

## Teacher-Child Interactions within Learning Contexts in Prekindergarten

**Authors :** Angélique Laurent, Marie-Josée Letarte, Jean-Pascal Lemelin, Marie-France Morin

**Abstract :** This study aims at exploring teacher-child interactions within learning contexts in public prekindergartens of the province of Québec (Canada). It is based on previous research showing that teacher-child interactions in preschools have direct and determining effects on the quality of early childhood education and could directly or indirectly influence child development. However, throughout a typical preschool day, children experience different learning contexts to promote their learning opportunities. Depending on these specific contexts, teacher-child interactions could vary, for example, between free play and shared book reading. Indeed, some studies have found that teacher-directed or child-directed contexts might lead to significant variations in teacher-child interactions. This study drew upon both the bioecological and the Teaching Through Interactions frameworks. It was conducted through a descriptive and correlational design. Fifteen teachers were recruited to participate in the study. At Time 1 in October, they completed a diary to report the learning contexts they proposed in their classroom during a typical week. At Time 2, seven months later (May), they were videotaped three times in the morning (two weeks' time between each recording) during a typical morning class. The quality of teacher-child interactions was then coded with the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) through the contexts identified. This tool measures three main domains of interactions: emotional support, classroom organization, and instruction support, and 10 dimensions scored on a scale from 1 (low quality) to 7 (high quality). Based on the teachers' reports, five learning contexts were identified: 1) shared book reading, 2) free play, 3) morning meeting, 4) teacher-directed activity (such as craft), and 5) snack. Based on preliminary statistical analyses, little variation was observed within the learning contexts for each domain of the CLASS. However, the instructional support domain showed lower scores during specific learning contexts, specifically free play and teacher-directed activity. Practical implications for how preschool teachers could foster specific domains of interactions depending on learning contexts to enhance children's social and academic development will be discussed.

**Keywords :** teacher practices, teacher-child interactions, preschool education, learning contexts, child development

**Conference Title :** ICEP 2023 : International Conference on Educational Psychology

**Conference Location :** Paris, France

**Conference Dates :** June 22-23, 2023