

## The Exploration of Preschool Teachers' Understanding of the Role of Socio-Emotional Development in School Readiness

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**Abstract :** Socio-emotional development is considered to be an essential prerequisite for school readiness. To our best knowledge, research on socio-emotional development specifically from the views of teachers in the South African context is limited. This study explored preschool teachers' understanding of the role that socio-emotional development plays in preparing the child for school. Using the social learning theory, a qualitative approach with an exploratory design was used for the study. A total of 12 preschool teachers from both community-based and school-based preschools were purposively recruited. Upon receiving ethics clearance from the University of the Western Cape and the Western Cape Education Department, semi-structured interviews were conducted and analysed by utilizing Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis. Participants' rights, anonymity, and confidentiality were upheld throughout the research process. Findings reveal that preschool teachers emphasise the importance of holistic development for school readiness. Teachers deemed socio-emotional development as absolutely crucial for preparing children for school as it eases the transition to formal schooling and adaptation to the classroom environment.

**Keywords :** early childhood, preschool teachers, school readiness, socio-emotional development

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