergartens and Childcare Guidelines for Daycare Centers Guidelines?

Regarding questions about childcare activities, the interviewees said it would be easier for ECEC teachers to understand if they were asked how they would interact with children. By using phrases such as “emotional control,” “self-control,” “interaction with others,” “collaboration,” and “the ability to adapt and recover from difficulties,” they can tell us in detail about their activities aiming to nurture social-emotional skills and resilience. However, the term “emotional control” requires further clarification, and the term “cooperation” would be more appropriate than “collaboration.” One participant pointed out that supporting children’s development through play is fundamental, so ECEC teachers should deepen their understanding of the fact that all of these skills are interconnected.

## **Question 6: Regarding “resilience” and “social and emotional skills”**

We asked the participants the following two questions, and they responded as follows:

- From your point of view, what kind of approach do the teachers of your facility take to develop resilience and relevant social-emotional skills in your children? Please describe what you know about the specific activities and practices. If you use any programs or educational materials to nurture children's resilience and relevant social-emotional skills at your facility, please provide information about them.
- If you use any programs or educational materials to nurture children's resilience and relevant social-emotional skills at your facility, please provide information about them.

Interviewee (A): I have never heard of any teaching materials for developing social-emotional skills or resilience. Considering that children learn from their interests through play, such programs may be difficult to use.

Interviewee (B): Since we value children's freedom and want to use materials in a variety of ways, I can't think of anything that is definite. You never know when an item of play equipment that was not intended for that purpose may be used for another purpose.

Interviewee (C): Developmental support, inclusive childcare. Environmental settings. How can we enhance free play? In addition to making separate corners or rooms, various spaces should be made in the hallway as well, so that children can choose their own play and space. The environment should be composed considering children's experience to express one's choices, have fun, and be recognized that s/he is having fun. As we want children to try things they are not good at as well, we emphasize the importance of understanding the child's current situation, among the staff. I tell them to consciously determine how much they are going to require from each child. We also value developing self-esteem.

Interviewee (D): The degree of emphasis on free play. Providing ambiguous toys and materials (such as scrubbing brushes and chain rings that can develop into various activities) allows children to adjust their differences in each other's ideas and diversify their self-control functions. We also emphasize children being able to make their own choices and how much we can make them feel they made their own decisions and accomplished it. Differentiation between what they did together and what a child did individually. In addition, building the environment and support from childcare workers. Expanding children's ideas and images based on their reasoning will help develop their emotional skills and expand their imagination. In order to nurture the ability to bounce back, self-compassion is important, so when reviewing, we should first reflect on the good points, rather than focusing on the issues.

To nurture resilience and social-emotional skills in childcare facilities, the emphasis is on a play-based approach rather than specific teaching materials. ECEC teachers mostly encourage children to engage in free play and interest-based activities, fostering an environment where they can make choices, express themselves, and tackle problems independently. They try to foster children's self-expression and self-esteem by providing them with various spaces and allowing them to choose how to use those spaces. In addition, they assist children in improving collaboration and self-regulation skills using

ambiguous toys and materials. They believe it is essential to share each child's conditions among ECEC teachers to provide appropriate support, while also emphasizing the importance of self-compassion.

At the end of the interviews, we asked the participants for advice on the main survey. They said that it would be advisable to avoid academic terminology and ask questions based on actual childcare situations and experiences when discussing resilience and social-emotional skills with ECEC teachers. It is also better to give examples of specific situations and ways of interacting with children in everyday childcare settings and ask how ECEC teachers deal with such situations. We incorporated these tips into our main survey.

**[Tomomi Sato]**

### **Section 3: Main Survey - Interview with ECEC teachers**

The purpose of the main survey was to clarify the perception of "resilience" and "social-emotional skills" in ECEC teachers, who play a key role in childcare settings. In addition, we seek to explore their methods for developing these skills in children, as well as the backgrounds and perspectives behind these practices.

The preliminary survey findings revealed that even if the ECEC teachers are unfamiliar with the academic terms "resilience" and "social-emotional skills," they actually value and practice developing these skills in children. Based on these findings, we adjusted the interview questions for the main survey. Specifically, we set an interview phase to align their understanding of the terminology. Then, we created questionnaire items by providing examples of specific situations that may occur in everyday childcare settings and ways of interacting with children.

The attributes of the survey participants are shown in Table 8. Interviews were conducted remotely using Zoom, with each session lasting approximately one hour per person. As with the preliminary survey, the participants were given an explanation of the main survey in advance and asked to complete a consent form. In addition, at the beginning of the survey, the participants were informed that the interviews were voluntary and that there would be no disadvantage if they stopped midway. First, we asked about their career backgrounds, then conducted a semi-structured interview, asking the following questions (see Table 7). This survey was approved through the ethical review process at Aichi Shukutoku University (ethical review number: 2023-004).

**Table 7: Questionnaire Items Used in the Main Survey**

<b><u>Question 1: Have you heard of the term "social-emotional skills"?</u></b>	
1	I have heard of the term and know the meaning well.
2	I have heard of the term and know a little what it means.
3	I have heard of the term, but do not know what it means.
4	I have never heard of the term, nor do I know what it means.
	For those who answered 1 or 2...
·	What do you understand about the term "social-emotional skills"?
·	What kind of social-emotional skills do you think are essential? (in your country or culture)

/ as an individual childcare worker) Please list as many skills as you can think of.

- What would a child with a high level of social-emotional skills be like?
- Do you think nurturing children's social-emotional skills is important?

### **Question 2: Have you heard of the term "resilience"?**

- 1 I have heard of the term and know the meaning well.
- 2 I have heard of the term and know a little what it means.
- 3 I have heard of the term, but do not know what it means.
- 4 I have never heard of the term, nor do I know what it means.

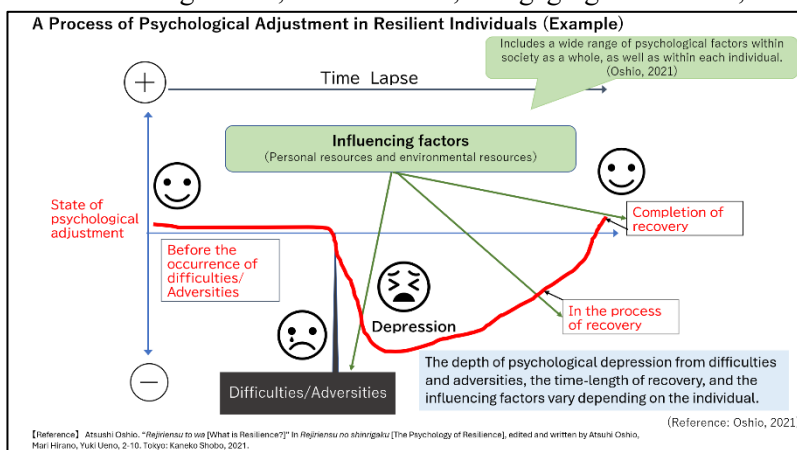
For those who answered 1 or 2...

- What do you understand about the term "resilience"?
- What would a child with resilience be like?
- Do you think nurturing children's resilience is important?

### **Question 3: If you have heard of the word "social emotional skills" or "resilience," where did you learn about it?**

#### **<Explained the definition of “resilience” as shown below, and shared the concept>**

- <What is "resilience"?>
- There are different interpretations in the concept of resilience.
- We will indicate the concept of resilience focused in this survey using words and diagrams.
- <Description of the core concept of "resilience">
- #Ability to adapt successfully despite adversity/difficulty
- #Ability to bounce back from adversities and difficulties
- <Note: Social-emotional skills related to the concept of resilience>
- "emotional regulation," "self-control," "engaging with others," etc.



**<Figure illustrating the concept of resilience>**

**Question 4: Regarding “resilience”**

- What do you think are "difficulties" or "adversities" for children aged 4-6?
- What do you consider it would be like for a child, aged 4-6 to 'adapt successfully' or 'bounce back'?

**Question 5: Do you provide childcare considering the concept of resilience?**

- What kind of approach do you and your colleagues take to nurture resilience in children? Can you provide specific settings or situations within your childcare practices or activities?
- Please also tell us about any developmental programs or materials that you have implemented in your facility to develop resilience.

**Question 6: Provided below are some scenarios related to the development of children's resilience. Please select two or more scenarios out of the four, and tell us "How you would interact as a childcare worker," and "why would you do so?"**

- 1) He/she was left out (he/she was not included in the group of friends).
- 2) He/she had a fight with his/her friend.
- 3) A person in a close relationship with him/her moved away (his/her favorite teacher, a close friend, etc.)
- 4) An upsetting incident occurred at home (he/she was scolded by his/her parents, parents had a fight, the atmosphere at home is negative, etc.)

**Question 7: How do you measure/assess/evaluate children's achievement in resilience?**

- Are there any assessment tools to acknowledge children's achievement in resilience? What are the contents of the assessment tool? (Please answer if possible)

**Question 8: Do you give feedback to parents of their children's achievement in resilience?**

- If so, what kind of feedback do you give? (Please answer if possible)

**Table 8: Attributes of Eleven Participants from Different ECEC Facilities**

Participant	ECEC facility type	Current position	Length of service	Age of children in charge	Gender	Age group
E	Authorized private daycare center	Class teacher	22 years	4-year-olds (4-year-old class)	Female	40's
F	Authorized private daycare center	Class teacher	3 years	5-year-olds (5-year-old class)	Female	20's
G	National kindergarten	Class teacher	19 years	5-year-olds (5-year-old class)	Male	40's



H	Municipal kindergarten	Senior teacher	19 years	5-year-olds (5-year-old class)	Female	40's
I	Authorized public daycare center	Class teacher	5 years	5-year-olds (5-year-old class)	Female	20's
J	Authorized public daycare center	Class teacher	6 years	4-year-olds (4-year-old class)	Female	20's
K	ECEC center	Deputy senior teacher	5 years	4-year-olds (4-year-old class)	Female	20's
L	Public kindergarten	Senior teacher	15 years	5-year-olds (5-year-old class)	Male	30's
M	Public kindergarten	Senior teacher	15 years	5-year-olds (5-year-old class)	Female	30's
N	Authorized public daycare center	Class teacher	3 years	5-year-olds (5-year-old class)	Female	20's
O	Authorized public daycare center	Class teacher	12 years	5-year-olds (5-year-old class)	Female	30's

### **Question 1: Have you heard of the term "social-emotional skills"?**

For the above question, two out of eleven participants answered, “I have heard of the term and know the meaning well,” seven answered, “I have heard of the term and know a little what it means,” and two answered, “I have heard of the term but do not know what it means.” We then asked the participants who answered, “I know the meaning well” or “I know a little what it means,” to explain how they perceived the term “social-emotional skills” (see Appendix: Question 1).

Most of them perceived social-emotional skills as “non-cognitive skills.” They considered these skills to be the foundation for children’s personality development, including the ability to control their emotions, cooperate with others, be motivated, and exercise self-determination. They valued the ability to communicate their own thoughts to others and work toward goals through trial and error.

The participants described children with strong social-emotional skills as those who can clearly express their own opinions, while considering other children's situations, finding ways to communicate effectively, and coping with difficulties without giving up. Some noted that ECEC teachers should support children in childcare settings to help them gain self-confidence, actively express their opinions, and develop social skills through interactions with friends and group collaborations.

The participants also noted that social-emotional skills are essential qualities that will be useful to children when they become members of society in the future, and that it is particularly important to foster these skills during early childhood.

### **Question 2: Have you heard of the term "resilience"?**

For the above question, two out of eleven participants answered, “I have heard of the term and know the meaning well,” two answered, “I have heard of the term and know a little what it means,” and three answered, “I have heard of the term but do not know what it means.” The remaining four said, “I have never heard of the term, nor do I know what it means.” We then asked the participants who answered, “I know the meaning,” to explain how they perceived the term “resilience” (see Appendix: Question 2).

All of the participants perceived resilience as the ability to continue attempting to overcome difficulties when faced with them. Some said it is the mental strength to recover from failures and difficulties and continue to make positive attempts.

The participants described children with strong resilience as those who persist even after failure and have the courage to try again as they feel accepted.

Some said it is important to develop resilience in early childhood to build the foundation for coping with the various challenges children will face in the future. There was also the opinion that developing resilience through childcare, including communication skills, interaction with friends, and problem-solving abilities, is necessary. Some said they provide opportunities to nurture children’s resilience in daily childcare settings.

### **Question 3: If you have heard of the word "social emotional skills" or "resilience," where did you learn about it?**

For the above question, the participants who knew the term said they learned it during training sessions. However, a majority of participants were not familiar with the term “resilience.” Two participants mentioned that they had looked up the word on the Internet before participating in this interview.

### **Question 4: Regarding “resilience,” what do you think are "difficulties" or "adversities" for children aged 4-6?**

We asked the participants the above question, and they responded as follows (see Appendix: Question 4).

First, most participants answered that children aged 4-6 might encounter "difficulties" and "adversities" when recognizing a gap between their own expectations and actual abilities, their weaknesses in group activities, and their limitations and difficulties. Specifically, they said children typically face such difficulties when participating in physical exercise, painting pictures, or trying new play in their daily activities. They might feel frustrated because they realize they are not good at such activities and cannot accomplish their intentions or goals.

Next, the participants mentioned having trouble with friends or difficulty building friendships. For example, children may have difficulty when they cannot effectively communicate their thoughts when playing with friends.

In addition, some participants mentioned that children’s difficulties differ according to their age. For example, right after enrollment, they experience separation from their parents or unwillingly put up with things during collective activities. As they grow, they might experience setbacks, such as being unable to accomplish their projects and creative activities as planned. They might realize differences in ability between themselves and other children in group activities or have difficulty understanding

their roles and abilities while collaborating with friends.

All participants agreed that these difficulties and adversities provide important opportunities for children to gain independence and social skills. They all shared the understanding that while coping with such difficulties, children can gradually develop resilience and social-emotional skills.

### **What do you consider it would be like for a child, aged 4-6 to 'adapt successfully' or 'bounce back'?**

We asked the participants the above question, and they responded as follows (see Appendix: Question 4):

First, the participants answered that children aged 4-6 might encounter "difficulties" and "adversities" when they are unable to meet their own expectations, compare their abilities to those of other children in group activities, face tasks that they struggle with, and experience conflicts with friends due to troubles or different opinions.

**To "adapt successfully,"** the participants said that children need to utilize items to calm down, build up successful experiences, approach something in small steps, and develop self-confidence. Some noted that it is important for ECEC teachers to support children by talking to them with positive words, providing an environment to attempt to do something they are not good at, and encouraging them to accept learning and help from their friends.

**To "bounce back,"** the participants emphasized the importance of experiencing failures and difficulties. Children can learn from these experiences to find solutions on their own and adapt to situations through trial and error. They also noted the importance of certain capabilities that enable children to ask for help, solve problems with others' help, and achieve goals through collaboration with friends.

When children engage in new activities or work towards a common goal in a group, they will face various challenges and adversities. All participants had a common perception that children will develop the ability to adapt and bounce back by persistently trying something, even if they fail, and gradually gaining successful experiences. They can also develop this ability by verbally communicating their thoughts and feelings to friends, coping with problems, and achieving goals.

### **Question 5: Do you provide childcare considering the concept of resilience?**

According to the responses to the question above, we have confirmed their efforts to promote children's resilience in various areas (see Appendix: Question 5).

First, they help children recognize the gap between their own expectations and actual performance through childcare activities and develop the ability to cope with such a gap. Some noted that they provide an environment such as a "resource room" (a place where children can be alone and calm down), helping them manage their emotions when they feel discouraged or panicked due to conflicts with friends or other reasons.

For other activities, some participants stated that they offer opportunities for children to engage in specific activities and solve problems by themselves, such as sports days, recitals, and other daily play activities. With such a process, ECEC teachers aim to nurture children's self-confidence and the ability to cope with difficulties, by talking to children with positive words and encouraging them to seek help or learn from peers.

ECEC teachers emphasized that they prioritize providing opportunities for children to think and act independently. They believe that children can naturally and enjoyably develop these abilities through play and daily activities, rather than relying on specific educational materials and programs. They also noted that cooperation and mutual support among ECEC teachers, working towards a shared objective, are important factors in nurturing children's resilience.

To summarize, we have confirmed that ECEC teachers assist children in developing resilience through daily play and childcare activities, providing them with challenging opportunities to test themselves. They also aim to promote children's independence and their ability to overcome difficulties.

**Question 6: Provided below are some scenarios related to the development of children's resilience. Please select two or more scenarios out of the four, and tell us "How you would interact as a childcare worker," and "why would you do so?"**

We asked the participants the above question, and they responded as follows:

**Scenario 1 "A child is left out (he/she is not included in the group of friends)"** was chosen by six participants (see Appendix: Question 6-1).

These participants (ECEC teachers) said they would first acknowledge the child's feelings of being excluded from the group. Since excluded children often perceive the situation from a one-sided perspective, teachers make them listen to the opinions and reasons of other children. Providing the child and other children with an opportunity to mutually discuss and communicate their feelings may help them understand and accept each other. If a minor misunderstanding between children caused this, teachers would ask children to include the child in their group. If this issue is due to conflicting preferences or choices of play, it is necessary to provide support according to children's different needs and preferences. All participants who chose this scenario agreed that the most important thing is to acknowledge and accept the feelings of both sides when dealing with this kind of problem.

Sometimes, ECEC teachers share the incident with the entire class without identifying the names of the children involved. They ask the class for their opinions and feelings about the situation, providing an opportunity to think about alternatives to excluding a child from the group and how to react when the children are excluded from a group. Some participants noted that, by doing so, they can help children understand that there is a place where each child can turn to for any problem they encounter, which, they believe, is also essential support ECEC teachers can offer.

Generally, when a child is left out of the group, ECEC teachers try to support both sides by first acknowledging each child's feelings, encouraging dialogue and mutual understanding, and preserving the children's self-esteem. Some noted that it is important to respect not only the feelings of the child left out but also the feelings of children in the group without pressuring them to get along well.

**Scenario 2 "A child had a fight with his/her friend"** was chosen by eight participants (see Appendix: Question 6-2).

These participants (ECEC teachers) said they would first listen to both sides of fighting children, taking a neutral stance. They would encourage children to communicate their feelings with each other to gain mutual understanding. The teachers would also encourage children to share, understand, and accept their emotions and thoughts that caused the fight. For young children who are not good at verbally expressing themselves, the ECEC teachers assist their communication by asking them what they dislike and what they want. All ECEC teachers use this approach to deal with this kind of problem, such as when dealing with the case of a child being left out, recognizing that the most important thing is to acknowledge and accept the feelings of children.

Some participants mentioned that resolving children's conflicts can be a valuable learning experience for not only the children involved in the conflict, but also for the entire class. Therefore, they set a session to recount the incident to the class and invite them to share and discuss their opinions.

In addition, for children in a 5-year-old class, some participants noted that ECEC teachers should encourage children to resolve their dispute by themselves instead of intervening. This approach aims to nurture children's ability to express their opinions and cope with problems with friends autonomously. ECEC teachers may intervene in children's disputes as necessary, but they seek interaction with children in a way that assists children's personal growth.

As with the case of a child being left out, the participants noted that there is no need to force the children to stay together if the dispute is not resolved. ECEC teachers aim to teach children that they can choose what they want and respect their own motives in their relationships with friends.

**Scenario 3 “A person in a close relationship with him/her moved away (his/her favorite teacher, a close friend, etc.)”** was chosen by three participants (see Appendix: Question 6-3).

These participants (ECEC teachers) said they would start by showing sympathy and listening to the child who is feeling sad or lonely, to help the child acknowledge his/her emotions. They would show the child how to stay connected and maintain the relationship, such as sending a letter to that friend or teacher who has moved away. The teachers would also encourage the child with positive words, such as “You can see your friend/teacher again someday,” to help the child have hope for the future and overcome the current situation. In particular, for children who cannot tell or express their sad feelings adequately, the ECEC teachers would ask the class to discuss how they can encourage the child, which may enhance the relationship with new friends who will share the child's sad feelings and overcome the separation. Sometimes, during conversations like “I wonder what that child is doing now,” ECEC teachers provide children with an opportunity to recall memories together. In this way, they encourage children to cherish positive memories and overcome sad events through empathetic communication.

As described above, the ECEC teachers emphasize helping a child cope with separation from a close person by first showing sympathy for the child's emotions, suggesting ways to stay connected, sharing positive memories, and encouraging other children to support the child.

**Scenario 4 “An upsetting incident occurred at home (he/she was scolded by his/her parents, parents had a dispute, the atmosphere at home is negative, etc.)”** was chosen by five participants (see Appendix: Question 6-4).

These participants (ECEC teachers) said they would first listen to and understand the child's feelings. Regardless of the situation, they would refrain from blaming the child, instead offering reassurance that they are on the child's side and providing a sense of security. If the incident is caused by a lack of affection from parents or their busyness, the teachers would ask the parents about their family situation and provide support to the parents as necessary. If the incident is due to a sibling dispute, the teachers would express sympathy and help the child manage their feelings and calm down.

As described above, the ECEC teachers prioritize acknowledging children's emotions, collaborating with parents, offering empathy, assistance, and a secure environment for children, so that children can overcome upsetting incidents experienced at home.

**Question 7: How do you measure/assess/evaluate children's achievement in resilience? (Please answer if possible)**

We asked the participants the above question, and they responded as follows (see Appendix: Question

7):

First, all of the participants answered that they have no specific assessment tool.

To determine the degree of resilience, they said they would observe how quickly children can change their mood. Whether children can recover quickly or not from their failure to resolve a difficult situation indicates the degree of resilience. They also monitor children's growth by observing their behavioral changes, such as a child who couldn't express opinions beginning to do so or a child who used to play alone starting to play with friends.

Next, for assessment methods, they use daily records and childcare notes prepared at the end of the school year to confirm children's growth and the progress of goal achievements. They compare children's current and past behaviors to verify their growth and development progress. Some participants mentioned that they share child information with colleagues and assess children's development together to ensure diverse perspectives.

Although they would not show these assessments to children, they pointed out the importance of supporting children who encounter difficulties and challenging situations every day by monitoring and confirming each child's development.

**Question 8: Do you give feedback to parents of their children's achievement in resilience? (Please answer if possible)**

We asked the participants the above question, and they responded as follows (see Appendix: Question 8):

First, the participants indicated they aim to communicate children's small everyday successes and achievements to their parents. They try to report children's specific episodes for parents, such as when their child interacted well with friends or expressed their feelings appropriately, where they were previously unable to do so. Furthermore, when children achieve something new or overcome a challenging situation, the ECEC teachers would share it with their parents in front of these children to boost their self-esteem.

In addition, the ECEC teachers communicate with parents about children's development progress, qualities, and competencies through individual parent meetings and those for the entire grade. They also mentioned that parental understanding and support are crucial for fostering children's resilience. Therefore, while explaining children's development details, they also encourage parents in supporting such growth at home.

As described above, the ECEC teachers provide positive feedback to the parents about their children's growth in resilience and share such joy with parents. They also ask for parental support at home.

**[Tomomi Sato]**

**Section 4: Discussions on the results of preliminary and main surveys reconsideration of childcare policies of facilities/teachers from the perspective of social and emotional learning (SEL)**

In the preliminary survey, the ECEC facility managers and senior teachers noted that ECEC teachers

are not very familiar with the academic terms "social-emotional skills (non-cognitive skills)" and "resilience." Despite this, the facility managers and senior teachers felt that ECEC teachers appear to value these skills and practice developing them. Based on these results, we conducted the main survey interviews targeting currently employed ECEC teachers including a phase to explain the definition of the above terms. We also provided examples of specific situations and interactions with children that occur in everyday childcare settings and asked ECEC teachers to answer the questions.

The main survey results revealed that ECEC teachers are aware of the term “social-emotional skills (non-cognitive skills)” fairly well through their training, while most are unfamiliar with the term “resilience.” However, after the meaning of the term “resilience” was explained, we confirmed that all ECEC teachers recognize it as important in their daily childcare practices. Most ECEC teachers replied that they nurture children’s resilience not by using specific programs or educational materials, but through difficulties and conflicts with friends they encounter in their daily lives. All ECEC teachers agreed on the importance of acknowledging children’s feelings. They also mentioned the importance of supporting children in expressing their own feelings and understanding others’ feelings. Furthermore, ECEC teachers aim to respect children’s different viewpoints and, as they grow, encourage them to find a way to cope with and solve a problem independently, rather than showing immediate solutions. About taking on new challenges, ECEC teachers think that it is necessary for children to gradually build up successful experiences in small steps, which will nurture their persistence and perspectives. In addition, they value the presence of friends as significant support, as they observe children teaching each other, watching and learning from friends, and are motivated by friends’ persistent efforts. ECEC teachers also emphasize the importance of seeking solutions independently, even under stressful circumstances, instead of avoiding difficulties and conflicts children may encounter. **To ensure successful outcomes, ECEC teachers need to tailor their professional practices to accommodate children’s personalities, developmental progress, and interpersonal relationships.**

Throughout the main survey interviews, ECEC teachers frequently discussed their dedication to fostering children’s social-emotional skills and resilience in solving difficulties and conflicts. Therefore, we further examined their strategies for supporting children’s social-emotional skills from the perspective of **social and emotional learning (SEL)**.

**SEL** is also known as the process of developing social and emotional skills (Watanabe & Koizumi, 2022). According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), SEL is the “process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.” In other words, **it is the process of learning to develop social (interpersonal) skills, attitudes and values based on how one perceives oneself and interacts with others** (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Relationship between competencies that need to be developed for SEL and learning environments**

Source: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

<https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/>

The skills to be developed in **SEL** include the following five competences (Table 9). SEL programs aim to foster abilities that are deeply related to each of the five areas specified in the National Curriculum Standard for Kindergarten (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2017), namely, "health," "human relationships," "language," and "expression" (apart from the area of "environment") (Watanabe and Koizumi, 2022).

- (1) Self-awareness
- (2) Self-management
- (3) Social awareness
- (4) Relationship skills
- (5) Responsible decision-making

**Table 9: Descriptions and Examples of SEL Competencies**  
(compiled by the author based on a previous study (Watanabe & Koizumi, 2022))

Competency	Description
(1) Self-awareness	The ability to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts. This includes the capacity to recognize one's strengths and limitations with a well-grounded sense of confidence and purpose.
(2) Self-management	The ability to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.



	This includes the capacity to delay gratification, manage stress, and feel the motivation and agency to accomplish personal and collective goals.
(3) Social awareness	The ability to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts. This includes the capacities to feel compassion for others, understand the broader historical and social norms for behavior in different settings, and recognize family, school, and community resources and support systems.
(4) Relationship skills	The ability to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups. This includes the capacity to communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, work collaboratively to problem solve and negotiate conflict constructively, navigate settings with differing social and cultural demands and opportunities, provide leadership, and seek or offer help when needed.
(5) Responsible decision-making	The ability to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations. This includes the capacity to consider ethical standards and safety concerns, and to evaluate the benefits and consequences of various actions for personal, social, and collective well-being.

All interview conversations recorded in the main survey were converted into text data and analyzed using NVivo. In addition, we categorized the interviewed participants based on two attributes: “Class in Charge” (4-year-old class: four participants; 5-year-old class: five participants) and “Length of Service” (less than ten years: four participants; 10 years or longer: seven participants). The frequency of the five SEL items that appeared in the participants' conversations is shown below:

**Table 10: Frequency of SEL Items Appeared in Conversation**

SEL Items	Frequency total	Average frequency by class in charge		Average frequency by length of service	
		4-year-old class	5-year-old class	Less than 10 years	10 years or longer
(1) Self-awareness	45	3.8	4.3	3.5	4.8
(2) Self-management	74	6.5	6.9	4.8	9.0
(3) Social awareness	42	4.5	3.4	3.3	4.4
(4) Relationship skills	26	3.0	2.0	2.2	2.6
(5) Responsible decision-making	26	2	2.6	1.8	3.0

The details of our analysis are specifically described below:

- (1) For **self-awareness**, ECEC teachers emphasized the process of children recognizing their own state and how to express their feelings. For example, Interviewee (E) stated, *"I think it can be quite difficult for children if they realize that their actual abilities are different from what they thought, which can be quite shocking for them."* Most ECEC teachers noted that self-awareness develops in children when they recognize a gap between what they can actually do and what they think they can do in creative or physical activities. This awareness also occurs when children become aware of their position within a group or when they recognize their weaknesses.

In this process, it is important to acknowledge one's own feelings and weaknesses and communicate them to others. For example, Interviewee (I) said, *"I think it's important to be able to express personal opinions or feelings clearly and autonomously."* The interviewee described the educational curriculum and activities implemented in her kindergarten to help children develop the ability to express their opinions and feelings appropriately and overcome difficulties and adversities.

It appears that ECEC teachers in charge of older classes (5-year-olds) and with 10 or more years of experience are slightly more likely to recognize self-awareness as an essential skill for children to deeply understand themselves and communicate it to others, compared to those in charge of younger classes (4-year-olds) and with less than ten years of experience.

- (2) For **self-management**, ECEC teachers emphasize not only self-control but also emotional regulation. For example, Interviewee (G) said, *"We need to nurture children's **ability to overcome, cope with, and persistently deal with difficulties, even if they fail.**"* This includes improving self-confidence, using various items and environments to calm down, enhancing coping skills with friends and self-esteem, and learning how to express emotions. For example, Interviewee (E) stated, *"We aim to provide children with numerous successful experiences to help them deal with things effectively and **build confidence.**"* Similarly, it is recognized among ECEC teachers that parental support and the presence of friends are important. Interviewee (N) pointed out, *"I believe that **just one word from the teacher can make a significant difference.** I also believe that **the influence of friends is significant.** By observing peers working hard or seeking advice from them, **children will gradually learn how to bounce back and switch their mode.**"*

The participants listed other essential elements as the ability to bounce back from failure or difficulties, tenacity, the ability to cooperate, and a willingness to take on challenges. They mentioned that these elements are influenced by interactions with friends in groups. Interviewee (K) noted, *"When something doesn't go well, it's easy for a class teacher to advise, but it's not just that. **We really value the process where children recognize the problem themselves and think about how to make it better.**"* The participants also described their specific activities and educational concepts for developing the ability to manage one's emotions appropriately and adapt to social situations. Interviewee (I) noted, *"When children become elementary school students, there will be only one class teacher in charge of group activities. Children need to be able to check and follow a timetable by themselves, which will lead to skills needed later in life. No matter how much we extend a helping hand and support them now, if they cannot manage themselves when they go to elementary school, it makes no sense. Therefore, I think children's ability to think on their own, take action autonomously, and ask for help when needed, are all definitely essential skills that should be acquired in early childhood."*

Some participants mentioned that these skills will develop as children grow. Interviewee (G) said, *"Children cannot instantly shift emotional gears when they fail at something. Instead, they often blame someone else or express anger over their failure. However, they gradually recover from the*

incident and shift their emotional response, which is often observed in the later months of the five-year-old class.” Likewise, Interviewee (K) noted, “Five-year-old children feel like everything is resolved when they receive feedback from adults. In this regard, I believe children have developed better self-management skills than when they were four years old.”

We also confirmed that ECEC teachers with ten years or more extended experience are more likely to mention children’s self-management than those with less than ten years of experience. This is probably because experienced ECEC teachers have learned strategies and intervention techniques to nurture these skills through specific experiences and situations, such as coping with the various emotions and difficulties children face, building confidence, recovering from failure, and motivation to make attempts persistently.

- (3) For social awareness, we confirmed that ECEC teachers aim to nurture children’s ability to understand each other and to feel and show empathy towards their peers. They focus on children’s skills of understanding the feelings of peers, respecting the opinions of the other side of children when fighting, and having a dialogue to resolve problems. For example, Interviewee (J) noted, “Children may feel a certain satisfaction when their opinions and thoughts are accepted by the other side of children after fighting. So we try to let fighting children talk with each other first.” More specifically, they emphasize the process of resolving conflicts among children by considering the other children’s positions and sharing and understanding each other’s feelings and opinions. Interviewee (L) explained, “Children tend to fight without recognizing the feelings and thoughts of the other side. It could be the child’s own assumption, or sometimes neither of them listens to the teacher... it may be necessary to act as a mediator and so that they can understand each other’s feelings.” Their process aims to assist children in expressing their emotions appropriately and respecting the emotions of others. This helps enhance children’s interpersonal relationships and promotes social harmony.

We confirmed that more ECEC teachers in charge of 4-year-old classes mentioned children’s social awareness than those in charge of 5-year-old classes. For example, regarding the difference in social awareness among children by age, Interviewee (E), who is in charge of a 4-year-old class, noted, “Children at this age become able to observe peers and recognize that peers have their own feelings, which helps them better deal with interpersonal relationships.” Likewise, Interviewee (K), who also oversees a 4-year-old class, said, “I think the goal is social awareness of 5-year-old children. I hope children in my class learn to enjoy creating something with friends, and when they become 5-year-olds, they will be able to deal with problems together with friends autonomously.” In contrast, Interviewee (H) who is in charge of a 5-year-old class noted, “We encourage children to express their thoughts and feelings in front of the class again, because 5-year-old children can articulate their feelings using their own words.” These comments suggest that developing social awareness is a more crucial task for 4-year-old children.

- (4) For relationship skills, ECEC teachers describe the process of nurturing children’s ability to communicate and solve conflicts with peers, which is vital in building interpersonal relationships. For example, Interviewee (J) explained, “I try to interact with children keeping in mind that those who always seem to cause trouble also have something good about them and other children should know about it. If a child wants to play with someone (who is not willing to play), what will he/she do? Since he/she wants to play with the friend, will he/she give up what he/she is doing and approach him/her? Or will he/she keep a distance from that child? I think children can learn about such interpersonal space... to overcome such conflicts... kindergarten may be the first place ... for children to experience such situations.” They emphasize the importance of learning how to make up after fighting, the ability to understand and empathize with the other’s feelings, the ability to communicate their own feelings appropriately, and the ability to work

together to solve problems. For example, Interviewee (E) said, “Fighting is not bad. I tell children they can fight with friends as much as they want but they should make up after fighting.” They also seek to foster an attitude of expressing one’s own opinion while respecting the opinions of others, placing value on receiving support from others in overcoming difficulties, and independently making efforts to build constructive relationships with others. For example, Interviewee (F) noted, “I will ask children in the class to suggest solutions for the child, such as how to invite that friend to play if he/she wants to play again on other occasions.” Interviewee (J) said, “I will tell about the incident of children’s fighting in front of my class. I want all children in the class to know that the child was finally able to apologize, or the child could tell his/her friend how upset he was.” Likewise, interviewee (K) mentioned, “When I explain the situation to other children not involved in the fight, they often provide useful comments. They say, ‘I can understand how he/she would feel upset if I were told the same thing,’” ECEC teachers seem to recognize that all of these are basic elements in the development of children’s social skills, laying the foundation to build healthy relationships in the future. Interviewee (L) noted, “I think that the ability to communicate with people is an absolute necessity in a future society. Children absolutely need such ability as they progress from elementary school to college and into adulthood.”

Some participants mentioned that fostering these skills takes time. Interviewee (E) noted, “Children at this age seem to cope with problems to some extent. It is impossible to instruct them in how to acquire these skills instantly and perfectly. We need to teach children repeatedly until they gradually develop such skills.” The participants who oversee 5-year-olds view children’s conflicts as an opportunity to encourage sharing and discussion in the classroom.

We confirmed that more ECEC teachers in charge of 4-year-old classes mentioned children’s relationship skills than those in charge of 5-year-old classes. For example, Interviewee (K) who is in charge of 4-year-olds noted, “I hope that children in my class learn to enjoy creating something with friends, and when they become 5-year-olds, they will be able to deal with problems together with friends autonomously.” Likewise, Interviewee (O), who oversees a 5-year-old class, said, “Compared to when they were 4-year-olds, children become able to switch their way of thinking, instead of fighting with each other. For example, if a child says, ‘I cannot play with you now,’ they will negotiate and decide to play later in the afternoon. In this way, they gradually become capable of socializing with one another.” Children seemed to develop relationship skills steadily as they grew older.

- (5) For **responsible decision-making**, it is confirmed that ECEC teachers aim to nurture children’s ability to autonomously make decisions and respect their own and others’ choices. For example, Interviewee (G) said, “I prioritize nurturing children’s fundamental skills, such as the ability to make decisions by themselves and the ability to autonomously attempt to do various things whatever they are interested in or motivated about.” The participants commented that this skill is related to the ability to cope with difficulties tenaciously, express their feelings and opinions adequately, and deal with situations flexibly. Interviewee (G) noted, “We need to nurture children’s ability to overcome, manage, and persistently cope with difficulties, even if they fail.”

In addition, the participants mention that children are learning to be responsible for their own behaviors, make appropriate choices, and accept the outcome of their choices. Interviewee (I) said, “When something doesn’t go well, children reflect on it and quickly shift emotional gears. If they see someone who fails at something, they will talk to the child to encourage or conversely, give them advice.” Interviewee (I) also noted, “Taking responsibility for what they say they will do until accomplishment will also lead to fostering the ability to express personal opinions.”

Furthermore, the participants emphasized the importance of harmony and collaboration within the

group, balancing the achievement of individual goals with the achievement of group goals. Interviewee (I) stated, *“If children say they wanted to play with a particular child, and not with the excluded child, I will ask them, ‘If you were that child, wouldn’t you feel sad? Is this OK?’ If children provide a specific reason for excluding the child, I will reassure the excluded child by saying, ‘They don’t mean that they don’t like you. They have a reason to play by themselves.’ **Then, the child will actually show understanding.**”* Likewise, Interviewee (E) stated, *“If a child is rejected in play by another child, I would advise the rejected child, ‘**You don’t have to persist on being with him/her because there is no reason you definitely need to stay together. If you want to continue the friendship and play with him/her, you must accept his/her opinions little by little. If you don’t feel comfortable about accepting being rejected, you can go and find another friend.**’”*

We confirmed that more ECEC teachers in charge of 5-year-old classes or who have ten years experience or more mentioned responsible decision-making than those in charge of 4-year-old classes or those with less than ten years of experience. This is because responsible decision-making skills become increasingly important as children grow, especially as they enter elementary school and beyond. In addition, ECEC teachers with longer years of experience have ample understanding of the various situations children face and have deep insight into children's responsibilities and decision-making.

The ECEC teachers interviewed for the main survey did not have specific social-emotional learning (SEL) programs in their facilities; however, they seemed to focus on fostering children's social-emotional skills, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, to support the development of “resilience.” Regarding **self-awareness skills**, ECEC teachers emphasized the importance of children recognizing and expressing their abilities and feelings. They support these skills through practical activities. For **self-management skills**, ECEC teachers emphasized self-control, emotion management, and a willingness to take on challenges. For **social awareness skills**, they aimed to foster children's understanding of each other through empathy and dialogue. For **relationship skills**, ECEC teachers emphasize communication and dealing with and resolving conflicts. For **responsible decision-making skills**, they aimed to foster children's ability to make decisions based on information and accept the results of such decisions. From a childcare perspective, ECEC teachers mentioned that these skills are not only necessary for fostering “resilience” but also important for forming the foundation for sound development of children as members of society. It should be noted, however, that the results also revealed different approaches taken depending on the experience of ECEC teachers and the children's age. A future challenge is to gather more research findings to enhance childcare initiatives aimed at fostering “social-emotional skills (non-cognitive skills)” and “resilience.”

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**[Tomomi Sato]**

## **Section 5: Designated Discussion “Resilience issues in early childhood from a long-term perspective”**

The theme of this section is whether low resilience in early childhood could lead to difficulties in school age.

The results of interviews for the main survey revealed that ECEC teachers believe it is important not only to encourage children who are facing difficulties in overcoming their situations and adapting to preschool life, but also to support the development of children’s “self.” For example, one ECEC teacher listed self-respect, perseverance in coping with difficult situations, and optimism in shifting emotional gears as crucial elements for building strong resilience.

Therefore, we will examine the issue of resilience in school-age years from the perspectives of “self-awareness” and “self-confidence”. Here, we employ the concept of “causal attribution” as the keyword. “Causal attribution” refers to the cause we attribute to successful or unsuccessful experiences. Here, we focus on failed experiences in relation to resilience. Children may attribute the cause of their failure to themselves or to external factors (other people, the situation, etc.). Children with low resilience tend to blame themselves for being unable to do something, saying, “It’s my fault.” In contrast, children who attribute blame to external factors, such as saying, “It’s XX’s fault,” may not necessarily have strong resilience, but they experience less stress. In addition, when faced with difficult situations, children may seek solutions internally (through their own efforts) or externally (through other people or situations). Children with the former type of thinking will say, “If I try hard, I can do it.” In this case, ECEC teachers may encourage and support them by saying, “Let’s do your best.” According to a comparative study of Japan and the USA, Japanese children show a strong tendency toward internal causal attribution, such as “It’s because I didn’t try hard enough, so I’ll try harder.”

In early childhood, 3-year-old children, whose concept of “self” is immature, are less likely to seek internal causal attribution. This behavior becomes more common among 5-year-old children. Japan’s early childhood education is fundamentally play-centered, and individual evaluation is not implemented. ECEC teachers, as stated in their interviews, support children in making flexible shifts. However, children who have built up experiences with low resilience tend to think, “It is my fault,” and are often unable to cope with the situation.

School life has far more constraints than early childhood education. Not only learning curriculum but also various tasks are not experienced or emphasized in early childhood education, such as quickly taking down notes from the blackboard, keeping up with the pace of the lesson, and switching activities based on a timetable. Children who have built up experiences with low resilience in early childhood are likely to be seized by acquired helplessness and low self-efficacy, thinking, “No matter what I do, everything goes wrong,” when they experience various new things and encounter difficulties. Consequently, these children tend to avoid trying anything that might not go well, lack motivation to learn or adapt to school life, and choose to withdraw and avoid interaction with their friends instead of facing conflict. This lack of motivation in the early school years is often the result of accumulated experiences from infancy and childhood. Hence, these children might turn into “under-achievers” who are unable to demonstrate their abilities. At the stage when children acquire metacognition in the middle and upper grades, they begin to gain the self-awareness that they are “useless.” It will then be very difficult for school teachers to instruct these children in rebuilding their self-confidence.

Then, what is important for ECEC teachers to support children in early childhood and prepare them for their future school life?

As stated in their interviews, it is important for ECEC teachers to respect children’s efforts, provide receptive support, and help them develop a sense of self-confidence by telling them even their imperfect selves are valuable to children who are not good at coping with difficulties or repeatedly

cause problems. Also noteworthy is what one ECEC teacher said in the interview: “When children face difficulties, we do not intervene immediately. Instead, we let children experience difficult situations and then provide an opportunity for children to work together to solve problems. 5-year-olds can think of how to solve problems together, but it is essential to have learned how to cooperate and enjoy working with friends when they are in the 4-year-old class. This will help them develop the ability to cooperate and solve problems with friends when they become 5-year-olds. In other words, in addition to self-confidence, developing trust in others through good relationships in group activities will become one of the foundation for nurturing strong resilience from longer perspectives.

The original intent of this study was to explore how resilience was supported in early childhood education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Children underwent various changes during the COVID-19 pandemic, including psychological instability, lack of physical exercise, and limited opportunities for communication. Although these experiences may not be very noticeable in early childhood, they seem to lead to more significant problems in school life. For instance, psychological instability can result in reduced concentration and a feeling of being unable to adapt to school life. Similarly, lack of exercise can lead to decreased motor skills and clumsiness, while limited opportunities for communication can result in poor self-expression and increased problems among children. Considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, even if resilience issues are dormant during early childhood, they may become apparent during school age.

**[Miwako Hoshi]**

## Appendix)

### Q1: Have you heard of the term ‘social-emotional skills’?

Interviewee(E) I understand the word is almost equivalent to non-cognitive skills that are not cognitive skills measured by tests.

Although it is intangible, I think these skills are very important.

Interviewee (G) **<Understanding>**

Non-cognitive skills. Our kindergarten has our own perspective on children’s trait and competency. Within this framework, social-emotional skills are related to the items of “My way of life” and “How to connect with people.” Willingness, the drive to do what one wants to do, the ability to communicate in order to collaborate with others, and to manage own emotions and cooperate with others.

#### **<What kind of social-emotional skills do you think are essential?>**

Social-emotional skills are fundamental to personality formation. These skills are those other than knowledge and cognitive skills and include the ability to think and make decisions. The definition of “social-emotional skills” is quite broad in the field of early childhood education and care. We must carefully nurture children’s capacities of self-determination, autonomy, willingness, and interest. Based on such capacities, children can develop the ability to achieve goals while collaborating with others and aiming for common goals. To collaborate with others, children need to control their emotions, acquire skills to overcome and cope with difficulties when things do not turn out well, and persistence is also important.

#### **<What would a child with a high level of social-emotional skills be like?>**

In addition to the above skills, the ability to experiment through trial and error until achieving goals is also essential.

#### **<Do you think nurturing children’s social-emotional skills is important?>**

These skills are the most important thing.

Interviewee (H) Children themselves may not consciously want to acquire certain skills, but I believe that children naturally develop these skills, for example, to communicate and interact with peers in the social setting of a kindergarten.

Skills to communicate, interact with peers, and understand others to survive in the society of a kindergarten.

Children who can deal with various situations (such as friends and other things) can be considered to have a high level of social-emotional skills.

Interviewee (I) **<Understanding>**

Non-cognitive skills. They are intangible. The ability to build a good personal relationship, to understand others’ feelings, to concentrate on what one wants to do, and to carry through something once started. Different from academic performance which is tangible, indispensable when one thinks about how to lead one’s life and act upon after



reflecting.

**<What kind of social-emotional skills do you think are essential?>**

It is essential to speak out opinions clearly and actively express one's thoughts and feelings. We provide opportunities to speak out, such as circle time. We also observe and encourage children as necessary so that they can overcome problems on their own.

**<What would a child with a high level of social-emotional skills be like?>**

A child who can speak out opinions clearly while caring for others by stepping back and thinking about others' circumstances. They can take an appropriate approach to communicating their own thoughts to others and carry through something without giving up.

**<Do you think nurturing children's social-emotional skills is important?>**

It is important. Something that can be nurtured especially at this growth stage.

Interviewee (K) • I understand social-emotional skills as the ability of children to think of ways on their own and overcome difficulties and challenges by themselves when a problem occurs.

- I also consider the ability to create something new from scratch to be part of social-emotional skills.

- I highly appreciate social-emotional skills as they align with the educational philosophy of our kindergarten.

(Characteristics of children with high skills)

- Children who autonomously take on difficult challenges

- Children who have a high level of communication skills and enjoy interacting with friends

- Children who are able to respond with positive emotions in difficult situations

Interviewee (L) I have learned these skills as non-cognitive skills at training sessions.

Patience, the ability to persevere with willingness, compassion, the ability to overcome on your own when facing burdens.

-Children in the current class tend to give up easily when facing difficulties, such as spinning tops. What is different from the first semester is that they have developed the ability to challenge something with friends. They recognize friends' problems, and try to help them. I think the ability to communicate with others is absolutely important.

**<What would a child with a high level of social-emotional skills be like?>**

Some children can show sympathy and help friends who are in trouble. To have confidence and self-esteem would be the foundation of these skills.

-Because I heard at training sessions, etc. that society will undergo significant change, I think these skills are essential. I hope children will take on challenges in various things.

Interviewee (M) **<Understanding>**

The ability to think and find a way to accomplish a goal (wanting to do something) through trial and error, even though that goal is challenging. Also, the ability to cooperate with friends, collaborative skills.

**<What kind of social-emotional skills do you think are essential?>**

The willingness to exhibit one's abilities, although, of course, having a place where you feel safe and stable is a prerequisite. Creative jobs will be in demand in the future. It is essential to be able to spark and express ideas freely and uniquely.

At the Kindergarten 9, most parents are education-conscious, which may be due to the neighborhood characteristics of this area. It seems parents in this area, from their deep concern over their children, prepare everything in advance for them to avoid failure.

Instead of having to be told what to do by adults, parents and teachers, and being scared of making mistakes, I hope our children will be able to believe it is OK to fail, or it is not clumsy to make mistakes.

**<What would a child with a high level of social-emotional skills be like?>**

A child who is confident with what to do and can positively accept the outcome regardless of whether it is wrong, failed, or successful; who has a high level of willingness; who can get inspiration from friends' activities and build a good relationship with them; who can flexibly ask for help, consult with friends, and adjust/respond to unexpected situations.

**<Do you think nurturing children's social-emotional skills is important?>**

These skills are crucial for children considering their future.

Interviewee (N) • Cognitive skills involve understanding, while social-emotional skills belong to non-cognitive skills, which I consider children's intangible inner abilities.

- These are important skills that allow children to think and act independently.
- To nurture children's social-emotional skills, I try to take the *mimamoru* approach (watch without intervention) over children so that they can speak out for themselves. (Characteristics of children with strong social-emotional skills)
- Children who can think on their own and express opinions while also considering their friends' feelings.

Interviewee (O) **<Understanding>**

Recently, I often hear the word "non-cognitive skill." I looked up the definition of the word on my own. The word refers to intangible skills children acquire as they grow, such as the ability to challenge, cooperativeness, creativity, and curiosity.

**<What kind of social-emotional skills do you think are essential?>**

It seems many children expect adults to sense their emotions. For example, if a child spills tea, the child will only say, "Tea" or "I spilled tea." I want children to think about what they should do in such a case and tell me their solution. I want to help children acquire the ability to think and act independently. The ability to verbalize and communicate their own thoughts and feelings. The ability to understand other's situations and sometimes be patient. The ability to listen to friends' opinions.

**<What would a child with a high level of social-emotional skills be like?>**

A child who is amenable in group activities, but can create something original, make suggestions at discussion time, and listening to others' opinions.

**<Do you think nurturing children's social-emotional skills is important?>**

I think it is important. Later, when children become adults, they must work and live in a large collective society; therefore, relationships with others become very important. Even now, they live in a small group of children at daycare center. I think the ability to build relationships with friends and the ability to think and act independently will be essential skills to get around in society.

**Q2: Have you heard of the term "resilience"?**

Interviewee (G) **<Understanding>**

When I heard the word "resilience" for the first time, I understood this was the ability to bounce back and overcome something that did not turn out well or difficulties. From then on, I searched more about the word and found its broader definition. Whether one is being respected. The concept of resilience overlaps with some elements of social-emotional skills. The more I examined closely, the more the boundary or distinction between these two terms have become unclear. Optimism also seems to be included.

**<What would a child with resilience be like? >**

Children with resilience can continue to challenge again by managing their emotions and do not give up easily. They can be resilient because they feel accepted and respected. Therefore, the definition of "resilient children" is broad.

Interviewee (H) I understand resilience as the ability to decide how to act and overcome a difficult situation when facing it.

- In situations where children try and fail, it's the ability to repeatedly challenge something without giving up, and to learn by observing the behaviors of their friends.
- In society, children will encounter situations where things don't go as they want. Therefore, it is crucial for them to learn how to act in difficult circumstances.

Interviewee (L) I checked the meaning of the word (before being interviewed).

I had the impression of hardiness. While related to SES, this is the ability to endure and overcome difficulties. In times of stress.

- Nurturing children's resilience is very important. When playing with friends, children sometimes encounter occasions where things do not turn out as they want it to. Some children try to have it their way, but if they behave selfish too often, they cannot get along with friends. The ability to challenge difficult things (such as unicycles and spinning tops) is necessary.

Interviewee (M) **<Understanding>**

The ability to overcome situations when things are not working out.

**<What would a child with resilience be like?>**

A child who has toughness; who doesn't get upset when facing a setback, even doesn't think it is a setback; who can react positively; and thinks 'If I try hard, I might be able to do it,' or 'Even if I can't do it now, how about doing it this way?' making efforts to find solutions in their own way.

**<Do you think nurturing children's resilience is important?>**

I think it is important.

Interviewee (O) **<Understanding>**

After being asked to participate in this survey, I looked up the meaning of the term on the Internet. It is the ability to shift certain emotional gears and recover from adversities, difficulties, and problems.

**<What would a child with resilience be like?>**

A child who can express and communicate his/her thoughts and feelings to friends and having ECEC teachers understand their feelings when he has trouble with friends, such as quarrels or other incidents where friends break his hand-made works, etc., and by doing so, who can shift emotional gears and focus on the next activity.

**<Do you think nurturing children's resilience is important?>**

I think it is important. For example, suppose a child wants to play with Friend A, but Friend A wants to play with other children. In that case, the child should be able to change his emotional gears and accept playing with Friend B instead of rigidly sticking to Friend A. I think such skills are critical.

#### **Q4a : What do you think are "difficulties" or "adversities" for children aged 4-6?**

Interviewee (E) • When there is a discrepancy between children's perceived abilities and their actual skills (a gap between self-evaluation and reality).

- When a child realizes that he/she cannot do something that other children can do in a group, and cause him/her mental harm (recognizing his/her own weaknesses in a group setting).
- When a child recognizes limitations of his/her abilities or weaknesses, this may be adversity for the child.

Interviewee (F) When children encounter difficulties (such as physical exercise and drawing) in their daily lives, and cannot do these well and want to avoid them. Whether children can enjoy challenging activities depends on their capabilities. It is also difficult for 5-year-olds to think for themselves how to communicate with each other in order to resolve the problem after being in conflict.

Interviewee (G) • Situations where you cannot make progress while you have many things you want to do or to achieve; situations where you cannot accomplish things alone; and situations where you cannot get the necessary help easily.

- Situations where you cannot build a desired relationship with friends.

Interviewee (H) “Difficulties” and “adversities” experienced by children:

- Situations where children try to accomplish something but fails.
- Situations beyond children’s control, such as when interactions with friends were restricted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Interviewee (I) • How the child handles things the child is not good at.

- For example, some children who are not good at speaking in front of others tend to be quiet or avoid such occasions. These children know they have to speak up in one way or another, so we try to watch and intervene gradually, while they also try to overcome their weaknesses by taking various approaches.
- What children feel difficult (other than expressing opinions): Each child has different weaknesses, such as being receptive, doing physical exercise, singing, playing instruments, etc.

Interviewee (J) To accept and cope with different opinions and thoughts through interactions with friends. Occasions to challenge something requiring specific skills, such as jumping rope, or something you have never tried before.

Interviewee (K) • When children experience situations where ideas or projects (such as a shop project) that children came up with did not turn out well.

- When children face difficulties in working on creative activities such as creating a menu or roles in a play.
- When children recognize their individual roles and abilities by comparing and collaborating with their peers through group activities (such as preparing for a recital or play).

Interviewee (L) When children separate from parents when they start coming to kindergarten.

In kindergarten, children need to do everything by themselves, different from at home where they get help from their parents. In group life, they cannot always have their way, and sometimes they must be patient. Dealing with these minor situations may also be related to resilience.

When insects die. When children play with friends, and things do not turn out as they want. When children cannot do well in a new kind of play, such as skipping rope.

Interviewee (M) • Setbacks, upsetting situations.

- Children as a group: When practicing for the kindergarten sports day, my class could not defeat the other class in a relay race. Some children said, "Let's practice hard, then we can win the race." However, they gradually gave up, saying, "We practiced so many times, but it is impossible to win." We consulted a physical training teacher who regularly visits

our kindergarten. His advice was to say “*ei ei oh!* (a cheer of encouragement)” loudly twice. The first “*ei ei oh!*” was for our class, and the second “*ei ei oh!*” was for the opponent. Following the advice, we won the race finally. I thought the teacher would teach children technical matters (such as their running form or arm swing), but he advised us on how to encourage children mentally. This was an example of how the outcome changed through children’s willingness. The difference lies between running while thinking that we will win the game today with the “*ei ei oh!*” strategy” and running while thinking that we will lose the game today no matter how hard we try. This was a good example of how children overcame their difficulties.

- Children as an individual: Personal relationships, especially girls. A girl wants to play with another friend, but the friend does not. She likes her, but things do not turn out the way she wants. In such cases, will she give up what she wants to do and go to her friend, or will she stay away from her? Just as adults do, some children struggle with how to distance oneself from others.

Interviewee (N) • Difficulties children would face when they challenge new kinds of play or activities. Some children can do it well from the beginning, while others may find it difficult.

- Such difficulties include children's inability to communicate their thoughts and feelings while playing with peers.

- For example, when 5-6-year-olds attempt to walk on stilts, interacting with other children can help encourage them to keep trying even if they fail at first.

Interviewee (O) • When I observe children's interaction with each other every day, I recognize that conflicts occur when things do not turn out the way they want it to when playing with each other. ECEC teachers will intervene, but children won't give in to others, and arguments will intensify.

**Q4b: What do you consider it would be like for a child, aged 4-6 to 'adapt successfully' or 'bounce back'?**

Interviewee (E) • When a child can calm down using some items (such as picture cards, liquid oil motion timers, or items with a pleasant texture).

- When a child gradually becomes capable of handling difficulties through repeated successful experiences.

- When a child gains confidence by accomplishing something gradually through small steps.

Interviewee (F) • When children have a sense of difficulty in something, they will gradually not like doing it. At the age when self-awareness emerges in children, if they don't have much physical competence and something does not turn out well, children will challenge difficulties again with the help of adults that may make the children's feelings change. Instructing children to communicate their feelings to adults, as well as encouraging them with positive words will lead to trying again. I think children can adapt to and

handle difficulties by themselves.

**-Since there may be individual differences among children, how do you change the approach according to each child?**

I do change the approach for each child –e.g. hyperactive boys have difficulty controlling their emotions, and may have a reason for their behavior, or not. Many children tend to lose their self-esteem, so I try to talk to them in a way to improve their self-esteem. If a child hits his friend, I would first ask the child, "What happened?" and then tell him/her, "Oh, so that's what happened." By listening to children's reason sympathetically before teaching them that their behavior was wrong, most children feel accepted. I would also ask them, "How do you think your friend feels?" and "What will you do next?" By accepting children's reasoning each time, they will gradually (behave better). The more adults try to understand and accept children's behavior and talk to them in a positive tone; children will gain emotional stability.

Interviewee (G)• Ask for help. Make continuous efforts through trial and error from a different set of mind. For example, if a child quarrels with friends who would not listen to his/her opinions, the child will gradually understand the other's opinion, understand their thoughts and feelings, and finally turn things around. The ability to ask for advice or ask for help in order to solve the problem.

- Children aged five to six become capable of managing emotions and trying different methods based on their experiences without others' help. They can also flexibly change their minds based on a single suggestion from others. This is the ability to adapt successfully.

Interviewee (H)• To ask for help and get assistance (although it is vital for children to overcome challenges by themselves, it is also important to be able to ask adults for help when necessary).

- To observe friends' behaviors and learn something from them, and then challenge difficulties.

- To repeatedly challenge difficulties and gradually find own solutions and adapt to situations.

- I believe it is crucial for children to take the initiative and start autonomously when they are challenging something.

Interviewee (I)• "Bounce back" means to get better at handling what they were not good at. Young children cannot easily switch their mood after they fail to do something. They even blame someone else for their failure. However, in the later months of the five-year-old class, many can switch their mood. For example, when they quarrel with a friend, they can switch their mood and apologize to that friend spontaneously. Even if they cannot apologize, they can reflect on their conduct immediately and then switch their mood. Then when children see other friends in a quarrel, they will talk to their friends to calm them down or tell them it is wrong. It seems their own experiences lead to their subsequent behavior.

- Four-year-olds whine or stay quiet in the classroom, but in the later months of the five-year-old class, they become capable of understanding others' feelings and can thus cope with their own emotions and behaviors.

Interviewee (J)-Adults encourage children, subtly offer tips, and advise them to observe friends who are good at doing something. To exchange ideas and thoughts with friends, receive their empathy and suggestions, which leads to coping with problems.

Interviewee (K)•When children participate in a new activity or project (for example, a shop project or recital ), and adapt to such situations and requirements, make decisions on their own, and work on their tasks creatively.

- The process where children learn from failures and challenges encountered during activities and gain confidence by overcoming such difficulties. Based on their confidence, when things they have created themselves do not turn out as expected, children can come up with ideas to improve the situation.

- The ability of children to understand their own roles in a group and collaborate with other children to achieve their goals.

- The attitude and ability of children to deal with problems positively without giving up when facing difficulties.

Interviewee (L) Anxiety when separating from parents can be resolved as time goes by. Children will feel secure. They will be relieved when they understand their parents will come to pick them up, and their peers are friendly.

For the death of insects, children gradually accept it by examining, experimenting with these insects and understanding what they eat.

Interviewee (M) It is important how strong children's willingness is (the desire to achieve something, strongly willing to do something or the ideal image of desired outcomes). In the case of the sports day, children could successfully win because they strongly wished to win the race and asked the PE teacher for help. Some children even practiced at home, running around the park with their father. I think the efforts made by each child combined with the timely "ei ei oh!" strategy led to their victory. When children are willing, they will ask others for help, consult with friends, practice at home, etc. showing persistent efforts.

Interviewee (N)•When children facing difficulties or challenges can shift their negative feelings to positive feelings with the encouragement of their teacher.

- When children having difficulty doing something can shift their emotional gears positively by observing other friends trying hard or getting help from friends who support him/her behind the scenes.

- When 5-6-year-olds realize they are the oldest in the daycare center, they feel they should try harder and act as big brothers or sisters to their younger 3-year-old-or 4-year-old -class children.

- When younger 3-year-old-or 4-year-old -class children observe five-year-old class children trying hard, it inspires them to adjust their emotional gears to try harder and adapt.

Interviewee (O)•Children who can communicate their feelings with each other, giving way to the other friend saying, "It's OK," or listen to other children's opinions, being able to cope



with the problem.

- After the children resolve their conflict, they can start playing with each other again.

#### **Q5: Do you provide childcare considering the concept of resilience?**

Interviewee (E) • We let children develop resilience through almost all activities, such as craft and physical exercises.

- Through physical education lessons using mats and vaulting boxes, children become aware of the difference between their expectations and actual performance and nurture skills corresponding to these activities.

- For children who are particularly not good at basic skills, such as holding paper and using scissors, I let them have successful experiences by encouraging them to steadily develop such skills from the basics, and foster their feelings that they can overcome whatever they are not good at.

Interviewee (F) **Interaction with friends / when feeling down or panicked:** Our daycare center has several "resource rooms (small rooms)," where children can go to when they are upset, so they can read a picture book, etc., to calm themselves. We provide these small rooms to help children feel safe and relaxed and can talk to us after a while. All children can use the resource room. After they calm down, they will return to their peers. By providing an environment where they can be alone, momentarily separating them from the group will allow them to control their emotions better so they can communicate with their peers afterwards. Children know we have a resource room. Some children need our encouragement to use the room, and some can go there alone. So, we flexibly change our approach depending on each child.

Interviewee (G) • It is not only limited to resilience, but speaking within the framework of the curriculum of our kindergarten, I want to nurture children's ability to find out what they want to do, and learn how to control their emotions in the process of finding and approaching what they want to do under the broad component of "my way of life" and "how to connect with people."

- More precisely, if a child finds difficulty in doing something, I want to tell the child over and over, "It happens sometimes." The failure is merely an outcome, so I will appreciate his efforts in the process. I hope the child himself and the children surrounding him/her values the efforts and process the child tried hard, instead of focusing on the outcome. We try to value the process. I also try to tell the child that it will be fine, to make the child feel secure, introduce his/her peer's efforts who have succeeded, and share the child's feeling of distress during play reflection time. In this way, I try to nurture children's resilience not only through interaction between teachers and children but also among children themselves. It is important for other children to think together when someone is in trouble. It is important to know others' sensibility and feelings.

- **Approach to encourage children to ask for help easily:** All of us, teachers demonstrate that we do not evaluate merely whether it is going well or not but efforts as

well; provide an environment where children can feel accepted and feel safe to come to us; also nurture children's ability to express and communicate their thoughts. It may be difficult for younger children in 3-year-old classes (3-4-year-olds) at the beginning, but encourage them to express something; demonstrate by action for 3-year-old class children and by language for 4- 5-year-old children. It is also ideal to nurture children's ability to explain about themselves.

- Issues when nurturing children's resilience: We tend to put aside resilience when nurturing children's abilities, because visible skills are easier to support and see the outcome than invisible non-cognitive skills. So the question is whether we understand what is happening in children's internal abilities, what abilities we want to nurture, and how to encourage children to do so. Each teacher should recognize such fundamental philosophy and awareness.

Interviewee (H) • Our kindergarten provides opportunities for children to develop their resilience through “challenging and overcoming” experiences in their play activities, such as stilts, jumping ropes, top spinning, and Kendama.

- We don't use specific educational materials and programs; we value traditional Japanese toys, such as *Karuta* and *Menko*. We believe that setting rules to maintain fairness and challenging oneself leads to resilience.

- I believe it is essential to encourage activities that children are willing to challenge.

- By using handmade toys in activities such as Kendama, it is possible to adjust the difficulty; enabling to provide challenges that match their development level.

- Rather than introducing specific educational materials and programs to foster resilience, we value the importance of the natural development of resilience in children through having fun in daily life and play activities.

Interviewee (I) • **Approach:** Our kindergarten's motto is “*mimamori* (watch without intervention) and *michibiki* (guide children).” We “watch without intervention” so that children can solve the problem by themselves when something happens, and “guide children” by preparing an environment or situation so that they can exhibit their abilities freely. Childcare workers at our facility interact with children based on this perception. We, teachers, often step back and oversee children, instead of helping them immediately when they encounter difficulties, so that they can exhibit their abilities fully.

- **Situation:** We often see conflicts (arguments) in the classroom. Children in quarrels come to us to tell us what happened. We do not intervene immediately; just hear out the situation and basically watch over them carefully. If one child unreasonably complains, we simply tell him/her to try to imagine the opposing child's feelings if he/she were the child, then walk away. Then even if the child can't immediately accept to apologize at the time, they may rethink a little and go over to the other child to say “I'm sorry,” or correct their behavior. Children seem to understand that telling the teachers would not always resolve problems.

- **Our hope behind *mimamori* and *michibiki*:** Children will continuously need the ability to solve problems by themselves even as they grow up. When they enter elementary school, activities will all be done collectively by following instructions from a single teacher and a fixed timetable, which they will have to follow on their own.

Therefore, during this time of growth, children must learn to think/act independently and ask for help whenever necessary. All our staff members feel the same way. At the beginning of the five-year-old class, teachers first need to build personal relationships with children, but in the later months of the five-year-old class, teachers spend more time watching over children (not intentionally, as it seems children grow and become capable of handling situations on their own. Regarding conflicts, we intervene with children and repeatedly tell them how to handle their quarrels at the beginning, but children gradually learn to try and solve conflicts by themselves.)

Interviewee (J) **Approach:** My approach is to listen to each child carefully, trying to accept and understand each of their feelings. ECEC teachers, including myself, always try to observe and grasp children's group activities from a broad perspective. We also subtly encourage children to challenge something they are not good at or have never tried.

**Practices and activities:** While children prepare for the sports day through play, we encourage them to try something new, such as jumping rope, hula-hoops, and stilts (for 5-6-year-olds), or create something in a group of two to three children. We provide an opportunity for four- to five-year-olds to discuss together.

**Developmental programs:** Since our facility is a public daycare center, we do not introduce such programs.

**Do you introduce various activities for children besides resilience?:** I encourage children to think and act autonomously instead of waiting for instructions, express opinions to others pleasantly, and accept various opinions from others.

(Priority to SES and resilience) I hope children experience difficulties and overcome them through the presence of friends.

(How to assist children on certain occasions) For example, children tend to avoid jumping rope for the sports day, but when they observe other children who do it well, they feel like they can do it as well. For children who are not interested, I encourage them every day to try. If they can do it even a little bit, I will praise them. I help them accumulate satisfactions through small achievements.

Interviewee (K) **(Shop project)**

- For the 5-year-old class children, we have a shop project, where they plan a shop from scratch, create a menu, and try several materials for the menu. This project values the process where children need to think and act independently and experience difficulties.

**(Recital)**

- This session intends to enhance children's ability to decide the play's scenario, lines, and roles on their own. Things may not go as planned, but through this process they will develop the ability to solve a problem on their own.

**(Daily efforts)**

- I believe it is crucial for children to make decisions on their own and gain experience in overcoming difficulties they encounter in day-to-day childcare activities, such as deciding which picture book to read or deciding roles. Such successful experiences will enhance their confidence, which contributes to the development of resilience.

**(Long-term support)**

• Observing the same child for three years can be difficult, but we deliberately provide them with opportunities to experience a new environment, through changing classes and teachers. Nonetheless, we collaborate with other teachers as a team and share the conditions of each child, trying to provide equal care for them.

**(Leveraging blank time and space)**

• We value children's time where they think and address something on their own. By providing a space for free ideas, rather than giving specific instructions, we aim to enhance their ability to think independently.

**(Collaboration and support among staff)**

• We actively share information and collaboration among the staff, including new teachers. We collaborate to achieve common goals while taking individual approaches in each class. We, teachers, also hope to enhance our own resilience and social-emotional skills (especially for new teachers).

Interviewee (L) No ECEC teacher engages in childcare practices to develop children's resilience. However, there are many cases in daily life where resilience is required.

• Assigning soccer teams or losing a game. Spinning tops. - I try to support children until they have a feeling of accomplishment. If they jumped five times with a skipping rope, I will say "you jumped as many as five jumps", instead of saying "you can only jump this much."

• If I think children can overcome difficulties alone, I will step back and watch over them. When they overcome it, I accept and praise them, while collaborating with other teachers. I thoroughly communicate the thoughts of the class teacher to floating ECEC teachers without a set class in charge. I am careful not to overlook opportunities for children to overcome on their own.

[Environment] My class has 22 children, and the other has 21 children (with a new ECEC teacher). One floating ECEC teacher (veteran) assists these classes and helps children who need attention.

**When do you feel you have built a relationship with children? Why do you think they can come back alone?:** I have known about half of the children in the class since they were four, which means I have known them for about two years, so it is something "instinctive." I can intuitively understand depending on the cause and degree. I want to help children nurture the ability to adjust their emotional gears in the two years. Children come back on their own with a happy smile. By the second semester, I scold children less frequently. The ability to accept the opinions of friends, the ability to understand the situations.

**There are children who are not good at communicating.—**I intentionally talk to them. Start asking from us. I do not speak for them. I help children acquire the ability to speak up for themselves.

**Is the perspective of bouncing back through “comprehending” or “understanding” used in daily childcare practices?—**If the teacher provides an answer first, children will lose the ability to think. I implicitly tell them the location of picture books or think

together about it. => I hope they are inspired to search for answers by themselves.

Interviewee (M) • Small steps: For children who strongly wish to do something, I observe them carefully and encourage them, and introduce their efforts to peers. In contrast, for children who don't want to do something that they feel they can't do, I tell them, "Don't worry; it doesn't matter whether you can do it or not. You are great because you continue making efforts." I always try to appreciate children's efforts, not just their success, no matter how small the efforts seem.

- Whenever I see children's success, no matter how small, I praise them for their efforts. I want them to feel they can do it if they try. I provide an environment where children can push themselves a little further and challenge something (and might accomplish it). I also arrange the locations of play activities in the classroom so that children can see their peers' efforts.

- Up to the second semester, we discussed approaches to develop children's activities and personal relationships by plotting where children play together on a floor map.

- 15-minute meeting: All kindergarten staff members, including part-time teachers, meet from 14:15 to 14:30 daily to ensure everyone is informed about children's conditions. We also discuss things to keep in mind for the next day, for example, what kind of environment we should prepare, what kind of considerations are needed for specific children, and so on. In particular, we share each child's progress (not only about resilience) with other teachers so that every teacher can encourage children's efforts, as necessary.

- Teachers' strategy to encourage children not to be afraid of making mistakes: There is no need to push them to do something they feel they can't do, so we wait until they feel they can try it. We strongly approve the child's effort when he/she tries it, even if he/she doesn't succeed, which will resonate to other children who see it. For example, even if his/her skipping does not look like a typical skip, we try to make the child feel satisfied with what he/she has done. For children with strong anxieties, we praise such children just by joining the activity, even if he/she just walks. In this way, we encourage children differently according to their situation.

Interviewee (N) • When I see children challenging something, I encourage them with positive words. I believe that by gaining confidence, children can develop the courage to challenge difficulties.

- Our facility offers various activities to help children experience new things, such as stilts, the traditional Japanese *Naruko* dance called *Yocchore*, relay races, and dodgeball games. By participating in these activities, children can learn to control emotions through the experience of winning or losing, which can enhance their resilience.

- For example, when children play games with rules, such as *Karuta* (Japanese card game), musical chairs, and arm wrestling, they will experience conflicted feelings and learn to accept and overcome the results of winning/losing and associated emotions.

- For example, we offer children in our recitals when we perform plays, opportunities for self-determination, while respecting their opinions and helping them learn to make compromises when others have different opinions.

•Initially, teachers support children and as they become older in 5-year-old classes, we gradually increase opportunities where children can independently think and act.

Interviewee (O)•If two children quarrel about something, I will carefully listen to each of their stories in front of both children. I will tell them, "Please let me know what happened." They would tell me, "I didn't like the way he/she did this," "I wanted to do it that way," etc. Then, I would say, "A wants to do it this way," and "B wants to do it that way," and lastly, ask them, "If you leave it as it is, you can't continue playing. What will you do next?" and think together. It would be ideal if they could discuss and solve the problem on their own, but most children need my help to settle their quarrels. So, I will intervene and think together about how to deal with it. I tell them, "Talk to your friend so he/she'll understand how you feel now." I also try to interact with them carefully with respect including watching out for their tone of voice and language.

•**Example of children's use of words and tone of voice:** Child A tends to call insulting names to friends, such as "You old hag!" so Child B gets angry, "How come you call me that?" resulting in a fight. When I asked them carefully what happened, Child A said, "I wanted to play in this way, but B wouldn't listen to me, so I felt angry." So, I tell Child A, "If you call B names like that, she will never understand how you feel." Some children are not good at choosing words, so I try to help such children communicate smoothly with friends, by saying, "I understand you were upset by this." and "Next time, what is a better way to tell her how you feel?" I interact with children so they can convey their feelings verbally.

•Other teachers also listen to each child's story when they quarrel and think together about how to solve the problems. If children seem to be able to discuss the problems by themselves, teachers will step back and warmly observe them until they find solutions.

•When I was in charge of the toddler class, I observed children's feelings carefully and spoke their feelings out loud for them saying, "You didn't want this, did you?" I believe that understanding what children dislike or feel wrong about and showing them that I fully understand such feelings is important.

•**Example of success:** The frequency of observing children fighting over one friend decreased compared to springtime. From the beginning, I continued telling children it is him/herself who chooses whom they want to play with or what they want to do. Since fall time, children gradually learned how to shift emotional gears. Children gradually learned how to communicate their thoughts to others. It is important for teachers to carefully listen to children's stories and understand their feelings.

•**Example of failure:** When I see the same kind of incidents happening repeatedly, I end up saying "Darn!". I cannot help showing my emotions out of patience. I sometimes feel I should be careful about my tone of voice and speech.

**Q6: Provided below are some scenarios related to the development of children's resilience.**

**Please select two or more scenarios out of the four, and tell us "how you would interact as a childcare worker," and "why would you do so?"**

**1) He/she was left out (he/she was not included in the group of friends).**

Interviewee (F) Selected scenario: 1

If a child feels upset by a friend's behavior, we will discuss the matter in class. When the incident occurs, I will listen to each child's story and solve the problem, but will share this incident in the classroom later on. Without disclosing the names, adults replay the incident in front of children and ask them how they feel and their opinions or emotions. We let all children in the classroom think, "What should you say to a friend if you want to play with him/her later, without leaving him/her out?" We encourage children to think about what they can do next time, such as telling teachers if they cannot tell friends. Children can understand the situation better by being recognized from others around them. => I think it is also important to let children know they have an environment where they have someone they can talk to.

Interviewee (G) Selected scenario: 1

Children tend to think he/she is left out of the group one-sidedly. However, the other child has his/her opinions and reasons. After hearing their reasons, I often find that being left out was just the outcome. I want children to develop the ability to think about others' situations and take action to understand their own situations. So, I would ask the rejected child, "Did you ask why they won't play with you?" If the child cannot ask alone, I will go with the child to ask. I will show understanding to the upsetting feeling of the rejected child, but the child may have interpreted the situation wrongly (the child thinks he is in an adversity, but the truth may be different). If the group of children rejected him/her because of their preference, I tell the rejected child to communicate his/her feelings clearly. If he/she can communicate properly, he/she can control his/her emotions as well.

Interviewee (H) Selected scenario: 1

- First, I would listen to what the children who rejected the child have to say. Then, I would let these children and the excluded child communicate their feelings to each other.
- I will provide an opportunity for children on both sides to communicate their feelings to each other.
- If they can't come to an agreement, I will ask other children to join the discussion.
- I try to avoid situations where adults just say "That is not right," to children. I want to nurture children's ability to empathize with other's feelings.

Interviewee (I) Selected scenario: 1

Five to six-year-old children are very clear about what they like and dislike. Although adults also have their likes and dislikes, it is necessary to teach the rejecting children how sad the child being left out feels. If a child comes to us and says he is left out of the group, I will ask the child about the situation. If the child fails to communicate sufficiently with other children, I will ask the child to go back and explain to the group what he wants to do. If the group still rejects the child, I usually accompany him and ask them why. I would also ask the rejecting children, if they were left out of the group like that child, how they would feel. If the rejecting children have a reason, such as "We want to play this game only with these members for this reason," then I will tell the excluded child about it. I

never say, "Why did you leave him out of the group? Let him join your group!"

Whether children or teachers take the above process depends on a case-by-case basis. Some children can explain reasonably. If not, teachers will intervene in solving the problem.

Interviewee (N) Selected scenario: 1

- For example, if one child doesn't want to play at that time, but the other wants to play. We need to understand such a situation first and interact according to the situation.

- Causes leading to exclude a child from the group may include, "differences in preference or choice of play," or "when a child wants to play with only one specific friend, but that friend wants to play with other children." Therefore, I try to assist each child in enjoying their playtime by understanding their different needs and preferences.

Interviewee (O) Selected scenario: 1

These cases actually happen sometimes. I will talk to the children once, but if the child is still left out of the group, I will talk to the excluded child so that he/she can move on to do something else rather than being possessed or stay with the child until he/she finds something else to play with.

There are cases where I understand why a child is rejected at that moment. For example, two children are making something using building blocks, and when it is just about to be complete, another child asks them, "Can I join?" I understand that because two children worked hard to create something, they want to finish it between the two. So, I will tell the child, "They are working hard to make it now, so let's ask them later. How about trying something else?" I will also ask the child, "Imagine if you were working hard to create something, and another friend asked you just before finishing, 'Let me in' and stole your moment, how would you feel?" Then, the child would understand the situation, saying, "I wouldn't like that." I try to give illustrative examples to help children better understand the feelings of others.

## **2) He/she had a fight with his/her friend.**

Interviewee (E) Selected scenario: 2

- First, I would let both children tell each other their say and let the other know how each feels. If they cannot come to terms with each other, I would suggest another solution and encourage the children to accept it. Furthermore, I would share children's emotions and feelings that caused the conflict and help them understand the feelings of each other.

- I try to teach children the importance of understanding and accepting the other's feelings.

- I (ECEC teachers) think we are encouraging children to gradually realize and understand the differences between themselves and others through their experiences.

- If children cannot stop fighting, I will teach them that they don't necessarily have to



stay together; they can be the one to choose.

- I tell children it is OK to act on their emotions, and I tell them to maintain self-respect in their interactions with friends.

Interviewee (G) Selected scenario: 2

This is the same as the case of a child being left out. The opponent child must have their say as well. When children are rejected by the group or quarrel with someone, they will be upset, to which I will show understanding, but will encourage children to take action. Realizing what one can do and finding out what the opponent must feel, he/she will consequently come to terms with him/herself. In this way, I help them nurture their ability to listen to others and communicate their own feelings.

Interviewee (I) Selected scenario: 2

In principle, I don't intervene in children's conflicts at the moment (I will accompany children who need help, but basically leave it to the children to solve on their own). Children may have things they don't want to be heard. When I ask children in a quarrel, "Do you need my help?" they would say, "Nope."

I don't want children to think they will be scolded if they quarrel. I want to respect each child's feelings. If they can solve problems independently, it will nurture their ability to compromise and adapt, which is the best solution.

At the beginning of the five-year old class, I told the children, "Try to solve conflicts by yourselves through conversation." However, I would intervene since they just spoke out their own opinions and would not concede, lacking the ability to solve problems on their own. I have maintained my stance from the beginning saying "I will intervene when necessary, but please try to solve conflicts on your own." Over time, as I intervened when needed, showing understanding in their emotions, but told them not to rely on me for every fight, children have gradually grown and developed the ability to solve problems independently.

- Suppose you let a group of children solve a problem by themselves. Is there any risk that a child with a loud voice will take leadership and quieter children will obey?: (Answer) I usually keep tabs on children's quarrels and ask these obedient children, "Are you really OK with this?" If they say OK, I would consider the conflict solved. If there is any concern about children's quarrels or hierarchical relationships, I ask children to discuss it in circle time (class discussion time), which is held in the morning and afternoon daily.

Interviewee (J) Selected scenario: 2

Not just relying on adults' impressions, I will listen carefully to both sides of the story and show sympathy and understanding. I will provide an opportunity for both children to sympathize with each other's feelings and accept them, get to know how they feel about each other. Once they accept the other's feelings, he/she can digest their feelings. I consciously make efforts to avoid quick judgments and make sure to listen to both sides. I will also tell the class about the conflict and that they accepted each others' feelings and apologies. When the child in conflict explains, I let the opposing child listen to him/her together. Depending on the situation, I tell all the children as a group at the time of the conflict or tell them separately later.

Interviewee (K) Selected scenario: 2

- I would talk with the children in conflict, which I believe is the most effective way to resolve the issue.
- I would share the conflicting situation with other peers and ask their opinions. This would enable other peers to join the conflicting children in finding a resolution to the problem. It is also an opportunity for other peers to reflect on how they would feel if they came in conflict with a friend and how the opposing friend might feel.
- Rather than teachers directly solving the problem, I place importance on making children think for themselves how to resolve their conflicts.
- After resolving the conflict, I would give feedback to them to help them understand that they solved it on their own.

Interviewee (L) Selected scenario: 2

I would listen to the children's reasons from both sides, think about the background together, and help them understand the opposing child's feelings, as young children often do not recognize others' feelings.

-I would explain the conflict to other children. When they become 5-6-year-olds, they may use harsh words, etc., something that may happen to anybody. Children's conflicts might involve 1) excluding one child from the group. If any incident happens that triggers a discussion with all children, we will all gather in a circle and discuss about it. The purpose is not to blame children, but to listen to the opinions of other children and help them reflect on their behaviors. If these children encounter a similar scene, they may recall this discussion.

-Because they are getting close to elementary school age, they can develop the ability of self-control. > I try to encourage children to solve problems by themselves according to their age and timing.

Interviewee (M) Selected scenario: 2

First, I would ask each child why they fought. Each one must have their own reason. Because young children tend to think self-centeredly, I would let them know the feelings of both sides but would not expect them to understand each other. Unless one of them is obviously wrong or I need to draw a line between right and wrong and intervene, if they fight simply because they have different opinions, I may explain what the other is thinking but will not intervene further. I carefully observe whether both children understand and accept each other.

For young children, it isn't easy to understand that others' way of thinking differs from theirs. Young children tend to think self-centered; it would be meaningless to make both children superficially say to each other "I'm sorry," "I forgive you." "I'm sorry" may be unnecessary in some cases. It does not have to end in an "ideal" way. I would end the intervention by saying, "I understand what A and B, both of you want to say very well." Sometimes, children end up making up again within ten minutes. If adults intervene too much, children will apologize for the sake of teachers. I don't think this is right. Children will make a heartless apology. Children sometimes just need someone (a teacher) to listen to their complaints, and then they might start playing again.

Interviewee (N) Selected scenario: 2

- (In the case of 5-6-year-olds) First, I would take the *mimamoru* approach (watch without intervention) and then talk with them.
- I would listen carefully to both sides of the conflicting children's stories, to deepen my understanding. By hearing each story in front of both children, I provide an opportunity for them to reflect on the other's perspective.
- ECEC teachers will intervene from a neutral stance when children come into conflict, helping them understand each other's feelings and solve the problem.
- I would not solely blame the child who hit or the child who was hit. I try to understand the background or reason why they did so.
- If they cannot explain their feelings well, I will ask them what they didn't like or what they wanted the other child to do, and help them communicate their feelings appropriately.

**3) A person in a close relationship with him/her moved away (his/her favorite teacher, a close friend, etc.)**

Interviewee(H)Selected scenario: 3

- It is crucial to demonstrate empathy towards children's sadness and listen to their stories. By doing so, children can feel that their emotions are acknowledged, which can help them gain the confidence to overcome the experience.
- I will suggest ways to stay connected with the leaving friend, such as sending a letter to the friend. In this way, children can feel connected to each other even though they are far apart.
- I will talk with the children about "What he/she might be doing now." We will recall and share happy moments together. I will show my sympathy to children and support cherishing positive memories.
- I will encourage children with positive words like "You will see your friend again someday." This will help children have hope and helps them overcome the current situation.

Interviewee (J) Selected scenario: 3

Separation from a friend - I will show understanding to the child's feeling that he/she wanted to play more with the friend and how he/she will miss him/her. Hoping the child can digest his/her feelings, I will ask the class what we can do. If they suggest writing a letter or drawing a picture and sending it to the leaving friend, I will help them fulfill their suggestion. I let children exchange ideas and think about it. If it is possible to have a farewell party, I will encourage the child to tell the leaving friend that the child liked him/her so much to alleviate the loss in his/her heart.

Not only the child who was close to the leaving friend, do you take care of other children

in a group? - If there is a child who is particularly sad, I will ask all children to discuss "what we can do to help."

Interviewee (K) Selected scenario: 3

- When a child is upset about losing a friend, I would gently talk with the child and support their feelings.
- I would encourage the child to actively participate in group play and activities with other peers. This way, the child who was isolated will expand his/her circle of friends and have a better opportunity to make new friends.
- Other peers cared for the child whose close friend had moved away by actively inviting the child to join their play. As a result, the child could build a relationship with these peers with whom the child rarely played before.
- The child could take this opportunity as a positive experience in building broader relationships with other children.

**4) An upsetting incident occurred at home (he/she was scolded by his/her parents, parents had a fight, the atmosphere at home is negative, etc.)**

Interviewee (E) Selected scenario: 4

- If a child had an upsetting experience, I would first listen to the child's story and try to understand his/her feelings.
- After hearing why the child was scolded, instead of criticizing him/her, I would tell that the ECEC teachers always stand by him/her so that the child would feel secure.
- I would tell the child that ECEC teachers always secure a safe place for him/her even when the child does something wrong.
- I hold back saying "You were also wrong," and give priority to accept the child's feelings first.

Interviewee (F) Selected scenario: 4

-At the daycare center, children behave differently the following day or during the week when they cannot receive enough affection from their parents due to busy work. These children are easily irritated or demand affection (such as playing close to ECEC teachers). => I ask their parents what happened. By showing understanding to the situation, I respond to children who demand affection. If children have trouble over minor things, I will talk to them gently, since these children sometimes react to negative words. If children rarely receive praise at home, I will respond to their demand for affection at the daycare center and observe them carefully through their parents.

**-Can you recognize a lack of affection at home?:** Quite noticeable. Some parents cannot stay home at night due to working conditions, such as night shifts (nurses). Such parental absence at night is a serious issue for children. I tell parents about their children's conditions without denying the nature of their work. We understand that the mothers also

want their stories to be heard, and that it can't be helped because they are busy. Accepting these circumstances, I do believe communicating with the parents is difficult.

**-Do you think it is essential to work together with parents to nurture children's resilience?:** It is absolutely necessary. I believe that I should inform parents about children's conflicts at the daycare center, so trust in the teacher-parent relationship is also crucial. When children reach the age of five-year-old class, children get better at speaking, and each child has their reasons when something happens. So, I tell parents whatever I think necessary. At the beginning of the new school year, I obtain consent from parents that there may be times when I will have to mention specific names to other parents when trouble occurs. Sometimes children's version of the incident may be contradicting, so it is important that teachers explain the situation in advance for parents to understand. Then, parents can listen and respond to what children say, which is very important. Children can develop their abilities by receiving praise from not only ECEC teachers but also from parents. I mainly tell parents about the positive progress of children. To nurture children's resilience, building a relationship between teachers and parents is important.

Interviewee (L) Selected scenario: 4

First, I should accept the child's feelings. Can teachers intervene in family matters? I sometimes talk with his/her parents. It is necessary to understand and sympathize with the child's feelings. In the case of our kindergarten, parents come to drop off/pick up children so we can talk with parents directly every day.

**-Do children tell you about their family matters?:** Children often tell me about conflicts with siblings. Since I am not aware of the situation, I approach them by just accepting their stories.

Interviewee (M) Selected scenario: 4

• This is a complex issue. It depends on how badly the child is suffering. It may be the child's fault. It depends on whether the child can tell the teacher about it or show that something happened. In our daily 15-minute meeting after dismissal, we sometimes hear about a child who shows unusual behaviors, looks depressed or unhappy, behaves strangely when separating from the parent in the morning, etc. Because we cannot have an in-depth discussion with the child, we try to read between the lines. Seek reasons why the child is behaving strangely today. Since the problem is sensitive, it is not easy to ask parents directly. So, we need to seek the best approach carefully.

• Since parents drop off and pick up children at the kindergarten, we meet them face-to-face every day. This means we can communicate with children's parents daily. If parents are insecure, their child cannot exert him/herself at kindergarten. We encourage and praise the child for small things and have physical contact with the child more often to make the child feel comfortable.

Interviewee (O) Selected scenario: 4

• I actually see such children sometimes. They come to daycare feeling down in the morning, because they were scolded by their mother for minor reasons, such as not being allowed to wear their favorite clothes or watch TV. I try not to urge them to explain; instead, I gently ask in casual conversation, "What made you sad? Why did you have a

fight? "As they talk to me, children will gradually recover from their upsetting feelings. I show sympathy to them and tell them, "But I also understand why your mother said so" (as I have two children). Then I make suggestions, such as "How about making her promise?" or "How about deciding what to wear the day before?" They will agree with my suggestions. In this way, I make sure children can shift their mood and enjoy spending time at daycare.

**Q7: How do you measure/assess/evaluate children's achievement in resilience?**

**Are there any assessment tools to acknowledge children's achievement in resilience? What are the contents of the assessment tool? (Please answer if possible)**

Interviewee (E)• We don't use any specific assessment tools.

I evaluate taking in consideration the following standards:

- The speed of shifting emotions (the ability of children to quickly shift their emotions by themselves)
- The ability to learn from successful and unsuccessful experiences (by accumulating successful experiences, children can learn to overcome failures and shift their emotions after they fail)
- Taking in consideration the personal characteristics of each child (some children can naturally shift emotional gears quickly, while others may struggle due to their aspirations or competitiveness)

Interviewee (F)-I have not been concerned about evaluations. Each child shifts their emotional gears in their own way. Some show potential for developing this skill, while others maintain their own comfortable pace or are slow. Some children act at their own pace when they join group activities, so if I compare them differences can be noticed in their developmental pace. However, since I usually pay little attention to such differences, assessing seems difficult.

**- "Each child differs in shifting emotional gears." - What are the characteristics of children who quickly switch moods?:**

As personality qualities, calm children with moderate emotional swings can easily shift their emotions. Compared to other children, I think they can switch faster. However, it is difficult, because some children whose emotional swings are intense also switch their feelings quickly.

**- Do you use any tools or methodologies, such as childcare notes?:** Our daycare center holds a case study meeting for assessments once a month. We will pick up one example case of concerned behaviors we noticed in class. While considering the developmental progress of the concerned child, we discuss the concerning behavior and seek support methods with other colleagues. We also coordinate time for a child development specialist to come in to observe concerned children and conduct assessments with the specialist.

-The leaders in charge of each age-class gather and discuss support methods for the respective children in that class. At the beginning of the following month, we have time to discuss the outcome of the preceding month. We have created a cycle of assessments.

Interviewee (G)•I observe and make notes on children’s activities daily. Distinguish facts from my interpretation. I try to eliminate as much as possible teacher’s one-sided notions and biases.

•Our kindergarten has unique educational guidelines regarding children’s qualities and competencies. It is finely designed in detail with about 40 items. These guidelines were jointly created with elementary school as the basis of our educational curriculums, with more detailed guidance than the government’s educational guidelines: “Ten items describing characteristics of how children are desired to grow up by the end of early childhood.” Based on these guidelines, we set ideal qualities and competencies for each year of three-year-old to five-year-old class children. We evaluate children’s “ability to manage emotions” based on the goals of the educational guidelines.

Interviewee (H)•We don’t use any specific assessment tools.

I consider the following standards:

•I reflect on children’s progress in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd semesters and assess their growth based on childcare notes.

(Examples)

•A child who was initially crying and clinging to his/her mother when he/she started to attend kindergarten can now stand alone without clinging to his/her mother over time.

•Last May on sports day, a girl was unable to demonstrate her physical abilities and ended up crying and clinging to her mother. However, on a Parents’ Day in the 3rd semester, the same girl was able to bounce back on her own even though she struggled to spin tops well.

Interviewee (I)The assessment criteria will be based on how a child handles the same situation differently from the previous time. For example, when the child comes in conflict with the same child again, even if they could not compromise with each other the last time, they could solve the problem themselves or amenably admit they were wrong this time. Such changes indicate their growth.

Interviewee (J)-We don't take statistics on children's achievements, but I reflect on the progress of children compared to their status at the beginning of the school year in April and share such progress with my colleagues. At a staff meeting, I report the developmental progress of individual children, suggest their issues, and receive advice from others to share their growth.

-We don't have standards for children's specific skills, but we have documents. We determine goals and challenges for each semester and reflect on progress at the end of each semester. We also share the results at a staff meeting.

**-We document children's progress notes through the four semesters:** We reflect on children's progress at the beginning of enrollment (spring), until summer, until winter, and at the end of each school year. We reflect on the progress of each child.。

**-Besides resilience, what goals are written in the document?:** For children whose daily rhythm is not well regulated, advice should be given to their parents to change to an early-bird lifestyle. Thorough guidance should be given to children's lifestyle habits.

**-Is there anything you focus on regarding children's qualities and competencies?:** The ability to communicate with their own words, express themselves to others, act independently, consider and understand others' feelings, compromise and cooperate, and value themselves.

Interviewee (K) • We don't use any specific assessment tools.

I consider the following standards to determine children's progress:

• **Comparison of the past and current status of the child:** When evaluating children's resilience, I don't compare the child with others; but with his/her past.

• **Observation of behavior and growth:** I observe changes in children's behaviors as an indicator of their growth. For example, if a child who couldn't speak out his/her opinion could do so now, or if a child who used to play alone could play with other children now, I consider this as their growth.

• **Notes:** I document children's growth and their achievement status of goals by taking daily notes and year-end documents. With these documents, I track and evaluate children's growth specifically.

• **Sharing information with colleagues:** I talk about children's growth and behaviors with other colleagues to share and understand the situation of each child. I believe we can provide appropriate support for children through this sharing of information.

Interviewee (L) • **Childcare notes:** Although not every day, I write down what children said or their growth. I share them with other ECEC teachers, but we don't use assessment tools, etc.

**-When do you recognize children's development progress?:** During children's free play time, when I see they are able to do something that they could not do before. Therefore, careful observation is necessary.

Interviewee (M) • Personal notes: It is up to each teacher how to keep notes, and is not something the kindergarten does as a facility. I keep a notebook and write down the details about each child per page. It is helpful when I have interviews with children's parents. In addition, it helps me observe children's progress and growth by comparing the status of children in April/May with their present status. I also use the note to write a cumulative guidance record (a document compiling the process of the child's growth, their behavior, and the support provided in their daily lives at the facility, which will be passed on to elementary school, etc.).

Interviewee (N) • There are no specific assessment tools.

I consider the following standards to determine children's progress:

• I am able to identify children's developmental progress and growth through their behaviors and speech patterns.

• I recognize children's growth when I see, for example, that they give way to their friends



or that they can think positively, "I might succeed next time," after experiencing a failure or setback.

- Children can enhance their resilience by learning the importance of overcoming failures (for example, when they succeed in walking on the stilts, and share their joy with their friends and ECEC teachers).

- The way resilience manifests varies depending on children's age. Younger children find happiness by themselves, while older children can find great joy in sharing such happiness with friends, which will enhance their confidence.

Interviewee (O) • There are no assessment sheets, but I can realize children's steady growth by observing them daily since springtime. For example, some children become more capable of listening to other children or communicate their thoughts or feelings in their own words.

- I recognize the growth of each child through daily observation, but at large, I try to recognize the growth of children as a group.

#### **Q8: Do you give feedback to parents of their children's achievement in resilience?**

##### **If so, what kind of feedback do you give? (Please answer if possible)**

Interviewee (E) • I place importance on sharing children's small growth and development with their parents, and taking joy in it together.

- Rather than focusing on achievements like being able to do a pullover on a bar or craft something skillfully, I talk about children's progress when they have overcome challenges that they could not do previously.

- Nowadays, parents are more concerned about whether their children can get along with friends and communicate their feelings to friends without being violent. So, I try to provide detailed updates on these aspects.

Interviewee (F) - If children have trouble with friends, I will explain the situation to their parents in detail. I try not to overlook children's reasons and tell these reasons to their parents. If a child causes injury to a friend, I will tell his/her parents, "I have discussed this thoroughly with your child, so just listening to him/her at home will be fine." Being told what he/she was told at daycare at home again will probably be annoying for children, so I try to avoid recurring situations at home.

- I tell all the children in the classroom about someone's good practices, such as picking up rubbish, tidying up the bookshelf, etc. Children who do such a practice also feel happy if they are mentioned. I also show good practice by being a role model for children and children sometimes imitate it.

- I think self-esteem is also important. Even at training sessions, self-esteem often becomes a topic. Cooperation with parents is also important. By ensuring the understanding of parents, we nurture children's self-esteem. For children of every age, self-esteem relies on parent-child attachment. Children who receive sufficient praise and encouragement

from parents and grow up freely are calm. Because they have secure attachment, their expression is calm. Taking care of children's mental health is necessary.

-(How do you feed back to parents about children's positive progress and growth?) When children can accomplish something new or something they are not good at, I tell their parents about it in front of children, explaining it in detail by mentioning specific examples comparing the children's state in the preceding year. Children feel happy when they are praised. They show a delighted expression on their face. So, I try to tell parents about children's good practices, achievements, and growth in front of children, telling specific examples so as to share a sense of fulfillment with children. This will also enhance children's self-esteem.

Interviewee (G) • I conduct a private interview with parents (one interview with one parent per day) after dismissal. During the interview, I will explain their children's progress based on specific episodes, in line with the kindergarten qualities and competencies guidelines mentioned above.

- We also conduct a parents meeting for all five-year-old classes. I will ask parents to bring the educational curriculum for three years, which I provided them in advance. Then, I will explain children's progress and targeted competencies based on the corresponding month and year of children described in the curriculum. I will tell parents which development stage their children have reached, saying, for example, "Your child is around here."

- I also post documentations on the kindergarten's website. It will describe children's daily activities and the skills they exerted in these activities in an easy-to-understand format. At the end of the post, I show "the learning observed in this play," based on the qualities and competencies guideline.

- In the latter half of the five-year-old class, I often hear from parents at private interviews, "I thought my child was not mature to be able to control emotions but am surprised he/she properly acquired the targeted skills as shown in the guidelines." I feel glad parents resolved their concerns and recognized their child's progress in learning.

- What is the advantage of involving parents?: (Answer) Explanations at parents' meetings are not enough for parents to truly understand because they are intangible. That's why we prepared a list of goals as a curriculum and the qualities and competencies guidelines to make it visible. With this approach, just as teachers, parents can interact with children in a more conscientious way. It becomes clear by verbalizing it. When this understanding is shared between the kindergarten and parents, it makes it much easier for us to communicate. Sharing how parents interact at home and how teachers do at kindergarten facilitates smooth communications. In this way, we can be on the same page to support children's development.

Interviewee (H) • I can talk with parents daily since they come to the kindergarten to drop off/pick up children.

- When I encounter mothers who appear concerned about their children feeling anxious, I take the time to explain the child's anxious situation in detail. I also tell the parents how we support them at kindergarten and what to expect for their future growth, and talk to them in an encouraging tone.

- Whenever there is a story to tell about the children, I will report it to their mothers on the same day so they can feel the children's growth.

- I believe working with parents can enhance children's growth.

(Example)

A child who was not good at speaking in front of people volunteered as the moderator for a kindergarten birthday party and performed excellently.

Interviewee (I) I don't give feedback to all parents about all children, just to those with noticeable children (for example, when a child who usually speaks harshly or causes trouble shows improvements). Because parents of such children worry about them, I try to let them know their positive progress. Giving feedback to parents of problematic children is a sensitive matter, because family environments and parental use of language largely affect such children. I also report to parents when I recognize the growth and development of children, such as the ability to challenge difficult things (how they handle in their own way to overcome things they were not good at).

Interviewee (J)-When parents come to the daycare center to pick up/drop off their children daily, I share with them the children's growth, issues, and try to pick up the parents' feelings toward their children through small talk. I will think together how to support their children.

-I display children's photos taken during childcare activities on the wall, so their parents can see children's expressions and what they were doing. I also put a note describing children's goals and accomplishments in childcare so that parents know their children's growth.

-I have a meeting with every parent once or twice a year. I set about 15 minutes for each meeting to discuss children's progress.

**-How do you talk to parents when they come to drop off/pick up children?:** I decide who to talk to considering their situation. Depending on the situation, we discuss things. (There are 18 pupils in one class, with one ECEC teacher and one child development assistant in charge.)

**-When you compare each child's progress when children are in the stage of developing resilience, do you find any individual differences?:** Children who need support show a stronger ego and obsession than other children. If they cannot do what they want to do, they cannot take the next step. These children need persistent support.

**-Do you share children's progress with other ECEC teachers?:** It is difficult for all staff members to know of every child, but we share such information through documents on a classroom basis as well as with senior ECEC teachers and other teachers not in charge of a class. We also share information on children who need attention.

Interviewee (K)•I create and distribute digital documentation describing children's activities and growth (introducing, for example, children's efforts to prepare for a recital and what abilities they are fostering using photos and texts) for parents.

- Every month, the class teacher creates a portfolio for each child using photos and text. These portfolios are given to parents to help them understand what their children have

done and how they made progress during the month.

- We make sure children's growth (something that moved their heart) in everyday activities are promptly informed to their parents by phone, email or mobile applications.

Interviewee (L) When parents come to drop off /pick up their child, I tell the parents what happened today as well as the progress of the entire class. I happily share each child's good practices, challenges, etc., to parents. I praise their child. Parents feel happy to hear such praise.

- I also tell parents if their child were in a conflict and felt sad.
- Through handouts or newsletter, I let parents know about what we value in kindergarten, such as examples where children created the rules by themselves by accepting other friends' opinions and giving way, which worked out very well.
- Our kindergarten hosts a parent-teacher meeting about twice each semester, where the director reports on the kindergarten's initiatives and the children's growth and issues.
- Private meetings with parents are held twice a year (April and December).

**-Do you praise children in front of them?:** I try to tell parents the progress of their children in front of them.

**-Does involving parents facilitate children's development of resilience? Is it necessary?:** Parents only see their child at home. They cannot see how their child behaves in a group. If a child cannot verbally express him/herself through interactions with friends, I sometimes tell the parents about the importance of their role in the child's growth such as waiting for the child to talk, or not helping them with everything.

Interviewee (M) • Because we see parents daily, it is ideal to give them feedback as timely as possible. We explain children's achievements with a concrete episode, such as what children did today and what they accomplished. In this way, we share delightful news with parents.

- Kindergarten events and classroom visits. Children who used to cry their eyes out at events when they were three years old will participate through the whole event at five. We tell parents about their children's progress promptly and in detail.

• **Why parents' involvement is necessary to nurture children's resilience:** Because we do not have specific opportunities to report the details of children's development, we mention in our monthly classroom newsletter the importance of children's efforts to overcome problems independently. We also encourage parents in this newsletter to let children do some home activities that can enhance their self-esteem, such as helping parents with housework. Since most parents are education-conscious, they thoroughly read this letter. Then, we ask the parents about what we mentioned, "How is your child doing at home?" We cannot deny failure-avoidant feelings that parents have, but we often write in the newsletter, "It is important to have a spirit of challenge." Our current agenda is to convey to parents how children grow and develop skills through various play activities.

Interviewee (N) • I try to tell parents about their children's daily activities and growth in detail whenever I see them face to face, such as when they drop off/pick up their children.

- I share the joy of children's growth and happiness in achieving new things with their parents. I also directly show parents their children's efforts and progress on occasions such as seasonal events and parents' days.

- The understanding and support of parents is crucial. I think interactions with parents have a significant impact on children. Encouragement and praise from parents can boost children's confidence and further motivation.

Interviewee (O) • When children have conflicts and could not resolve the problem or return home with mixed feelings from the conflict, they will tell their mother about it. When mothers have only heard from their child; some will come to us and ask what has happened. Thus, I explain the children's conflicts to them. If it took time to solve the quarrel between children, or if a child could step aside and let others do or communicate their feelings to others, I would tell their parents about it. I would say, "Your child was great today in XX," "It took some time to solve the trouble he/she had today. He/she might tell you about it today, so please listen to him/her warmly." I can talk with parents directly when they come to the daycare center to drop off/pick up their children (sometimes I cannot because of staggered work shifts).

- I hope children resolve problems before leaving the daycare center and return home happily. Most times, they can solve problems before going back home. If it took time to solve problems, or the quarreled child looks unhappy, I will tell their parents about it. I try to solve conflicts between children at the daycare center as much as possible. Still, some children might want to talk about it with their parents, so explaining to their mothers what happened in advance will help mothers discuss it with their children at home. I hope children spend time happily at home without worrying about the problems at daycare. But at the same time, if their parents can listen to their child's unhappy feelings, children's unhappiness will be dissolved, and they can shift their emotional gears to move on.