

Abstract

Given the problem of the high incidence of challenging behavior in young children, there may be an association between teachers' self-efficacy to constructively deal with children's challenging behavior and the frequency of children's challenging behavior, which thereby may be affecting expulsion rates. This study was designed to determine whether or not a professional learning community would increase teachers' self-reported, self-efficacy when supporting children with challenging behaviors.

The study employed an experimental design using a pre- and post-treatment survey which was designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. There were a total of 40 preschool teachers who participated in the study who were randomly assigned into two groups: (a) the treatment group received three professional development sessions, which were on self-regulation in young children, positive reinforcement, and reducing power struggles and (b) the control group, which was given three articles to read on block building and make-believe play, science, and cooperative games in preschool classrooms.

Participants in the treatment group indicated they noticed a difference in challenging behaviors after implementing the strategies learned from the workshops. Teachers in the treatment group showed an increase in self-efficacy in the following areas: coping with unpredictability, teacher leadership and classroom issues. Participants in the control group noticed a difference in challenging behaviors as well as showed an increase in self-efficacy in dealing with challenging children. Professional learning communities may increase preschool teachers' self-efficacy as well as help them learned to be more passionate and understanding for the children in their classrooms.