

# PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM EXEMPLAR FOR THE CITY GOVERNMENT OF MAKATI IN PARTNERSHIP WITH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DEPED) SCHOOLS DIVISION OFFICE: BASIS AND INPUTS FOR THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF AN ENHANCED MAKATI PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

\*Neil Vincent Cedilla Sandoval

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**Corresponding Author:** Neil Vincent Cedilla Sandoval; doi:10.46360/cosmos.ahc.520241004

## Abstract

The study determined the development status of Makati Pre-Kindergarten Program beneficiaries based on the Early Childhood Care and Development domains, as well as the success of the pre-kindergarten education's initial implementation. It used a mixed-method design. Purposive sampling was used by the researcher to select study participants. Six hundred fifteen pre-school students were chosen as study respondents, and 47 participants were chosen for interviews. The study found that the first assessment of pre-kindergarten pupils' development status was noticeable at average development, but there were a noticeable number of pupils who were at slight to significant delay development based on the ECCD domains. The comparison of the first and last assessments, based on the ECCD domains, confirmed that the Pre-Kindergarten Program is adequate in preparing children aged 3 to 5 for more formal schooling. Significant improvements in gross motor skills, fine motor skills, self-help, expressive language, cognitive, and socio-emotional development were observed in pre-kindergarten students. Pre-kindergarten students, on the other hand, were stuck. Furthermore, participants stated that the program was very beneficial due to the provision of learning materials/resources, cooperation among stakeholders such as parents, local government unit, and teachers; however, some factors hampered its implementation. There may be circumstances during implementation that are beyond human control, such as a problem with a stable internet connection. The participants concentrated on improving the classroom activities. It was emphasized that more interactive activities that develop the child's social aspect, as well as the integration of values into teaching, should be provided. Children ages 3 to 5 should enroll in pre-kindergarten because it provides adequate activities and experiences to prepare them for kindergarten. It is also recommended that pre-kindergarten teachers must acquire appropriate competencies skills in dealing with pre-kindergarten students. Consultation with other professionals, such as an educational psychologist, speech therapist, and so on, is recommended for optimal Pre-Kindergarten Program implementation. Parent-teacher involvement will be increased because it contributes significantly to the overall development of Pre-Kindergarten students. For improved learning outcomes, it is recommended that the Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum be reviewed.

**Keywords:** Pre-Kindergarten Implementation, Program Exemplar, Early Childhood and Development Domains, Early Childhood Education, Program Management.

## Introduction

Republic Act No. 10533 outlines the K-12 Basic Education Program, extending from Kindergarten through Senior High School, yet disregards preschool programs offered by private institutions. This study's focus stems from this oversight, coupled with considerations of the Early Years Act (EYA) of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10410) and critiques of the Philippine educational system. Exploring the EYA Law of 2013 presents an opportunity for Makati City, in collaboration with the Department of Education, to spearhead an education program catering to learners before kindergarten to ensure readiness. The significance of early education is emphasized by its pivotal role in brain development, prompting educators and researchers to seek optimal methods for young children.

Research underscores the positive influence of preschool programs on children's academic success, with enduring benefits extending to high school graduation rates, workforce participation, family stability, and reduced criminal behavior. Despite these recognized advantages, pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) programs are often insufficiently assessed, especially at the national level, revealing discrepancies in enrollment data. The social, behavioral, and health-related benefits of Pre-K programs are frequently undervalued, impeding efforts to achieve equity among diverse demographics.

Acknowledging the importance of early childhood education, this study aims to assess and improve Pre-K education within Makati's public school system. Through a thorough evaluation, the study

\*Ph.D. Schools Division Office of Makati City, Department of Education and St. Paul University, Manila, Philippines.

will pinpoint existing gaps and obstacles, striving to formulate a tailored Pre-K model aligned with Makati's specific requirements. By gauging the proposed model's impact on cognitive, physical, and social development, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the efficacy of early childhood education locally.

Moreover, the study seeks to propose evidence-based policy recommendations to enhance Pre-K education accessibility and quality, particularly for children from low-income families. By emphasizing advanced concepts and principles in curriculum design and instructional supervision, the study aims to elevate early childhood education practices. Crucially, it aims to bridge a gap in current research literature by offering a localized perspective on Pre-K education within the Philippine public school system, thereby deepening understanding of early childhood development.

### Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored in Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, emphasizing learning through observation and experience, alongside Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, and Attachment Theory. It argues that assessment outcomes in pre-kindergarten education are shaped not only by individual abilities but also by contextual factors like socio-emotional context and ecological systems. This aligns with

Bronfenbrenner's view of human development within interconnected systems. Attachment Theory is utilized to explore the impact of early emotional bonds on socio-emotional skills. Expanding Bandura's notion of self-efficacy, the study investigates its role in enhancing socio-emotional development and educational effectiveness in the pre-kindergarten environment. By contextualizing these theories within the Philippine educational setting, the study aims to fill the gap in localized research and provide insights into socio-emotional development and Pre-K education in Makati City, Philippines.

### Conceptual Framework

The study is guided by an IPO schematic diagram, focusing on Input, Process, and Output. It employs a mixed-method design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data is gathered through e-surveys assessing Pre-Kindergarten pupils' development status, analyzed using frequency distribution tables, and supplemented by existing research. Qualitative investigation delves into strengths, weaknesses, and perceived improvements in the Makati Pre-Kindergarten Program, gathering insights from credible sources. Qualitative data is collected through online surveys and analyzed using textual and thematic methods. The findings from both approaches inform the development of the Program Exemplar, serving as the study's output.

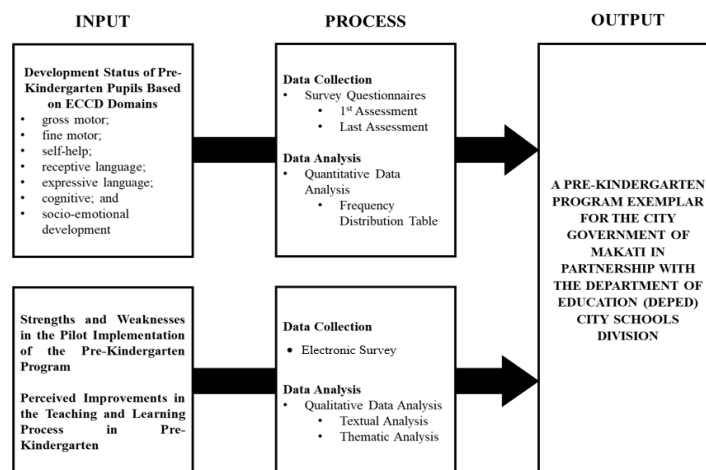


Figure 1: Research Paradigm

### Statement of The Problem

situation of Medical English teaching in higher This study developed a pre-kindergarten program exemplar based on the results of the pilot implementation of the Makati Pre-Kindergarten Program. Specifically, this purported to answer the following:

1. What is the development status of the pupils who completed the Pre-K program based on the Early Childhood Care and Development

(ECCD) checklist domains on the 1st assessment:

- 1.1. gross motor;
- 1.2. fine motor;
- 1.3. self-help;
- 1.4. receptive language;
- 1.5. expressive language;
- 1.6. cognitive; and
- 1.7. socio-emotional development?

2. What is the development status of the pupils who completed the Pre-Kindergarten program based on the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) checklist domains on the last assessment:
  - a) gross motor;
  - b) fine motor;
  - c) self-help;
  - d) receptive language;
  - e) expressive language;
  - f) cognitive; and
  - g) socio-emotional development?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses experienced in the pilot implementation of the Makati Pre-Kindergarten Program as perceived by:
  - a) education department officials;
  - b) Pre-Kindergarten teachers; and
  - c) parents?
4. What improvements can be made to the teaching-learning processes of the Makati Pre-Kindergarten Program as perceived by:
  - a) education department officials;
  - b) Pre-Kindergarten teachers;
  - c) Kindergarten teachers; and
  - d) parents?
5. What pre-kindergarten program exemplar can be developed and implemented in the City of Makati based on the results of the study?

### Scope and Delimitation

This study focuses on evaluating the developmental progress of beneficiaries of the Makati Pre-Kindergarten Program across seven domains outlined in the ECCD Checklist. It aims to create an exemplary pre-kindergarten program based on the pilot implementation's outcomes. The research is limited to Makati City, where the program was conducted, targeting children aged 3.5 to 5 years who completed the program from December 2020 to May 2022. It primarily examines the developmental status of these children and gathers perspectives from education department officials, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers, and parents regarding the program's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Participants include 615 pre-

kindergarten pupils from the first three batches, along with education department officials, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers, and parents involved in the program. Data collection will rely on documentary analysis of ECCD Checklists and researcher-made digital tools.

### Methodology

The study employed a mixed-method research design, starting with a quantitative phase followed by a qualitative phase, utilizing the explanatory method. Initially, demographic profiles were analyzed using quantitative methods, then thematic analysis was employed to explore correlations and differences between variables. Participants included three batches of pre-kindergarten students, their parents, education officials, and teachers. The study location was chosen due to the availability of a preschool program and cooperation from the Department of Education. Data collection involved the ECCD checklist and an interview guide questionnaire, both validated by expert validators. Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent, ensuring participant withdrawal rights, and maintaining data confidentiality. Data analysis included both quantitative (e.g., MS Excel for demographic analysis) and qualitative (thematic analysis) methods. Quality assurance measures were implemented throughout the research process, including data storage protocols and validation of research instruments. Dissemination of results involved academic journals, conferences, policy briefs, and community outreach. Ethical considerations regarding researcher qualifications, informed consent, assent, vulnerability management, recruitment, and participant follow-up were meticulously addressed.

### Result and Discussion

Analysis and interpretation of data using frequency and percentage distribution reveal the following significant findings of the study:

#### Development Status of the Pupils who Completed the Pre-K Program based on the Early Childhood Care and Development Domains on the 1st Assessment.

**Table 1: Frequency Distribution of the Overall Development Status per Domain of the Pupils who Completed the Pre-K Program based on the Early Childhood Care and Development Domains on the 1<sup>st</sup> Assessment**

Interpretation of Scaled Scores	Gross Motor	Fine Motor	Self-Help	Receptive	Expressive	Cognitive	Socio-emotional
<i>Suggest significant delay in the overall development</i>	0	0	0	15	0	9	25
<i>Suggest a slight delay in the overall development</i>	2	30	26	38	211	236	188
<i>Average development</i>	613	585	556	562	404	370	402
<i>Suggest slightly advanced development</i>	0	0	33	0	0	0	0
<i>Suggest highly advanced development</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>615</b>

Table 1 presents the frequency distribution of students' overall development status across various domains based on the ECCD assessment. In the gross motor domain, all students demonstrated average development, indicating typical progress in physical coordination. However, in the fine motor domain, while most students showed average development, a few displayed slight delays. Similarly, in the self-help domain, the majority exhibited average development, with a small portion showing slight delays. In receptive language, a notable number of students showed delays, while expressive language saw a higher frequency of delayed development. Cognitive development mostly fell within the average range, with a few cases of significant delays. Socio-emotional

development displayed a mix of average and slightly delayed progress. These findings underscore the heterogeneous nature of children's development across different domains, echoing previous research by DeWitt et al. (2016) and Hitti et al. (2019), which highlights variability in developmental trajectories. Furthermore, studies by Jones (2018), Raval et al. (2017), and Chen et al. (2015) emphasize the multifaceted influences on children's development, suggesting interventions should consider both genetic and environmental factors to effectively support children's overall growth.

**Development Status of the Pupils who Completed the Pre-K Program based on the Early Childhood Care and Development Domains on the Last Assessment**

**Table 2: Frequency Distribution of the Overall Development Status per Domain of the Pupils who Completed the Pre-K Program based on the Early Childhood Care and Development Domains on the Last Assessment**

<b>Interpretation of Scaled Scores</b>	<b>Gross Motor</b>	<b>Fine Motor</b>	<b>Self-Help</b>	<b>Receptive</b>	<b>Expressive</b>	<b>Cognitive</b>	<b>Socio-emotional</b>
<i>Suggest significant delay in the overall development</i>	0	0	0	15	0	1	2
<i>Suggest a slight delay in the overall development</i>	0	1	5	38	123	102	96
<i>Average development</i>	615	614	484	562	492	512	517
<i>Suggest slightly advanced development</i>	0	0	126	0	0	0	0
<i>Suggest highly advanced development</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>615</b>

Table 2 outlines the frequency distribution of pupils' overall development across different domains based on their final assessment in the Pre-K program. In the Gross Motor and Fine Motor domains, the vast majority of pupils exhibited average development, with minimal instances of delay observed. However, in the Self-Help domain, a few pupils showed slight delays, indicating the need for targeted support. Notably, in the Receptive and Expressive Language domains, some pupils exhibited delays, emphasizing the importance of language development interventions. The Cognitive domain generally showed average development among pupils, with minimal delays observed. Conversely, in the Socio-emotional domain, a notable number of pupils demonstrated slight delays. These findings underscore the necessity for tailored interventions to address specific developmental needs, particularly in areas such as self-help and expressive language skills.

delays and designing targeted interventions. Perry et al. (2018) advocate for comprehensive assessments covering social-emotional, cognitive, and language skills. Jones (2018) highlights the typical developmental trajectory of children aged 3 to 5, corroborating the findings of average development in this study. Furthermore, Phillips et al. (2017) emphasize the positive impact of pre-K programs, particularly for children from low-income backgrounds. Mistry et al. (2017) and Spiker et al. (2016) underscore the importance of early identification and ongoing monitoring to facilitate timely interventions and support for children experiencing developmental delays.

**Strengths and Weaknesses on the Pilot Implementation of the Pre-K Program**

The researcher held an interview to supplement the quantitative results of the survey. The questions focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the pilot implementation of the Pre-Kindergarten Program. Refer to the table for the results of the thematic analysis:

These results align with existing literature emphasizing the significance of early childhood development across multiple domains. Bates et al. (2018) suggest exploring factors contributing to

**Table 3.1: Themes on the Views of the Participants on the Strengths of the Implementation of Pre-Kindergarten Program**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Narrative</b>	<b>Theme</b>
Education Program Officer 1	Full support of the city government in providing instructional materials	<b>Support given by the City Government</b>
Education Program Officer 2	Complete set of educational materials which were very helpful to the Pupils. Considering that this project is typically seen in the private sector, it is noteworthy that the City Government of Makati and DepEd-Makati provided this kind of initiative to prepare our early childhood learners in the world of play, learning, and activities.	
Parent 17	They gave us the complete modules and a bag full of learning materials for the kids provided by Makati City Government.	<b>Support given by the City Government</b>
Parent 3	All students are provided with educational materials necessary for pre-kinder learning from the City Government of Makati.	
Parent 5	All the supplies needed for the duration of the program were provided by the City Government of Makati City.	
Pre-Kinder Teacher 1	The pre-kindergarten program founded by the City Government assured that the assigned teachers are qualified and capable of teaching children aged 4 wherein the curriculum prepared by them was almost at par with kindergarten.	<b>Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment</b>
Pre-Kinder Teacher 3	The City government-supplied manipulative learning materials are genuinely appropriate for the learning process of the students and reduce the financial burden on low-income parents.	
Kinder Teacher 1	The City Government of Makati reaches out to Pre-K learners through Online Education. They also have lots of supplies and educational support from the City Govt. that suffice needs to learn. Pandemic times are not an excuse not to achieve education intended for Pre-K learners.	
Education Program Officer 1	Receptiveness of the pre-k teachers in the implementation of the pre-kindergarten program.	
Education Program Officer 2	Ultimately, this program highlights the appropriate early learning experiences which various ECCD practitioners can use as anchors to ensure the delivery of a full range of health, nutrition, social, and early learning services for the child at all levels of development.	
Parent 5	Timely implementation during the pandemic, great opportunity for kids to study while staying at home with competent teachers teaching our kids.	
Parent 7	Since it is online, is easier to attend despite being at home. Teachers were also at their best in teaching.	
Parent 9	It is great that pre-kindergarten learners were still able to learn even if it is through online. It seems they were attending face-to-face class because of the strategies of the teachers.	
Pre-Kindergarten Teacher 2	Using innovative and engaging instructional materials, our students can actively participate and learn effectively in our online classes. Our assessments are also thoughtfully crafted to gauge their understanding and progress, which helps us tailor our teaching methods to further improve their learning outcomes.	
Pre-Kindergarten Teacher 4	I understand the importance of providing a comprehensive curriculum, effective instruction, and ongoing assessment to ensure the academic success of my young students. During these challenging times of the pandemic, we have adapted our teaching approach to accommodate remote learning, and we are committed to ensuring that our students continue to receive quality education while maintaining their safety.	
Pre-Kindergarten Teacher 7	I am grateful that despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, there are still opportunities for the child to learn and grow. With the option to study and learn at home, I can take a more active role on the child's education and ensure that they receive a comprehensive and well-rounded education.	

Kindergarten Teacher 3	Regarding the strengths, it implicates early education to children under 5 years old, be oriented of the activity before kindergarten. It helps children be more recognized and be identified of the simple lesson intended for young learners	
Parent 12	Kids benefited well from the Makati Pre-K program. It prepared my child and drove her interest in studying and most especially developed her social skills thus giving her confidence to mingle with her classmates now that she is in kindergarten.	<b>Give Opportunity to Pre-K Learners and Develop Appropriate Skills Needed</b>
Parent 14	My child started to interact with others virtually and started learning and enhancing her skills.	
Parent 16	Especially she tries to read books and write the alphabet and numbers. We would like to thank you so much for helping my kids to be included in the activity learning program.	
Parent 17	The advantage of the Pre-kindergarten Program is that the children will be able to hone their skills especially in familiarizing the alphabet and numbers.	
Parent 18	The kindergartner learns from physical and social experiences such as learning how to socialize with other kids.	
Kinder Teacher 5	The implementation of the Pre-K program has a great impact on our learners, specifically the readiness of the students in entering school age. At an early age, they are exposed to different lessons which will develop their different skills.	
Kinder Teacher 6	The Makati Pre-kindergarten program prepares the learners as they enter the primary or kindergarten level. This program also helps the learners to adjust and enables them to socialize with others as well. It also promotes social and emotional development.	
Kinder Teacher 4	Students were able to cope easily with the lesson and have background knowledge of the topics. Readiness among children was evident.	
Pre-Kindergarten Teacher 2	The program is nice for students 5 years and below as their first experience of education.	
Parent 1	Teachers are well prepared to handle the Pre-K program in an online platform despite the classes being conducted online. They were still there to help us with our child.	
Parent 2	Good communication skills and interaction of teachers with the students and to us parents whenever we need some clarification.	
Parent 3	Teachers were very approachable and accommodating.	
Parent 8	The school is a child-friendly environment for the pupils. The staff ensures the safety of the kids as well as the quality of education they provide.	
Parent 9	Effective teaching for pre-kinder students coming from the teachers.	
Parent 10	Teachers are patient and collaborative.	
Parent 11	Having a teacher that will guide our children.	
Parent 12	Give more time to our kids and teach them properly.	
Pre-kindergarten Teacher 2	Being able to work and serve again the young learners and impart my knowledge and skills to my team.	
Pre-kindergarten Teacher 11	The strength experienced in the pilot implementation of Makati Pre-K Program is by imparting knowledge in teaching, to be more patient and understanding kids 'different behaviors as well as with the parent. Through online classes, I tried to my pupils to express themselves and build a good rapport with them.	

The study reveals that the pre-kindergarten program in Makati, supported by the City Government, offers robust resources and qualified teachers, almost akin to kindergarten. Despite varied developmental statuses observed among pupils, overall feedback from both teachers and parents is positive,

particularly regarding the program's online format during the pandemic. This echoes prior research affirming the efficacy of online education alongside traditional methods (Mavrou and Papastefanou, 2020). Studies by Lee and Burkam (2022) and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES,

2018) further emphasize the significance of instructional materials and teacher qualifications in early childhood education. Nonetheless, factors like curriculum quality and parental involvement are equally crucial (NCES, 2018). The program's comprehensive support aligns with recommendations from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (Bredenkamp & Copple, 2017), indicating its potential to enhance student learning and development. Positive feedback from both parents and teachers underscores its effectiveness in providing early learning experiences and supporting overall child development.

The Makati Pre-K program receives commendations for its positive impact on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, with stakeholders affirming its role in delivering appropriate early learning experiences, particularly amid the pandemic. Most pupils demonstrate average development upon program completion, reflecting its effectiveness despite challenges. These findings resonate with broader research on the benefits of high-quality pre-kindergarten programs, including improvements in various skills (Barnett and Ackerman, 2016). Positive attitudes toward pre-K programs among

parents and teachers align with prior studies (Magnuson et al., 2017; Belfield et al., 2015), highlighting perceived benefits for children's readiness and parental engagement.

The Makati Pre-K program garners praise for fostering social skills, confidence, and a love for learning among children, consistent with research showing the positive effects of early childhood education on various developmental domains (Goldschmied & Jackson, 2020). Its success in preparing children for primary school aligns with broader research emphasizing the importance of early childhood education (Reynolds et al., 2018; Duran and Aragon, 2017).

Lastly, the program's effective teaching methods and child-friendly environment receive accolades from parents and teachers, leading to improved social skills and interest in learning. Research highlights the benefits of high-quality pre-kindergarten programs in promoting cognitive and noncognitive skills (Deming et al., 2018) and underscores the importance of positive teacher-child interactions and parental involvement (Pianta et al., 2017; Savage et al., 2020).

**Table 3.2: Themes on the Views of the Participants on the Weaknesses of the Implementation of Pre-Kindergarten Program**

Participant	Narrative	Theme
Education Program Officer 1	Unstable internet connection. Not all teachers are adept in the management of online classes and the parents as well	<b>Unstable Internet Connectivity</b>
Education Program Officer 2	Weak internet connection.	
Parent 11	Slow internet connection of the teachers while they are in the Hub.	
Parent 12	Unexpected Internet connection problems	
Parent 14	Encountered poor internet connection	
Parent 15	The main weakness of the Pre-kindergarten Program is the availability of high-speed internet. There's an instance that my child can't have his online class during Pre-kindergarten because we lack in internet connection.	
Pre-Kinder Teacher 1	Since the program is purely online, sometimes the internet connection is slow	
Pre-Kinder Teacher 4	As a pre-k teacher the only weakness online is those children who cannot attend because of their slow Wi-Fi connection, and as for the teacher, sometimes when the online class is at the same time, the connection is weak.	
Kinder Teacher 4	The modality being used. Not all students have a strong or sufficient internet connection.	
Kinder Teacher 5	Pre-Kindergarten in pandemic times has lots of struggles not with the program itself but with the challenges of teaching using technologies. It is beyond our control when the signal is out or has disconnections.	
Education Program Officer 1	In view of the health pandemic, it is beneficial that this program was launched. However, it is greatly expected to have this in the on-site modality.	<b>Learning Modality</b>
Parent 1	Since my child was only 4 years old when she joined the program, I think it is much more efficient if it will be face to face since at that	

	age, children will be more active when they socialized and have bonding with other kids.	
Parent 3	It is better to have face-to-face so that they can learn more and enjoy the activities.	
Parent 4	It is better if the learning modality is face-to-face.	
Parent 6	For me, the nonphysical classes. No actual interaction with the other kids.	
Parent 8	Not face to face. Children are easily distracted in the house.	
Kinder Teacher 1	The program is executed through online classes. It's better if it's also face-to-face.	
Education Program Officer 1	Not all teachers are adept in the management of online classes.	
Parent 9	Since it is online, kids are quite distracted and need assistance from their parents to make them focus on the class.	
Parent 11	As our time it is online classes, some kids just don't comprehend or pay attention while in an online class. The conduct of online class is not good for my kid.	<b>Problems in Curriculum, Instruction, &amp; Assessment.</b>
Parent 13	There are several students in a class and since it is online, some classes end later than scheduled to give time for everyone to finish activities. Also, for the ECCD, we parents do not know how students are being assessed.	
Parent 14	Maybe for teaching methods of our great teachers, to how to handle toddlers. Because the instruction was conducted online, teachers were not able to assess our kids properly.	
Parent 16	Too short duration	
Parent 17	The number of students in a class. No. of students should be lesser to be able to assess each student properly. This affects instructions.	
Parent 18	But they only teach, and they don't know if the students understand their lessons sometimes when pre-kindergarten graduates and become grade1 they don't know anything.	
Parent 19	Quality of education is much lower, and much more stressful to me and my child.	
Parent 20	I found the online class as a weakness as it lacks the socio-development for the child.	
Pre-Kinder Teacher 1	Being conscious in some aspect of how to start with. e.g manner of conducting online classes after the pandemic, the learners themselves and the connection towards guardians.	
Pre-Kinder Teacher 3	No Physical Interaction with the students. Hard to assess the weaknesses and strengths of the students.	
Pre-Kinder Teacher 4	Weaknesses encountered in the pilot implementation of the Makati Pre-Kindergarten Program included the fact that, as preschool teachers, we confront a variety of new and novel challenges daily while addressing the diverse requirements of toddlers.	
Kinder Teacher 4	Have a bigger number of pupils to cater, unfortunately I was one of those who is handling some children with behavioral disorders. It's kind a challenging to a teacher to perform its role when she/he is the only who's managing the classroom with mount an aid.	

The findings of this study shed light on several crucial aspects affecting the success of online pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs. Firstly, unstable internet connectivity emerged as a significant challenge for both teachers and students, hindering their ability to fully engage in online classes and potentially leading to missed learning opportunities. These findings underscore the critical importance of stable and strong internet connections

for the effectiveness of such programs. Existing literature corroborates these findings, highlighting the adverse impact of poor internet access on student learning and achievement (Cox et al., 2017; Gee et al., 2018; Pasek et al., 2019). Addressing this issue requires investment in infrastructure and providing necessary technology to ensure equitable access to online education, as observed in studies by Chawinga (2017) and Kim et al. (2020).



Secondly, the preference for face-to-face education among education program officers, parents, and teachers was evident, particularly for young children. This preference stems from the potential benefits of face-to-face interaction, such as enhanced socialization and engagement in interactive activities. Despite the advantages of face-to-face education, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the need to balance these benefits with health and safety considerations, as discussed in studies by Rigg and Rigg (2017) and Hofferth et al. (2018).

Lastly, challenges in curriculum, instruction, and assessment were identified in the online education setting, including difficulties in managing online classes, lack of student attention and comprehension, and limited opportunities for

physical interaction and socio-development. While online education presents certain challenges, its effectiveness can vary based on design and support, as highlighted in studies by Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2018) and Garrison et al. (2020). Educators and policymakers must carefully weigh the benefits and challenges of online education to determine the most suitable approach for young learners.

**Suggested Improvements for the Implementation of the Program**

The researcher held an interview to supplement the quantitative results of the survey. The questions focused on the improvements on the pilot implementation of the Pre-Kindergarten Program. Refer to the table for the results of the thematic analysis:

**Table 4: Themes on the Views of the Participants on the Improvements of the Implementation of Pre-Kindergarten Program**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Narrative</b>	<b>Theme</b>
Education Program Officer 1	Sharing of best teaching practices and regular conduct of meeting with the teachers to discuss the issues and concerns regarding the implementation of online classes. Maximize the assessment result to improve the teaching and learning process.	<b>Improvement of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.</b>
Education Program Officer 2	Curriculum-values infusion in the modules. Instruction-Should sticks to one medium of instruction like Filipino because, in kindergarten, they use Filipino. Assessment-No formal assessment. ECCD is not enough to measure one’s ability.	
Parent 4	Lessen the no. of students per class in that way, teacher can be understood and kids will receive quality education.	
Parent 6	Limit the number of students (10 per class) so that everybody will be given a chance to showcase their knowledge.	
Parent 8	The classes are all in the Filipino language which is still ok but incorporating English will also not be bad at all. Explain the assessment of teachers so parents know the ECCD and how teachers came up with the scores.	
Parent 10	In terms of curriculum, I think it is best for the children to master the phonetics or sounds of the alphabet so that children will be able to read in faster method.	
Parent 15	A proper assessment of teaching and guidance for the children’s behavior.	
Parent 17	More fun activities for kids in helping them with their studies.	
Pre-Kinder Teacher 3	Having additional resources, the extension of the learners’ schedule, and be provided the right environment to further have encouraged them to continue within the program.	
Kinder Teacher 5	Providing pre-k teachers more trainings and seminars in conducting classes online and pedagogical skills/competencies.	
Education Program Officer 1	To adopt the full in-person classes to unleash the full potential of the learner.	<b>Conduct of In Person Classes</b>
Parent 2	Face-to-face learning for me will be more efficient than online and modular classes.	
Parent 4	Face-to-face class. Good thing it is now implemented.	
Pre-Kinder Teacher 1	If possible, limited face-to-face classes so that those Makatizens who are incapable to join the online class can also enjoy the program offered by the government.	

Pre-Kinder 3	Teacher	Face-to-face learning is important to the kids, to be more independent and their emotional and social behavior be developed also to assess the instructional needs of the pupils necessary for their learning.	<b>Provision of Strong Internet Connectivity</b>
Education Officer 1	Program	Strong internet connection, provision of bigger space so as not to disrupt other teachers that are conducting online classes.	
Parent 1		Learning materials are all good just improve internet bandwidth.	
Parent 5		Provide a strong and stable internet/data connection.	
Parent 6		To have a stable internet connection and f2f class so that children can learn more	
Pre-Kinder 2	Teacher	To improve, even more, upgrade the Wi-Fi connection and give more space to the pre-k teachers where they go online so as not to disturb other teachers.	
Pre-Kinder 12	Teacher	The internet allowance for students and teachers makes it highspeed.	
Pre-Kinder 16	Teacher	We recommend a good internet connection, new laptops, classroom for children to have face-to-face classes for they can interact & socialize with their classmates & develop their thinking and reasoning.	

The findings of the study revealed several key themes regarding the improvement of online pre-kindergarten and kindergarten education programs. Firstly, participants highlighted the need for enhancements in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, emphasizing the importance of sharing best practices, consistent instruction mediums, formal assessments, and support for parents and teachers. Literature, such as Pace et al. (2020) and Garrison et al. (2020), supports these notions, although some research, like Zhang et al. (2017), suggests varying effects, particularly concerning class size reduction.

Secondly, there was a preference among education stakeholders for face-to-face education, citing benefits like socialization and interactive learning. This preference aligns with research by Johnson and Johnson (2011) and Slavin (2013), which underscores the effectiveness of face-to-face interaction and collaborative learning methods.

Lastly, the significance of strong internet connectivity emerged as a crucial factor affecting online education effectiveness. Research, including studies by Barak et al. (2020) and Bower et al. (2019), underscores the impact of internet quality and technology access on student performance in online learning environments. In conclusion, educators and policymakers should consider these findings and associated literature when devising strategies to optimize online education experiences, recognizing the multifaceted nature of the challenges and solutions in this domain.

## Conclusion

Based on the significant findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Initial assessments showed average development in pre-kindergarten pupils, with some exhibiting slight to significant developmental delays across ECCD domains.
2. Comparative analysis indicated the Pre-Kindergarten Program effectively prepares children aged 3.5 - 5 for formal schooling, evidenced by significant improvements in gross and fine motor skills, self-help, language, cognition, and socio-emotional development.
3. Participants highlighted program benefits such as learning materials and stakeholder cooperation but identified implementation challenges, including unstable internet connectivity.
4. Suggestions for improvement focus on enhancing classroom activities to foster social development and integrating values into teaching methodologies.

## Recommendations

In conclusion, the following recommendations are proposed based on the study's findings and conclusions:

1. Encourage enrollment of children aged 3-5 in pre-kindergarten to adequately prepare them for kindergarten.
2. Provide Pre-Kindergarten teachers with necessary competencies and skills, including consultation with educational psychologists and speech therapists for optimal program implementation.
3. Enhance Parent-Teacher involvement to positively impact the overall development of pre-kindergarten pupils.
4. Implement the Pre-Kindergarten Program emphasizing strengths and addressing weaknesses, while continuously striving for improvement.

- Future research should focus on longitudinal studies, comparative analyses, assessments of parent-teacher involvement, investigations into teacher professional development, innovative teaching methods, and cross-disciplinary collaborations to support holistic pre-kindergarten pupil development.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in this manuscript.

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