

Experiences of Early Childhood Teachers in Building and Nurturing Parental Confidence

Ruth C. Landawe¹; Dr. Cindy B. Rosil²

^{1,2}Graduate School Students, College Professor, Rizal Memorial Colleges, Philippines

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Abstract: This study explored how teachers foster trust and collaboration with parents in early learning settings. Anchored on a qualitative phenomenological design, the research involved ten (10) early childhood teachers from Manobisa Elementary School in Magpet, North Cotabato. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, then analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis. Findings revealed three positive experiences: Creating a warm and welcoming classroom environment, building confidence through visible progress, and celebrating small wins in parent engagement with three challenges: Overcoming parental hesitation and distrust, dealing with communication barriers, and managing unrealistic expectations from parents. Teachers addressed these challenges through coping strategies such as building trust gradually through consistent engagement, adapting communication approaches to parent contexts, and clarifying roles through transparent dialogue. Insights revealed that consistent communication, empathy, and simple involvement activities are key in sustaining parental confidence. The study emphasizes the importance of trust-based relationships in early childhood education and provides recommendations for stakeholders to strengthen home-school collaboration.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education Teachers, Building and Nurturing, Parental Confidence.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Trust between early childhood teachers and parents is essential in creating a strong foundation for a child's learning and development. Establishing and maintaining this trust requires intentional strategies that foster open communication, collaboration, and parental involvement. Parental confidence, which refers to the trust parents place in teachers to educate and care for their children, strengthens when this partnership is rooted in mutual respect and responsiveness. When parents have confidence in their child's teacher, they are more likely to engage in school activities, support learning at home, and develop a positive relationship with the school community. A strong parent-teacher relationship not only benefits the child's academic progress but also contributes to their social and emotional well-being. Understanding how teachers build and sustain trust with parents can help strengthen early childhood education by promoting meaningful partnerships that support student success.

Globally, establishing trust between parents and educators has been recognized as a fundamental component of effective early childhood education (OECD, 2020). In many countries, educators face challenges in engaging parents due to cultural differences, language barriers, and varying expectations regarding parental involvement. For

instance, in multicultural societies, teachers often encounter difficulties in communicating with parents from different backgrounds, leading to misunderstandings and reduced trust (Tan & Rao, 2021). Additionally, disparities in educational philosophies between parents and schools can create tensions, making it essential for teachers to employ culturally responsive strategies to bridge these gaps and build trust.

Nationally, in the Philippine context, parental involvement in education is deeply rooted in cultural values that emphasize family engagement. However, challenges persist in aligning parental expectations with school practices. A study by Gonzales and Torres (2021) revealed that while Filipino parents are eager to participate in their children's education, they often lack a clear understanding of how to engage effectively, which may lead to misconceptions and diminished trust between parents and educators. Furthermore, technological advancements, though useful in communication, may also lead to impersonal connections that affect the ability of teachers to nurture parental confidence (DuraiPandi, 2024). These challenges are compounded in communities where limited internet access and digital literacy hinder effective communication.

In addition, economic disparities in the Philippines also play a significant role in parental engagement. Families from low-income backgrounds may prioritize livelihood over

active participation in school activities, not due to a lack of interest but because of pressing economic needs. This situation can create a disconnect between parents and teachers, making it imperative for educators to develop empathetic approaches that consider the socioeconomic contexts of families to build trust and encourage involvement (Santos & Reyes, 2022).

Further, in urban areas, particularly, parents' demanding work schedules and socioeconomic responsibilities limit their capacity to participate in school activities (Santos & Reyes, 2022). Families from low-income backgrounds may prioritize livelihood over educational engagement, not from disinterest, but due to economic necessity. These factors can create a disconnect between teachers and parents, making it imperative for educators to adopt flexible and inclusive approaches that recognize the realities of Filipino families and strengthen parental trust.

Technological advancements have introduced both opportunities and challenges in parent-teacher communication. While digital platforms can facilitate timely updates and interactions, they may also lead to impersonal communication, lacking the warmth of face-to-face interactions. Teachers must manage these dynamics carefully, balancing the convenience of technology with the need for personal connection to build and sustain trust with parents (Halis, Bhaumik, & Duraipandi, 2024).

In the local context of Davao City, a study by Estorgio and Rosil (2024) investigating parental involvement in urban elementary schools revealed that while parents value their role in their children's education, they face time constraints and conflicting priorities. They emphasized the need to manage their schedules and intentionally engage with schools. Effective communication between teachers and parents was cited as essential to fulfilling these roles.

However, in more rural areas like North Cotabato, particularly in schools such as Manobisa Elementary School in Magpet, these challenges are more pronounced. Teachers work in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas where parents often have limited presence in school due to distance, livelihood pressures, or cultural norms. The lack of consistent communication and shared understanding can weaken parental confidence and trust in the school system. This setting reveals how critical it is to understand the actual lived experiences of teachers who are actively navigating these dynamics in real time.

Despite these insights, there remains a scarcity of localized studies focusing on the specific strategies that early childhood educators in North Cotabato, particularly in rural and geographically isolated schools, employ to build trust with parents. In many areas such as Magpet, teachers often face unique challenges such as limited access to communication tools, varying levels of parental literacy, and cultural expectations that shape how parents interact with schools. These realities affect the way teachers establish relationships with families, especially in communities where parents are less visible in school activities due to livelihood

demands or distance. This gap in the literature highlights the urgency of conducting research that delves into the real-life experiences of teachers within the distinct cultural, socioeconomic, and geographic contexts of North Cotabato, in order to better understand and strengthen parent-teacher relationships in early childhood education.

➤ *Research Questions*

Establishing trust between early childhood teachers and parents is essential in creating a supportive and collaborative learning environment for young children. However, building and maintaining this trust comes with challenges that teachers must navigate effectively. Understanding the difficulties they encounter, the coping mechanisms they employ, and the insights they gain from these experiences can provide valuable knowledge for improving parent-teacher relationships. This study explores the experiences of early childhood educators to build parental trust by addressing the following research questions:

- What are the experiences of early childhood teachers in building and nurturing parental confidence?
- What coping mechanisms do early childhood teachers employ in building and nurturing parental confidence?
- What insights do early childhood teachers gain from their experiences in building and nurturing parental confidence?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

➤ *Parental Confidence in Schools*

Parental confidence in schools is a multifaceted concept that significantly influences student outcomes and the overall effectiveness of educational institutions. Recent studies have highlighted the critical role of parental involvement in enhancing children's academic performance and self-esteem. For instance, a systematic review by Hill and Tyson (2020) demonstrated that active parental engagement is positively correlated with improved academic achievements among students.

The relationship between parental involvement and student success has been extensively studied. Research indicates that when parents actively participate in their children's education, it leads to better academic outcomes and fosters positive behavioral traits. A comprehensive literature review by Maša Đurišić and Mila Bunijevac (2017) emphasized that schools need to build partnerships with parents and develop mutual responsibility to comply with integrated support systems for students.

Parental confidence is also closely linked to the perceived competence and self-efficacy of parents. Henney (2016) explored the relationship between personality traits and parental confidence among mothers of school-aged children, finding that higher levels of certain personality traits predicted greater parental confidence. Furthermore, the constructs of parenting confidence, self-efficacy, and perceived competence are interrelated and influence how parents engage in parenting behaviors. A delineation by Jones and Prinz (2017) highlighted that these concepts significantly

affect parental involvement and, consequently, children's developmental outcomes.

In addition to individual traits, external factors such as socioeconomic status and family environment play a crucial role in shaping parental involvement and confidence. Studies have shown that parental support enhances students' self-esteem and academic achievement, suggesting that a high level of parental support may boost students' confidence and performance.

The impact of parental involvement extends beyond academic performance. Research by Hill and Tyson (2020) demonstrated that active parental engagement is positively correlated with improved academic achievements among students.

Parental trust and support also enhance students' behavioral learning at school through their general self-esteem, built from the family level. A study by Hill and Tyson (2020) found that parental trust and support significantly contribute to students' learning engagement and academic success.

The Lamb Inquiry (2019) in the UK further underscores the importance of parental confidence in the educational system. The inquiry recommended enhancing parental engagement and trust to improve educational outcomes for children with special educational needs.

Cultural factors also influence parental involvement and confidence. Fisher's research introduced concepts of identification and alertness in parental involvement, highlighting the need for culturally responsive strategies to engage parents effectively.

➤ *Parent - Teacher Partnership in Early Childhood Education*

The partnership between parents and teachers in early childhood education (ECE) is widely acknowledged as a cornerstone for fostering children's development and learning. This collaboration enhances educational outcomes and supports children's social and emotional well-being. Recent studies have delved into various aspects of parent-teacher partnerships, offering insights into effective practices, challenges, and the impact of these collaborations on early learners.

A study by Sisson et al. (2020) utilized a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore pre-service teachers' experiences in engaging with parents of young children. The findings highlighted the importance of building partnerships with parents, emphasizing that such collaborations are crucial for the holistic development of children.

The Reggio Emilia approach, an educational philosophy originating from Italy, underscores the significance of parental involvement in early education. In this approach, parents are viewed as partners, collaborators, and advocates for their children, actively participating in curriculum planning and school activities. This philosophy fosters a

strong sense of community and shared responsibility between parents and educators. Despite the recognized benefits of parent-teacher partnerships, challenges persist in establishing and maintaining these relationships. A review by the Australian Council for Educational Research (2021) identified gaps in existing research regarding educator and parent partnerships, particularly in supporting early childhood educators to collaborate effectively with families. The study emphasized the need for further research to address these challenges and develop strategies to enhance these partnerships.

The quality of parent-teacher relationships can be influenced by various factors, including parent and teacher characteristics, program attributes, and external circumstances. A study by Hindman and Morrison (2022) examined how these factors impacted early childhood parents' ratings of their relationships with teachers. The findings suggest that aspects such as parents' education level, income, and the availability of distance learning options can significantly affect the perceived quality of these relationships.

Effective communication is a pivotal component of successful parent-teacher partnerships. A theoretical approach discussed by Patrikakou and Weissberg (1999) focuses on teachers' responsibilities in fostering these partnerships. The authors argue that teachers play a crucial role in initiating and maintaining effective communication channels with parents, which are essential for building trust and collaboration.

Interventions aimed at promoting parent-teacher partnerships have been systematically reviewed to assess their effectiveness. A recent review by Sheridan et al. (2023) evaluated various interventions designed to improve parent-teacher relationships. The study concluded that targeted interventions could enhance collaboration between parents and teachers, leading to positive outcomes for children's learning and development.

Moreover, the development of reliable tools to measure the effectiveness of family-preschool partnerships has been a focus of recent research. Margaritopoulou et al. (2024) conducted a literature review examining existing measures and their psychometric properties. The study highlighted the need for robust assessment tools to evaluate the quality of these partnerships accurately, which is essential for informing practice and policy. Theoretical frameworks have been applied to understand the dynamics of parent-teacher partnerships better. A project by Bruggink et al. (2020) explored the application of Vygotsky's social constructivism theory and Bandura's social learning theory in the context of these partnerships. The study emphasized that understanding these theories can inform the development of strategies to enhance family engagement and collaboration with educators.

➤ *Trust Between Parents and Teachers*

Trust between parents and teachers is a foundational element in fostering effective educational environments and

promoting student success. Recent studies have delved into various facets of this trust, highlighting its impact on student outcomes, the dynamics influencing trust levels, and strategies to enhance parent-teacher relationships.

A comprehensive model of trust within educational systems was introduced by Van Maele et al. (2020) following a systematic literature review of 183 peer-reviewed articles. This model underscores the multifaceted nature of trust, encompassing generalized trust, educational governance, educational settings, and educational attainment, thereby providing a holistic understanding of trust dynamics in education.

Moreover, the significance of parental trust in teachers extends to children's academic interests. A longitudinal study by Silinskas et al. (2022) investigated the reciprocal associations between parental trust and children's academic interest from Grades 1 to 4. The findings revealed that higher levels of parental trust in teachers were associated with sustained or increased academic interest among children, highlighting the long-term benefits of nurturing trustful parent-teacher relationships.

Conversely, the absence of trust can lead to less effective educational practices. Adams and Christenson (2013) found that teachers with lower levels of trust in parents and students were more likely to adopt custodial orientations and dominating conflict management strategies, which can hinder the development of a positive learning environment.

The quality of parent-teacher relationships varies across educational stages. Adams and Christenson (2000) observed higher levels of trust between parents and teachers at the elementary level compared to middle or high school levels, suggesting that trust diminishes as students' progress through the educational system.

In addition, parental satisfaction with school collaboration is closely linked to trust. A nationwide survey in Switzerland by Gräsel and Parchmann (2021) examined parents' experiences, needs, and expectations regarding collaboration with schools. The study emphasized that effective collaboration, rooted in mutual trust, is essential for addressing critical issues such as involvement in educational decisions, inclusion, and student well-being.

Interventions aimed at enhancing parent-teacher relationships have been systematically reviewed to assess their effectiveness. Sheridan et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review identifying various interventions designed to promote quality relationships between parents and teachers. The review concluded that targeted interventions could significantly improve collaboration, thereby fostering better educational outcomes for students.

Parental involvement and trust are also influenced by demographic variables. Santiago et al. (2023) explored the impact of factors such as socioeconomic status on parent trust, finding that lower socioeconomic status was associated with reduced trust in teachers and schools. This diminished

trust correlated with decreased parental involvement and adverse student behaviors, highlighting the need for strategies to build trust across diverse demographic groups.

The erosion of trust can also result from perceived encroachments into parental roles. The Times (2024) discussed concerns regarding schools increasingly intervening in areas traditionally managed by parents, such as children's health and moral upbringing. This perceived overreach can lead to strained relationships and diminished trust between parents and educational institutions.

In addition, the integration of surveillance technologies in schools has raised additional concerns about trust. An article in Teen Vogue (2024) highlighted that while these technologies aim to enhance safety, they often compromise student privacy and erode trust among students, parents, and educators. The pervasive use of surveillance can lead to a climate of suspicion, undermining the foundational trust necessary for effective education.

➤ *Synthesis*

The review of significant literature highlights that trust between parents and teachers plays a vital role in fostering a supportive and effective educational environment. Research consistently emphasizes that strong parent-teacher relationships contribute to improved student engagement, academic achievement, and overall well-being. Several factors influence the development of trust, including communication quality, parental involvement, educator transparency, and institutional support.

Challenges in establishing trust arise due to differences in expectations, socioeconomic factors, and evolving parental roles in education. Studies indicate that trust levels tend to be stronger at the early childhood and elementary levels but may decline as students' progress through higher grades. Additionally, cultural and technological factors, such as digital communication and school surveillance, impact the perception of trust among parents and educators.

Interventions and frameworks designed to strengthen parent-teacher partnerships have shown promising results in enhancing collaboration and building mutual confidence. Educators who actively foster inclusive communication and create opportunities for meaningful parental involvement are more likely to establish a trusting relationship with families. Given the complex and dynamic nature of trust, ongoing research is necessary to address emerging challenges and develop strategies that sustain strong parent-teacher relationships in diverse educational contexts.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

➤ *Philosophical Assumptions*

In conducting this study on how early childhood teachers build trust with parents, I subscribed to specific philosophical assumptions that shape the research approach and interpretation. These assumptions include ontology, epistemology, axiology, and rhetoric, each influencing the study's design and execution.

- *Ontology*

I aligned with the constructivist ontological stance, acknowledging that reality is socially constructed and subjective. In the context of this study, trust between parents and teachers is understood as a dynamic and individualized experience, varying across different contexts and relationships. This perspective aligns with the view that multiple realities exist, shaped by personal experiences and interactions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

- *Epistemology*

From an epistemological standpoint, I engaged closely with participants to co-construct knowledge about trust-building processes. This involves recognizing that understanding emerges through interactive dialogues with early childhood educators, reflecting the belief that knowledge is subjective and context-dependent (Cypress, 2017).

- *Axiology*

Axiologically, I acknowledged that my values and biases influence the research process. By practicing reflexivity, I will critically examine how my perspectives affect data collection and analysis, ensuring transparency about my positionality. This approach emphasizes the importance of ethics and values in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

- *Rhetoric*

Regarding rhetoric, I employed a narrative style that reflects the participants' voices and experiences. Using first-person language and rich descriptions, the study will present findings in a manner that authentically represents the perspectives of early childhood teachers, aligning with qualitative research traditions that prioritize participant viewpoints (Cypress, 2017).

- *Qualitative Assumption*

In exploring how early childhood teachers build trust with parents, I operated under the qualitative assumption that multiple realities exist, each shaped by individual experiences and perceptions. This ontological perspective acknowledges that both teachers and parents may have unique understandings of trust, influenced by their personal contexts and interactions. Recognizing these diverse realities is essential for capturing the complexity of trust-building processes in educational settings.

- *Research Design*

I employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore how early childhood teachers build trust with parents. This approach is best suited for my study as it focuses on understanding the essence of lived experiences, allowing me to capture the subjective meanings that teachers assign to their trust-building practices. By engaging directly with educators, I interpreted their behaviors and the significance they attribute to fostering trustful relationships with parents. This methodology facilitates an in-depth exploration of the complex social interactions inherent in educational settings (Cresswell & Proth, 2018).

- *Research Participants*

I conducted my study with 10 early childhood teachers (1 from different schools in the District in Magpet, North Cotabato). To select these participants, I used purposive sampling, a technique commonly used in qualitative research to identify and select information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). The inclusion criteria for this study are as follows: participants must be currently teaching Kindergarten to Grade 2 at Manobisa Elementary School and have a minimum of two years of teaching experience in early childhood education. Establishing clear inclusion criteria ensures that selected participants have relevant experience and can provide meaningful insights into the research topic (Statistics Solutions, n.d.).

- *Research Instrument*

I used an interview guide as my primary research instrument to explore how early childhood teachers build trust with parents. An interview guide is a structured set of open-ended questions designed to facilitate in-depth discussions while allowing flexibility in responses (Kallio et al., 2021). This tool ensured that all participants address key themes related to trust-building while enabling me to probe deeper into their lived experiences. By using an interview guide, I will gather rich qualitative data that captures the experiences of teachers in fostering relationships with parents in early childhood education settings.

- *Data Collection*

I gathered data through in-depth interviews (IDIs) using an interview guide. IDIs are qualitative research techniques involving intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation (Boyce & Neale, 2006). This method allows for a deep understanding of early childhood teachers' experiences in building trust with parents. The procedure involved scheduling interviews at convenient times for the teachers, ensuring a comfortable environment to facilitate open and honest discussions. Each interview was guided by open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses about their strategies, challenges, and insights related to fostering parental trust.

In addition to IDIs, I conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) to collect data. FGDs are qualitative research methods that aim to obtain data from a purposely selected group of individuals rather than from a statistically representative sample of a broader population (Nyumba et al., 2018). This approach allowed me to explore the collective views of early childhood teachers and the meanings they ascribe to their shared experiences in building trust with parents. Conducting FGD enabled participants to interact and influence each other during the discussion, leading to the generation of new ideas and perspectives. To enhance the credibility of the findings, I employed environmental triangulation by conducting FGDs in a different setting within the school environment, such as classrooms and staff lounges. This strategy ensures that the data collected reflects diverse contexts and reduces the influence of a single environment on the participants' responses.

➤ *Data Analysis*

I will analyze the data collected from early childhood teachers using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis approach. This method will allow me to systematically identify patterns and themes in how teachers build trust with parents.

First, I will familiarize myself with the data by transcribing the recorded in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, reading through them multiple times, and taking initial notes. This step will help me immerse myself in the teachers' narratives and gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives. Engaging deeply with the data is crucial in qualitative research, as it lays the foundation for meaningful analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Second, I will generate initial codes by systematically identifying significant phrases or statements related to trust-building strategies. I will use both manual coding and qualitative data analysis software to ensure accuracy and consistency. Coding will help me organize the data and begin identifying patterns in how early childhood teachers foster trust with parents.

Third, I will search for themes by grouping related codes together into broader categories. These themes will reflect the commonalities in the teachers' experiences and highlight key aspects of trust-building in early childhood education. This step is critical in making sense of the data and ensuring that emerging themes accurately represent the participants' perspectives (Nowell et al., 2017).

Fourth, I will review the themes to ensure they accurately represent the data. I will revisit the transcripts to confirm that the identified themes align with the participants' responses and modify or refine them if necessary. This iterative process will help strengthen the credibility of the findings.

Fifth, I will define and name the themes to ensure clarity and coherence. Each theme will be clearly articulated and supported by direct quotations from the early childhood teachers to provide rich, contextualized insights into their experiences of building trust with parents.

Finally, I will produce the report, where I will present the findings in a structured manner, supported by participant narratives. This will include a detailed discussion of each theme, its relevance to the research questions, and its implications for early childhood education. Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework will allow me to systematically analyze the data while maintaining the depth and richness of the participants' experiences.

➤ *Trustworthiness of the Study*

Ensuring the trustworthiness of my qualitative study on how early childhood teachers build trust with parents is paramount. This involves addressing credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability to ensure the findings accurately reflect the participants' experiences.

• *Credibility*

To establish credibility, I will employ member checking by sharing my interpretations and findings with the participating early childhood teachers to verify accuracy and resonance with their experiences. This process allows participants to confirm or correct the data, enhancing the study's validity. Additionally, I will use triangulation by collecting data through both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, providing multiple perspectives on trust-building practices. Prolonged engagement with the participants will further ensure a deep understanding of their experiences, thereby strengthening the credibility of the findings.

• *Dependability*

To ensure dependability, I will maintain a detailed audit trail documenting all research decisions and processes, including data collection methods, analysis procedures, and reflective notes. This comprehensive documentation allows for external review and demonstrates that the study's findings are consistent and replicable under similar conditions. Engaging in peer debriefing sessions with colleagues will also provide opportunities to discuss and refine the research process, further enhancing dependability.

• *Confirmability*

I will achieve confirmability by practicing reflexivity, continually reflecting on my biases and how they may influence the research process. Maintaining a reflexive journal will help document my thoughts and decisions, ensuring that the findings are grounded in the participants' perspectives rather than my own preconceptions. This approach aligns with the goal of achieving neutrality and objectivity in qualitative research.

• *Transferability*

To address transferability, I will provide rich, thick descriptions of the research context, participants, and findings, enabling others to determine the applicability of the results to similar settings. By thoroughly detailing the context in which early childhood teachers build trust with parents, readers can assess the relevance of the findings to their own situations. This detailed contextualization enhances the potential for the study's insights to be applied in other educational environments.

IV. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with early childhood teachers from Manobisa Elementary School in Magpet, North Cotabato. Themes were identified to capture both the positive and challenging experiences of teachers, their coping strategies, and the insights they gained in fostering parental trust. These findings are analyzed in light of existing literature to draw meaningful interpretations grounded in their lived experiences.

➤ *Experiences of Early Childhood Teachers in Building and Nurturing Parental Confidence*

The participants shared various rewarding experiences as they strived to gain the trust of parents. These experiences were captured in three major themes: *Creating a Warm and Welcoming Classroom Environment*, *Building Confidence Through Visible Progress*, and *Celebrating Small Wins in Parent Engagement*.

Despite the positive outcomes, teachers also encountered several obstacles while fostering parental confidence. The challenges were categorized into the following themes: *Overcoming Parental Hesitation and Distrust*, *Dealing with Communication Barriers*, and *Managing Unrealistic Expectations from Parents*.

• *Creating a Welcoming Classroom Environment*

A warm and inviting classroom helps parents feel more comfortable, respected, and included. Teachers emphasized that when the school environment is open and non-threatening, parents are more likely to participate in their children's learning journey. A welcoming space communicates that the teacher values their role as a partner in education.

Here are the responses from the participants:

"The first thing I do is make my classroom look cheerful and open. When parents see that, they feel relaxed and are more likely to talk to me." (IDI-P1)

"I always greet parents with a smile when they drop off their kids. Simple gestures like that make them feel accepted." (IDI-P2)

"We make sure parents feel they're part of the classroom community—like putting up welcome boards and letting them observe when they want." (IDI-P3)

"During school events, we arrange the room so parents can sit comfortably. They feel more involved that way." (FGD-P6)

"I encourage parents to come in and ask questions. I never want them to feel like they're intruding." (FGD-P7)

The respondents highlighted that creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for parents is important. IDI-P1 noted that making the classroom cheerful helps parents feel more relaxed and willing to communicate, while IDI-P2 mentioned that simple gestures like greeting parents with a smile during drop-off fosters a sense of acceptance. IDI-P3 likewise shared that involving parents in the classroom strengthens their connection. Similarly, FGD-P6 noted that arranging the classroom comfortably during school events helps parents feel more engaged and FGD-P7 noted that encouraging parents to ask questions is crucial so they don't feel like intruders. Altogether, these strategies promote a positive parent engagement and a supportive school environment.

This finding aligns with literature emphasizing that trust can be nurtured in spaces where parents feel acknowledged and respected. As Bruggink, Goei, and Koot (2020) note, creating inclusive classroom environments fosters a sense of belonging, which is essential to parent-teacher partnerships. Similarly, Sisson, Kroeger, and Kim (2020) explain that pre-service teachers who practiced positive engagement reported stronger relationships with parents when they actively created welcoming routines.

• *Building Confidence through Visible Progress*

Teachers shared that one of the ways they gain parents' trust and build their confidence in the school is by showing clear signs of their children's development. When parents see actual progress, whether in communication skills, academic outputs, or social behavior, they begin to trust that the teacher is doing their part in supporting their child. This visible progress becomes a foundation for mutual respect and cooperation.

Here are the responses from the participants:

"I always make sure to highlight the improvements of their child, even small ones. When I show them a before-and-after sample of their kid's work, they smile and nod in approval." (IDI-P2)

"During parent-teacher conferences, I use folders of student outputs to help parents see their child's progress over time." (IDI-P4)

"One mother told me she was unsure at first, but when she saw her child starting to read and participate in class, she started attending meetings regularly." (IDI-P5)

"We post student accomplishments on our bulletin boards. Some parents even take photos because they're proud." (FGD-P9)

"Sometimes parents don't believe in their child's ability until we show them test results or classroom behavior logs. It changes their perception." (FGD-P10)

The participants noted the value of showing parents their child's progress in fostering engagement and pride. IDI-P2 mentioned that emphasizing even the child's small progress and using before-and-after samples of student work to elicit positive responses from parents. IDI-P4 shared that organizing student outputs in folder stacks during parent-teacher conferences allows parents to track progress overtime. Meanwhile, IDI-P5 recounted a mother who became more involved after she saw that her child began to read and participate in class.

FGD-P9 noted that posting student accomplishments on bulletin boards encourages parents to celebrate, while FGD-P10 emphasized that presenting test result and classroom behavior logs can shift parents' perceptions of their children's abilities. Altogether these approaches show how visible evidence of student growth strengthens parental engagement.

This finding is consistent with the literature emphasizing that regular updates on student development foster stronger trust between parents and teachers. Bruggink, Goei, and Koot (2020) argue that visible signs of learning growth strengthen family-school partnerships by reinforcing the teacher's credibility. Moreover, Gonzales and Torres (2021) highlight that when parents are made aware of their child's progress through clear communication, their confidence in the teacher increases significantly, leading to stronger involvement.

- *Celebrating Small Wins in Parent Engagement*

Teachers expressed joy and fulfillment when parents acknowledged even the smallest efforts to engage with the school. These "small wins" such as parents attending class activities, replying to messages, or showing interest in their child's work, were seen as encouraging signs that trust was gradually being built. Recognizing these minor yet meaningful interactions strengthened teachers' motivation to sustain positive communication and partnership with parents.

Here are the responses from the participants:

"When a parent simply sends me a thank-you message after receiving feedback, I already consider that a big win." (IDI-P1)

"One time, a parent who never attended meetings came just to see her child perform. That meant a lot to me." (IDI-P2)

"It feels fulfilling when parents start asking how they can help their child learn better at home." (IDI-P5)

"We appreciate when parents volunteer for simple tasks, like decorating or preparing materials for activities." (FGD-P7)

"Some parents become more involved little by little. Seeing that change assures us that our efforts are working." (FGD-P8)

The respondents highlighted that even small gestures of parental involvement are affirming and meaningful. IDI-P1 stated that receiving a simple grateful message from a parent after giving feedback is considered a significant achievement. IDI-P2 shared the effect of a previously uninvolved parent who attended her child's performance, which was very rewarding. IDI-P5 highlighted the fulfillment felt when parents ask about ways to support their children's education. FGD-P7 noted appreciation for parents who volunteer in simple tasks, like decorating or preparing materials, while FGD-P8 observed that gradual increases in parental involvement reassure teachers that their efforts are making a difference. Overall, these instances underscore the value of encouraging and recognizing even small steps in parent engagement.

This theme reflects findings from prior studies emphasizing that sustained parental involvement, even in small forms, contributes significantly to building trust and

confidence between home and school. Estorgio and Rosil (2024) found that consistent recognition of parental participation fosters stronger emotional connections and long-term cooperation. Similarly, Sheridan, Ryoo, and Garbacz (2023) assert that small, meaningful gestures of engagement, when acknowledged by teachers, create a cycle of positive reinforcement that deepens parental confidence and partnership.

- *Overcoming Parental Hesitation and Distrust*

Teachers shared that one of the most difficult challenges in building parental confidence was dealing with parents who were initially hesitant or distrustful toward the school or the teacher. Some parents doubted the teacher's ability or were reluctant to communicate openly, often due to past negative experiences or unfamiliarity with the school environment. Teachers described the process as gradual, requiring patience, empathy, and consistent communication to earn parents' trust over time.

Here are the responses from the participants:

"At first, some parents didn't want to talk to me. They would just drop off their child and leave. It took several months before they started greeting me back." (IDI-P2)

"A few parents seemed to test me first. They didn't trust teachers easily because of issues in the past." (IDI-P4)

"Some parents think we're too strict or judgmental, so they hesitate to share their child's problems with us." (IDI-P5)

"It's challenging when parents assume we're only after grades. I had to show them that I genuinely care about their child's well-being." (FGD-P9)

"When I consistently communicate with them and show results, they slowly start trusting me." (FGD-P10)

The participants described challenges in building trust with parents, especially at the beginning. IDI-P2 stated that some parents initially avoided interaction, merely dropping their children at school, and only gradually beginning greeting teachers over several months. IDI-P4 noted that a few parents seemed to test teachers due to past experiences, reflecting a general lack of trust. Moreover, IDI-P5 observed that some parents are hesitant to share concerns, perceiving teachers as judgmental and strict.

FGD-P9 noted the challenge when parents assume teachers only focus on grades, requiring efforts to show genuine care for the learners' well-being. FGD-P10 highlighted that consistent communication and showing tangible results could gradually foster trust. These experiences emphasize that establishing strong parent-teacher relationships allows for patience, transparency, and ongoing engagement.

This challenge reflects the complexities of establishing mutual trust between teachers and parents, particularly when

prior experiences or social factors create barriers. Santiago, Garbacz, Beattie, and Moore (2023) emphasize that trust develops gradually when teachers demonstrate consistency, fairness, and transparency in their actions. Similarly, Silinskas et al. (2022) found that parents' trust in teachers increases when they observe teachers' genuine care and responsiveness toward their child's needs, which strengthens their confidence in the school's capacity to support learning.

Teachers shared that one of the persistent challenges in building parental confidence was the difficulty of maintaining clear and consistent communication with parents. These barriers often arose from differences in language, parents' limited literacy skills, or logistical factors such as distance and lack of digital access. Many teachers admitted that miscommunication or lack of response from parents sometimes caused misunderstandings and reduced parental trust in the teacher's role.

Here are the responses from the participants:

"Some parents can't understand the school memos, especially when they're written in English, so I explain them personally in the local dialect." (IDI-P1)

"We have parents who don't own cellphones or who change numbers often, so they don't always get the updates." (IDI-P2)

"There are times when parents don't respond to messages, and we're unsure if they received the information or not." (IDI-P4)

"The distance of some families from school makes it hard to call for meetings. Sometimes I just meet them during market day." (FGD-P6)

"We once had a parent who misunderstood a note we sent and got upset. Since then, we make sure to communicate things face-to-face." (FGD-P7)

The participants noted communication barriers that influence parent engagement. IDI-P1 stated that some parents struggle to comprehend school memos that are written in English, so explanations in the local dialect are necessary. IDI-P2 mentioned that parents with no cellphones or who frequently change numbers might miss updates from the school. IDI-P4 also shared the challenge of parents that are unresponsive, leaving teachers uncertain whether messages were received. FGD-P6 pointed out that the physical distance of some families makes scheduling meetings challenging, sometimes requiring interactions during busy days. FGD-P7 likewise recounted an instance in which a parent misunderstood a written note, showing the value of communicating important information face-to-face. These experiences demonstrate the need for flexible, clear, and context-sensitive communication strategies with parents.

This challenge reflects what the literature recognizes as one of the most common obstacles to parent-teacher collaboration, ineffective or inconsistent communication.

Gonzales and Torres (2021) emphasize that many Filipino parents face barriers related to literacy and accessibility, which hinder their participation in school matters. Likewise, Hindman and Morrison (2022) point out that communication quality directly affects the level of trust and cooperation between teachers and families, making it essential for schools to adapt communication strategies suited to parents' contexts and capacities.

- *Managing Unrealistic Expectations from Parents*

Teachers also faced the challenge of addressing parents' unrealistic expectations regarding their children's learning progress. Some parents expected rapid academic improvement or wanted their children to perform beyond their developmental level. Others misunderstood the role of early childhood education, assuming it should focus mainly on academics rather than holistic growth. Teachers described the difficulty of balancing parental expectations with what was developmentally appropriate for the learners.

Here are the responses from the participants:

"Some parents expect their child to read fluently by the middle of kindergarten. I have to explain that each child learns at their own pace." (IDI-P3)

"There are parents who get disappointed when their children do not get high grades, even if they show good effort." (IDI-P4)

"One parent insisted I give more homework, thinking it would make their child smarter." (IDI-P5)

"Parents sometimes compare their child to others, which pressures the learner and affects their confidence." (FGD-P9)

"I always tell parents that our focus is not only on academics but also on developing values and social skills." (FGD-P10)

The participants discussed problems that arise from parents' misaligned expectations of their children's learning. IDI-P3 mentioned that some parents expect early reading fluency and require guidance to comprehend that children develop at their own individual pace. IDI-P4 shared that parents can feel disappointed when children do not achieve high grades in spite of demonstrating effort. IDI-P5 recounted a parent insisting on more homework, believing it would make their child more intelligent. FGD-P9 emphasized that comparisons between children can create pressure to learners and affect their self-esteem, while FGD-P10 noted communicating that the school's focus extends beyond academics to include children's values and social skills. These insights reveal the relevance of managing expectations and promoting a holistic view of child development among parents.

This theme aligns with studies highlighting the mismatch between parental expectations and the goals of early childhood education. Hindman and Morrison (2022)

emphasized that strong parent-teacher relationships depend on open communication about realistic developmental milestones and learning objectives. Similarly, Margaritopoulou et al. (2024) noted that when teachers

clarify educational goals and explain the child’s holistic growth, parents gain a better understanding of their child’s progress, which helps reduce tension and strengthens trust in teachers.

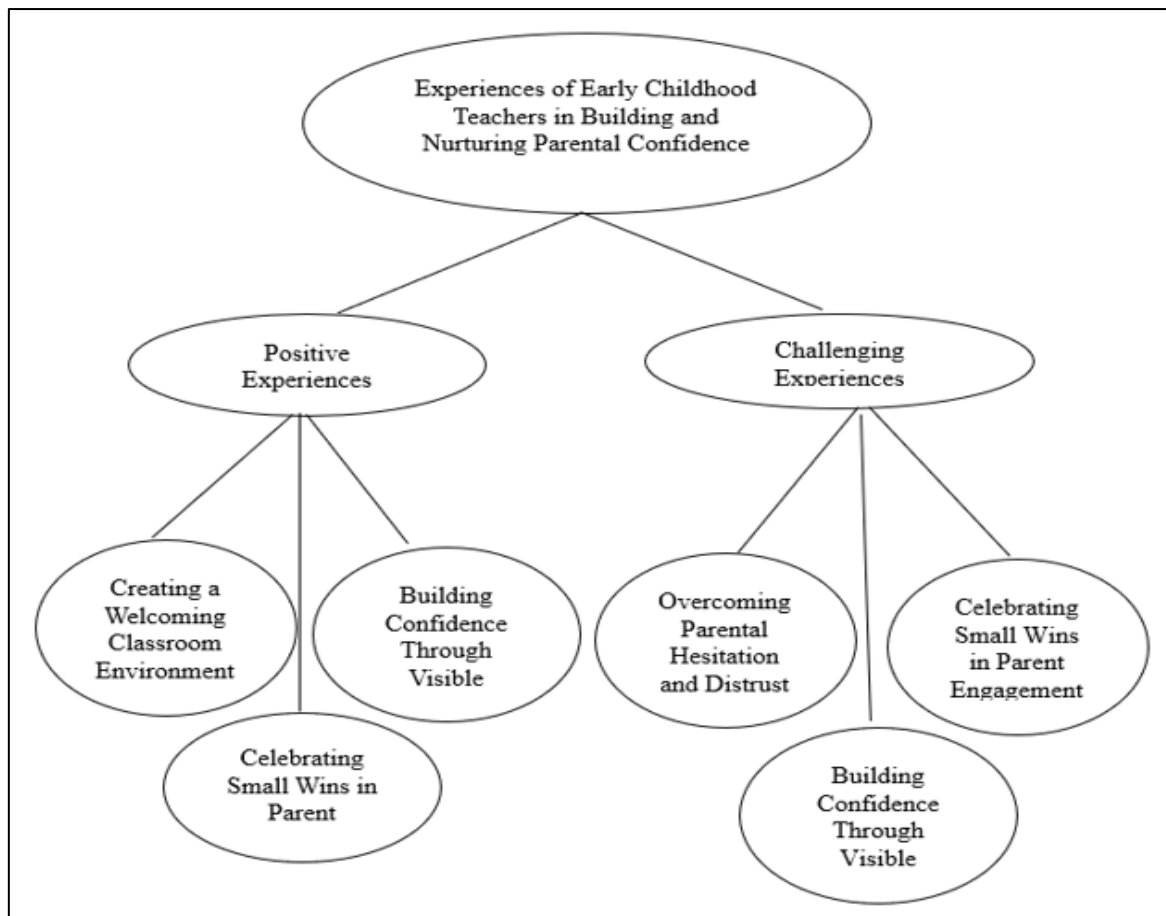


Fig 1 Experiences of Early Childhood Teachers in Building and Nurturing Parental Confidence

➤ *Coping Mechanisms of Early Childhood Teachers in Building and Nurturing Parental Confidence*

The findings revealed that early childhood teachers employed several strategies to manage the challenges they faced in fostering trust and confidence among parents. Their coping mechanisms were categorized into three themes: *Building Trust Gradually through Consistent Engagement*, *Adapting Communication Approaches to Parent Contexts*, and *Clarifying Roles Through Transparent Dialogue*. These strategies reflect how teachers remained proactive and empathetic in addressing parents’ concerns while sustaining meaningful partnerships that support children’s development.

- *Building Trust Gradually Through Consistent Engagement*

Teachers shared that one of the most effective ways to address parental hesitation and distrust was through consistent engagement and communication. They realized that trust does not happen instantly; rather, it develops as parents observe the teacher’s reliability, sincerity, and genuine concern over time. Teachers made efforts to maintain regular contact, provide updates, and show continuity in their interactions with parents, which slowly fostered confidence and mutual respect.

Here are the responses from the participants:

“At first, the parents didn’t approach me, but I made it a habit to greet them every morning until they eventually started smiling back.” (IDI-P1)

“I regularly send short messages to parents about their child’s progress so they know I’m always checking on them.” (IDI-P3)

“When parents see that you’re consistent in communicating and following through on your words, they begin to trust you.” (IDI-P5)

“I made sure to attend all school events and meet parents personally each time — it helped them see my dedication.” (FGD-P9)

“Building trust takes time, but once they notice that I genuinely care, they start opening up and asking for advice.” (FGD-P10)

The participants noted strategies for building trust and rapport with parents. IDI-P1 said that consistently greeting

parents every morning encouraged them to respond more positively. IDI-P3 also shared that regularly sending short updates about their child's progress helps parents feel cared for. IDI-P5 mentioned that consistent communication about commitments fostered parental trust.

Meanwhile, FGD-P9 noted that attending school events and meeting parents personally strengthens relationships. FGD-P10 highlighted that patience encourages parents to seek guidance and open up, showing that trust is established through consistent engagement.

This coping strategy aligns with the literature, which underscores the importance of consistency and reliability in establishing strong parent-teacher relationships. Santiago et al. (2023) emphasize that parents develop confidence in teachers when they consistently demonstrate care and transparency in communication. Similarly, Sheridan, Ryoo, and Garbacz (2023) found that sustained teacher engagement, through small yet regular interactions, helps strengthen trust and fosters more collaborative relationships between home and school.

- *Adapting Communication Approaches to Parent Contexts*

Teachers coped with communication barriers by modifying their communication methods according to parents' needs and circumstances. They recognized that not all parents could be reached through the same means due to differences in literacy, language, and access to technology. To ensure that messages were understood, teachers used the local dialect, simplified their language, and explored alternative modes of communication such as home visits, written notes, or in-person meetings. This adaptability allowed them to sustain meaningful interaction despite constraints.

Here are the responses from the participants:

"Some parents cannot read long messages, so I use short and simple words in our local dialect when texting or talking to them." (IDI-P1)

"For parents who don't have phones, I make use of their neighbors or the barangay officials to deliver important information." (IDI-P2)

"When internet connection is unstable, we go back to printed notes and memos to keep parents informed." (IDI-P4)

"I visit nearby houses of parents who rarely come to school, just to check in and share updates about their child." (FGD-P8)

"Adapting how we communicate helps a lot—some parents respond better when we explain things face-to-face rather than through text." (FGD-P9)

The respondents highlighted the value of adapting communication methods to meet parents' needs. IDI-P1 stated that using short, simple messages in the local dialect for parents who struggle with long texts is useful. IDI-P2

likewise shared that relying on neighbors or barangay officials to relay important information to parents without phones is also helpful. IDI-P4 mentioned that when internet connection is unstable, printed notes and memos function as reliable alternatives.

Moreover, FGD-P8 showed visiting parents' homes to provide updates for those who rarely come to school is important, while FGD-P9 highlighted that some parents respond better with face-to-face interactions than to messages. These strategies show that flexible, context-sensitive communication improves parent engagement and ensures that information reaches all families.

This coping strategy is consistent with literature highlighting that effective parent-teacher relationships require flexible, inclusive communication practices. Gonzales and Torres (2021) emphasized that Filipino teachers must adjust their communication style to accommodate parents' literacy levels, cultural backgrounds, and availability. Similarly, Hindman and Morrison (2022) found that tailoring communication methods to families' contexts promotes greater understanding and reinforces trust, particularly in early childhood settings where parents play a vital role in children's learning.

- *Clarifying Roles Through Transparent Dialogue*

Teachers addressed unrealistic expectations from parents by initiating open and respectful conversations that clarified their respective roles in supporting the child's development. They found that honest communication about learning goals, school responsibilities, and parental duties helped manage misunderstandings and align expectations. Through transparency and mutual respect, teachers were able to explain the scope of early childhood education and encourage parents to become partners rather than critics in the learning process.

Here are the responses from the participants:

"When a parent expects too much from their child, I take time to explain what is age-appropriate and what we focus on in early childhood." (IDI-P1)

"I tell parents that education is a shared effort. We both have roles, teachers guide, but parents must support learning at home." (IDI-P3)

"Sometimes I sit with parents one-on-one to explain why we use play-based learning. They understand better once I clarify it." (IDI-P5)

"We remind parents during meetings that our goal is holistic development, not just high grades or competition." (FGD-P7)

"By being honest and respectful in how we talk, parents see that we're not against them but working with them." (FGD-P8)

The participants emphasized guiding parents to have realistic expectations and understand the school’s approach to early childhood education. IDI-P1 mentioned explaining what is age-appropriate and clarifying the classroom focus when parents expect too much from their child. IDI-P3 noted that education is a form of shared effort, with teachers guiding and parents supporting learning in their homes. IDI-P5 described one-on-one discussions to help parents understand the value of play-based learning. FGD-P7 mentioned that meetings are used to reinforce the goal of holistic development rather than solely focusing on competition or grades, while FGD-P8 emphasized that respectful communication allows parents to see teachers as partners rather than opponents. On a collective note, these strategies

foster collaboration and realistic understanding between teachers and parents.

This coping approach aligns with studies emphasizing that transparent communication fosters mutual understanding and strengthens the trust between parents and teachers. Margaritopoulou et al. (2024) highlight that open dialogue is key to establishing clear expectations within family–school partnerships, helping prevent conflict and confusion. Similarly, Estorgio and Rosil (2024) found that parents who clearly understand teachers’ objectives are more confident in the educational process, leading to improved collaboration and reduced tension.

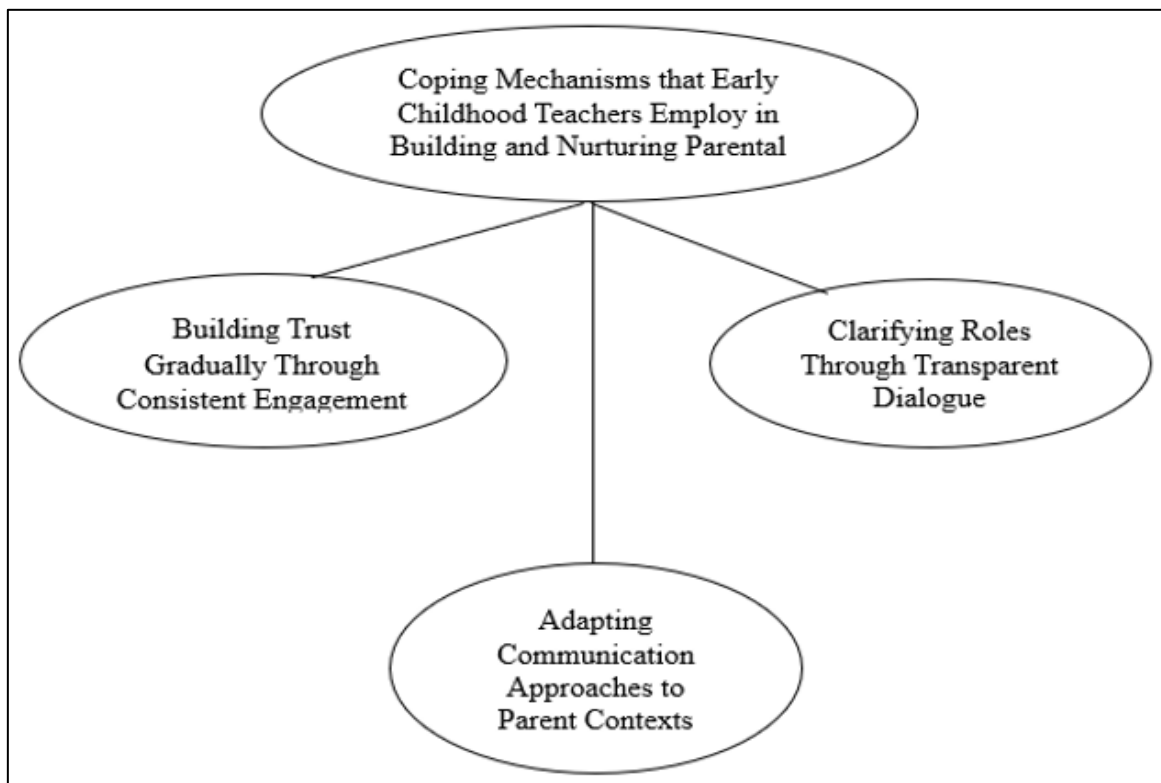


Fig 2 Coping Mechanisms that Early Childhood Teachers Employ in Building and Nurturing Parental

➤ *Insights of Early Childhood Teachers in Building and Nurturing Parental Confidence*

Through their experiences, early childhood teachers developed meaningful realizations about fostering trust with parents. The key insights drawn from their narratives include: *Consistent Communication Builds Trust Over Time, Empathy and Cultural Sensitivity Earn Parental Confidence, and Simple Involvement Activities Boost Parent Engagement.* These insights reflect how teachers learned to deepen relationships with parents by being intentional, respectful, and inclusive in their approaches.

- *Consistent Communication Builds Trust Over Time*

Teachers realized that maintaining consistent communication with parents is the foundation of lasting trust. Regular updates, honest feedback, and open dialogue reassured parents that teachers genuinely cared about their

children’s progress. Through steady interaction, parents began to feel more connected to the school and confident in the teacher’s role as a partner in their child’s learning journey.

Here are the responses from the participants:

“When parents see that I always update them about their child, even on small matters, they start trusting me more.” (IDI-P2)

“Consistent communication helps prevent misunderstandings. Parents appreciate it when they’re kept informed.” (IDI-P3)

“I noticed that parents who were distant before became more cooperative once I began regularly texting or talking to them.” (IDI-P4)

“We send reminders and feedback weekly so parents know we value their involvement.” (FGD-P6)

“It’s not about saying a lot, but about saying things regularly. It makes parents feel that we care.” (FGD-P8)

The respondents mentioned the importance of the role of consistent communication in building trust and fostering parental involvement. IDI-P2 noted that regularly updating parents, even regarding small matters, strengthens their trust towards teachers. IDI-P3 also noted that consistent communication with parents prevents misunderstandings and is well-appreciated. Meanwhile, IDI-P4 observed that parents who were previously distant have become more cooperative when they were regularly contacted. Moreover, FGD-P6 shared that teachers sending weekly reminders and feedback demonstrates that parents’ involvement is valued, while FGD-P8 highlighted that concise updates foster attention and care. Altogether, these practices show that regular, purposeful communication is the key to sustaining positive parent-teacher relationships.

This insight supports research highlighting that trust is built through consistent and transparent communication between home and school. Gräsel and Parchmann (2021) found that satisfaction and cooperation between families and schools improve when teachers communicate regularly and clearly. Likewise, Sheridan, Ryoo, and Garbacz (2023) emphasized that continuous dialogue, rather than one-time meetings, fosters long-term parental trust and strengthens collaborative partnerships in early childhood education.

- *Empathy and Cultural Sensitivity Earn Parental Confidence*

Teachers recognized that showing empathy and respecting parents’ cultural backgrounds significantly helped in building parental confidence. Understanding the parents’ circumstances, values, and daily struggles allowed teachers to communicate more effectively and respond with compassion. By showing patience and sensitivity, they created an atmosphere of respect and trust where parents felt understood and supported.

Here are the responses from the participants:

“Some parents are shy or hesitant because of their background. When I approach them kindly, they open up more easily.” (IDI-P1)

“I try to understand where parents are coming from, some have limited education, so I avoid using technical words.” (IDI-P2)

“When I learned about their culture and traditions, I realized how important it is to show respect when talking to them.” (IDI-P3)

“Empathy helps a lot. Parents feel valued when we don’t judge their situation but instead listen to their concerns.” (FGD-P6)

“Once I started understanding their point of view, they began trusting me more and cooperating.” (FGD-P10)

The participants highlighted the importance of empathy and cultural sensitivity in engaging with parents. IDI-P1 mentioned that approaching hesitant parents encouraged them to be more open. IDI-P2 noted the necessity to consider parents’ educational backgrounds and avoid jargons. IDI-P3 shared that understanding parents’ traditions and culture shows the value of showing respect during parent-teacher interactions. FGD-P6 noted that listening without judgment allows parents feel that they are valued, while FGD-P10 observed that understanding parents’ views fosters cooperation and trust. On a collective note, these methods show that empathy and respect are keys to creating strong parent-teacher relationships.

This insight is supported by studies emphasizing that empathy and cultural responsiveness are key elements in nurturing positive parent-teacher relationships. Gonzales and Torres (2021) found that teachers who demonstrate genuine understanding of parents’ backgrounds foster stronger collaboration and mutual respect. Likewise, Sheridan, Ryoo, and Garbacz (2023) highlight that culturally sensitive communication allows teachers to bridge differences and build meaningful partnerships that enhance parental confidence and involvement.

- *Simple Involvement Activities Boost Parent Engagement*

Teachers realized that even small, informal activities could significantly strengthen parents’ confidence and involvement in their child’s education. They found that inviting parents to simple classroom events, sending home interactive assignments, or recognizing parental support encouraged families to stay connected and participate more actively in school life. These small yet meaningful gestures created a bridge between home and school, reinforcing mutual trust and collaboration.

Here are the responses from the participants:

“When I invite parents to storytelling days or short classroom visits, they feel proud and more connected to their child’s learning.” (IDI-P1)

“We ask parents to help their children create small projects at home, it makes them feel involved and appreciated.” (IDI-P4)

“During family reading activities, I notice that parents become more confident when they see their children enjoying learning.” (IDI-P5)

“Simple events like parent-child craft sessions make parents realize that their presence matters in school.” (FGD-P8)

“Even just asking parents to write a short note of encouragement to their kids makes them feel part of the classroom.” (FGD-P9)

The respondents emphasized strategies that involve parents in their child’s learning to enhance connection and engagement. IDI-P1 mentioned that inviting parents to short classroom visits fosters pride and connection. IDI-P4 likewise shared that involving parents in small home projects helps them feel more appreciated and involved. IDI-P5 said that family reading activities build parents’ confidence as they see their children enjoying learning. FGD-P8 highlighted that simple event, such as parent-child craft sessions, show parents that their presence matters. Meanwhile, FGD-P9 added that even asking parents to write short notes of encouragement makes them feel like they are a part of the classroom community. These practices show that hands-on

participation effectively promotes meaningful parent engagement.

This insight is supported by research emphasizing that simple, low-pressure engagement opportunities can effectively nurture parental trust and participation. Estorgio and Rosil (2024) highlighted that small act of inclusion, such as home-based learning activities or classroom invitations, encourage long-term involvement. Likewise, Sheridan, Ryoo, and Garbacz (2023) noted that these consistent yet simple interactions foster a stronger parent–teacher bond and build confidence in both the school and the teacher’s role.

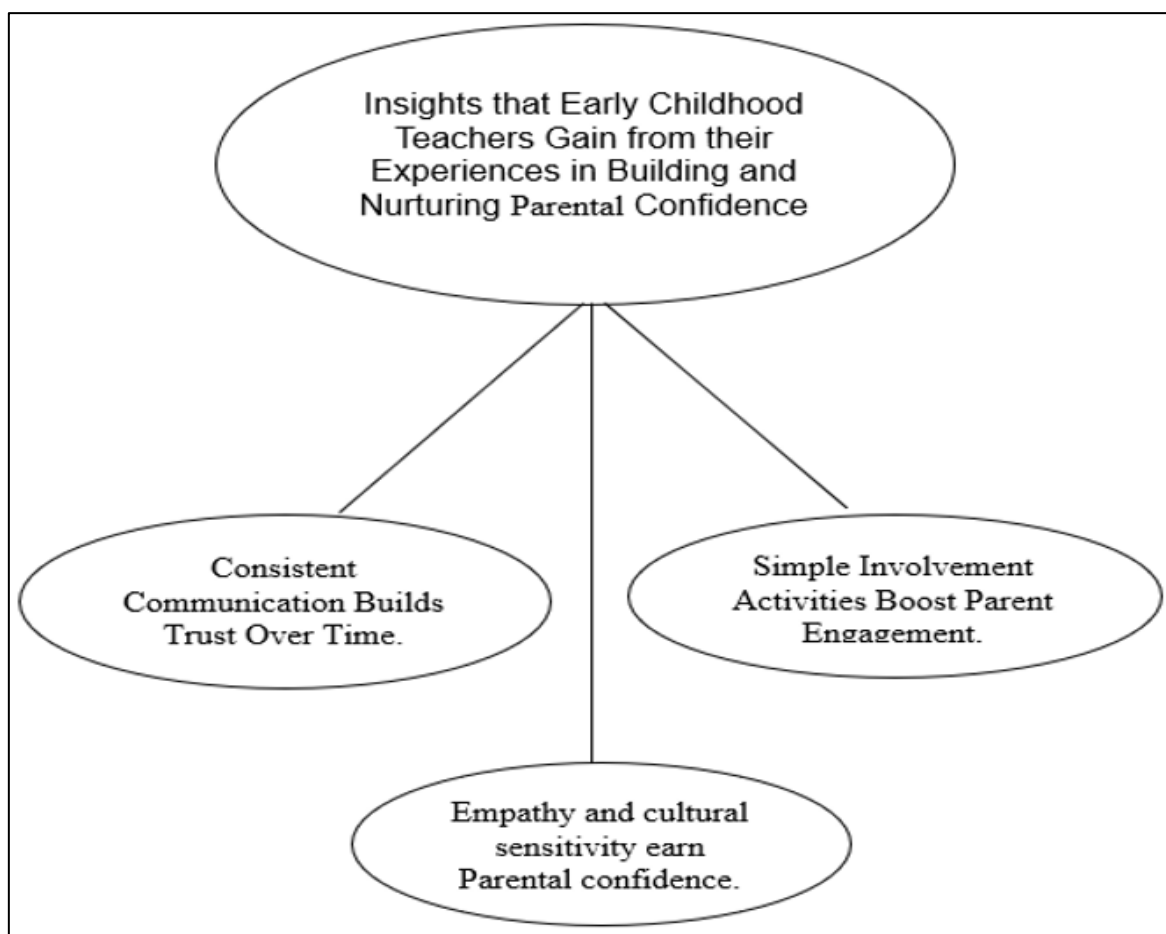


Fig 3 Insights that Early Childhood Teachers Gain from their Experiences in Building and Nurturing Parental Confidence

V. IMPLICATIONS

The findings indicate that early childhood teachers experience both positive and challenging conditions in building and nurturing parental confidence, as reflected in the themes Creating a Welcoming Classroom Environment, Building Confidence Through Visible Progress, and Celebrating Small Wins in Parent Engagement, alongside challenges such as Overcoming Parental Hesitation and Distrust, Dealing with Communication Barriers, and Managing Unrealistic Expectations from Parents. These themes imply that parental confidence is shaped through everyday interactions, visibility of children’s learning progress, and inclusive practices, but is also hindered by

parents’ prior experiences, communication limitations, and misaligned expectations. Schools therefore need to recognize that trust-building is a dynamic process that requires both relational and structural support for teachers.

The coping mechanisms identified, Building Trust Gradually Through Consistent Engagement, Adapting Communication Approaches to Parent Contexts, and Clarifying Roles Through Transparent Dialogue, suggest that teachers rely heavily on flexibility, persistence, and clear communication to address trust-related challenges. These themes imply that effective coping is not reactive but intentional, requiring teachers to adjust their strategies based on parents’ backgrounds, access to communication tools, and

understanding of early childhood education. This highlights the need for schools and administrators to provide professional development opportunities that strengthen teachers' interpersonal, cultural, and communication competencies.

The insights that consistent communication builds trust over time, empathy and cultural sensitivity earn parental confidence, and simple involvement activities boost parent engagement imply that trust is sustained through relational rather than purely instructional practices. These insights emphasize that parental confidence grows when teachers demonstrate understanding of parents' contexts and create manageable opportunities for involvement. This suggests that school policies and programs should prioritize sustained communication, culturally responsive practices, and low-pressure engagement activities to strengthen home-school partnerships in early childhood education.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Department of Education should strengthen policies and programs that promote parent-teacher partnerships, especially in early childhood education. Integrating modules on trust-building, parental engagement, and communication into teacher training and professional development programs will equip educators with the necessary interpersonal skills. The Department may also design monitoring tools to assess the quality of parent-school relationships and allocate support for schools in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas where communication barriers persist.

School heads should establish a school culture that values collaboration and open communication between teachers and parents. Regular dialogue sessions, parent orientation programs, and parent appreciation events can serve as platforms to strengthen trust and understanding. Additionally, school heads should provide technical and moral support to teachers, especially in managing challenging parental expectations and maintaining consistent communication with families from diverse backgrounds.

Teachers should continue practicing empathy, consistency, and transparency in dealing with parents. They are encouraged to adopt culturally responsive communication methods that reflect the realities of their communities. By regularly updating parents about their children's progress and recognizing their involvement, teachers can reinforce parental confidence. Professional collaboration among teachers should also be encouraged, allowing them to share strategies and experiences on how to effectively build and sustain trust with parents.

Learners indirectly benefit from strong parent-teacher relationships. Schools should design programs that encourage children to involve their parents in learning activities, such as reading together, collaborative projects, and home-based performance tasks. When learners see their parents and teachers working together, it reinforces their motivation and positive attitude toward school, fostering holistic development and emotional security.

Parents should view teachers as partners in their child's education rather than as sole authorities. By maintaining open communication, attending school activities, and recognizing teachers' efforts, parents can contribute to a positive learning environment. They should also set realistic expectations and actively collaborate with teachers to support their child's learning both at home and in school.

Future researchers may explore the experiences of parents themselves to gain a balanced understanding of the factors influencing parental confidence in schools. Comparative studies between rural and urban settings, or across different educational levels, could also provide broader insights into how trust dynamics evolve in various contexts. Further qualitative or mixed-method studies may focus on developing frameworks or intervention programs that strengthen parent-teacher partnerships in early childhood education.

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