

Evaluation of the Quality of Early Childhood Care and Development Services in Barangay Day Care Centers in Digos City, Philippines

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Abstract. Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) plays a vital role in shaping young children's foundational growth and learning. Consistent monitoring and evaluation are essential across all levels of implementation to ensure their effectiveness. Although the ECCD program is implemented nationwide, limited data exist on service quality and stakeholder satisfaction at the barangay level. This study assessed the quality of ECCD service implementation in barangay day care centers in Digos City using an Input-Process-Output (IPO) quantitative research design. A validated questionnaire was administered to all 75 barangay day care teachers implementing the ECCD program across the 26 barangays of Digos City, following ethical approval and necessary permits. Data were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. Results showed that most day care teachers were aged 56–60, predominantly female, married, college graduates, and had attended 6–10 ECCD trainings. The quality-of-service implementation in these centers was rated "outstanding," while parents' satisfaction was rated "very satisfied." These findings suggest a highly successful implementation of the ECCD program at the barangay level in Digos City. The consistent and effective practices leading to high service quality must be sustained. Moreover, the intense parental satisfaction reflects trust in the program and promotes collaboration between families and ECCD providers. The study supports continued or increased policy and financial support for ECCD initiatives. The evidence of strong implementation and high stakeholder satisfaction can be a basis for further investment and replication in other areas.

Keywords: Barangay Day Care Center, Early Childhood Care and Development, Parents' satisfaction feedback, Quality-of-service

1.0 Introduction

Childcare centers play a vital role in early childhood education, as they foster young children's cognitive, emotional, and social development during their formative years. Despite their importance, many Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) teachers in the Philippines encounter ongoing challenges in delivering consistent, high-quality services. Common issues include limited resources, insufficient training, and inconsistent application of best practices, all hindering optimal care and instruction delivery. Addressing these obstacles is crucial to ensuring that all children have access to quality early education that supports a stronger foundation for lifelong learning and development.

Globally, the right to education—including early childhood care and development—is recognized under the

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and reinforced through the Sustainable Development Goals, which advocate for at least one year of quality ECCD for all children before entering formal school by 2030 (UN, 2015). UNICEF (2019) emphasized the critical role of quality early learning programs, especially those delivered through daycare centers. Supporting this, research by Van Laere et al. (2021) and Guevara & Urban (2020) confirms that high-quality early education significantly enhances children's development and well-being later in life.

In the Philippine context, Republic Act No. 6972 mandates the establishment of a daycare center in every barangay to promote the holistic development and protection of children. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is responsible for setting national policies and providing oversight, training, and accreditation of these centers. These institutions are expected to offer children basic care, development, and education services through qualified ECCD teachers (Abdul, 2021). However, actual implementation varies widely. In many parts of Mindanao, the quality of ECCD service delivery remains a pressing concern. Barangay daycare centers in the region are critical in delivering early education and basic health and nutrition services, yet often face operational challenges. A study by Mendoza and Belisario (2010) in Davao City highlighted issues such as insufficient government support, inadequate facilities, lack of investment in the workforce, and minimal community engagement.

Recent research further underscores the systemic barriers limiting ECCD effectiveness across the country. A study by Ulep et al. (2024) from the Philippine Institute for Development Studies found that as of 2022, only 20% of children aged 3–4 were enrolled in preschool. The report cited fragmented governance, limited funding, and poor access to essential services as major contributing factors. Likewise, Pearson and Siraj (2025) explored ECCD workforce systems in low-resource settings, including the Philippines, and found significant gaps in teacher training, qualification standards, and ongoing professional support. These findings call for more structured and targeted interventions to enhance the capacity of early childhood educators.

Similarly, Jaca and Baroman (2021) evaluated the readiness of kindergarten teachers in Cebu City and identified key issues such as language barriers, limited preparation time, and a lack of instructional materials. These findings highlight the need for sustained professional development programs and adequate teaching resources. In addition, a 2024 report by the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II), as reported by the Philippine Star (Chi, 2024), noted that fewer than half of Filipino children aged 3–4 are enrolled in preschool. Contributing factors include a lack of parental awareness about the benefits of early education and a shortage of government-run daycare centers. Meanwhile, Abon et al. (2023) investigated the impact of the "new normal" brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. They found that early childhood educators faced multiple difficulties, including adjusting to remote teaching, managing time, assessing young learners effectively, and securing parental cooperation.

Generally, while the Philippines has made legislative and institutional strides to support early childhood development, numerous barriers impede the delivery of quality ECCD services. These include systemic issues in governance, funding, teacher training, parental awareness, and infrastructure. Addressing these challenges through integrated reforms and sustained investment is essential to provide every Filipino child with a strong start in life through accessible and high-quality early education. Similarly, this quantitative study investigated the quality of service provided by the ECCD implementation of barangay day care centers in Digos City. This analysis proposes a tangible scheme to improve early childhood care services and advocacy to benefit all intrinsic and extrinsic stakeholders in attaining the ECCD vision, mission, and goals.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative Input-Process-Output (IPO) research design, following the model outlined by Vani (2021). This framework provided a systematic approach to evaluating the ECCD program by organizing key variables into three categories: inputs (resources and conditions required for effective implementation), processes (methods and practices used), and outputs (outcomes and recommendations for sustaining the program).

2.2 Research Locale

This study was carried out in Digos City, Davao del Sur, which consists of 26 barangays. Each barangay hosts at least one daycare center managed by the city's social welfare and development office, making the city an appropriate setting for evaluating the implementation of the ECCD program.

2.3 Research Participants

The study involved all 75 Barangay Day Care teachers implementing the ECCD program across the 26 barangays of Digos City. For parent respondents, purposive sampling was used to select 10 parents per center, totaling 260. Parents were chosen based on the following criteria: their children were enrolled in the day care centers, actively participated in school activities, and were involved in the ECCD program for a specific period.

2.4 Research Instrument

The study employed the Early Childhood Education Program Assessment Tool (ECEPAT), initially developed by Virginia F. Ulit, RPsy, a former Montessori teacher and current head psychologist at the Department of Health, Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Center, Region XI. Originally designed to evaluate service quality at the University of Southern Mindanao Child Care Center, the tool was modified to suit the specific context of the ECCD program in Digos City. Adaptations, such as adding, removing, or rewording items, were made to better align with the study's specific objectives, ensuring all items are relevant to the ECCD context in Digos City.

A panel of three experts reviewed and validated the modified instrument's content to ensure its appropriateness and clarity. This content validation helped identify and revise ambiguous or unclear items, ensuring alignment with the study objectives. The researcher also developed a separate survey questionnaire to measure parents' satisfaction with implementing the ECCD program. The construction of this tool followed a structured process: first, defining the construct to be measured; second, generating items that comprehensively reflect the construct; and third, subjecting the instrument to expert review. The experts assessed each item's relevance, clarity, and coverage, and the tool achieved a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 1.00, indicating unanimous agreement on item relevance. A pilot test was conducted with a small sample from the target population to identify potential issues. The final instrument demonstrated strong reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.943, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70. These results confirm that the researcher-developed questionnaire was valid and reliable for assessing parental satisfaction.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

To gather the pertinent data for the study, the researcher first secured approval for the research implementation and coordinated the necessary activities through the Office of the City Social Welfare and Development Officer in Digos City. Letters were then sent to all Barangay Day Care teachers and selected parents, informing them of their involvement in the study and obtaining their voluntary participation through signed consent forms. All participants were made aware of their rights and responsibilities, data privacy policies, and the schedule of survey activities. The researcher surveyed the "Quality of Service Implementation" among ECCD workers and parents, following the approved schedule for each sitio. A separate Parent Satisfaction Survey was also administered to selected respondents from the parent population in each barangay. Once all survey questionnaires using the Early Childhood Education Program Assessment Tool (ECEPAT) were collected, the scores were tallied and consolidated to assess the quality-of-service implementation across six ECCD facilitation indicators and the client satisfaction survey results. The collected data were then statistically analyzed with the assistance of an in-house statistician, and the results and findings of the study were formulated. Based on these findings, an enhancement proposal was developed to improve ECCD implementation. Lastly, the proposed ECCD program improvement was written and presented to ECCD stakeholders for consideration.

2.6 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics—frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation—were used to summarize respondent profiles and evaluate ECCD program implementation and parent satisfaction. Inferential statistics, including t-tests and ANOVA, were applied to examine differences among demographic groups. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26, and a significance level was set at 0.05.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

Before data collection, the study underwent an ethical review and received approval from the DSSC Research Review Committee. All participants were provided with informed consent forms, which they voluntarily signed after being briefed on the study's objectives and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. The researcher ensured that participant recruitment was appropriate and that potential physical, psychological, or socio-economic risks were assessed and minimized. Strict measures were taken to maintain privacy and confidentiality; all responses were anonymized, and personal information was securely handled to protect participants' identities. In compliance with ethical research standards, the study prioritized data integrity and respondents' well-being throughout the research process.

3.0 Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the sociodemographic profile of barangay daycare teachers. Most respondents are 56–60 years old (18.7%). Most are female and married, with most holding a four-year college degree. Regarding professional development, most teachers reported attending 6–10 ECCD-related trainings. Understanding the sociodemographic profile of daycare teachers is essential, as it directly influences the quality of ECCD service implementation and, in turn, children's developmental outcomes. Quijano-Pagutayao (2023) found similar trends—most teachers were married women and college graduates who often faced financial constraints and high accountability. This aligns with the findings of the present study, which also highlight the prevalence of female, married, college-educated teachers experiencing varied challenges, particularly related to financial support.

Table 1. *Socio-demographic profile of the participants*

Age	Frequency	Percentage
21 to 25 yrs old	4	5%
26 to 30 yrs old	3	4%
31 to 35 yrs old	3	4%
36 to 40 yrs old	8	11%
41 to 45 yrs old	12	16%
46 to 50 yrs old	13	17%
51 to 55 yrs old	13	17%
56 to 60 yrs old	14	19%
61 yrs old and above	5	7%
Sex		
Female	73	97%
Male	2	3%
Civil Status		
Married	49	66%
Single	11	15%
Widow	13	16%
Separated	2	3%
Educational Attainment		
College Level	10	13%
College	59	79%
With MA Units	2	3%
MA Graduate	4	5%
Length of Service		
5 yrs and below	15	20%
6 to 10 yrs	21	28%
11 to 15 yrs	8	11%
16 to 20 yrs	13	17%
21 to 25 yrs	7	9%
26 to 30 yrs	6	8%
31 to 35 yrs	5	7%
Relevant ECCD Trainings Attended		
5 trainings and below	27	36%
6 to 10 trainings	29	39%
11 to 15 trainings	11	15%
16 trainings and above	8	10%

Supporting this, Irma et al. (2024) emphasized that while most daycare teachers across the Philippines are also female and hold baccalaureate degrees, many are not explicitly trained in Early Childhood Education. His study further confirmed that the sociodemographic profile of teachers significantly correlates with preschoolers'

academic performance, highlighting the importance of teacher qualifications and preparedness in delivering quality ECCD services.

Table 2. *Level of Quality-of-Service Implementation of ECCD*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Facilitation of the ECCD Curriculum	4.76	0.33	Outstandingly Implemented
Safety and Health Management	4.84	0.21	Outstandingly Implemented
Learning Environment	4.67	0.38	Outstandingly Implemented
Classroom Supervision and Discipline	4.86	0.20	Outstandingly Implemented
Partnership with Parents, and Communities	4.79	0.26	Outstandingly Implemented
Overall	4.78	0.21	Outstandingly Implemented

Table 2 presents the assessment of the quality-of-service implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) program across barangays in Digos City for the school year 2024–2025. The findings show that all five key areas were rated as outstandingly implemented, with a grand overall mean of 4.78 (SD = 0.218), indicating exemplary delivery of ECCD services. Facilitation of ECCD Curriculum received a mean score of 4.76 (SD = 0.33), suggesting that teachers effectively addressed children's cognitive, affective, physical, social, and cultural development. This aligns with Henderson et al. (2022), who emphasized integrated, play-based learning as critical to early childhood education. In addition, Safety and Health Management scored the highest with a mean of 4.84 (SD = 0.215), indicating that emergency protocols, health records, and vaccination tracking were well-managed. Duncan and Magnuson (2023) support that such practices create safe environments that enhance children's well-being. Moreover, Learning Environment received a mean of 4.67 (SD = 0.38), reflecting well-organized, resource-rich classrooms. This supports Castillo's (2023) call for engaging, secure, and stimulating learning spaces. Further, Classroom Supervision and Discipline earned a mean of 4.86 (SD = 0.208), showing effective routine implementation and behavior management. Bakken et al. (2017) emphasized that structure and consistent feedback foster responsibility and positive behavior in young learners. Furthermore, Partnership with Families and Communities had a mean of 4.79 (SD = 0.260), demonstrating strong parental engagement through orientations and regular meetings. Tang et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of teacher-parent collaboration in promoting children's holistic development. Overall, the outstanding ECCD implementation in Digos City reflects strong teacher commitment, active community involvement, and sufficient resource support. Consistent with studies by Witte et al. (2021) and Jabbar (2021), this level of service positively contributes to children's cognitive, emotional, and social growth. Digos City's model may serve as a benchmark for other LGUs aiming to enhance ECCD delivery and outcomes.

Table 3. *Level of Parents' Satisfaction Feedback on the Quality-of-Service Implementation of the ECCD Program*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Facilitation of the ECCD Curriculum	4.69	0.53	Very satisfied
Safety and Health Management	4.61	0.53	Very satisfied
Learning Environment	4.58	0.58	Very satisfied
Classroom Supervision and Discipline	4.70	0.55	Very satisfied
Partnership with Parents, and Communities	4.65	0.59	Very satisfied
Overall	4.65	0.53	Very satisfied

Table 3 presents the level of parents' satisfaction with implementing the ECCD program in Digos City for the school year 2024–2025. Overall, parents rated the quality of service as very satisfactory, with a grand mean of 4.65 (SD = 0.535), indicating that services exceeded their expectations across all assessed areas. Among the five domains, Classroom Supervision and Discipline received the highest satisfaction rating, with a mean of 4.70 (SD = 0.551). This suggests strong parental approval of the structured daily routines and the teachers' commitment to developing literacy and positive behavior among preschool learners. This finding supports the National Child Development Council (NCDC, 2023), which linked effective classroom management with improved learner outcomes and parental trust.

In contrast, Learning Environment scored the lowest, though still rated very satisfactory, with a mean of 4.58 (SD = 0.581). While parents appreciated the organization of learning materials and the cleanliness and safety of the classroom, this slightly lower score may suggest opportunities for further enhancement in physical space or educational resources. Allen and Fraser (2007) also emphasized that stimulating and well-maintained environments significantly influence children's development and parents' perceptions. In addition, Facilitation of the ECCD Curriculum earned a mean of 4.69 (SD = 0.536), showing parents' intense satisfaction with how the program addressed multiple developmental domains. Bentley et al. (2023) found that such satisfaction

encourages greater parental involvement, which reinforces children's learning at home. Moreover, Safety and Health Management was rated at 4.61 (SD = 0.534), indicating parents' confidence in teachers' attention to medical records, vaccination tracking, and emergency protocols. This aligns with Alcantara and Reyes (2023), who observed that parent trust in health and safety practices supports the successful implementation of early childhood programs. Lastly, Partnership with Parents and Communities received a mean rating of 4.65 (SD = 0.590), reflecting high satisfaction levels with parent-teacher communication, regular meetings, and collaborative problem-solving. Lippard et al. (2018) emphasized that such partnerships are essential for building trust and promoting a supportive learning environment. In summary, parents expressed consistently high satisfaction across all areas of ECCD implementation, with the highest approval in classroom discipline and the lowest, though still strong, feedback on the learning environment. These findings suggest that while current practices are effective, continued efforts to enhance physical learning spaces and resources could further strengthen ECCD outcomes.

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the data gathered, the study draws several key conclusions. Barangay Day Care teachers in Digos City are predominantly female, mainly within the 56–60 age range, married, college graduates, and have participated in 6 to 10 ECCD trainings—indicating a highly experienced and professionally committed workforce. The overall implementation of the ECCD program in the city's barangays is rated as outstanding, demonstrating effective execution in curriculum facilitation, safety, classroom management, and community involvement. Additionally, parents reported high satisfaction with the services provided, reflecting strong stakeholder trust and alignment in early childhood education. Notably, while all service indicators received high ratings, the learning environment emerged with the lowest score, albeit still favorable. This suggests there is potential for further enhancement in day care settings' physical and instructional aspects.

This study contributes significantly to knowledge and practice by offering localized, evidence-based insights into ECCD implementation and stakeholder perception at the barangay level—an area often overlooked in broader national evaluations. The findings can guide policymakers, local government units, and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in sustaining successful strategies while identifying areas that require targeted improvement. In particular, the study recommends greater investment in improving learning environments to support holistic child development further and uphold the high standards of ECCD service delivery.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The researcher conceptualized the study, designed the methodology, collected and analyzed the data, and drafted the manuscript. The thesis adviser guided the research process, offering critical input on the findings' design, analysis, and interpretation. The panel members reviewed the study during the proposal and final defense, offering constructive feedback that helped improve the quality and rigor of the research. The grammar editor reviewed the manuscript for clarity, coherence, and grammatical accuracy. The statisticians assisted in selecting appropriate statistical tools, analyzing the data, and interpreting the results accurately.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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