

## Effect of Male and Female Early Childhood Teacher's Educational Practices on Child' Social Adaptation

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**Abstract :** Internationally in early childhood education (ECE), the great majority of teachers are women. Some groups believe that a greater male teacher presence in ECE would be beneficial for children, specifically for boys as it could offer a positive male model. It is a common belief that children would benefit from being exposed to both male and female models. Some believe that women are naturally better suited to offer quality care to young children comparatively to men. Some authors bring forth that after equivalent training, differences in the educational practices are purely individual and do not depend on the teacher's gender. Others believe that a greater male presence in ECE would increase the risk of pedophilia or child abuse. The few scientific studies in this area suggest that differences could exist between male and female ECE teacher, in particular when it comes to play which is the mainstay of the ECE educational program. Male teachers describe themselves as being more playful and having a greater tendency to initiate physical and turbulent play comparatively to female teachers, who describe themselves as favoring games that are calmer and focused on social interaction. Observed directly, male teachers appear more actively engaged in play with children and propose more motor play than female teachers. Furthermore children who have both male and female teachers for one year show less behavior difficulties when compared to children with only female teachers. Despite a variety of viewpoints we don't know if the educational practices of male ECE teachers, (emotional support, classroom organization or instructional support) are different than the educational practices of female teachers and if these practices are linked with children's adaptation. This study compares the educational practices of 37 ECE teachers (57 % male) and analyses the link with children' social adaptation (n=221). Educational practices were assessed through observational measurements with the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) in a natural class environment. Child social adaptation was assessed with the Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation (SCBE). Observational data reveals no differences between men's and women's scale of the CLASS. Results using Multilevel models analyses suggest that the ability to propose good classroom organization and give good instructional support are linked with better child' social adaptation, and that is always true for men and women teachers. The results are discussed on the basis of their potential impact on future educational interventions.

**Keywords :** child social adaptation, early childhood education, educational practices, men teacher

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