

# [CRNA Collaborative Research] Survey on Childcare Practices Nurturing Resilience in Children 2024

## Result Report

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## 1 - 1 Background and Purpose

### Objectives of this Report

Since its establishment in 2016, CRNA (Child Research Network Asia) has held various collaborative activities to achieve the well-being of children, with researchers from eight Asian countries and regions. As the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the world, CRNA initiated a survey focusing on the resilience of children. Resilience is an essential ability needed to overcome the adversity of being restricted from a normal social life due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to navigate through uncertain and unpredictable times even after the pandemic subsides, and to bounce back from and move forward through the everyday challenges and conflicts. CRNA has continued its research consistently focusing on the theme "Nurturing Children's Resilience."

Resilience is said to be one of the social-emotional skills (non-cognitive skills). While there are various definitions, the core concept is "the ability to adapt successfully despite adversity/difficulty" and "the ability to bounce back from adversities and difficulties" (Masten, 1990; Oshio et al., 2021).

In 2021, CRNA conducted the "Survey on Children's Daily Life among 8 Asian Countries 2021" on mothers in eight countries and regions, and found that a child's resilience was strongly associated with their well-being in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Results also showed that support from parents and childcare facilities (ECEC teachers) was an important factor associated with children's resilience.

As a follow-up study, CRNA then conducted an interview survey on ECEC teachers titled "Survey on Childcare Practices Nurturing Resilience in Children 2024" in eight countries and regions in 2023-2024 to identify how children's resilience is nurtured in childcare facilities. Results showed that there are countries that recognize the importance of the concept of resilience and consciously implement activities to nurture it, while some countries implement efforts to nurture resilience inherent in their practices, even if the teachers are not quite familiar with the term. It was also found that understanding of the concept of resilience and approaches varied among ECEC teachers, even within the same country.

This report presents the results of the "Survey on Childcare Practices Nurturing Resilience in Children 2024." We aim to offer insights on how to interact with children effectively. Our research findings will benefit not only educational practitioners working with young children in early childhood education and childcare settings but also parents and educators in elementary schools and beyond.

- Please see [p.3](#) for a detailed explanation on the concept of resilience.

#### (References)

Masten, A. S., Best, K. M., & Garmezy, N. (1990). Resilience and development: Contributions from the study of children who overcome adversity. *Development and Psychopathology*, 2(4), 425-444. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579400005812>

Oshio, S., Hirano, M., & Ueno, Y. (Eds.). (2021). *Rejiriensu no shinrigaku* [The Psychology of Resilience]. Kaneko Shobo.

### Researches Conducted by CRNA

Research Theme	Nurturing Children's Resilience	
	2021	2023-24
Name of Survey	Survey on Children's Daily Life among 8 Asian Countries 2021	Survey on Childcare Practices Nurturing Resilience in Children 2024
Subjects and Number of Valid Response	Mothers with children aged 5: 1,973 Mothers with children aged 7: 1,372	Preliminary Survey: 45 Principals and senior teachers Main Survey: 82 ECEC teachers mainly in charge of 4 to 6-year-olds
Survey Method	Questionnaire survey	Interview survey
Survey Period	Aug. to Nov. 2021	Preliminary Survey: Sept. to Oct. 2023 Main Survey: Dec. 2023 to Feb. 2024

This report presents the results of the survey conducted in 2024.

- Please see the following webpage for details on the survey conducted in 2021.  
<https://www.childresearch.net/crna-research-activities-2021.html>
- In this report, references, citations, and analyses are made based on the country reports and case reports provided by the collaborative researchers from the eight countries/regions.





## 1 - 2 Outline of the Survey

### What is Resilience?

The "operational definition" of resilience differs according to researchers and is studied from various perspectives. In this study, resilience is defined as follows and the diagram below was shown during the interview.

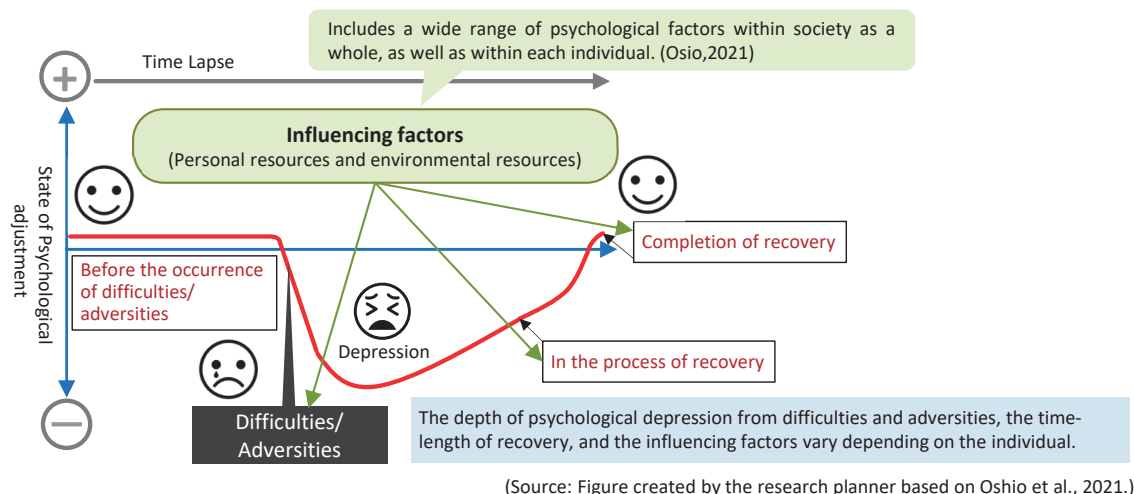
**Description of the core concept of "resilience"** (Masten, 1990; Oshio et al., 2021)

- Ability to adapt successfully despite adversity/difficulty
- Ability to bounce back from adversities and difficulties

**For reference: Social-emotional skills related to the concept of resilience**

Emotional regulation, self-control, engaging with others, etc.

Figure 1-2-1 A Process of Psychological Adjustment in Resilient Individuals (Example)



#### When does resilience help?

- To overcome and survive adversities such as the COVID-19 pandemic
- To navigate through uncertain and unpredictable times
- To bounce back from and move forward through everyday challenges and conflicts

### Overview of Survey

<b>Survey Theme</b>	Nurturing Children's Resilience: Discussing from ECEC Teachers' Childcare Practices in Asian Countries
<b>Research Questions</b>	1. How the terms "resilience" and "social-emotional skills" are perceived and understood by ECEC teachers 2. What the efforts and practices by ECEC teachers in nurturing children's resilience are
<b>Countries/regions</b>	Japan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand
<b>Survey Method</b>	Interview survey (Semi-structured online interview)
<b>Survey Period</b>	Preliminary Survey: September to October 2023 Main Survey: December 2023 to February 2024
<b>Subjects</b>	Preliminary Survey: Principals and senior teachers (4-8 per country, 45 in total) Main Survey: ECEC teachers mainly in charge of 4 to 6-year-olds (approx. 10 per country, 82 in total)
<b>Survey Items</b>	Preliminary Survey: Perception and understanding of the terms "resilience" and "social-emotional skills" / Efforts and practices implemented at the facility to nurture "resilience" and "social-emotional skills," etc. Main Survey: Perception and understanding of the terms "resilience" and "social-emotional skills" / Perception of what "difficulties" or "adversities" would be for 4-6-year-olds / Efforts and practices implemented at the facility to nurture resilience / Interaction in designated scenarios related to resilience, etc.* *Scenarios: Respondents were asked to select and respond to how he/she would interact as a childcare worker to at least two out of the four scenarios relevant to resilience. 1) A child is left out; 2) He/she had a fight with his/her friend; 3) A person in a close relationship with him/her moved away; 4) An upsetting incident occurred at home

- The "Survey on Childcare Practices Nurturing Resilience in Children 2024" includes both the Preliminary Survey and Main Survey. However, this report only presents the results of the main survey.
- The subjects of the Main Survey were "ECEC teachers mainly in charge of 4 to 6-year-olds," but the results of some countries also include administrators such as principals.

## 1 - 3 Introduction of CRNA / Research Representatives

### About Child Research Network Asia (CRNA)

CRNA, which conducted this research, is a network of researchers from Asian countries operated by Child Research Net (CRN). It engages in research activities aimed at solving social issues surrounding children in Asia from the perspective of "Child Science." The network consists of eight countries and regions: Japan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand.

Among the members that comprise CRNA, the representatives of this research from each country and region are introduced below.

### Director of This Research



#### Yoichi Sakakihara (Japan)

Professor Emeritus of Ochanomizu University, Director of Child Research Net, Executive Advisor of Benesse Educational Research and Development Institute (BERD), President of Japanese Society of Child Science.

Specializes in pediatric neurology, developmental neurology, in particular, treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Asperger's syndrome and other developmental disorders, and neuroscience.

### Representatives from Asian Countries and Regions in This Research



#### Tomomi Sato (Japan)

Professor, Aichi Shukutoku University. She specializes in educational technology, early childhood education and care, communication within the family, and learning environment design.



#### Thelma Mingoa (Philippines)

Assistant professor, De La Salle University. Her research interest includes Special Education, Gifted Education, and Early Childhood Education.



#### Nianli Zhou (China)

Professor, East China Normal University. Specializes in child development, parent-child relationship, evaluation of multiple intelligence and child-rearing planning for children aged 0-3 years.



#### Christine Chen (Singapore)

President, Association for Early Childhood Educators (Singapore). She has been advocating for professional development of EC educators for the well-being of children and their families for over thirty years.



#### Sofia Hartati (Indonesia)

Professor, State University of Jakarta. She is qualified as a lecturer of Early Childhood Education, a researcher in early childhood of social skill spectrum.



#### Fu Tsai Hung (Taiwan)

Professor, National Taipei University of Education (NTUE). His research and teaching interests involve the policy and working system of ECEC in Taiwan, the well-being of early childhood professionals, along with others.



#### Mazlina Che Mustafa (Malaysia)

Associate Professor, Sultan Idris Education University (SIEU). Her research interests include children's well-being, quality early childhood care and education (ECCE), child development, along with others.



#### Sasilak Khayankij (Thailand)

Associate Professor, Chulalongkorn University. Her areas of interest include Parent Education, Special Education, aesthetic experiences, and assessment for young children.

- Japan is listed first as the lead research team, followed by China and the other countries in alphabetical order.



## 1 - 4 Attributes of Respondents

### Attributes of Respondents from Each Country or Region

	Number of Respondents	Title			Years of experience		Type of facility			Note
		ECEC teachers (Class teacher)	Leaders (Principals, Managers etc.)	Others	Less than 10 years	10 years or over	Public	Private	Others	
Japan	11	11	0	0	5	6	7	3	1	• The facility in "Others" is a national childcare facility. • Two private facilities provide inclusive childcare.
China	10	5	5	0	2	8	9	1	0	
Indonesia	9	4	5	0	3	6	2	4	3	• The facilities in "Others" are religious childcare facilities.
Malaysia	7	7	0	0	0	7	2	4	1	• The facility in "Others" is a religious childcare facility.
Philippines	15	15	0	0	8	7	5	10	0	
Singapore	9	6	3	0	2	7	5	4	0	
Taiwan	10	10	0	0	2	8	6	4	0	• 3 facilities provide Montessori education.
Thailand	11	5	2	4	2	8	4	7	0	• Title classified as "Others" are special activity teacher (play), physical education teacher, etc.

- The "Survey on Childcare Practices Nurturing Resilience in Children 2024" includes both the preliminary survey and main survey. However, this report only presents the results of the main survey.
- The table above indicates the attributes of respondents from the main survey.
- The researchers from each country were requested to interview "ECEC teachers mainly in charge of 4 to 6-year-olds," but the results of some countries also include administrators such as principals.
- In China, all case studies were conducted in county-level cities.
- In Thailand, the survey was conducted at private facilities implementing Waldorf, Montessori, High Scope, or Project Approach, etc., and public facilities working in a lead or best practice.

### Notes Regarding the Respondents

- This research used the case-study method.
- Target childcare facilities were selected using snowball sampling by the representative researchers of each country.
- The researchers from each country were asked to cover different types of facilities available in their country (such as public and private, kindergartens and daycare centers, religious-based, and so forth).



## The National Curriculum Guidelines for ECEC

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. The autonomous activities of children have always been highly valued in ECEC in Japan, which was basically provided through ECEC environments. While inheriting the aforementioned 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.

## How Resilience and Relevant Social-Emotional Skills Are Addressed Within the Curriculum Guideline

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.

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."

### 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

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 of morality and normative consciousness" involves "controlling one's feelings and compromise with friends."



## Key Points of the Research Results in Japan

### (1) Perception and Understanding of the Terms "Social-Emotional Skills" and "Resilience"

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.

### (2) Practices and Activities Implemented at ECEC Facilities to Nurture "Resilience"

Many 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.



## 2 - 2 China



## The Current Policy Orientation of Preschool Education in China

Since the Chinese government advocated for the popularization of preschool education in 2010, it has gone through the stage of "universal access and quality" and is now entering a critical moment of pursuing high quality. High quality preschool education refers to providing universal and high-quality preschool education to all preschool children, making them the successors of socialist construction with comprehensive development in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor. While advocating for more equitable preschool education, more attention has also been paid to the physical and mental health development as well as social development of preschool children.

## The Spirit of Documents Related to Social Emotional Skills and Resilience

The "Guidelines for Learning and Development of 3-6 Year-Old Children" issued by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2012 clearly states that the learning and development process of young children in the social field is a process of continuously improving their sociality and laying a sound foundation for their personality. Interpersonal communication and social adaptation are the main contents of young children's social learning, and also the basic ways for their social development. To promote the mental health development of young children, emphasis is placed on creating a warm and relaxed psychological environment, allowing them to develop a sense of security and trust. Families, kindergartens, and society should work together to create a warm, caring, and equal family and collective living atmosphere for young children, establish good parent-child relationships, teacher-student relationships, and peer relationships, so that young children can gain a sense of security and trust in positive and healthy interpersonal relationships, and develop confidence and self-esteem. It also emphasized the need to help young children learn how to express and regulate their emotions appropriately. Encourage young children to share their emotions with others, allow them to express their emotions, and provide appropriate guidance. When children are unhappy, actively inquire about the situation and help them resolve negative emotions.

The "Guidelines for Quality Assessment of Preschool Care Education" issued by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2022 states that "teachers should maintain a positive, optimistic, and happy emotional state, interact with children with a friendly, supportive attitude and behavior, and treat every child equally. Children are confident and composed in daily activities, and can confidently express their true emotions and different opinions."



## Key Points of the Research Results in China

**(1) Perception and Understanding of the Terms "Social-Emotional Skills" and "Resilience"**

The results of cognitive level research indicate that principals have a certain understanding of the SES of young children and associates them with the three dimensions of emotional recognition, emotional management, and empathy, as well as resilience. However, for front-line teachers, SES is an unfamiliar term. From the perspective of developmental methods, principals believe that it is necessary to integrate their own cultural traditions and foster good SES in young children from the perspectives of ability, age, and permeability. The principals focus on understanding the meaning of resilience from aspects such as "self-healing" and "self-management and control." For front-line teachers, resilience is an unfamiliar term, but the understanding of "difficulties" and "adversity" related to both sides of "resilience," as well as the understanding of "smooth adaptation" and "recovery" situations, are relatively rich.

**(2) Practices and Activities Implemented at ECEC Facilities to Nurture "Resilience"**

The research results on the application of the understanding of the words indicate that the principals and teachers participating in the survey are relatively weak in using the concept of resilience for on-site practice. The application and measures of the concept of resilience as well as the use of teaching materials are still lacking in county-level kindergartens in China.\*

\* The administrative divisions of China consist of a four-tier system: provincial level, municipal level, county level, and township level.



## The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Indonesia's Education System and Curriculum

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has impacted the education system in Indonesia, such as significant learning loss in literacy and numeracy. The restriction of direct contact in schools has led to changes in the curriculum system. "Kurikulum 2013," the previous national curriculum was adjusted into three optional schemes that schools could choose from. First, the "Kurikulum 2013," implemented before the pandemic. Second, the "Kurikulum Darurat" or Emergency Curriculum (which is a simplified "Kurikulum 2013"). And third, the "Kurikulum Prototype," a competency-based curriculum to support learning recovery by implementing project-based learning.

The Indonesian Ministry of Education is currently gradually implementing the "MERDEKA" curriculum which is a development of the "Kurikulum Prototype" for all levels of education including early childhood education. The early childhood education (ECE) curriculum in Indonesia is designed to support children's holistic development in various children development aspects or STPPA, including religious and moral values, Pancasila values, physical-motor, cognitive, language, and social-emotional, as stated by the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 5 of 2023 concerning Graduate Competency Standards in Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, and Secondary Education.\* The curriculum aims to build a strong foundation for children before they enter the next education level.

\* STPPA: Standar Tingkat Pencapaian Perkembangan Anak Usia Dini is an indicator of ability or skill achieved by children in all aspects of child development and growth set by the Indonesian Government.

Pancasila: An ideology believed by the Indonesian people. The values of Pancasila refer to the values of divinity, humanity, unity, democracy and justice.

## How Resilience and Relevant Social-Emotional Skills Are Addressed in the Curriculum Guidelines

Early childhood social-emotional development outcomes are specifically described through Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 137 of 2014 on National Standards for Early Childhood Education. The regulation mentions the outcomes based on age categories (from three months to six-years-old) that include self-awareness, a sense of responsibility for oneself and others, and prosocial behaviour. Resilience itself is not clearly mentioned in the curriculum. However, the project-based learning process in the "MERDEKA" Curriculum allows children to encounter failure and find solutions. Social activities with peers also involve the emotional skills. Both lead to the development of resilience in early childhood. Furthermore, teachers take their pre-service teacher training and in-service training, where they have been introduced to the concept of social-emotional skills, how children's SES milestones are based on age categories, and how to develop them in children. Therefore, the concept of children's social-emotional skills has been widely understood by teachers.

## The Influence of Indonesian Culture on ECCE

Apart from policies, the process of creating high-quality ECCE is influenced by the culture in Indonesia. Cultural characteristics influence the teaching and learning approaches used in ECCE, and the way ECCE institutions are run in terms of organizational structure and leadership. For example, the emphasis on collectivity and community in Indonesian culture is seen in collaborative learning in the classroom. The culture of respect for elders in Indonesia shapes classroom discipline and behavior management. Leadership styles in ECCE institutions are influenced by a culture that emphasizes hierarchy and respect for authority. Leaders in the institution take a more authoritarian approach to decision-making and communication. By understanding this culture, it is imperative that leaders be strategic in their management of teams.



### Key Points of the Research Results in Indonesia

#### (1) Perception and Understanding of the Terms "Social-Emotional Skills" and "Resilience"

Early childhood teachers in Indonesia understand that social emotional skills and resilience are very important from an early age. Students need it in social interactions, self-regulation, and facing various social challenges (such as being in a new place and adapting). Challenges faced by teachers include a lack of in-depth understanding of concepts, a lack of conceptual material when pursuing professional teacher education, so teachers study independently via the internet, books, articles and discussions.

#### (2) Practices and Activities Implemented at ECEC Facilities to Nurture "Resilience"

Social emotional skills are the focus of developmental activities in learning as it is stated in the curriculum, but only 1 out of 8 preschools had a special program to strengthen resilience. However, activities provided by other early childhood teachers also include learning activities which strengthen resilience in children.





## 2 - 4 Malaysia



### Early Childhood Education Policy

In Malaysia, formal education commences at the age of four (4) with preschool, although it is not mandatory. However, the majority of children under six (6) years old enroll in preschool as a preparatory step before entering the formal school system. Early childhood education (ECE) in Malaysia is structured into two age groups: children under four (4) attend nurseries or childcare centers known as 'TASKA,' while those aged 5–6 attend preschools. These institutions are overseen by different authorities, with TASKA regulated by the Department of Social Welfare and preschools governed by the Ministry of Education.

Curriculum-wise, Malaysia follows two national curricula: the PERMATA National Curriculum for children aged 0–4 years old and the National Preschool Standard Curriculum (NPSC) for children aged 5 to 6. The NPSC emphasizes several objectives, including effective communication, fostering positive self-concept and confidence, and promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills. One of its strands, the Personal Competence Strand, focuses on socioemotional development, interaction skills, and leadership.

Preschool education in Malaysia aims to comprehensively develop children's physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects in a safe and enriching environment. The curriculum emphasizes fun, creative, and meaningful activities to improve skills, boost confidence, and instill a positive self-concept, preparing children to face challenges and engage in further learning. The focus lies on nurturing confident communicators who can socialize effectively, tackle challenges, demonstrate eagerness to learn, and are prepared for subsequent educational endeavors.

### Development of Resilience and Relevant SES in Early Childhood

In both the NPSC curriculum for 5–6-year-olds and the PERMATA Negara curriculum for 0–4-year-olds, there is a clear emphasis on fostering resilience and socio-emotional skills (SES) in early childhood development. The NPSC specifically highlights the importance of cultivating children's personalities to be 'berdaya tahan' or resilient, alongside promoting qualities such as effective communication, teamwork, virtuous behavior, and empathy. Resilience, as defined in the curriculum, refers to the ability of children to confront and overcome challenges with wisdom, confidence, tolerance, and empathy.

Similarly, the PERMATA Negara curriculum underscores the significance of developing resilient children, alongside other characteristics like confidence and independence. Here, resilience is defined as 'berjati diri' or possessing a positive self-concept, being motivated to try new things, and daring to take risks. These definitions collectively highlight the importance of instilling in children the ability to navigate challenges, setbacks, and uncertainties with courage, adaptability, and self-assurance.

By integrating resilience-building components into early childhood curricula, Malaysia aims to equip children with the necessary skills and mindset to thrive not only during their formative years but also beyond school-age. This holistic approach to education acknowledges the multifaceted nature of resilience, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions. Moreover, by nurturing resilience from a young age, children are better prepared to cope with life's inevitable ups and downs, develop healthy coping mechanisms, and cultivate a resilient outlook towards future challenges and opportunities.

### Key Points of the Research Results in Malaysia

#### (1) Perception and Understanding of the Terms "Social-Emotional Skills" and "Resilience"

Educators recognize SES and resilience as foundational competencies crucial for children's social interactions, emotional regulation, and adaptive coping strategies, drawing upon various sources to deepen their understanding and implement effective pedagogical approaches.

#### (2) Practices and Activities Implemented at ECEC Facilities to Nurture "Resilience"

Challenges such as the lack of formal assessment tools tailored to resilience were identified, prompting educators to rely on observation, judgment, and individualized communication strategies when providing feedback to parents. Cultural and linguistic perspectives were also highlighted as significant factors shaping the understanding and implementation of SES and resilience in Malaysian ECE settings. Practices employed at ECEC facilities to nurture resilience include building social support networks, teaching emotional regulation skills, and promoting independence and self-confidence among children, ultimately contributing to their holistic development and future success.



### How Resilience and Relevant Social-Emotional Skills Are Addressed in the Curriculum Guidelines

The MATATAG Curriculum, which originally aimed to instill Filipino values and nationalism, has evolved to encompass resilience against various challenges, including the pandemic (Zara et al., 2022). The Philippines' Basic Education Development Plan 2030 prioritizes transformative education to nurture globally competitive and resilient youth (Department of Education, 2024).

MATATAG, although an actual Filipino word for resilience, is also an acronym that shows the four pillars of the new curriculum:

MA	<b>MA</b> ke the curriculum relevant to produce competent and job-ready, active, and responsible citizens;
TA	<b>TA</b> ke steps to accelerate delivery of basic education facilities and services;
TA	<b>TA</b> ke good care of learners by promoting learner well-being, inclusive education, and a positive learning environment; and
G	<b>G</b> ive support to teachers to teach better.

Strategies for developing socio-emotional skills and for developing resilience are found mostly in the subject for Values Education, however, the skills for critical thinking, decision making, resourcefulness, creativity and flexibility are embedded in all other subjects of the curriculum.

### The Relationship Between Cultural and Geographical Backgrounds and Resilience

The Philippines has a unique geographical and cultural context, cultivating resilience in its population, especially amidst challenges like frequent storms and poverty. The significance of resilience in children's development is highlighted in the country's education policies and curriculum aimed at nurturing holistic well-being. Research underscores the role of emotional intelligence in fostering resilience and promoting socio-emotional learning in schools. The country prioritizes creating supportive environments and leveraging community support to foster resilience among its learners.



#### Key Points of the Research Results in the Philippines

##### (1) Perception and Understanding of the Terms "Social-Emotional Skills" and "Resilience"

Findings of the case study survey reveal varying depths of familiarity with the terms "social-emotional skills" and "resilience" among the ECE teachers, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive understanding. Teachers recognize the importance of social-emotional skills in children's development, associating them with emotion regulation, social interaction, and relationship building. Regarding resilience, teachers perceive it as the ability to learn from difficult situations, demonstrating adaptability and bravery.

##### (2) Practices and Activities Implemented at ECEC Facilities to Nurture "Resilience"

The study further explores specific activities and practices implemented by teachers to develop resilience in children, including restorative justice chats, peace circles, and peace corners, along with educational programs and materials aimed at nurturing resilience. Overall, the study underscores the significance of fostering resilience and social-emotional skills in early childhood education to support children's holistic development and well-being. Various cases highlight different perspectives of teachers from various kinds of schools and different ages.



## 2 - 6 Singapore



### How Social-Emotional Skills Are Addressed in the Curriculum Guidelines

The development of early childhood education (ECE) in Singapore, represents a dynamic interplay of policy initiatives, societal values, and educational practices, reflecting the nation's commitment to nurturing its youngest citizens for future success. The ECE scene in Singapore is characterized by a holistic approach that integrates academic rigor with socio-emotional development, laying the foundation for lifelong learning and holistic well-being. In the recent update to the Curriculum Framework, Nurturing Early Learners (NEL2022), more emphasis has been given to the building of social emotional skills and nurturing joyful learners. Central to Singapore's ECE philosophy is the recognition of inclusivity as evidenced by efforts to ensure that every child, regardless of background or ability, has access to quality education and support services.

### Investment in ECEC and Facts on ECEC Facilities

Our founding fathers have always reminded us that the only resource that the island nation has is human resource. As such, since 1965, the Government of Singapore has been investing heavily in education. In the early childhood education (ECE) landscape, the major investment is with the formation of the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA - 2013) and the National Institute of Early Childhood Development (NIEC - 2019).

The ECDA regulates Childcare Centres, including Kindergartens, and NIEC is the institution for teacher preparation for both Childcare Centres and Kindergartens. Childcare Centres operate from 7am to 7pm and care for children from 2 months to 6 years old; while Kindergartens operate for 4 hours in a day and provide for children ages 3-6.

The number of centres grew from 90 in early 1980s to currently, 1,665 childcare centres and 344 Kindergartens. In addition, the Ministry of Education (MOE) also runs 43 Kindergartens with 17 more opening by 2027. As such, by 2027 there will be 60 public centres operated by the Government (MOE) and the rest of the centres will continue to be privately operated. However, to make them affordable with quality for all, the Government provides subsidies, with a fee cap, for Anchor Operators (AOP) as well as Partner Operators (POP). AOP are large chains of childcare centres with a community service focus and POP are smaller chains with at least 300 children in total. In Singapore, there are 600 centres under AOP and 323 POP schemes. The rest are standalone private centres. The ECE sector has always been a private undertaking, but the Government of Singapore recognises the critical role it plays in human development. In recent years, much has been invested and this reflects the nation's aspirations for its youngest citizens to achieve its potential.



### Key Points of the Research Results in Singapore

#### (1) Perception and Understanding of the Terms "Social-Emotional Skills" and "Resilience"

The findings from the study demonstrated that our ECE practitioners are familiar with the notion of SES, SED and resilience. The role of the leader is critical as they seem to have a deeper understanding of what SES and resilience means. They were able to craft a comprehensive definition while the teachers gave different aspects of it. On the other hand, the teachers were able to give concrete examples of what a child with a high level of SES and resilience would look like in the classroom. This implies that both leaders and teachers have much to learn from each other.

#### (2) Practices and Activities Implemented at ECEC Facilities to Nurture "Resilience"

However, generally, there is no specific or structured program to promote SES and resilience. Teaching of these skills are weaved into the daily interactions and practice. Since there is no structured curriculum or formal assessment, the development of children's social emotional learning is done incidentally, at opportune moments and left to chance.



## ECEC in Taiwan

In Taiwan, children typically start attending kindergarten from the age of 2 to 5 and engage in over 8 hours of learning each day. This prolonged duration is often due to the prevalence of dual-income households, where parents opt to enroll their children in kindergarten to foster holistic development and cultivate positive attitudes toward life. As a result, apart from parental influence, kindergarten education plays a significant role in shaping children's personalities, worldviews, and values.

## How Resilience and Relevant Social-Emotional Skills Are Addressed

The concepts of SES (Social-Emotional Skills) and resilience are relatively new in early childhood education in Taiwan. The government-prescribed curriculum for early childhood education only includes teaching social skills. Over the past decade, some higher education institutions have begun to recognize the importance of SES in early childhood education. However, it wasn't until the last five years that some workshops specifically introduced SES to teachers or principals participating in training sessions. They hope to serve as seed teachers and return to their schools to promote SES education. In contrast, resilience is a concept that very few people know how to properly explain. So far, the early childhood education community in Taiwan remains largely unfamiliar with resilience.



### Key Points of the Research Results in Taiwan

#### (1) Perception and Understanding of the Terms "Social-Emotional Skills" and "Resilience"

Based on the interview results, it was found that currently employed teachers have inconsistent understandings of the concept of SES (Social-Emotional Skills). Most teachers only have a vague understanding of social-emotional skills because such theoretical knowledge was not taught during their university education. Teachers tend to use their understanding of social skills to comprehend SES.

Among the ten currently employed teachers, only half truly grasp the concept of resilience. Although teachers may not be familiar with the term "resilience," they unanimously recognize the importance of resilience and adaptability to stress for children.

#### (2) Practices and Activities Implemented at ECEC Facilities to Nurture "Resilience"

Currently, no specific teaching materials or assessment tools are aimed at enhancing children's resilience in Taiwan's educational system. However, teachers utilize various activities to foster resilience in children. Some teachers mentioned providing companionship to students when encountering difficulties because they found that children's emotions are more likely to stabilize with adult companionship during challenging times. They also discovered that students are more willing to attempt problem-solving through close companionship. Additionally, some teachers emphasize the importance of building a group behavior model to strengthen students' resilience. The most common educational method teachers employ is to create simulated scenarios where students can experience emotional changes and then guide them to develop resilience by tolerating setbacks.



## 2 - 8 Thailand



### The National Curriculum Guidelines for ECEC

According to the Thailand Early Childhood Development Plan B.E.2564-2570 (2021-2027), the vision of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is that every child will be nurtured to reach their full potential and become a quality citizen. Seven strategies proposed to achieve the plan includes services providing for young children; strengthening families' capability in nurturing young children; improving quality of childcare centers; developing an early childhood information system and integration for the beneficial; improving early childhood related acts, regulations, or laws; conducting research and development; administrating, developing mechanism of procedure and monitoring assessment. Thus, the image of Thai young children is a well-balanced child in all domains of development, including physical, emotional, discipline, social, and intellectual. Therefore, wellbeing, education, and social welfare are the focus of ECEC for 0-6 years-old before entering the primary level (Office of the Education Council [OEC], 2021).

### How Social-Emotional Skills Are Addressed in the Curriculum Guidelines

In 2017, the Health Systems Research Institute (HSRI) reported that 30% of children aged 2–7 have delayed executive functions (EF). This condition can lead to behavioral problems such as lack of self-regulation, easily distracted, low concentration, impulsiveness, and impatience. Social emotional skills are known to be associated with EF, meaning that these skills involve brain functions and lead to thinking processes (HSRI, 2017 as cited in Phromkat, 2023). EF is a set of mental processes, as a result, to achieve in learning or working. The ability to think rationally, inhibit control, emotionally regulate and control our behaviors, plan, pay attention, remember instructions, and work sequentially all depend on EF. Hence, EF is a brain capacity that regulates our thinking, feelings, and actions to achieve our goals (Pokam, 2020). As a result, the Thai Ministry of Education (MOE) places a strong emphasis on EF in order to improve the efficacy of ECEC programs to address the situation of young children's delayed development.

Since 2020, the Thai MOE announced the ECE policy focusing on well-rounded development for all 0-8 years old, including physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development plus additional characteristics: self-development and EF. The expected outcomes for ECEC program are nurturing young children to build up self-esteem, self-confidence, self-efficiency, and self-regulation (MOE, 2020).

### The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Thailand OEC (2022) reported that all level of learners were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic because online learning created stress, anxiety, low concentration, lack of focus or motivation in learning, and social skills. Measures to recover learning loss in young children are redesigning the learning process, empowering teachers and principals to develop potential of children, collaborating effective learning with stakeholders including schools, families, communities, and related sectors, valuing positive attitudes and well-being both physically and mentally, etc. In February 2024, the Thai Ministry of Education proposed a new campaign "3 promote, 3 reduce, 3 increase" to nurture young children due to the increasing hours of using screen time. It is in line with the measures of OEC to promote healthy young children. The 3 promote includes enhancing the right understanding to parents, teachers, and communities, amending the appropriate child welfare, and empowering local government agencies and communities; the 3 reduce include cutting down screen time in half, reducing stress by bringing happiness back to children, reducing violence against children both physically and mentally; the 3 increases include arranging more play-based activities for young children such as music, sports, and exercise, more story time, and improving quality family time (MOE 360, 2024).

### Key Points of the Research Results in Thailand

#### (1) Perception and Understanding of the Terms "Social-Emotional Skills" and "Resilience"

The answers reveal that Thai preschool teachers value social and emotional skills as well as resilience as important skills for children to be happy and successful people. Two out of eleven preschool teachers had never heard of the term "resilience," but all of them were familiar with "social and emotional skills," which are related to emotional and social development and are written in the Thai National Early Childhood Curriculum B.E. 2560 which is the second revised version.

#### (2) Practices and Activities Implemented at ECEC Facilities to Nurture "Resilience"

Practices to promote social and emotional skills and resilience comprise 3 aspects: 1) the physical environment, such as a cozy and homelike environment, and a large playroom; 2) activities, includes aesthetics activities; mindfulness practice; 7 habits; executive functions; emotional related stories; free play; music and movement; cooking; emotional check-in and check-out with emotional cards; emotions diary; Thai traditional games and board games; self-assessment worksheet; and 3) teacher guidance, includes being a role model; using positive discipline; setting up classroom rules; assigning appropriate tasks; teaching how to identify emotions; assigning individual, pair, or group work; and using the buddy strategy.





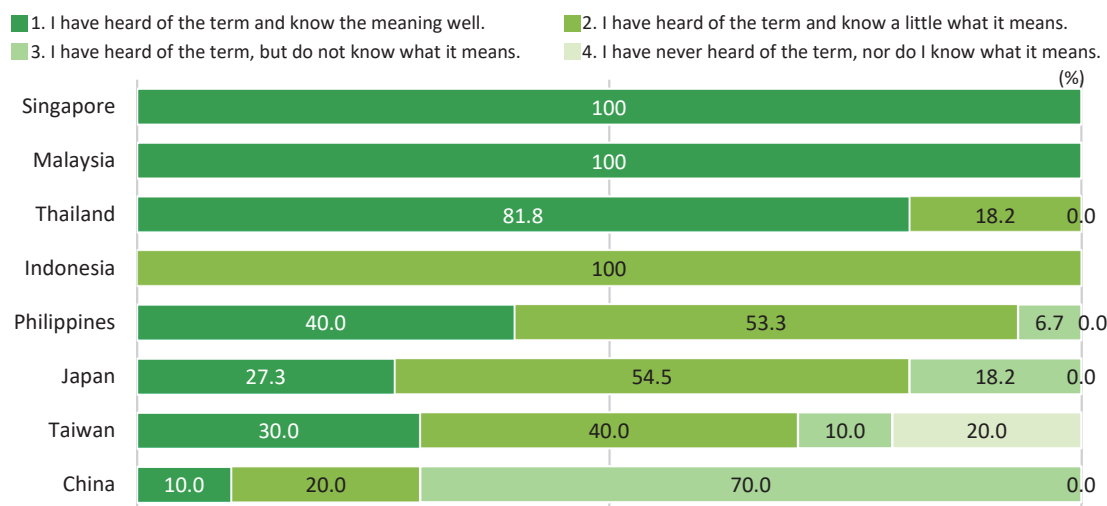
### 3 - 1 ECEC Teachers' Perception and Understanding of "Social-Emotional Skills"

Analysis results indicate that understanding of the term "social-emotional skills," a concept related to resilience, is more prevalent among ECEC teachers in Southeast Asian countries (Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines) than in East Asian countries and regions (Japan, Taiwan, and China). In all eight countries and regions, "social-emotional skills" are described as involving both aspects related to "social skills" and one's own "emotions." Furthermore, in Singapore, Thailand, and Japan, these skills are also viewed as related to the concept of the "self," such as "self-awareness" and "self-determination."



Have you heard of the term "social-emotional skills"?

Figure 3-1-1 ECEC Teachers' Perception of "Social-Emotional Skills" (Comparison of 8 Countries and Regions)



- Indicates in descending order of the sum of "1. I have heard of the term and know the meaning well." and "2. I have heard of the term and know a little what it means."
- In cases where there was uncertainty in the responses such as "1 or 2," the analyst reviewed the respondent's open-ended answers and categorized them as one of the two options.



What do you understand about the term "social-emotional skills"?

Table 3-1-2 ECEC Teachers' Understanding of "Social-Emotional Skills" (Comparison of 8 Countries and Regions)

<b>Singapore</b>	self-awareness / self-regulation / self-management / building relationship with others / engaging in problem solving / recipe for "success in life" / "growth in life" / communication / collaboration / creativity / critical thinking / able to adapt to different situations / contributes to their high self-esteem
<b>Malaysia</b>	foundational competencies crucial for children's social interactions and emotional regulation / communication / emotional management / empathy / contributing to holistic development
<b>Thailand</b>	crucial for a happy and successful life, being with others in a society, and accomplishing life goals / self understanding / self management / understanding others, building relationship / responsible decision making / emotional awareness / emotional regulation / emotional control / emotional management / understanding one's own needs / being mindful / perseverance / self-confidence / problem solving / empathy
<b>Indonesia</b>	to work together, share ideas, and solve problems together / an important foundation for a child's future academic and social success
<b>Philippines</b>	building relationships / managing emotions and behavior / taking perspective / coping successfully with conflict
<b>Japan</b>	the ability to control their emotions, cooperate with others / be motivated / self-determination / foundation for children's personality development / ability to communicate their own thoughts to others and work toward goals through trial and error / essential qualities useful when they become members of society in the future
<b>Taiwan</b>	ability to have proficient interpersonal interaction skills / demonstrate empathy towards others, and be aware of and manage their emotions
<b>China</b>	consciousness of emotions / emotional management / empathy / social adaptability

- Indicates the responses (understanding) of those who answered, "1. I have heard of the term and know the meaning well." or "2. I have heard of the term and know a little what it means." in Figure 3-1-1.



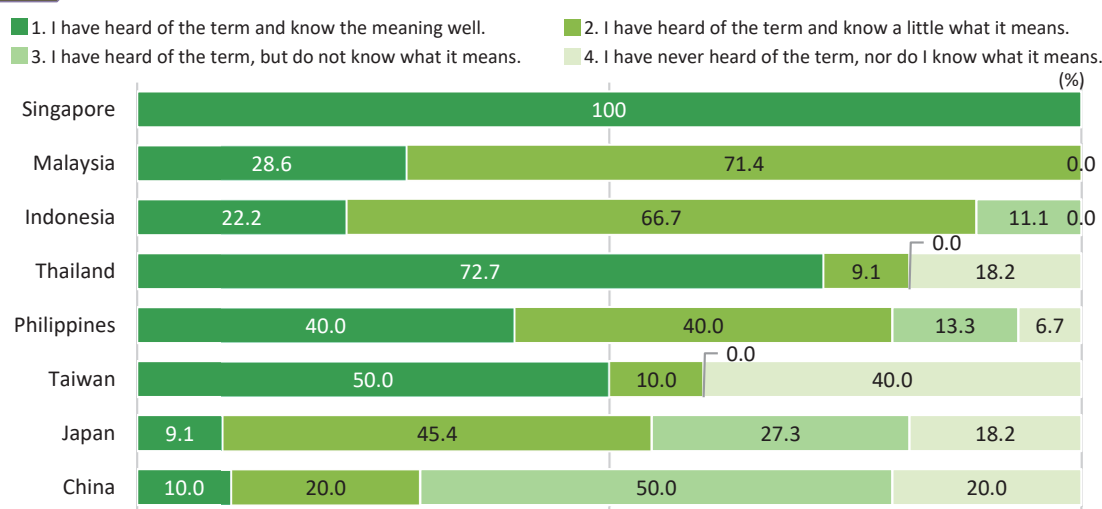
### 3 - 2 ECEC Teachers' Perception and Understanding of "Resilience"

Understanding the term "resilience" is more prevalent among ECEC teachers in Southeast Asian countries (Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines) compared to East Asian countries and regions (Taiwan, Japan, and China). In eight countries and regions, "resilience" is typically described as the ability to "adapt to, overcome, and recover from adversity, difficulties, and setbacks." However, in China, ECEC teachers tend to perceive resilience as controlling oneself, emphasizing self-regulation and self-control. In addition, ECEC teachers in Thailand mentioned the constituent factors of resilience, such as characteristics of an individual and environmental protective factors.



Have you heard of the term "resilience"?

Figure 3-2-1 ECEC Teachers' Perception of "Resilience" (Comparison of 8 Countries and Regions)



- Indicates in descending order of the sum of "1. I have heard of the term and know the meaning well." and "2. I have heard of the term and know a little what it means."
- In cases where there was uncertainty in the responses such as "1 or 2," the analyst reviewed the respondent's open-ended answers and categorized them as one of the two options.



What do you understand about the term "resilience"?

Table 3-2-2 ECEC Teachers' Understanding of "Resilience" (Comparison of 8 Countries and Regions)

<b>Singapore</b>	capacity to adapt and navigate through adversity and challenges / would not give up / independent in thought and behaviour / associated with self-regulation where the child can overcome negative feelings
<b>Malaysia</b>	adaptability / perseverance / positive mindset / essential for overcoming challenges and thriving in diverse environments
<b>Indonesia</b>	ability to recover from any challenges, failure or stress/related to teacher's role to support students
<b>Thailand</b>	skill humans use to effectively deal with and overcome obstacles or challenges / works with two factors, which are the characteristics of an individual and environmental protective factors / not only bounces back but also bounces forward
<b>Philippines</b>	ability to recover from adversity and adapt to difficult situations / learn from challenges / maintain a positive attitude / persist in tasks / seek help when needed
<b>Taiwan</b>	attitude toward facing setbacks and actively attempting to solve problems
<b>Japan</b>	ability to continue attempting to overcome difficulties when faced with them / mental strength to recover from failures and difficulties and continue to make positive attempts
<b>China</b>	self-recovery / self-regulation / self-control

- Indicates the responses (understanding) of those who answered, "1. I have heard of the term and know the meaning well." or "2. I have heard of the term and know a little what it means." in Figure 3-2-1.

### 3 - 3 ECEC Teachers' Perception of Difficulties and Adversities for Children Aged 4-6

A comparative analysis of how ECEC teachers in each country perceive "difficulties" and "adversities" for children aged 4 to 6 confirmed three major trends. ECEC teachers in Malaysia and the Philippines are more likely to describe difficulties in terms of "(2) Emotional well-being," while those in Japan, Taiwan, and Indonesia tend to focus on difficulties as "(3) Self-esteem/independence." In China, Singapore, and Thailand, difficulties are perceived across multiple items.



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

Table 3-3-1 Classification of Difficulties and Adversities (Comparison of 8 Countries and Regions)

	(1) Physical Well-being	(2) Emotional Well-being	(3) Self- esteem/ independ- ence	(4) Family	(5) Friends	(6) Nursery school/ Kinder- garten (daily life/ activities)	(7) Nursery school/ Kinder- garten (learning)	(8) Adverse Experiences	(9) Others	Number of Respondents	Number of difficulties/ adversities
	(%)										
Malaysia	10.5	<u>25.0</u>	14.5	5.3	11.8	15.8	5.3	9.2	2.6	7	76
Philippines	5.9	<u>29.4</u>	11.8	5.9	11.8	17.6	5.9	0.0	11.8	15	17
Japan	0.0	7.1	<u>42.9</u>	0.0	25.0	17.9	0.0	0.0	7.1	11	28
Taiwan	3.3	16.7	<u>30.0</u>	10.0	3.3	10.0	13.3	3.3	10.0	10	30
Indonesia	0.0	12.9	<u>22.6</u>	16.1	3.2	16.1	9.7	6.5	12.9	9	31
China	3.6	<u>28.6</u>	25.0	3.6	3.6	14.3	10.7	3.6	7.1	10	28
Singapore	7.1	7.1	10.7	<u>14.3</u>	<u>17.9</u>	<u>17.9</u>	<u>14.3</u>	10.7	0.0	9	28
Thailand	0.0	4.2	16.7	12.5	<u>25.0</u>	<u>25.0</u>	0.0	16.7	0.0	11	24

- Listed in order of trends in the classification of difficulties and adversities.
- The sum of (1) to (9) will add up to 100%.
- The top items are underlined for each country.
- The top items and items within 5% difference from the top items are shaded for each country (colors are differentiated according to the following three trends).
- Difficulties and adversities are classified with reference to the six domains of the KINDL<sup>®</sup> (Ravens-Sieberer & Bullinger, 2000) and literature on adverse experiences (Jennifer Hayes-Greene, Amanda Sheffield Morris / Supervised Translation: Masumi Sugawara et al., 2022).

#### Three Trends Broadly Categorizing Eight Countries and Regions

##### Prominent\* number of difficulties relating to " (2) Emotional Well-being"

- Corresponding countries: Malaysia and the Philippines
- Examples: separation anxiety, social withdrawal (such as being alone at kindergarten), worries and anxieties, problems controlling emotions, etc.

##### Prominent number of difficulties relating to " (3) Self-esteem/Independence"

- Corresponding countries/regions: Japan, Taiwan, and Indonesia
- Examples: a gap between what one wants to do and one's actual abilities, recognition of one's weaknesses compared to others, inability to ask for help, low self-expression and self-esteem, lack of self-determination/problem-solving abilities, etc.

##### Difficulties across multiple items

- Corresponding countries: China, Singapore, and Thailand

\*Prominent: There is a difference of 5% or more with other items.

#### (References)

- Ravens-Sieberer, U. & Bullinger, M. (2000). *KINDL<sup>®</sup> Questionnaire for Measuring Health-Related Quality of Life in Children and Adolescents Revised Version Manual*. Office of Quality of Life Measures. <https://www.kindl.org/english/information/>
- Hays-Grudo, J., & Morris, A. S. (2022). *Shouniki no gyakkyouteki taiken to hogoteki taiken: Kodomo no nou/koudou/hattatsu ni oyobosu eikyou to rejiriensu* [Adverse and protective childhood experiences: A developmental perspective] (M. Sugawara et al., Trans.). Akashi Shoten. (Original work published 2020)



### 3 - 4 Implementation Rate of Practices and Programs Nurturing Resilience

The survey results indicate that ECEC teachers across all preschools interviewed in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Japan implement childcare practices to nurture children's resilience. On the other hand, the number of preschools introducing special programs to nurture resilience exceeds 70% in Thailand but less than 50% in other countries.



- (1) Do you provide childcare considering the concept of resilience?
- (2) Have you heard of the term "resilience"?
- (3) Please also tell us about any developmental programs or materials that you have implemented in your facility to develop resilience.

Table 3-4-1 Practices Considering the Concept of Resilience, Recognition of Resilience, and Implementation Rate of Programs (Comparison of 8 Countries and Regions)

	Number of Respondents	(1) Practices considering the concept of resilience (%)	(2) Recognition of resilience (%)	(3) Implementation of programs (%)
Malaysia	7	100	100	42.9
Singapore	9	100	100	22.2
Thailand	11	100	81.8	72.7
Japan	11	100	54.5	9.1
Philippines	15	80.0	80.0	20.0
Taiwan	10	80.0	60.0	40.0
Indonesia	9	77.8	88.9	22.2
China	10	50.0	30.0	10.0

- Listed in descending order of the implementation rate of "(1) Practices considering the concept of resilience."
- (1) indicates the percentage of respondents who answered "yes" in the open-ended interview responses.
- (2) indicates the percentage sum of respondents who answered "I have heard of the term and understand the meaning well." and "I have heard of the term and know a little what it means."
- (3) indicates the percentage of respondents who mentioned the name of a program or a specific activity of the kind in the open-ended question.
- (3) Programs: Special activities with program names are counted as programs. Also, programs for which the respondents indicated these would lead to fostering resilience (including STEM and PBL) are counted as programs, even if these programs are not directly designed to nurture resilience.

#### Implementation Rate of Practices that Consider the Concept of Resilience and Recognition of Resilience

Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Japan were the countries where 100% of the respondents answered that they implement practices considering the concept of resilience. Of these, 100% of the respondents recognized the term "resilience" in Malaysia and Singapore, while 81.8% recognized it in Thailand. In contrast, only 54.5% of the respondents recognized the term in Japan.

#### Implementation Rate of Programs

The implementation rate of programs was particularly high in Thailand, compared to other countries where it was 50% or lower. In Thailand, a wide variety of programs related to emotional education are implemented, such as 7 habits, emotional check-in and check-out, mindfulness practice, and anger management.

### 3 - 5 Childcare Practices and Teachers' Involvement Nurturing Children's Resilience (1)

In response to difficulties relating to children's emotional well-being, ECEC teachers adopted the following practices: (1) encouraging children to use a calm-down corner; (2) giving children time to reflect on their feelings; and (3) providing opportunities for children to share their thoughts and feelings with their peers, as well as discussing ways to support one another.



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.



#### Childcare practices to address difficulties relating to children's emotional well-being

(1)

##### Providing a calm-down corner for children and encouraging its use

Some provide a place where children can calm down when they feel depressed or panic resulting from interactions with their friends. For younger children or those unable to use the corner voluntarily, ECEC teachers may suggest, "Would you like to go there?" This encourages the child to spend some time alone to sort out their thoughts and feelings. In addition to teachers in the Philippines, those in Japan, Taiwan, China, and Thailand, also said they adopt these practices.

"We have a PEACE CORNER - for the children. It's a safe place for you to process your emotions.... They sit with their feelings. Why they feel that way. No one will disturb them. Then they can approach their teacher or classmate if they are ready. This allows them to understand their limits, boundaries and become self aware. When they can process their thoughts and feelings without being disturbed, they understand what triggers them, what they can do next time to avoid it."  
(Philippines #1, private, ECEC teacher, less than 5 years of experience)



(2)

##### Giving children time to reflect on their feelings

In preschools and classes where ECEC teachers note issues with fights among friends and bullying, children check their emotions each morning using emotion picture cards that represent their feelings. Children reflect on and express their feelings while interacting with ECEC teachers. These practices are also evident in childcare approaches to address issues related to friendships (see p.20).

"Emotion check: using 5 feelings for children to monitor their own feelings, i.e., joy, excitement, sadness, fear, and anger, every morning as emotion check in."  
(Thailand #3, private, Vice principal, 12 years of experience)

"Mindful education, this activity lasts 30 mins, it's time for children to review and reflect themselves. Start with brain gym to cultivate body awareness, then telling story and using question to help children contemplate or link with their emotions, i.e., how do you feel if you were this child in the story?"  
(Thailand #2, private, Head of kindergarten teachers, 12 years of experience)

(3)

##### Providing opportunities for children to share their thoughts and feelings with their peers, as well as discussing ways to support one another

In classes with children who have communication difficulties, ECEC teachers provide opportunities for them to sit in a circle and talk about their thoughts and feelings. ECEC teachers also create opportunities to discuss and reflect on ways to show care and comfort when someone has experienced a setback. Similar practices have been observed in many countries, such as Japan, China, Thailand, and Singapore.

"I encourage the children to 'share and tell' their happy and sad experiences during circle time, so the children can get to know each other better and understand each other's feelings and emotions."  
(Malaysia #1, private, ECEC teacher, 22 years of experience )

"When someone in the class faces a setback, there should be predetermined ways to support them. Others should understand that such reactions are normal. We might even discuss with the children different ways to show care and comfort to those feeling upset.... fostering an atmosphere of mutual understanding, tolerance, and care in the classroom."  
(Taiwan #2, public, ECEC teacher, 27 years of experience)

• From p.18 onwards, at the end of the quoted narrative, the attributes of ECEC teachers are listed in the following order: Country and respondent number, preschool type, job title, and years of experience.



## 3 - 5 Childcare Practices and Teachers' Involvement Nurturing Children's Resilience (2)

ECEC teachers take the following strategies to manage difficulties relating to self-esteem and independence: (1) allowing children to experience "overcoming failures" and "working with perseverance" by providing challenges that are suitable for the individual's developmental stages and ages, (2) fostering children's confidence by encouraging self-expression and assigning them roles within the class, and (3) watching over children without intervening, and motivating them by showing the cases of their peers.



### Childcare practices to address difficulties relating to self-esteem and independence

(1)

**Allowing children to experience "overcoming failures" and "working with perseverance" by providing challenges that are suitable for the individual's developmental stages and ages**

For children who fear failure and find it hard to try new things or activities they are not good at, ECEC teachers offer opportunities to experience "overcoming failure" through everyday play that they want to try. Children are also given opportunities to experience "working with perseverance" through challenges in real-life settings such as woodworking and cooking. Similar practices have been reported not only in Japan and Taiwan, but also in China and Thailand.

"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*.... 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." (Japan #4, public, ECEC teacher, 19 years of experience)

"We provide opportunities for children to learn through real-life situations.... We set up challenging learning areas, such as weaving areas, woodworking areas, cooking areas, etc. Through cooking and planting activities and thematic lessons, we aim to provide children with learning related to resilience, especially in activities such as cooking, where they need to wait and continuously try." (Taiwan #6, public, ECEC teacher, 22 years of experience)

(2)

**Fostering children's confidence by encouraging self-expression and assigning them roles within the class**

In Japan, ECEC teachers encourage children to express themselves appropriately for their age so that they can ask for help independently. The practice of promoting self-expression is also reported in China. In Malaysia, ECEC teachers assign roles like "leader" or "assistant" to children in the classroom to enhance their confidence. The practice of assigning roles to children is not only observed in Malaysia, but also in Singapore and Indonesia.

"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." (Japan #3, national, ECEC teacher, 19 years of experience)

"confidence-building technique to help build children's build resilience. We would appoint a student as 'leader' to manage the routine activities for a day. This child 'leader' will be responsible for maintaining order and quiet classroom, ensuring cleanliness of the classrooms and making sure learning items are orderly arranged on the shelves, .... This 'leadership' role changes daily, so as to give a chance to every child to becoming 'a leader for a day' .... If they are not confident enough to handle the leadership role, they will be assigned 'an assistant' who will help them manage other children in the class." (Malaysia #5, public, ECEC teacher, 16 years of experience)

(3)

**Watching over children without intervening, while motivating them by showing the cases of their peers**

ECEC teachers observe children carefully, stepping back when children can solve problems independently. This practice of watching over children while they think and solve problems by themselves without intervention, from the perspective of also looking ahead to their entrance into elementary school and beyond, is observed in Thailand and Singapore as well as in Japan.

"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.... I am careful not to overlook opportunities for children to overcome on their own. If the teacher provides an answer first, children will lose the ability to think. Through the teacher's encouragement and by thinking together, I hope they are inspired to search for answers by themselves." (Japan #8, public, ECEC teacher, 15 years of experience)

"I hope children experience difficulties and overcome them through the presence of friends. For example, children tend to avoid jumping rope for the sports day, but when they observe other children doing it, they feel like they can do it as well." (Japan #6, public, ECEC teacher, 6 years of experience)



### 3 - 5 Childcare Practices and Teachers' Involvement Nurturing Children's Resilience (3)

For difficulties in friendships, ECEC teachers let children join activities, games, and plays to encourage interaction and cooperation, and to discuss ways to solve problems in order to foster children's cooperative skills. When conflicts arise among children, ECEC teachers will take two steps to resolve the issues. To address adversities, a disaster response curriculum was introduced in one facility to mitigate the effects of disasters and enhance preparedness for post-disaster responses.



#### Childcare practices to address difficulties in friendships

(1)

**Conduct activities, games, and plays that encourage interaction and cooperation, and discuss ways to solve problems**

Activities and games are used to let the children experience how to help and cooperate, enhancing their cooperativeness. In the Philippines, ECEC teachers also encourage children who often play alone with digital media to engage in outdoor play with their peers. Similar practices are reported not only in the Philippines and China, but also in Taiwan and Indonesia. ECEC teachers in Singapore use an approach that creates and plays out conflict situations to demonstrate how to resolve them.

"Encourage cooperation and mutual assistance: In kindergarten activities, I will create some group activity scenes so that children can learn and grow through mutual help and collaboration."

(China #9, public, ECEC teacher, 5 years of experience)

"activities that promote interaction with others. After school activities 'Friends for Keeps' which is mostly social interaction games. Activities that will give them a break from the gadgets and make them go out."

(Philippines #13, private, ECEC teacher, 15 years or more of experience)

"Create the situation and dramatize how the conflict situation can be resolved. The focus would be on relationship building based on respect, graciousness, integrity, and teamwork."

(Singapore #7, public, ECEC teacher, 10 years of experience)

(2)

**How teachers respond when children are in conflict**

1. Help them calm down in a quiet place
2. Guide them to talk about their feelings and the reasons for their fights (using empathetic language to promote mutual understanding)

Similar practices are reported not only in Taiwan but also in Thailand. In Japan, the same approach is used in the first half of the 5-year-old class. However, in the latter half of the year, as children become more capable of solving problems independently, ECEC teachers sometimes opt not to intervene. This method is also seen in childcare practices that address difficulties related to emotional well-being (see p.18).

"if a 4-year-old child cries loudly after a dispute with peers over using educational toys ... the teacher should first provide a quiet space for the child to stabilize emotions. Then, the teacher should observe and guide the two children to express the reasons and feelings behind the event, using empathetic language to prompt mutual understanding. This helps establish respect for interpersonal interactions and cultivates the meaning of cooperative play .... These specific actions require teachers to have concepts of empathy and behavior adjustment techniques to implement gradually." (Taiwan #3, private, ECEC teacher, 19 years of experience)



#### Childcare practices to address difficulties in adversities

##### A disaster response curriculum is introduced

In Indonesia, to mitigate the effects of disasters and enhance preparedness for post-disaster responses, ECEC teachers introduced problem-solving learning programs. These programs help children become familiar with disaster scenarios by using everyday materials and substitutes while learning about disasters.

"Our institution is included in the disaster curriculum which has familiarization, material content and learning using project based learning with MELESAT content (Mathematics, existence, literacy, engineering, science, art and technology) using coaching support and loose parts media with material content leading to mitigation and handling post-disaster. Learning with project based learning with MELESAT content stimulates children to have a frame of mind accustomed to finding real problems and finding solutions using MELESAT knowledge/material content strengthened by coaching support from teachers in accompanying children. Getting children used to ... independently fulfilling their own needs by eating alone, cleaning the environment and their own cutlery.... Children are invited to make things with existing materials so they are expected to get used to using substitute and complementary goods.... Children are introduced to and understand what to do through self-rescue habits through earthquake simulations where they are accustomed to queuing to get to the exit and using their binder book as a head covering."

(Indonesia #5, private, Head principal, 15 years of experience)

# 3 - 5 Childcare Practices and Teachers' Involvement Nurturing Children's Resilience (4)

For difficulties relating to physical well-being, ECEC teachers support the preschool life of children with special needs, seeking the help of classmates and specialists. To address problems in family matters, ECEC teachers focus on building a trusting relationship with parents and understanding children's home conditions. They also provide parents with information on child-rearing and assure them teachers will support children's education together.



## Childcare practices to address difficulties relating to children's physical well-being

### Assisting children with special needs

1. Get the help of classmates
2. Get the help of specialists

In the case of Malaysia, to help ensure children with developmental disorders or language delays are not left out from their peers, ECEC teachers explain to the class the characteristics of these children so that they can understand why these children may sometimes be in a bad mood. Additionally, some children are asked to consistently stay by their side to support the child with special needs. For children facing speech delays, teachers provide specialized sessions to develop oral motor skills with a speech therapist.

"First, I explained to my class the problem faced by this Special Needs child. Reason was because I wanted to raise the feeling of empathy among the children so they can understand her better and why she is sullen. I wanted to encourage each and every one of the children in my class to talk to her, play, learn and read together with her and make her feel accepted.... Second, I asked a few of the more resilient children in my class to be with her always and help her during play, reading sessions, and interact with her, and to not let other children to tease her. Meanwhile, I conducted a face-to-face learning sessions with the child, encouraging her to speak and read with me. At the same time, I arranged for her to receive assistance from a speech therapist. After three months of observations and assessments by me and the speech therapist, we found that she has become more confident in socializing with other children in the class, and the whole class too have accepted her as their beloved and protected friend.... She can eventually read and talk like any other children. Most of all, she is now much happier and enjoying her time in the Day-care."

(Malaysia #2, private, ECEC teacher, 12 years of experience)



## Childcare practices to address problems in family matters

### ECEC teachers try to build a trusting relationship with parents and assure them that teachers will support children's education together.

One teacher in the Philippines said she tries to build a trusting relationship with parents and ask them to talk about how the child is at home. Likewise, ECEC facilities and teachers in Indonesia assure parents they will support their children's education and provide child-rearing-related information by implementing child-rearing programs, such as circulating educational materials about children's "independence."

- Childcare practices that address children's upsetting incidents at home are detailed on [p. 25](#).

"In meetings during card day, we have a heart-to-heart talk with the parents ... when we tell our observations of children, parents and guardians also open up and explain their child's attitude ... knowing the situation of the children makes us think of different interventions to help them." (Philippines #8, public, ECEC teacher, 15 years or more of experience)

"When accepting new students and at the initial school meeting, we always emphasize to parents to trust and support teachers in educating children; holding parenting programs to build cooperation with parents to optimize children's development, for example raising material on 'independence'." (Indonesia #6, private, Head principal, 14 years of experience)



## <Supplementary note> Childcare practices through programs and projects

So far, we have explained some case studies for childcare practices to address specific difficulties. We also would like to introduce some other case studies where children's resilience is developed through activities under programs and projects. In Singapore, children learn to think, express, and explain how they seek solutions through the STEMIE (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Invention and Entrepreneurship) program (Singapore #3, public, ECEC teacher, 13 years of experience). In Malaysia, children participate in group activities to solve problems their teachers assign through a project-based learning approach (Malaysia #3, private, ECEC teacher, 11 years of experience). In Japan, the process of thinking, acting, and experiencing difficulties is valued through shop projects and theater play activities (Japan #7, private, ECEC teacher, 5 years of experience). In all eight countries and regions, ECEC teachers commonly foster children's resilience by allowing them to face difficulties and solve problems independently through such activities.

- Childcare practices that address difficulties relating to "Nursery school/Kindergarten" life are not included here, as they mostly overlap with difficulties relating to "self-esteem and independence," "friendships," and "programs and projects."

## 4 - 1 Scenario 1: A child is left out

Pages 22-25 present the results of responses, where participants were asked to select two or more from the following four scenarios: 1) He/she was left out; 2) He/she had a fight with his/her friend; 3) A person in a close relationship with him/her moved away; and 4) An upsetting incident occurred at home.

The ECEC teachers who chose this scenario answered that they support children who tend to be alone by connecting them with their peers and encouraging activities that promote interaction among them. If a child is left out from the group, they would help the child by (1) empathizing with the child's feelings, (2) encouraging children to communicate with others, (3) encouraging the child to shift emotional gears and move on, and (4) sharing the situation with the class and prompting children to think about it.



Tell us "how you would interact as a childcare worker," and "why would you do so?," regarding the scenario below related to the development of children's resilience.

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



### Support for children who tend to be alone to build friendships

(1)

**Connect children by pairing them together or finding factors that can relate to others**

"I would pair the 'loner child' with one or two children who have higher SES and resilience ... so they can assist and guide him/her."

(Malaysia #5, public, ECEC teacher, 16 years of experience)

"I would discover the talent of the child that can relate to other kids; and introduce them with each other."

(Philippines #4, private, ECEC teacher, 15 years or more of experience)

(2)

**Carefully observe children who tend to be alone and provide activities that promote children's interactions**

"I would organize some group activities ... so as to promote interaction and communication between them. In this process, I would pay special attention to the child who was excluded, and give him extra encouragement and support, and help him get mingled with the group."

(China #9, public, ECEC teacher, 5 years of experience)

"We try to use various grouping methods to ensure that their peers accept the excluded child.... we might assign them as a group leader and have others join their group, creating a situation where they must collaborate."

(Taiwan #8, public, ECEC teacher, 30 years of experience)



### ECEC teachers' responses when a child is left out of the group

(1)

**Understand and empathize with the feelings of the child who was left out**

"The general message is that 'It is ok.'"

Child is first to identify the feeling. Teacher might ask: How are you feeling now? If child cannot express himself, teacher says: I know you are feeling upset. (It's ok.) Teacher might ask: So how now? do you want to play with someone else or approach this friend again later? When the child recognises that he is not alone and that the teacher understands his feelings and affirms them he will be ok."

(Singapore #2, public, Principal, 13 years of experience)

(2)

**Encourage the child to communicate with others who left the child out and find out why**

"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 situation.... If the child cannot ask alone, I will go with the child to ask."

(Japan #3, national, ECEC teacher, 19 years of experience)

(3)

**Encourage the child to shift emotions and find something else to do or someone else to play with**

"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." (Japan #11, public, ECEC teacher, 12 years of experience)

"Taking them to interact with other children, making new friends, and expanding their social circle is important." (Taiwan #2, public, ECEC teacher, 27 years of experience)

(4)

**Prompt the children to think about the situation by sharing it in the class, reading social stories, etc.**

"I will share this incident in the classroom later on. Without disclosing the names ... 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?'" (Japan #2, private, ECEC teacher, 3 years of experience)

"I will read social stories. I will mindfully address the issue on exclusion" (Philippines #2, private, ECEC teacher, less than 5 years of experience)



## 4 - 2 Scenario 2: He/she had a fight with his/her friend



The approaches taken by many of the ECEC teachers who chose this scenario were common actions that could be categorized into five steps as a general approach to handling the situation. However, teachers mentioned various strategies regarding the specific interactions at each step. In addition, some teachers commented on an approach that involves discussing with children on how to respond to similar situations in the future and ways to avoid conflicts.



Tell us "how you would interact as a childcare worker," and "why would you do so?," regarding the scenario below related to the development of children's resilience.

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



### The flow of ECEC teachers' common approaches when conflicts occur

ECEC teachers in all eight countries and regions mentioned the following steps 1 to 5:



Regarding whether to intervene or not, ECEC teachers from several countries reported cases where they allowed them to resolve the issue on their own as much as possible (they would observe the situation without intervening immediately, or intervene as needed, taking into account the age and developmental stage of the children).

Also, another case was reported in Taiwan, where older children intervened first before the ECEC teachers.



### Approaches considering future conflicts

#### Think with children about how to respond if a similar situation occurs again in the future and how to avoid conflicts

- "brainstorm together on how to handle similar situations in the future." (Taiwan #2, public, ECEC teacher, 27 years of experience)
- "ask the question to both of them.... How can we avoid the conflict? Let's find the solutions together and take responsibility for their choices." (Thailand #2, private, Head of kindergarten teachers, 12 years of experience)



## 4 - 3 Scenario 3: A person in a close relationship with him/her moved away

Among ECEC teachers who chose this scenario, many indicated that they would adopt approaches that acknowledge and support children's emotions. For example, they prioritize listening to children who are experiencing feelings of loss or anxiety and empathize with their emotions. They also teach the emotion of "sadness" by talking to children in a way that helps children understand what they are feeling. In addition to addressing emotions, they teach children ways to maintain relationships even when they are far apart and guide them to build new friendships.



Tell us "how you would interact as a childcare worker," and "why would you do so?," regarding the scenario below related to the development of children's resilience.

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



### Approaches for responding to children's emotions

(1)

**Acknowledge and empathize with the child's feelings**

"I will approach the child with empathy and understanding. Through conversation, I will try to understand the child's feelings regarding separation from a close friend. Maybe I'll ask them to talk about their feelings, shared memories, and how they want to get involved in dealing with the change.... Understanding and responding to their feelings can help in managing change and building emotional resilience." (Indonesia #9, private, Principal, 20 years of experience)



(2)

**Help the child understand the meaning of separation and the emotions behind it**

"First, let children understand the meaning behind moving. Moving means separation and leaving close friends, so that children can establish the foundation of 'separation'. Cognition, and then observe the children's expression of experience. If the children in the class can predict the sad and sad emotions after separation, such children with better empathy ability should be allowed to talk about their inner thoughts. For children who cannot understand the meaning of 'separation,' teachers can use picture books and other forms to let children understand the emotions behind the act of separation, so that children can face this emotion and think about how to preserve the good relationship with their peers before separation." (China #10, public, ECEC teacher, 6 years of experience)

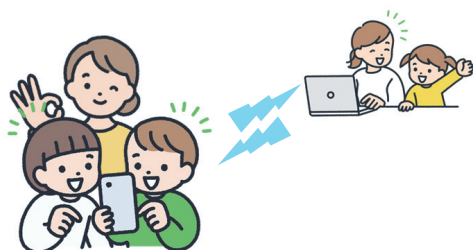


### Approaches for responding to children's behaviors

(1)

**Teach the child how to maintain relationships with friends and teachers**

"One week after a popular child had moved away, his classmates often expressed how much they missed him. They suggested a video-call so they could see and speak to him again. I contacted the child's mother and scheduled a suitable time for the video-call. The children were so thrilled to see their classmate again. After three video-calls over two weeks, the children felt happy and satisfied knowing that their friend was okay...." (Malaysia #2, private, ECEC teacher, 12 years of experience)



(2)

**Guide the child to build new relationships**

"The teacher is the child's safe zone; the teacher acts as the child's buddy and guides him or her when working with another kid who has the potential to be the new partner. The teacher should support the child in building new relationships with other friends and also use positive reinforcement to encourage the child to be confident." (Thailand #1, private, Head of the school, 10 years of experience)

## 4 - 4 Scenario 4: An upsetting incident occurred at home



The ECEC teachers who chose this scenario recognize that a child's behavior differs from usual and act supportive with children's feelings. Once the child has calmed down and is able to express their thoughts and situation, the teachers would try to figure out the cause and reason of the incident. They would then assist the child in considering how to respond to similar situations in the future.



Tell us "how you would interact as a childcare worker," and "why would you do so?," regarding the scenario below related to the development of children's resilience.

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.)



### Responding to cases where parents scolded a child

Among ECEC teachers who chose this scenario, many responded that they take the following steps:

1

**Recognize that a child's behavior differs from usual, talk to the child gently and empathize with his/her feelings. When the child has calmed down, ask him/her what happened.**

- "You can first soothe the child's sad mood by giving him toys that he is usually interested in and start interacting with the child.... We must first stabilize the children's emotions, and then interact and be good at communicating." (China #5, public, Principal, 22 years of experience)
- "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." (Japan #2, private, ECEC teacher, 4 years of experience)

2

**Find out why the parent scolded the child and encourage the child to reflect on whether his/her behavior was appropriate. Help the child think about how to act next time.**

In the following case in Taiwan, the ECEC teacher helps the child understand the difficult situations his/her father is facing. The teacher guides the child to empathize with the father's feelings and encourages the child to think about how to help the father.

[Example of a Conversation Between a Child and an ECEC Teacher] (C=Child, T=Teacher)

C: Dad scolded me. (In tears.)

T: **So you're feeling very sad now?**

C: Yes.

T: **Do you know why Dad got angry?**

C: Because we were all moving too slowly, and Dad was almost late.

T: **Mom is still taking care of Grandma, so Dad is the only one taking care of you guys? That must be hard for him.**

C: Yeah, he has to buy us food, bathe us, and even do the laundry.

T: **Yeah, now he has to go to work and do everything else, it's really tough. Do you help him?**

C: Yes, I can change my clothes by myself.

T: **You're a good big sister. So, what can you do next time to move faster in the morning?**

C: I can help my little sister put on her socks and get her backpack.

T: **You're a great little helper. Are you still feeling sad now?**

C: A little. Can you hug me?

T: **Of course.**

"Assisting the child in recognizing the reasons behind the event, empathizing with the emotions of others (Dad), and thinking about how to help, sharing a little of Dad's pressure, and affirming themselves. Practicing to cultivate the ability to make decisions that are beneficial not only to oneself but also to others, and utilizing seeking feedback to achieve personal growth." (Taiwan #4, public, ECEC teacher, 34 years of experience)

## 5 - 1 From the Collaborative Researchers

### Christine Chen (Singapore) President, Association for Early Childhood Educators (Singapore)

This qualitative study captures the perspectives of 8 countries and regions in the East and South-East Asian region. The concept of social emotional skills (SES) and resilience had varied understanding among the early childhood practitioners interviewed. Their depth of understanding in the two concepts was of varying degrees. However, generally, the concept of social emotional skills is better established than that of resilience.

In relation to the concept of SES, in the Philippines, it is found in the subject for Values Education. The practitioners in Singapore, like the Philippines where the working language is English, were familiar with SES as it is embedded in the teachers' preparation program and were able to describe how a child high in SES would behave. Malaysia, like Singapore being once a British Colony, recognized SES as being crucial for children's development and SES is part of their 0-4 curriculum. Thailand perceived SES as being associated with Executive Functions (EF) and much emphasis was focused on EF. While practitioners recognized the importance of SES in Indonesia, an in-depth understanding of the concept was a challenge. This gives us an indication that concepts in the English language may not be so readily understood where English is not the first or working language. As such, in China, Japan and Taiwan such concepts had to be related to what they know in their own language and culture. In China, the principals are more familiar with the concept of SES than the teachers. In Taiwan these concepts were somewhat new to practitioners and in Japan's curriculum standards "children are to become the creators of a sustainable society."

While "resilience" is a difficult concept to grasp, the early childhood leaders in Singapore were able to give a crisp definition of the word and the teachers were able to describe situations in which they witnessed resilience in the children. This again points to how familiarity with the English language affects the understanding of the two concepts under study. As such, I question the meaning of these concepts to each of the countries in this study. Also, when the practitioners were asked if they had any program to enhance SES and resilience, most of them replied that there was no specific program. However, Indonesia and Malaysia related how the Project Approach and Singapore the Science Technology Engineering Arts Mathematics Innovation and Entrepreneurship (STEAMIE) can enhance SES and resilience.

While in the findings, each country had their definition or understanding of what SES and resilience mean, I note that China promotes families, kindergarten and society working together in creating "collective living atmosphere" of warmth and care. Others talked about quality education, good citizenship, building relationships and sustainable society. Since the 8 countries and regions have diverse histories and cultures on which their society is built around, it might be worthwhile to investigate what they would like their future society to look like. It would be enlightening to hear from children, families and early childhood practitioners what they would like their future society to look like. By doing so, we may discover the similarity among us that would build solidarity in this region.

### Tomomi Sato (Japan) Professor, Aichi Shukutoku University

This survey shows that while ECEC teachers in Japan have a low perception of the term "resilience," they consider it an essential skill that is inherently integrated and practiced in their daily childcare activities. They emphasize providing adequate challenges through play, such as stilts and jumping rope, according to children's developmental stage. For 5-year-old class children, they also focus on making them challenge activities as a class/group. This survey also revealed valuable insights from childcare programs in Thailand and other countries, including Indonesia's disaster curriculum. By enhancing ECEC teachers' understanding of the concept of resilience and how it can be nurtured, and by making them more aware of the childcare practices they unconsciously engage in every day, they will be able to offer more effective support to children. In that sense, this report was very meaningful, which examines commonalities and differences through a survey conducted in eight countries and regions.

In addition, through this survey, many ECEC teachers from Japan, Taiwan, and Indonesia noted children's difficulties and adversities by relating them to children's "self-esteem and independence." Specific examples include the gap between what children can do and want to do, awareness of their weaknesses compared to peers, weakness of autonomy or self-expression, as well as decreased motivation to learn. In response to these issues, it is observed that ECEC teachers would first accept children's feelings and acknowledge their thoughts. Instead of guiding children to the correct answer or immediately having them solve the problem, they value the process of letting children think on their own. Then they support the solutions children independently discover and place importance on allowing them to work on the problem at their own pace. Meanwhile, ECEC teachers from Malaysia and the Philippines frequently referred to children's "emotional well-being." For example, they explained their practices, such as providing a place for children to calm down and sort out their feelings and using circle time to share their feelings and thoughts with peers. These practices may reflect the curriculum guidelines and childcare philosophies of each country. Instead of simply assessing the superiority or inferiority of childcare practices in each country, I believe it is essential to maintain objective attitudes, learn factors that have not been addressed, and explore innovative approaches.

Through this survey conducted in Japan, I was deeply impressed by the attitudes of the ECEC teachers, who believe in children's potential and watch over them warmly, yet sometimes strictly. I have come to realize once again the remarkable efforts of ECEC teachers by tenaciously engaging with children and offering them loving attention as they learn and grow through trial and error. These qualities of ECEC teachers are observed not only in Japan but also in all eight countries and regions, which became evident from ECEC teachers' daily childcare practices and underlying philosophies mentioned in this survey. I hope that the findings of this survey will enhance practices in childcare settings and support at home, ultimately improving the well-being of children.



## 5 - 2 Insights from the Research Results and Discussions

This survey was conducted between 2023 and 2024, targeting ECEC teachers across eight Asian countries and regions to explore how children's resilience is nurtured in preschools. Resilience is a crucial skill for navigating through uncertain times and for bouncing back and moving forward through everyday challenges and conflicts. This report summarizes and compares survey results from eight countries/regions from various perspectives on nurturing children's resilience. First, we assessed how ECEC teachers perceive and interpret the terms "resilience" and "social-emotional skills," the latter being a concept closely relating to resilience (pp.14-15). We also examined ECEC teachers' perceptions of the difficulties and adversities young children might face, as well as the implementation rate of childcare practices that promote resilience in each country (pp.16-17). Additionally, for each difficulty type, we analyzed the childcare practices and involvement of ECEC teachers in handling such difficulties in preschools across eight countries and regions (pp.18-21). In the final part, we have presented responses where we asked ECEC teachers to choose two or more from four specific resilience-related scenarios and explain how they would interact as a childcare worker, which we have organized by scenario and introduced them as case examples (pp.22-25). I will present what we found from our analysis in this commentary.

### **Despite Differences in the Degree of Term Perceptions Across Countries and Regions, Commonalities Seen in Childcare Practices**

The degree of perception of the terms "social-emotional skills" and "resilience" among ECEC teachers varied significantly across Asia. These concepts were more widely recognized in Southeast Asian countries (Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines) than in East Asian countries and regions (Japan, Taiwan, and China). There were also country-specific differences among ECEC teachers regarding children's difficulties and adversities. These differences, observed across eight countries and regions, can be categorized into three main trends: countries where the most common response pertains to "difficulties relating to emotional well-being" (Malaysia and the Philippines); countries/regions where "difficulties relating to self-esteem/independence" are more prevalent (Japan, Taiwan, and Indonesia); and countries where challenges arise from a combination of multiple factors, represented by China, Singapore, and Thailand. However, despite such differences, the above analysis results, as well as the case studies of how teachers respond in each scenario, also revealed that several common practices are shared across many of the eight countries. For instance, regarding "difficulties relating to emotional well-being," one of the strategies of ECEC teachers was "providing opportunities for children to share their thoughts and feelings with their peers as well as discussing ways to support one another." This practice was noted not only by ECEC teachers from Malaysia and Taiwan, whose specific examples are introduced in this report, but also by those from Japan, China, Thailand, and Singapore. This finding suggests that there are ECEC teachers in each country who have a good understanding of each child's state and circumstances, potentially leading to common childcare practices across the eight countries and regions. These ECEC teachers interact with children while caring for how they feel, which may contribute to the development of resilience in children.

### **ECEC Teachers Need Not Bear Issues Alone, but Respond with Classmates, Professionals, and Parents**

To address "difficulties relating to physical well-being," specifically for children with special needs, one of the ECEC teachers from Malaysia mentioned that she would seek assistance from classmates and professionals. This ECEC teacher's approach of asking other children for help instead of trying to solve problems alone may enhance not only the resilience of children with special needs, but also the development of their peers who provide support, ultimately improving the resilience of the entire class. Furthermore, rather than trying to solve every problem within the preschool, seeking assistance from external professionals when necessary, can benefit not only the children with special needs but also the ECEC teachers' learning and support they need. To address "problems in family matters," ECEC teachers from the Philippines and Indonesia discussed their strategies for building trusting relationships with parents and collaboratively supporting the child's education. This indicates the importance of collaborating with parents and exchanging information to foster children's resilience. In addition, some countries such as Thailand and Indonesia, mentioned childcare practices not discussed by other countries. The former approach is "giving children time to reflect on their feelings" when facing "difficulties relating to emotional well-being," while the latter approach is to deal with "difficulties in adversities." These approaches would also be applicable in countries other than Thailand and Indonesia.

### **Childcare Practices Nurturing Resilience May Offer Tips for Early Childhood Transition to Elementary School as Well as Parenting**

We encourage ECEC teachers to read and apply the results of this survey to their childcare practices. Furthermore, the childcare practices identified in this survey that promote children's resilience effectively address and support children's difficulties, confusion, and anxiety from various perspectives during their transition to elementary school, when significant changes occur in relationships with others and the surrounding environment. They may also be helpful for teachers in lower elementary schools to ensure smooth transitions. Additionally, some childcare practices presented in this report can serve as valuable references for parent-child involvement at home. For example, parents often try to help their children in advance to avoid making mistakes. However, sometimes, watching over children's actions by stepping back and allowing them to solve problems independently or presenting them with moderate challenges suitable for their developmental level may contribute to their children's growth.

In closing, it should be noted that the survey findings may not necessarily represent typical childcare practices in each country since this survey is a case study examining ECEC teachers from eight Asian countries and regions, in which respondents were chosen from a limited number of preschools using a snowball sampling method (for more details, please refer to the "Attributes of Respondents" on p.5). To gain a comprehensive understanding of how resilience is nurtured in preschools in each country, it is crucial to conduct a quantitative questionnaire survey in preschools, followed by interviews with ECEC teachers from a diverse range and type of preschools in each country.

## Research Collaborators

### Research Director

Yoichi Sakakihara (Director of Child Research Net, Professor Emeritus of Ochanomizu University)

### Collaborative Researchers (CRNA Board Members)

\*Please see p.4 of this report for the research representatives from the eight countries and regions.

Sachiko Kitano (Professor, Kobe University) [Japan]

Miwako Hoshi (Professor Emerita of Jumonji University) [Japan]

Jiaxiong Zhu (Professor Emeritus, East China Normal University) [China]

Fasli Jalal (Rector of Yarsi University) [Indonesia]

Poh Tin Tan (Pediatrician, Tan Specialist Child and Family Clinic) [Malaysia]

Shih-Tsung Chang (President, International Play Association-Taiwan branch) [Taiwan]

### Planners/Analyzers

Akihiro Sato (CRN Senior Researcher)

Junko Morinaga (CRN Senior Researcher)

Junko Ogawa (CRN Researcher)

Yuka Nozaki (CRN Researcher)

Aiping Liu (CRN Senior Researcher)

### Collaborators

Aminah Ayob (Former CRNA Board Member of Malaysia,  
Professor Emerita of Sultan Idris Education University)

Haruo Kimura (CRN Principal Researcher)

Seiko Mochida (CRN Senior Researcher)

Hanae Omori (CRN Editing Staff Member)

Madoka Shimizu (CRN Editing Staff Member)

[CRNA Collaborative Research]  
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