

**The Importance of Social and Emotional Learning in WELS ECMs**

by

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**Abstract**

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) operates 393 of Early Childhood Ministries (ECMs) that serve an even larger number of children from a variety of backgrounds (WELS Statistical Report, 2018). This study seeks to discover how WELS ECMs currently view and prioritize social and emotional competencies, as well as how they support and encourage their teachers to learn more about these social and emotional competencies. The results of this study provide a picture of the importance that social and emotional competencies have in WELS ECMs. The results lead to recommendations to clarify and improve upon a child's development in WELS ECMs.

### **Acknowledgments**

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## **Chapter I: Introduction**

### **Problem Statement**

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) operates 393 Early Childhood Ministries (ECMs), serving 11,270 children and their families (WELS Statistical Report, 2018). Those children come to us from a variety of backgrounds with a variety of needs, and we are privileged to provide a Christ-centered education for those students. Early childhood education may focus heavily on the academic development of the children and overlook the importance of the children's social and emotional development. Social and emotional developmental skills, "develop early and are essential for learning in a classroom setting" (Bettencourt, Gross, & Ho, p. iii, 2016).

Understanding the importance of developing the necessary social and emotional skills for children in our ECMs is a priority since those skills can positively impact kindergarten reading achievement and learning engagement (Nix, Bierman, Domitrovich, & Gill, 2013; Denham et al., 2013). Developing necessary social and emotional skills in early childhood is especially beneficial since by the ages of five or six, "the brain has matured to acquire the social-behavioral skills needed for learning in a classroom setting" (Bettencourt et al., p. 2, 2016).

### **Purpose of the Study**

Families and schools are focused on the academic readiness of children who will be entering kindergarten. They want to know what letters, numbers, pre-reading skills, comprehension skills, and reasoning skills these children possess. In fact, many of the WELS ECMs utilize some form of kindergarten readiness assessment, which provides

information solely on a child's academic readiness with little to no information on the child's social and emotional readiness. However, children who are not deemed socially and emotionally ready to enter kindergarten have a greater chance of struggling in school, being retained in grade, or needing special services or support by the third grade (Bettencourt et al., 2016). That finding is startling and is why most states require teachers in state licensed ECMs to have annual training specific to the social and emotional development of young children, wherein these teachers are provided with resources and skills to use in their classrooms.

But how many programs actually make the social and emotional development of their children a priority or focus in their classrooms? Despite all of the research that explains the importance of developing a child's social and emotional skills, there has been little research on how WELS ECMs carry out this important aspect of a child's development. The purpose of this study is to accumulate information regarding how WELS ECMs view and implement the development of social and emotional skills within their programs so that WELS can improve the quality of early childhood education for all of the children they serve.

### **Research Questions**

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Do our WELS ECMs explicitly teach social and emotional competencies?
2. How are WELS ECMs teaching social and emotional competencies?
3. What value does WELS ECMs put on the development of a child's social and emotional competencies?

4. How do WELS ECMs educate their teachers on social and emotional competencies?

### **Definition of Terms**

**Early Childhood Ministry (ECM)** - a program operated by a WELS' affiliated institution that provides care and education for children ranging in age from zero to five years. They include childcare programs that operate year round, preschool programs that operate during the school year, and a number of other make-ups.

**Lutheran Elementary School (LES)** - a program operated by a WELS' affiliated institution that provides education for children in grades K through eighth grade.

**Social and Emotional Competencies** - are the skills used to teach “children and adults to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (CASEL, 2017).

### **Assumptions and Limitations of the Study**

This study invited 393 WELS ECMs to complete a survey via email. Not all of the WELS ECMS that were invited participated in this study, thereby limiting the amount of data collected. It is difficult to accurately assess whether that limited data will be a fair representation of the various types of programs operated by the WELS.

This study will also focus on, and compare how, respondents in the roles of principal, director, and teacher completed the survey. The collected data were skewed towards directors and away from principals in the leadership roles based on the number of emails sent out to individuals serving in each role. Therefore, the respondents of this survey are not a fair representation of the leadership and teachers of WELS ECMs.

Furthermore, this study focuses on a small and somewhat unique part of early childhood education. The narrow focus of this study could limit the number of respondents as they may not be as familiar with social and emotional competencies and therefore further limit the data.

### **Overview**

Chapter two of this paper is the literature review. The literature highlights relevant data regarding the importance, teaching, and benefits of explicit instruction of social and emotional competencies. Chapter three describes how the study was designed. Chapter four discusses the results of the study, while chapter five provides recommendations based on the data.

## **Chapter II: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) defines social and emotional learning competencies as, “the developing capacity of the child from birth through five years of age to form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, regulate, and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways; and explore the environment and learn” (Yates et al., p. 2, 2008). In other words, it is a child’s ability to not only identify and manage their own emotions, but to also identify and positively interpret and react to the emotions of others. This regulation will allow children to positively interact with their peers so that they can create social relationships with those peers as well as adults in order to facilitate learning.

Social and emotional learning competencies are an important part of a child’s development and are gaining a foothold in current research regarding the benefits they have for children in their early years as well as beyond. However, there has been little, if any, research into how WELS ECMs teach social and emotional competencies in their programs. The growing importance of these competencies shows that it is imperative that WELS ECMs teach and help the children they serve to develop these skills.

### **Importance of Social and Emotional Learning Competencies**

Researchers identify self-confidence, the capacity to develop positive relationships with peers and adults, concentration and persistence on challenging tasks, the ability to effectively communicate emotions, the ability to listen to instructions and be attentive, and social problem solving skills as important social and emotional competencies for the development of young children (Shonkoff & Philips, 2000).

Similarly, the Baltimore Education Research Consortium identifies the following social and emotional competencies as important for kindergarten readiness: the ability to follow directions, compliance with the rules, management of one's own emotions, problem solving organization and completion of tasks, as well as the ability to get along with others (Bettencort et al, 2016). These two lists of social and emotional competencies are not only important for the overall development of a child in early childhood, but are also important skills for kindergarten and beyond.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified five core social and emotional competencies, which serves to organize those competencies listed above that children need to learn in order to benefit and support their development and well-being: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2017). Self-awareness speaks to a child's self-perception, ability to identify his/her own emotions, knowledge of strengths, as well as self-confidence and self-efficacy and how those items impact emotions. Self-management speaks to a child's ability to regulate their emotions, impulses, and behaviors while improving self motivation and goal setting. Social awareness consists of interacting with others as well as a child's ability to see a variety of perspectives, feel empathy for others, understand diversity, and respect others within the context of social norms and expectations. Relationship skills focus on a child's ability to communicate and maintain positive relationships with peers and adults, as well as a child's ability to work with their peers in solving conflicts. Finally, responsible decision-making includes a child's ability to identify and analyze situations, and evaluate and

solve problems, while taking into consideration the well-being of self and others (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011; CASEL, 2017; Im, Jiar, & Talib, 2019).

### **Teaching Social and Emotional Competencies**

There is some debate regarding how social and emotional learning competencies should be taught to young children in terms of developmentally appropriate practice and optimum methods (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011). Should the skills be taught through explicit and direct teaching components as part of a curriculum or should the skills be taught through a loving, caring, structured, and supportive environment with well trained teachers (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011; Conners-Burrow, Patrick, Kyzer, & McKelvey, 2016)? The answer is both, as long as the lessons that are being explicitly taught are researched-based and being taught in developmentally appropriate ways.

Conners-Burrow et. al. (2016) state that social and emotional learning competencies, as identified by CASEL, can be taught as teachers scaffold children's play; directly teach problem-solving skills; help children verbalize their feelings; discuss classroom values, rules, and consequences; as well as teach children coping skills, such as how to calm down, which is considered to be developmentally appropriate as defined by Copple and Bredekamp (2009). Studies show that effective social and emotional curricula focus on social and emotional skills daily in an intentional way to teach critical skills while also acknowledging them in context and encouraging children to use the skills they have been taught (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011). Research also shows that curricula with consistent and explicit lessons have a larger positive effect on student outcomes including not only improved social and emotional competencies, but academic

achievements as well (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011; Denham, 2006; Denham & Brown, 2010; Im et al., 2019; Nix et al., 2013).

Teachers are the connecting point between a social and emotional curriculum and a caring and nurturing environment. Teachers provide experiences that will either promote or deter a preschooler's social and emotional competence (Denham & Bassett, 2012). The way a teacher structures the children's environment and creates nurturing relationships with each child should support the social and emotional competencies that are being taught through explicit instruction that is based on research and developmentally appropriate practices (Conners-Burrow et al., 2016; Denham, Wyatt, Bassett, Echeverria, & Knox, 2008; Morris, Millenkey, Raver, & Jones, 2013). Denham, Bassett, and Zinsser (2012) took the importance of the teacher's role a step further when they discovered that *how* teachers demonstrate and model emotions, reacts to emotions of others, identify the emotions of children in the classroom, as well as regulate their own emotions can have as great an impact on a child's learning environment as the lessons being taught. Curricula and environment work hand-in-hand through the teacher as they strive to provide high quality early childhood care, which will increase the likelihood of positive relationships that will help children acquire necessary social and emotional competencies (McCabe & Altamura, 2011).

### **Benefits of Explicit Instruction of Social and Emotional Competencies**

It is a struggle for children to engage with peers for the first time and navigate how to positively control their own emotions all while also figuring out how to interact and handle the emotions of others (Denham & Brown, 2010). Social and emotional learning competencies are important to a child's development as they help children



properly navigate these new experiences. In addition, 60% of children enter school with the necessary cognitive skills, but only 40% have the social and emotional competencies necessary to succeed in kindergarten (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011, p. 398). Those competencies also help lay the foundation for children's ability to learn and succeed in school and life. Positive social and emotional competencies are linked to academic success, improved behavior, and improved social skills (Nix et al., 2013; Im et al., 2019; Denham & Brown, 2010; Mahoney, Duriak, & Weissberg, 2018).

The social and emotional competencies that children need to be successful in school are considered to be non-cognitive skills, interrelated, and acquired by the ages of five or six (Bettencourt et al, 2016; McCabe & Altamura, 2011). This fact highlights the importance of developing social and emotional competencies in early childhood education since children are spending more and more time in early childhood classrooms. When those skills are taught through an intentional and systematic approach, it demonstrates positive results in the acquiring and utilizing of those social and emotional competencies along with acquiring and improving academic competencies (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011; Im et al., 2019; Nix et al., 2013).

Research suggests that increased academic learning occurs for children who have a high level of social and emotional competencies since they are no longer struggling to understand and regulate their emotions and now have the capacity to focus on learning (Denham et al., 2012). Considering that children's behavioral difficulties may become an obstacle to their own learning, how social and emotional competencies are effectively taught and supported can impart a significant impact on how children learn and succeed in the early years of school (Morris et al., 2013). Preschoolers, children approximately

ages four and five, are beginning to understand their own strengths and weaknesses as they compare themselves to others (McCabe & Altamura, 2011). This realization highlights the benefit of positive self-awareness, which includes self-confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset” (CASEL, 2017).

### **Summary**

The above literature review demonstrates that teaching and developing social and emotional competencies in the children of WELS ECMs not only benefits them while they are in the programs, but later in elementary school and beyond as well. Social and emotional competencies not only help children identify and manage their own emotions, but interpret and navigate the emotions of others. This ability allows children to create and maintain positive relationships with their peers and adults. Children with well developed competencies can then focus on the academic material presented to them in preschool and elementary school so they can become even more successful.

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

Current evidence-based research into the social and emotional development of young children shows how important it is for young children in early childhood programs to learn social and emotional competencies. The literature reviewed for this study outlines the importance of social and emotional competencies as they lay the foundation for a child's ability to learn and succeed in school and in life. A child who is able to identify and regulate their emotions can more easily focus and learn the necessary academics in elementary school, as compared to a child who is still struggling to regulate their own emotions.

WELS operates approximately 400 ECMs, serving about 11,000 families (WELS Statistical Report, 2018). Considering that the WELS ECMs are serving such a large number of families and children, it is important to identify *how* they are teaching social and emotional competencies. This study looks to provide insight into how those WELS ECMs currently teach and value the learning of social and emotional competencies in the children they serve, as well as how they encourage and support their teachers in learning about social and emotional competencies.

A survey (see Appendix C) was sent out to all directors, principals, and teachers of WELS ECMs in order to provide information on their views and values of social and emotional competencies. The surveys included both quantitative and qualitative data. The information gathered serve not only as an insight into current practices, but hopes to also guide the leadership of WELS ECMs in prioritizing, valuing, and supporting social and emotional competencies in the future.

**Research Question(s)**

The information gathered from the surveys looked to answer the following questions:

1. Do our WELS ECMs explicitly teach social and emotional competencies?
2. How are WELS ECMs teaching social and emotional competencies?
3. What value does WELS ECMs put on the development of a child's social and emotional competencies?
4. How do WELS ECMs educate their teachers on social and emotional competencies?

**Research Design and Procedures**

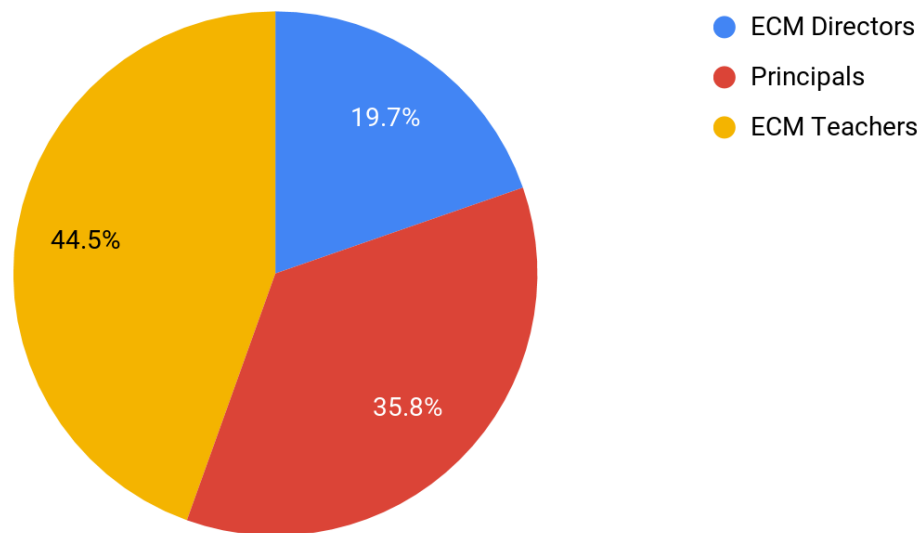
Both quantitative and qualitative questions were used when developing the survey. This survey was then emailed to all WELS principals, directors and teachers of WELS ECMs as identified by the Commission on Lutheran Schools' (CLS) office. The survey was sent to a total of 894 individuals serving as principals, directors, and/or teachers. The survey collected quantitative data through questions regarding the recipient's role in the ECMs, what type of an ECM they currently serve, how social and emotional competencies are taught and their knowledge of its impact on certain areas of a child's development, the amount of time spent teaching various skills measured in minutes including social and emotional competencies, and their perception of the priority level of teaching social and emotional competencies; in addition to qualitative data regarding the support/encouragement of teachers' growth in social and emotional competencies (see Appendix C).

### Population and Sample

The survey was sent out to 894 recipients who identified themselves as either a principal of a school with a preschool (serving ages three to four), a director of a WELS ECM (preschool serving ages three to four or center serving ages zero to five/school age), or a teacher in an ECM (preschool serving ages three to four or center serving ages zero to five/school age). The recipients are as follows: 19.6% (176) are directors, 35.7% (320) are principals, and 44.5% (398) are ECM teachers (figure 1). Of the 894 emails sent, 13 of those emails bounced indicating that the email addresses were no longer active. Those bounces left 881 recipients able to complete the survey.

**Figure 1**

*Survey Recipients*

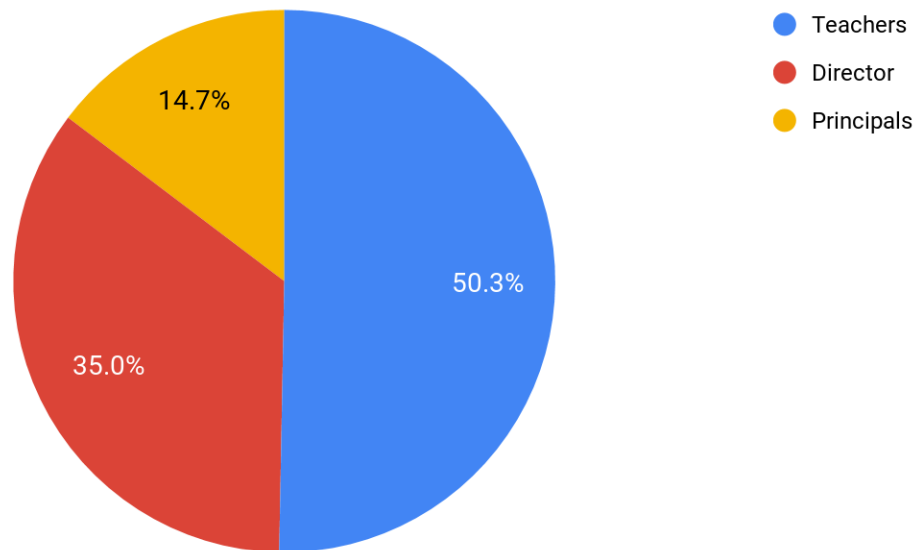


The survey was sent out via email on January 9, 2020. A reminder email was sent out on January 16, 2020. The survey closed on January 23, 2020, thereby giving recipients two weeks to complete the survey. One hundred sixty-three surveys were completed by the due date, which is an 18.5% response rate.

The ratio of directors and teachers who completed the survey is higher than that of principals who completed the survey when compared with those who received the survey. Fifty point three percent of the respondents were teachers and 35.3% of the respondents were directors. However, even though 35.8% of those who received the survey were principals, they only made up only 14.7% of the respondents. The lower response rate of principals skew the data toward directors and teachers. The breakdown of the roles in ECMs of those who completed the survey are as follows: principals completed 14.7% of the surveys, directors completed 34% of the surveys, and teachers completed 50.3% of the surveys (figure 2).

**Figure 2**

Comparison of Response Rate



### Instrumentation

The survey was developed and created using Google Forms. The survey was then emailed to the Commission on Lutheran Schools (CLS). The CLS then emailed the

survey to the principals, directors, and teachers in WELS ECMs. The survey was developed by the researcher in order to answer four specific questions regarding social and emotional learning within WELS ECMs.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The survey results were organized by Google Forms and exported into Google Sheets in order to be analyzed. Respondents were asked to answer questions and provide data using a five point Likert scale. The quantitative data was then cross-tabulated by the role the respondent has in their ECM to analyze and compare the responses in order to identify any relationship between the data and the respondent's role.

The qualitative responses were also collected by Google Forms and exported into Google Sheets. These responses were organized, analyzed, and coded based on the type of encouragement and support the respondents receive from their ECMs to learn about social and emotional competencies. The code themes that emerged were (a) no encouragement, (b) encouragement for any professional growth, (c) encouragement specific to social and emotional learning training, (d) compensation provided for those social and emotional learning training, (e) director led social and emotional training, as well as (f) reliance on the curriculum to train teachers in social and emotional learning.

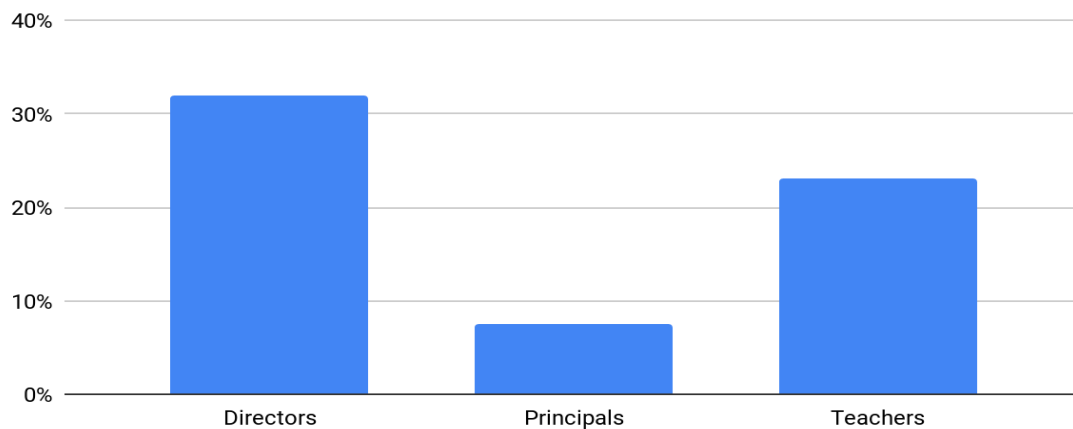
### **Limitations**

There was a relatively low response rate of 18.5%. Sixty-eight percent (599) of the 881 successfully sent and received emails were actually opened by the recipients, but only 27% (163) of that 599 who opened the email completed the survey. The low completion rate could be related to the subject matter. Recipients may not have felt knowledgeable enough about social and emotional competencies and therefore decided

not to complete the survey as only 7.5% of principals who received the survey completed it compared to 32% of directors and 23% of teachers (figure 3). Principals who do not work with children daily in the early childhood programs they are responsible for, typically are not as knowledgeable about the specific needs, skills, and training necessary in early childhood education. As one principal respondent replied, when asked about encouraging teacher growth in social and emotional competencies, “Not sure that we do much. We happen to have some very gifted teachers who just do it on their own.”

**Figure 3**

*Response Rate Based on Emails Sent*



*Note. Comparison of response rate between role in ECM*

Another reason for the low response rate could be because the recipients did not have the answers to the questions at their fingertips and as a result decided not to complete the survey. Unfortunately, this low response rate provides limited data to review and analyze.

There is a potential for duplication in responses from principals and directors of the same WELS ECM that would be another limitation. This means that if there is a preschool attached to a Lutheran Elementary School (LES), then it is possible that both a



director and a principal completed the survey. Both the principal and director completing the survey can thus duplicate the results for their ECM.

Another limitation in this study is that in some WELS ECMs an individual can serve as both a director and teacher. This study did not ask for a participant to identify more than one role within the ECM. Therefore, there is no way to know if a participant serving as both identified themselves as a director or as a teacher.

There could also be some unintentional bias in the survey questions. The researcher is a WELS ECM director and is passionate about the importance of social and emotional learning in early childhood. However, the survey was peer-reviewed by a principal of a preschool connected to an LES in order to mitigate any potential or perceived bias.

## Chapter IV: Results

### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate social and emotional learning within WELS ECMs so that they can continue to provide and improve the high-quality care and education for the children and families whom they serve. All of the data was collected and analyzed in order to answer the following research questions:

1. Do our WELS ECMs explicitly teach social and emotional competencies?
2. How are WELS ECMs teaching social and emotional competencies?
3. What value does WELS ECMs put on the development of a child's social and emotional competencies?
4. How do WELS ECMs educate their teachers on social and emotional competencies?

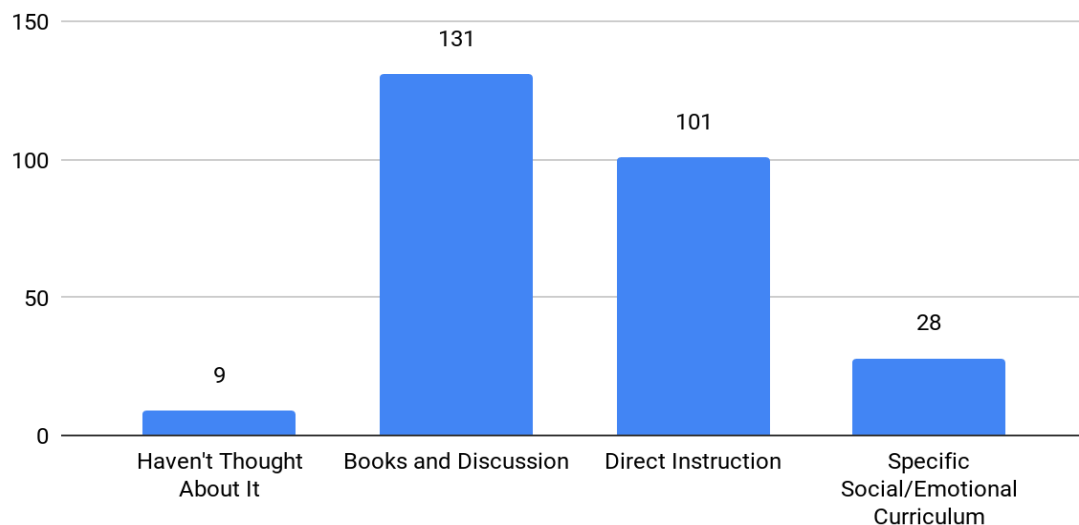
### Data Analysis

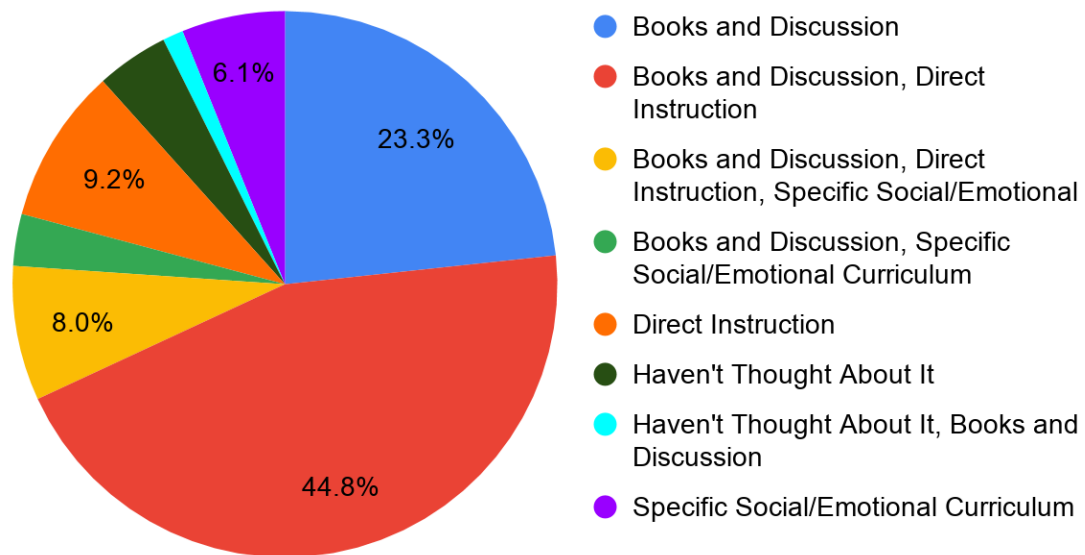
#### *Do our WELS ECMs explicitly teach social and emotional competencies?*

Overall, the majority of the respondents indicated that they are in fact explicitly teaching social and emotional competencies to the students in their care. The respondents were asked how they teach social and emotional competencies in their ECM program. One hundred fifty-four of the respondents identified that they did explicitly teach social and emotional competencies, which is 74.4%. However, nine of the respondents indicated that they have not thought about how they teach social and emotional competencies in their programs. The nine respondents who indicated that they have not thought about how they teach social and emotional competencies are split evenly between directors, principals, and teachers.

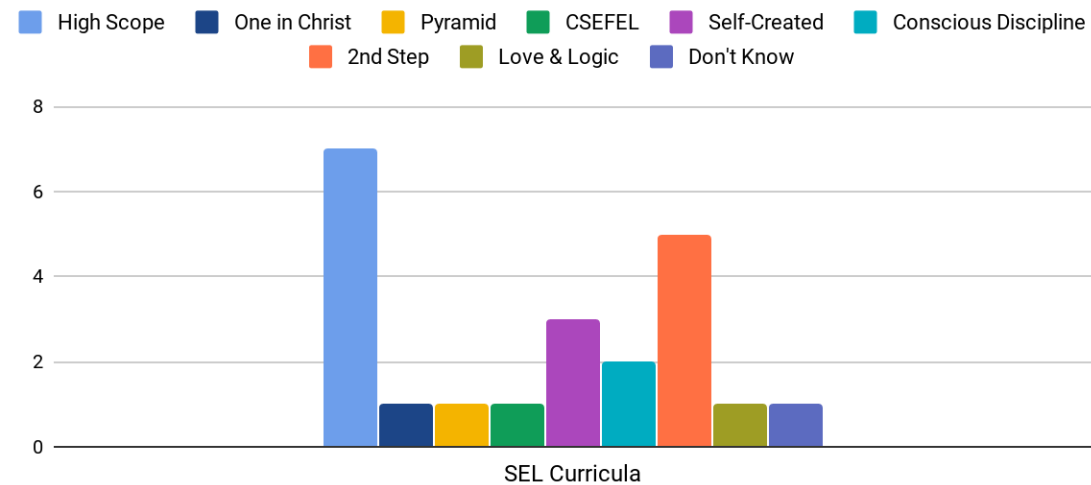
***How are WELS ECMs explicitly teaching social and emotional competencies?***

The survey that was sent to directors, principals, and teachers asked how they taught social and emotional competencies in their ECMs or classrooms. The respondents were able to choose a combination of four different options in order to gather the most accurate information (figure 6). When analyzing the data further and looking for any overlap, it was discovered that most of the programs utilized more than one method for teaching social and emotional competencies to the students in their care. One hundred respondents indicated that they use a combination of more than one method of instruction in their ECMs. The combination most often used to teach social and emotional competencies consisted of books and discussion together with direct instruction. The most commonly used single instruction method involved books and discussion (figure 4).

**Figure 4***Methods Used to Teach Social and Emotional Competencies*

**Figure 5***How Social and Emotional Competencies are Taught*

The survey also asked respondents if their ECM uses a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum. Twenty-two respondents indicated that they do use a specific SEL curriculum; while 141 respondents answered that they do not use a specific SEL curriculum. The respondents who indicated that they do use a specific SEL curriculum were then asked to provide the name of the curriculum they use. The breakdown is seen in figure 6 below.

**Figure 6***SEL Curricula*

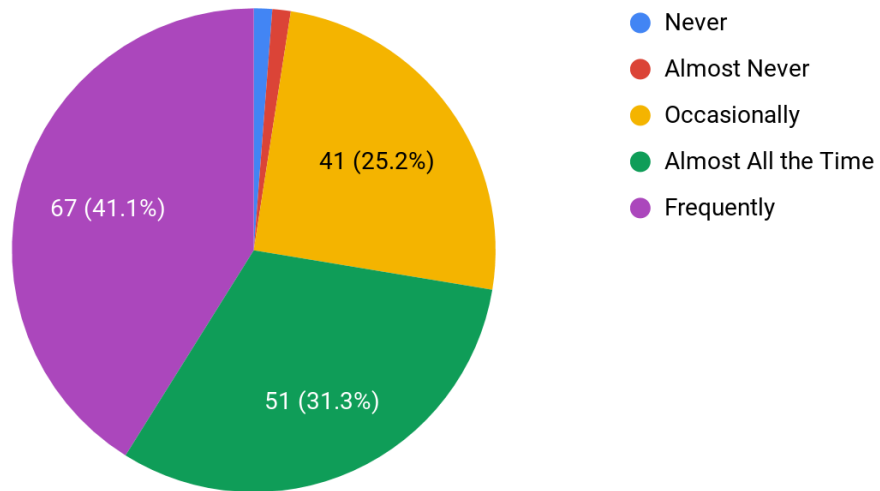
*Note. Names of SEL curricula WELS ECMs are using as provided by recipients.*

It is interesting that of the nine identified social and emotional curriculums, only one (2nd Step) is an actual SEL curriculum. High Scope, though a well-rounded curriculum that includes a social and emotional learning component, is not considered to be an SEL curriculum. Conscious Discipline and Love & Logic provide training and discipline philosophies for teachers to use to help manage behavior in their classrooms and with individual children, but they are not SEL curricula designed for children to learn social and emotional competencies. The curriculum identified as Pyramid and Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) are actually the same. Pyramid was developed by CSEFEL as a training program for teachers to help students develop their social and emotional competencies. Though it provides valuable training for teachers about social and emotional competencies, it is not an SEL curriculum. One in Christ is a religion curriculum, which is useful in teaching social and emotional competencies to children in our ECMs; again however, it is not an SEL

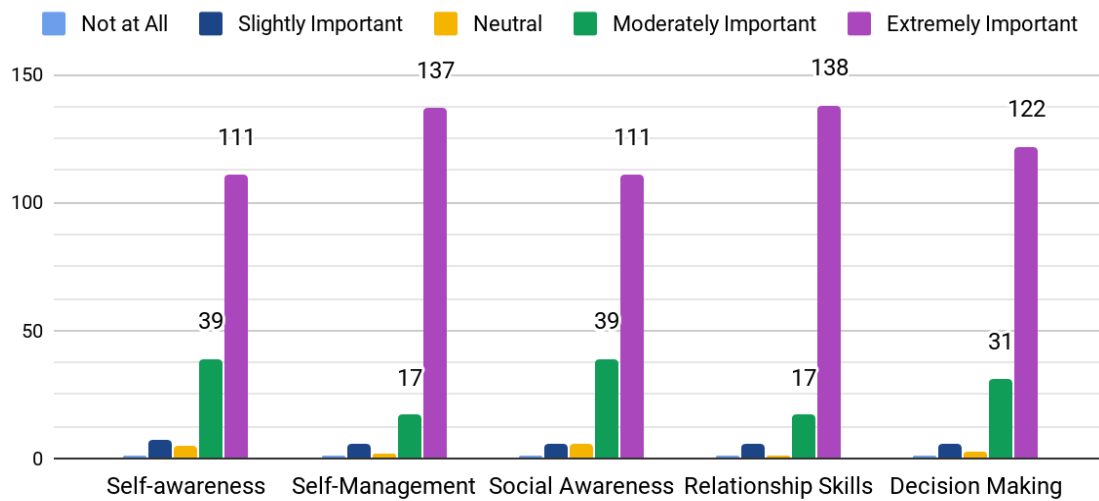
curriculum. Three respondents indicated that they have developed their own curriculum. Self-created curricula can be very useful and beneficial when they are based on research, but without knowing how they were developed, it is difficult to say whether or not the self-created curricula could be considered an SEL curriculum. These mixed responses can possibly indicate that though there may be confusion regarding what makes up a curriculum, the respondents are aware of the importance of social and emotional competencies and are utilizing additional resources to teach social and emotional competencies to the children in their ECMs. However, it also identifies a knowledge gap regarding how to effectively incorporate these competencies into their teaching.

***What value does WELS ECMs put on the development of a child's social and emotional competencies?***

**Frequency.** To discover the value that WELS ECMs place on social and emotional competencies, the survey asked respondents how often they teach social and emotional competencies. The frequency that social and emotional competencies are taught can be indicative of how important they are to the respondent. Forty-one point one percent of respondents indicate that they teach social and emotional competencies frequently, and 31.3% of respondents indicated that they teach social and emotional competencies almost all of the time. Combined, these two options add up to 72.4% of the total responses, thereby indicating that the majority of respondents recognize the importance of continually teaching social and emotional competencies in their classrooms or programs (figure 7).

**Figure 7***Frequency Teaching Social and Emotional Competencies*

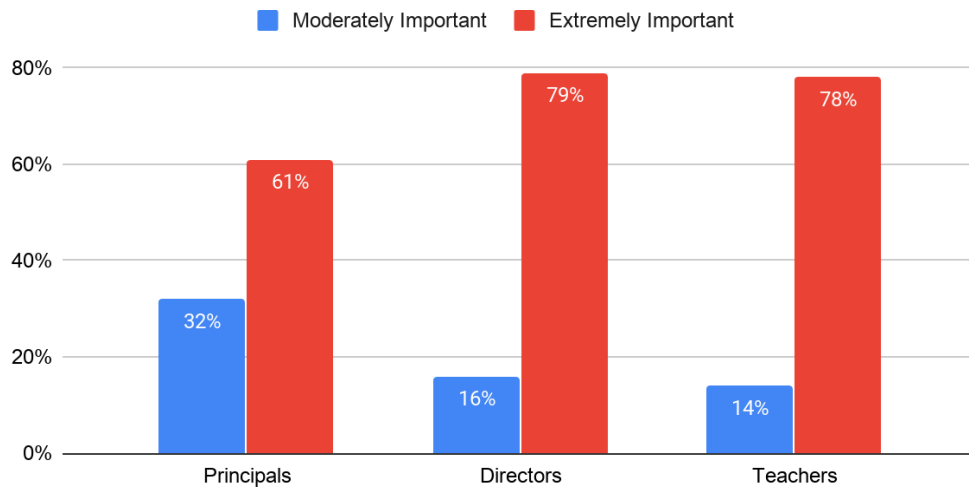
**Impact.** To find out how the respondents feel about the connection between social and emotional competencies and the development of other skills, the researcher asked the respondents to indicate how important they feel that social and emotional competencies are to a child's overall development in those specific skill areas using a 5-point Likert scale: not at all, slightly important, neutral, moderately important, and extremely important (figure 8).

**Figure 8***Impact on Development*

*Note. Views on how social and emotional competencies impact the development of other skills*

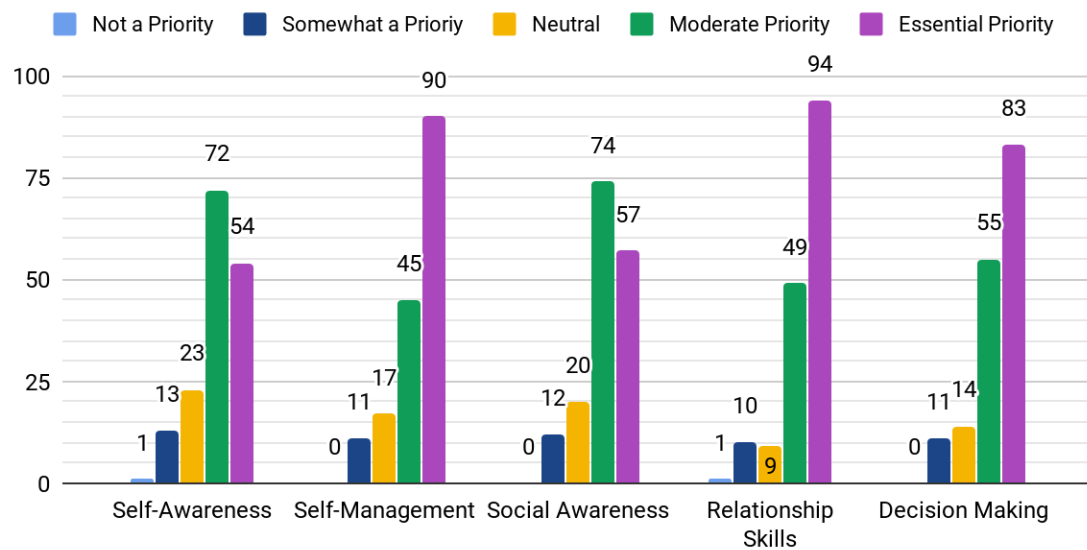
It is worth noting that the majority of the respondents demonstrated an understanding that social and emotional competencies are connected to and are extremely important to a child's overall development in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and decision making. When cross-tabulating responses based upon their role within their ECMs, principals rated the importance of social and emotional competencies slightly lower than the directors and teachers across all areas of skill development (figure 9).



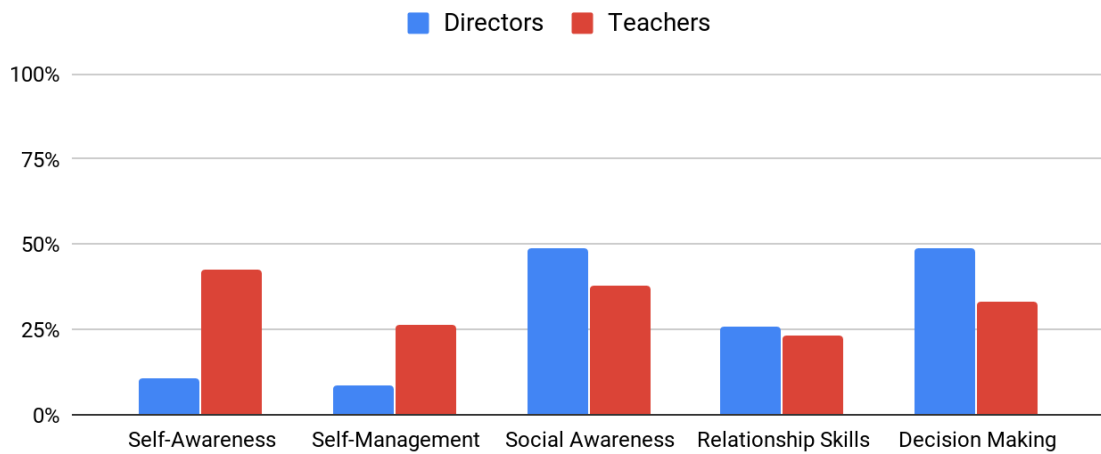
**Figure 9***Variance of Importance*

*Note: The average scores across various social and emotional competencies*

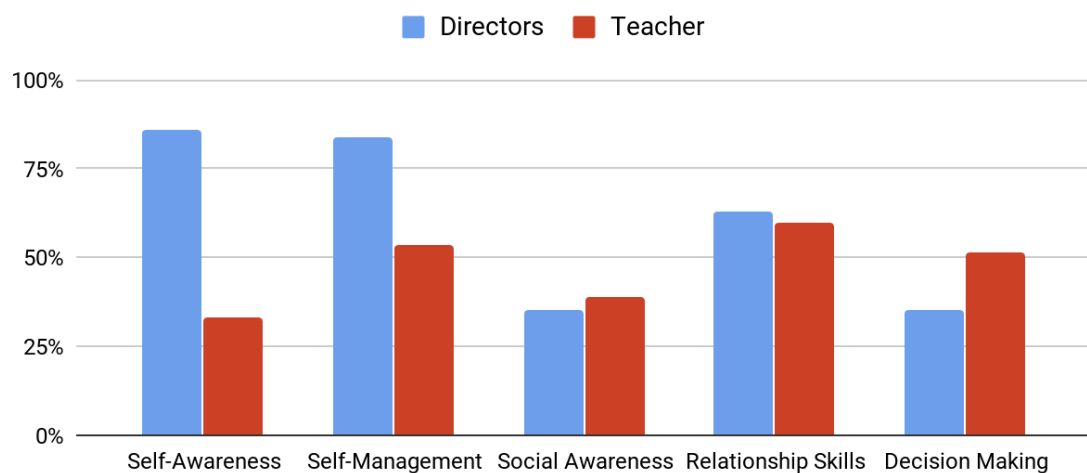
**Program priority.** The respondents were asked to rate their thoughts on a 5 point Likert scale: not a priority, somewhat a priority, neutral, moderate priority, and essential priority. It is interesting to note that though the respondents indicate a fairly high program priority for the ECM regarding social and emotional competence development, in general responses are not as high as when asked about personal beliefs regarding the importance of social and emotional competencies in the development of skills (figure 10). Here it can be seen that in the areas of self-awareness and social awareness that most respondents express that they have moderate priority within the ECM and the overall level of priority is mixed between moderate and essential priorities. This raises the question why does the importance and priority get diminished?

**Figure 10***Program Priority*

This disparity becomes more evident in the cross-tabulation of directors and teachers. Here it can be seen that there is a difference between how directors view the priority that their ECM gives these social and emotional competencies, and how the teachers view the priority that their ECM gives social and emotional competencies. This raises a question regarding how this discrepancy comes about. Figures 11 and 12 show this discrepancy more clearly.

**Figure 11***Comparison of Moderate Program Priority*

*Note. Directors and teachers views of their program's prioritization of social and emotional competencies.*

**Figure 12***Comparison of Essential Program Priority*

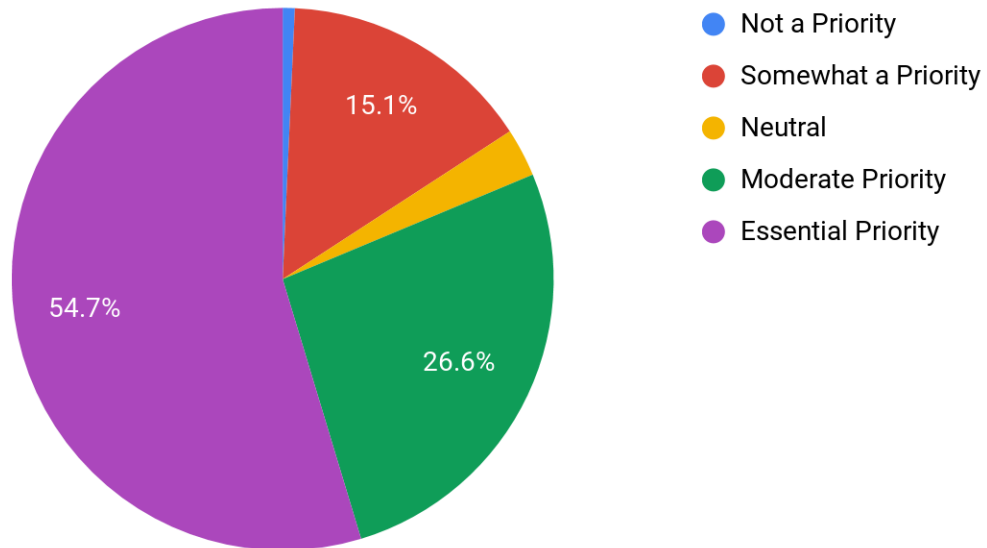
*Note. Directors and teachers views of their program's prioritization of social and emotional*

**Classroom priority.** When directors and teachers were asked to focus on their own classrooms in order to rate the priority of teaching social and emotional competencies, about half of the respondents indicated that they consider teaching the competencies an essential priority. They were once again asked to rate the priority on a

five point Likert scale: not a priority, somewhat a priority, neutral, moderate priority, or essential priority (figure 13).

**Figure 13**

*Classroom Priority*

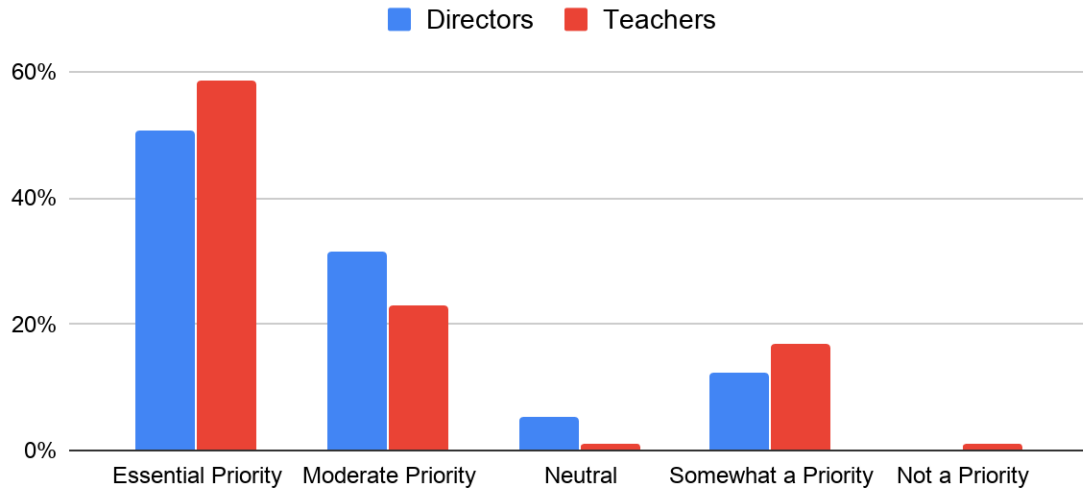


When the data gets cross tabulated based upon the role of the respondent in an ECM we again see that there is a slight disparity between directors' and teachers' views of social and emotional competencies. This time, the disparity occurs with their view of teaching social and emotional competencies in the classroom. The highest percentage of all respondents (59%), belonging to the teachers, answered that it was an essential priority. It is interesting to note that 17% of teachers and 12% of directors gave a lower rank to teaching social and emotional competencies in the classroom; somewhat a priority. Another interesting piece of data is that the highest percentage of principals (50%) view teaching social and emotional competencies relatively high on the scale as

having moderate priority in the classrooms (figure 14).

**Figure 14**

*Classroom Competency Comparison*



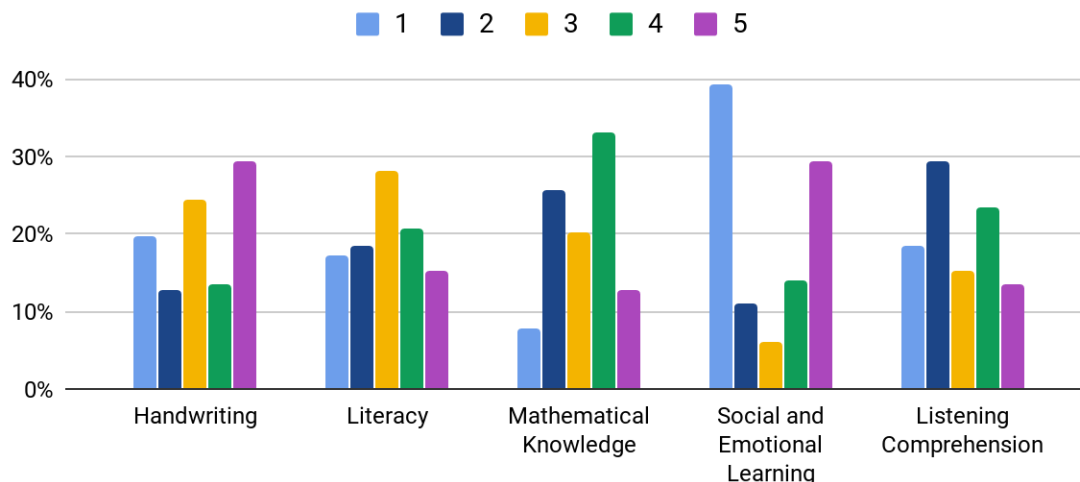
*Note:*

**Ranking skill importance.** To evaluate how important social and emotional competencies compare to other skills learned in early childhood, respondents were asked to rank the following skills: handwriting, literacy, mathematical knowledge, social and emotional learning, and listening comprehension. This ranking yielded some very interesting data. Previously, the majority of respondents indicated that they feel that social and emotional competencies are important to a child's overall development and that they are even essential skills for children to learn. However, when asked to rank them against other skills, the rankings were more evenly dispersed than expected. This data shows that there are diverse and varied views regarding which skills are important

for children to learn in WELS ECMs (figure 15).

**Figure 15**

*Ranking of Skills*



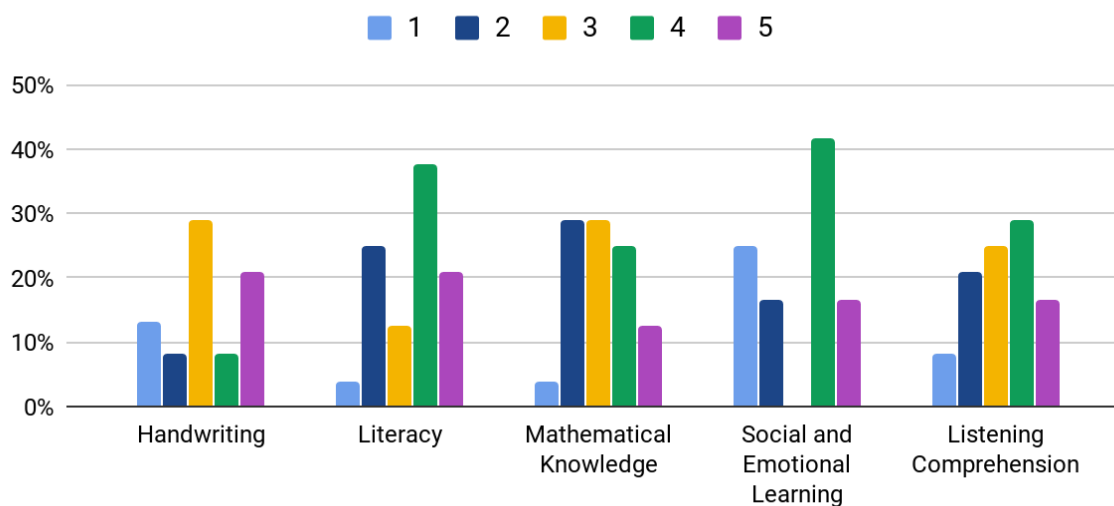
*Note: #1 being the most important and #5 being the least important*

Not surprising, however, was that social and emotional learning was ranked as the most important skill by more respondents than the other skills, but very unexpected was the relatively low percentage of 39.2%. Another surprising data point is that it was also ranked as the least important skill by 29.4% of respondents. The only other skill to be ranked this low was handwriting. Further research into the reason for such opposing rankings could help improve continuity between not only WELS ECMs but classrooms within the ECMs as well.

When cross-tabulating data between principals, directors, and teachers, it was discovered that overall principals rank social and emotional learning and literacy skills lower than other skills. They also rank mathematical skills higher than other respondents do (figure 16).

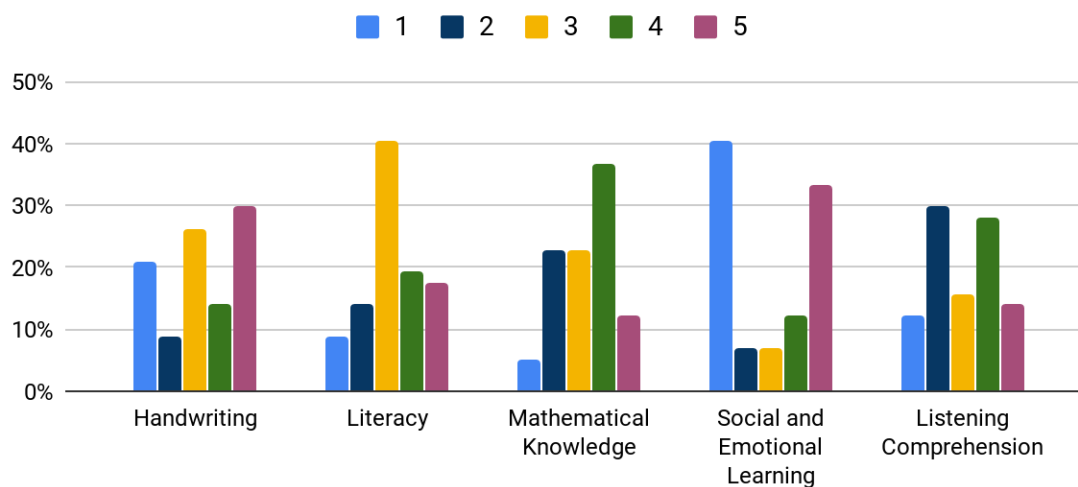
**Figure 16**

Principal Ranking of Skills

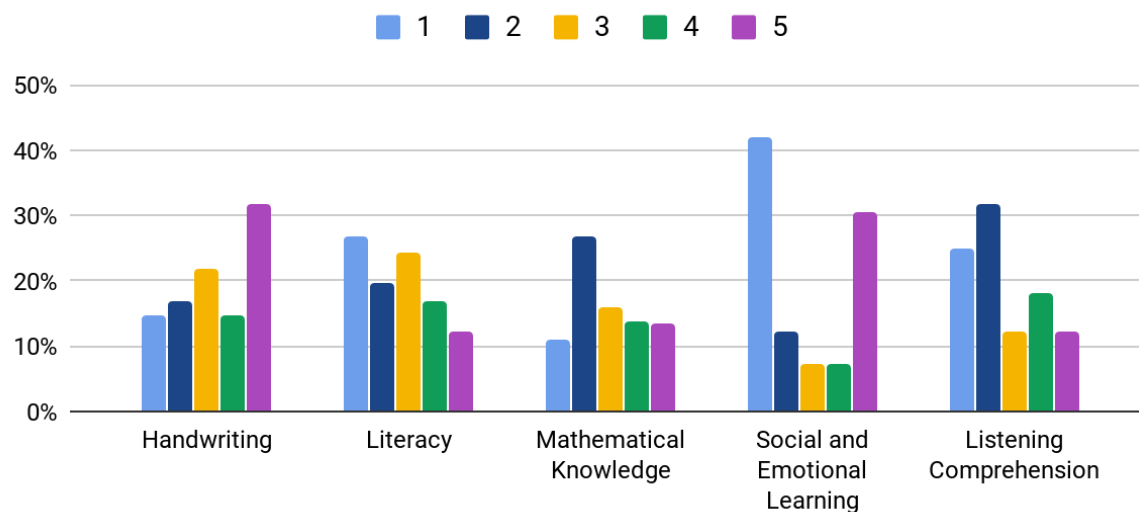


*Note. #1 being most important and #5 being least important.*

The opposing rankings in social and emotional learning, evident in the overall respondent ranking, really came from both the directors and teachers. Their rankings show a similar pattern with social and emotional learning receiving both the highest ranking as well as one of the lowest rankings (figures 17 and 18). The high percentage of least important rankings of social and emotional learning by both directors and teachers is of great concern. This concern is derived from an understanding of how well-developed social and emotional competencies benefit children not only in early childhood, but as they continue into elementary school and beyond.

**Figure 17***Director Rankings*

*Note. #1 being most important and #5 being least important.*

**Figure 18***Teacher Rankings*

*Note: #1 being most important and #5 being least important.*

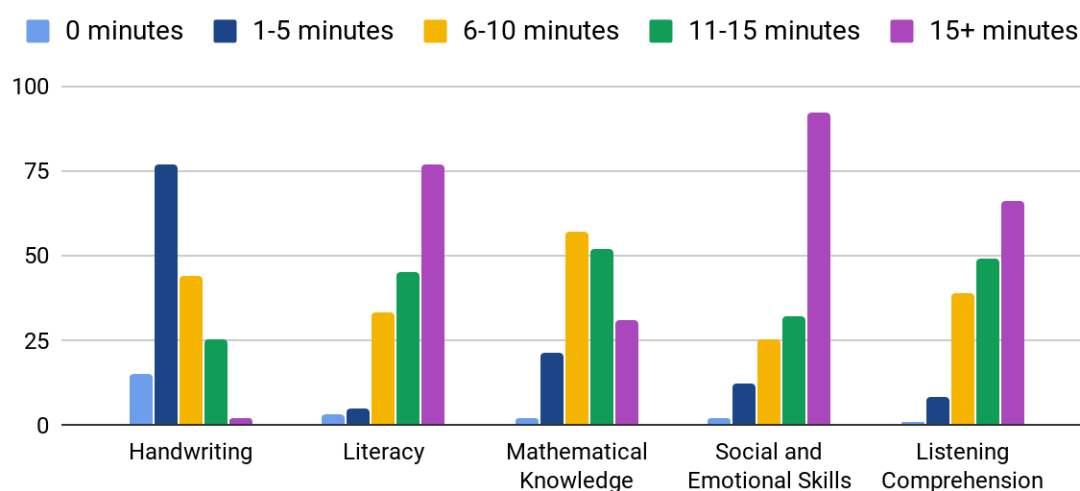
**Time spent teaching competencies.** The final insight that this study sought to gain regarding the value WELS ECMs put on the development of a child's social and emotional competencies was regarding the amount of time, on average, is spent on



teaching various skills in a typical day. The respondents were asked to identify the amount of time spent teaching handwriting, literacy, mathematical knowledge, social and emotional competencies, and listening comprehension in five minute increments (figure 19). The expectation which was confirmed by the data was that the majority of respondents spend more than 15 minutes teaching social and emotional competencies in their classrooms.

**Figure 19**

*Time Spent Teaching Skills*



*Note: Comparison of time spent on teaching skills each day.*

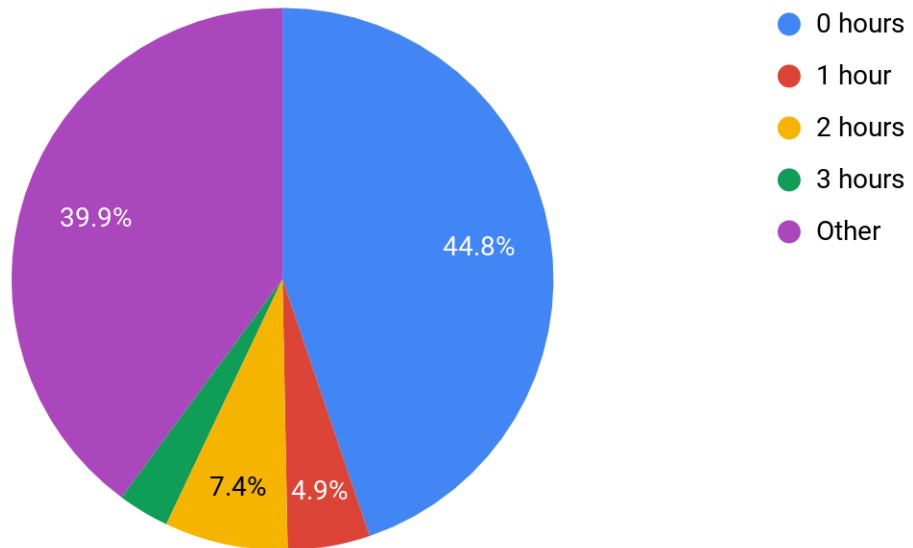
### ***How do WELS ECMs educate their teachers on social and emotional competencies?***

**State requirements.** The survey asked respondents how many hours of training in social and emotional competencies does their state require each year. The respondents could choose between 0 hours, 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, or “other.” Forty-five percent of respondents indicated that they are not required to complete any hours of training in social and emotional competencies. Forty percent of the respondents indicated “other”

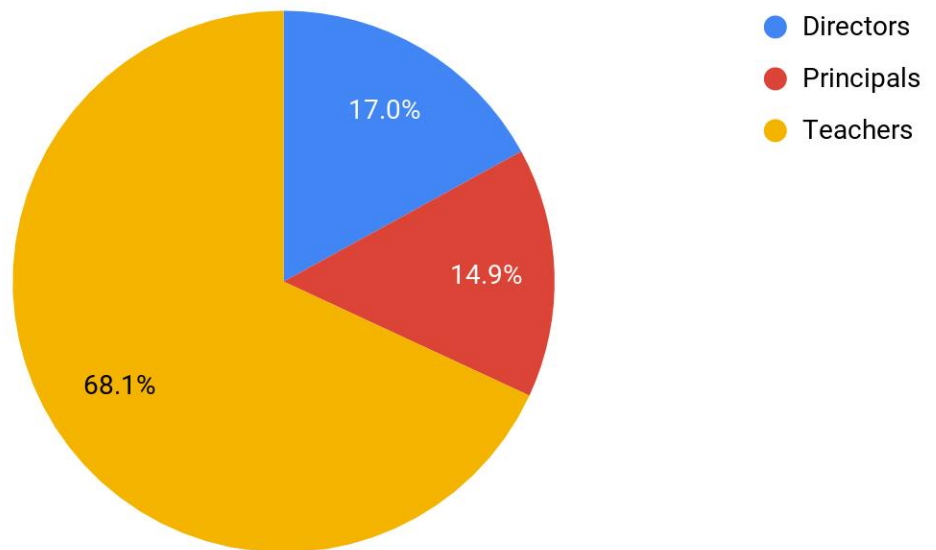
(figure 20).

**Figure 20**

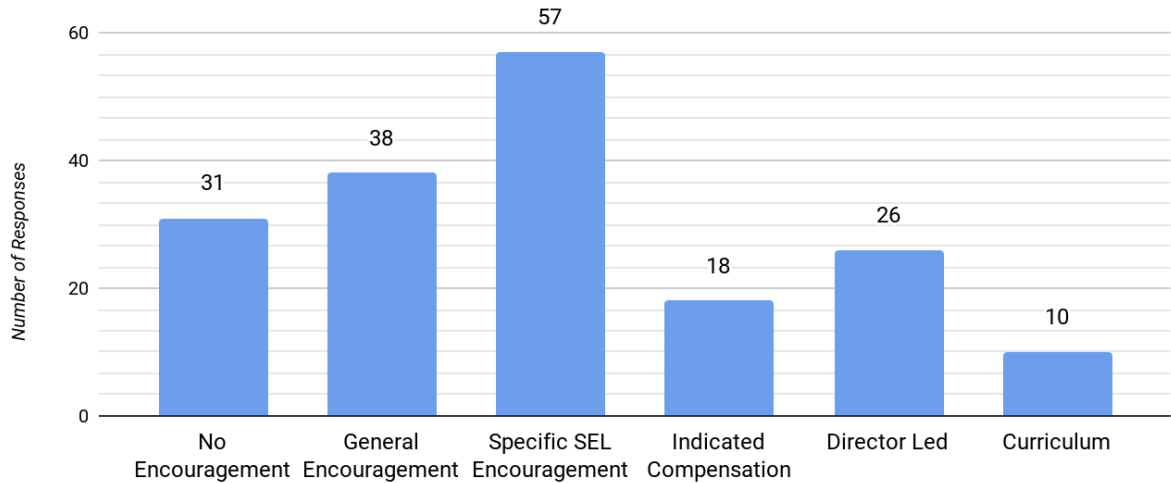
*Required Hours of SEL Training by State*



Thirty-nine point nine percent of the respondents who chose “other” when asked about the number of hours they are required to complete each year were asked to explain their answer. Those explanations conveyed that none of those respondents knew how many hours their state requires of social and emotional training each year. When cross-tabulated, the majority of the respondents who did not know how many hours of social and emotional training their states require each year were teachers (figure 21).

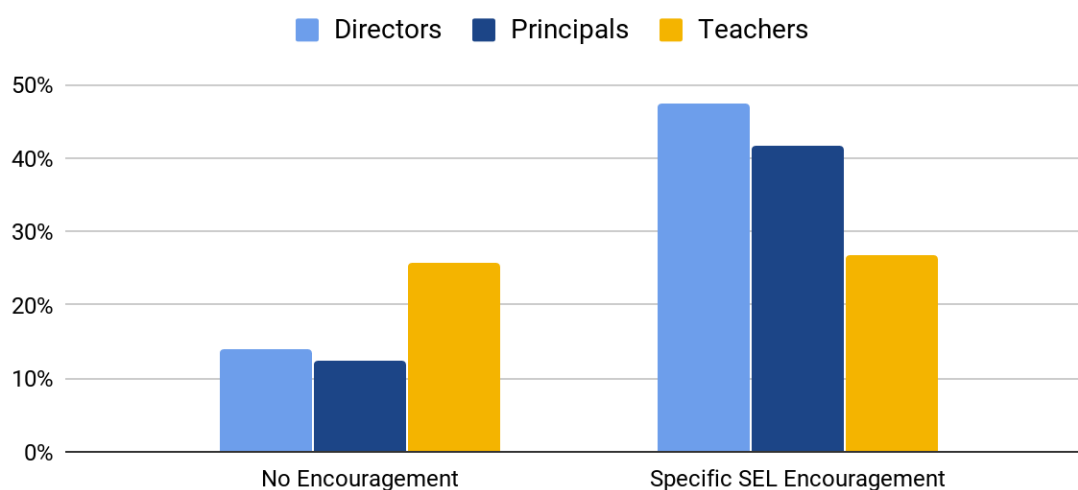
**Figure 21***Don't Know of any Requirements by State*

**Encouragement for professional growth.** In order to learn more about the training of WELS ECM directors and teachers, the survey asked respondents to answer an open-ended question regarding how their ECM program encourages and/or promotes teacher growth in social and emotional competencies. After reading through the responses there were six themes that became evident: (a) no encouragement, (b) general encouragement for professional growth, (c) specific encouragement for social and emotional learning training, (d) indicated compensation for trainings, (e) director led trainings, and (f) rely on curriculum to teach teachers (figure 22).

**Figure 22***Encouragement/Support for SEL Training*

*Note. Themes that emerged regarding type of encouragement/support provided by ECMs.*

It is interesting to note that again there are discrepancies between the answers from teachers and their leadership, whether a director or a principal. These discrepancies are more evident in the responses of no encouragement and specific SEL encouragement. Fourteen percent of directors and 12.5% of principals responded that there is no encouragement given for training in social and emotional competencies, whereas 25.6% of teachers also feel that there is no encouragement given (figure 23). Again we see a difference between how ECM teachers view the encouragement and/or support they receive, and how their leadership view the encouragement and/or support they give.

**Figure 23***Role Comparison on Support for SEL Training*

*Note: Encouragement for social and emotional training breakdown by role in ECM.*

This difference is seen again regarding the view of encouragement for specific social and emotional learning training. Here leadership feels that they do encourage and support specific training, whereas less teachers feel that encouragement and/or support (figure 23). These responses appear to indicate that there is a communication breakdown somewhere between leadership and teachers.

### Summary

This study was conducted to answer four questions regarding social and emotional learning in WELS ECMs. It sought to discover not only if, but how, WELS ECMs view and teach social and emotional competencies to both children and teachers. WELS ECMs strive to provide a high-quality Christ-centered environment where children can learn about themselves, the world around them, academic skills, and most importantly learn about their Savior's love for them. Therefore, it is important that these ECMs also lay the foundation for social and emotional competencies that children need

to be academically successful in elementary school and beyond (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011; Im et al., 2019; Nix et al., 2013).

This study revealed that WELS ECMs do in fact teach social and emotional skills to the children they serve. Only 5% of all respondents indicated that they have not thought about teaching social and emotional competencies. How social and emotional competencies are taught however, can be as varied as the programs they are taught in. The majority of respondents (88%) do not use a specific SEL curriculum. Instead, they use a combination of books and discussion, direct instruction, and curriculum elements to help children learn to identify not only their own emotions, but those of others. This data demonstrates that the majority of respondents are teaching social and emotional competencies within a caring environment. Only 6% of respondents indicate that they rely on a specific SEL curriculum in order to explicitly teach social and emotional competencies to the children in their care.

This study also revealed that social and emotional competencies are considered to be important and deserve priority within WELS ECMs. In general, teachers have a tendency to prioritize social and emotional competencies more than leadership, whether that leadership is a director or a principal. One of the most interesting items of data to come out of this study is that although directors, principals, and teachers all indicated that social and emotional competencies have high importance and priority in both their ECMs and classrooms, those competencies were not consistently ranked as being of higher importance than other skills acquired in an ECM. Specifically when ranking social and emotional competencies with handwriting, literacy, mathematical knowledge, and listening comprehension skills. While social and emotional competencies have now been

identified as being important to a child's overall development, a lower than expected percentage of our WELS ECMs are providing encouragement and/or support for training in those competencies.

## **Chapter V: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

Social and emotional competencies are an important part of a child's development, but they may sometimes be overlooked in light of academics. These skills help children navigate new experiences, focus on academic learning, and create lasting relationships with peers and adults. It is important that WELS ECMs recognize their importance and teach them to children in these programs so that they can continue to provide high-quality Christ-centered education to the children in their care. This study sought to discover not only if and how WELS ECMs are teaching social and emotional competencies as well as how they value those competencies in their programs and classrooms, but also how they demonstrate support for their teachers to learn more about the importance of social and emotional competencies and how to incorporate them into their classrooms. The hope is that the results of this study can be used to better develop the understanding and benefits of explicitly teaching social and emotional competencies throughout WELS ECMs.

### **Summary of the Results**

WELS ECM directors, principals, and teachers were asked to share their thoughts, views, and experiences on how social and emotional competencies are taught and supported within WELS ECMs. The focus of the study was to answer four questions regarding the teaching of social and emotional competencies:

1. Do our WELS ECMs explicitly teach social and emotional competencies?
2. How are WELS ECMs teaching social and emotional competencies?



3. What value does WELS ECMs put on the development of a child's social and emotional competencies?
4. How do WELS ECMs educate their teachers on social and emotional competencies?

**Teaching Social and Emotional Competencies.** Overall, most of our WELS ECMs do teach social and emotional competencies, though how they are taught varies. WELS ECMs utilize methods ranging from books and discussions to the use of a specific social and emotional learning curriculum. The method of using books and discussion to teach and support social and emotional competencies within the classroom is used more than any other method. It is most often used in connection with direct instruction. Together these two methods are used in almost 50% of the WELS ECMs that completed the survey (see figure 7). The WELS ECMs that indicate that they use an SEL curriculum do not demonstrate an accurate understanding of what an SEL curriculum is.

**Priority and Importance of Social and Emotional Competencies.** Social and emotional competencies are an essential part of educating the whole child. A child needs to have the necessary social and emotional skills to be able to identify and manage their own emotions as well as identify the emotions of others and respond appropriately, in order to be able to improve their attention span and focus on learning higher cognitive skills such as literacy and math skills. Thirty-one point three percent of respondents indicated that they teach social and emotional competencies almost all of the time while 41.1% of the respondents indicated that they teach social and emotional competencies frequently. The time spent on teaching social and emotional competencies shows that these skills are valued and important to WELS ECMs.

Respondents also demonstrated an understanding of the impact that social and emotional competencies have on other skills. An overwhelming majority of respondents scored social and emotional competencies as being extremely important to a child's development in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and decision-making skills. To further support the belief in the importance of social and emotional competencies, 50.9% of respondents indicated that teaching social and emotional competencies in their classrooms is an essential priority. Another 30.1% of respondents indicated that teaching social and emotional competencies are a moderate priority. These high percentages show that called workers in WELS ECMs personally give social and emotional competencies a high priority. However, this study also revealed that although social and emotional competencies are ranked high by individuals, that ranking may not be as highly ranked in the WELS ECM in which they serve.

When the respondents were asked to rank how the ECM program they serve prioritizes social and emotional competencies, the rankings were not as high. Although the rankings were moderately high, they were not as high as the personal beliefs. When these data were cross-tabulated by the roles of the respondents within the ECMs, a variance can be seen between the ECM leaders and the teachers. On average, a higher percentage of directors thought that their program viewed social and emotional competencies as an essential priority. A higher percentage of teachers thought that their program viewed social and emotional competencies as a moderate priority. These are not major differences in priority, but different enough to raise concerns about the cause.

One of the most telling pieces of data to come from this study is how social and emotional competencies rank when placed against other skills learned and developed in

early childhood. It was surprising to see that while social and emotional competencies were scored as being either essential or of extreme importance in a child's development, that same degree of importance was not demonstrated when compared to other skills. Respondents were asked to rank social and emotional competencies together with handwriting, literacy, mathematical knowledge, and listening comprehension and only 39.2% of respondents ranked social and emotional learning as the most important skill. In addition to that somewhat low percentage, 29.4% of respondents indicated that social and emotional learning was the least important skill.

**Support for Social and Emotional Training.** WELS ECM teachers need support and encouragement to pursue further education and training in social and emotional competencies. Some states require training in this area, but most do not. Therefore it is up to the program to support and encourage their teachers to continue to learn and implement social and emotional learning within their classrooms. This study shows that the majority of respondents are either not required to have any additional training or are not aware of any state requirements regarding annual training.

Fifty-nine respondents stated that their WELS ECM encourages them to pursue additional training specifically in social and emotional competencies. This is a good start, but it shows that the majority of respondents do not receive specific encouragement for social and emotional competency training. Another important piece of information is that 32 respondents said that they receive no encouragement for additional training, social and emotional or otherwise. WELS ECMs need to do a better job of encouraging and supporting continuing education within their programs; not only for social and emotional learning, but for other areas of growth and development as well.

## **Conclusions**

There is little to no research on social and emotional learning competencies within WELS ECMs. This study provides the first insight into how WELS ECMs teach, prioritize, and value social and emotional competencies. The following conclusions can be drawn from this study:

### **Do WELS ECMs explicitly teach social and emotional competencies?**

Yes, the majority of WELS ECMs do teach social and emotional competencies in their programs.

### **How are WELS ECMs teaching social and emotional competencies?**

The majority of WELS ECMs teach social and emotional competencies through books, discussions, and direct instruction. There is also a lack of understanding or clarity regarding what is an SEL curriculum.

### **What value does WELS ECMs put on the development of a child's social and emotional competencies?**

Social and emotional competencies are viewed as an essential priority to a child's overall development by both leaders and teachers in an ECM. However, Directors, principals, and teachers have different views regarding how WELS ECMs prioritize teaching social and emotional competencies. Overall, social and emotional competencies are viewed as extremely important, even though they are not consistently ranked as more important than cognitive skills such as handwriting, literacy, mathematical skills, and listening comprehension.

**How do WELS ECMs educate their teachers on social and emotional competencies?**

WELS ECMs provide some encouragement for continuing education by ECM leaders for teachers in social and emotional competencies. However, it is quite varied in how that encouragement is given and how specific it is towards social and emotional competencies.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are proposed to improve teaching social and emotional competencies within WELS ECMs.

**Understanding Curricula**

ECM leaders, whether directors or principals, need to make sure that they fully understand what an SEL curriculum entails. The responses in this research study regarding how WELS ECMs teach social and emotional competencies indicate that there is some confusion regarding what an SEL curriculum is. SEL curricula are developed and published for the specific purpose of strategically and explicitly teaching social and emotional competencies. They are not part of another curriculum nor are they behavior management techniques. They are based on research and are meant to be incorporated each day in connection with other curricula in order to support children's social and emotional development. It is vital for ECM leaders to understand what makes up an SEL curriculum in order to support and provide resources for their teachers to strengthen their teaching of social and emotional competencies.

Once ECM leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of what an SEL curriculum is, they then need to research available curriculums to see which ones are quality and research-based. This understanding will help ECM leaders decide if they

would like to use a curriculum and which specific curriculum they would prefer. Then, they need to share and help educate their teachers about how they can best help their students acquire social and emotional competencies. Research shows that it is the teacher who is critical to a child's social and emotional development. Whether the ECM leaders chose to teach social and emotional competencies through a loving, caring, and well structured environment or through explicitly taught lessons from a curriculum, it is important that they inform and help educate their teachers on why that method was chosen. If there is an unclear understanding, then WELS ECM leaders and teachers may think that they are teaching social and emotional competencies in a way that will benefit the children when they are not. Understanding curricula options, what research indicates, and developmentally appropriate ways of teaching social and emotional competencies is vital to ensuring support for all children's growth and development in their care.

**Synod Supported Resources**

MLC early childhood professors can support their ECM leaders and teachers by providing recommendations regarding available social and emotional curricula. These recommendations would be similar to how WELS already recommends the High Scope curriculum. Each ECM leader and teacher would then need to decide which program would work best for their programs, but it would greatly support them in their decision.

WELS early childhood leaders can also compile a list of books that they recommend to be read to support the development of social and emotional competencies. This list would provide support for WELS ECM teachers in their classrooms. This could be extremely helpful since the majority of our WELS ECM teachers utilize books to teach social and emotional competencies within their classrooms.

**Educate About Positive Impacts**

ECM leaders and teachers need to learn about and educate their faculty regarding the positive impact social and emotional competencies have on the acquisition of cognitive competencies. The research data from this survey indicates that even though WELS ECM leaders and teachers may feel that social and emotional development is important to a child, those feelings are not demonstrated strongly when asked to rank other skills obtained in early childhood. Children entering kindergarten are expected to know at least ten letters, write their name, count and identify numbers to ten; identify words that rhyme as well as make up rhymes, answer open-ended questions about text read to them, and sort based on attributes. ECM leaders need to understand and teach that well-developed social and emotional competencies aid children in acquiring those expected academic competencies, and that WELS ECMs need to be careful to not lose sight of that.

Many families are looking for programs that will teach strong academics and they can also lose sight of the importance of their child's social and emotional development. As a result, it is up to WELS ECM leaders to not only educate their children in social and emotional competencies, but their families as well. ECM leaders need to know and understand the impact social and emotional competencies have on children learning cognitive competencies, such as literacy and mathematics, so that children can be fully equipped for kindergarten and beyond. Then, ECM leaders and teachers can confidently prioritize social and emotional competencies in their programs and classroom.

**Develop Synod-Wide Recommendation**

The WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools might investigate how the WELS School Accreditation (WELSSA) can encourage continuing education specific to social and emotional competency for both ECM teachers and leaders. Continuing education is important for WELS ECM leaders and teachers in order to provide high quality care. Though most WELS ECM leaders and teachers are encouraged to pursue continuing education, most are not encouraged to pursue continuing education specifically purported for social and emotional competencies.

A synod-wide recommendation will support WELS ECM leaders as they encourage continuing education in social and emotional competencies through outside resources or by educating their faculty themselves. In order to do that, WELS ECM leaders need to gain knowledge in social and emotional competencies themselves. A synod-wide recommendation will not only encourage improving their own understanding of social and emotional competencies, but will allow them to more adequately educate, support, and encourage their faculty. When WELS ECM leaders incorporate learning about social and emotional competencies as part of the expectation for themselves and their faculties, they are embedding its importance into their culture, which naturally will encourage WELS ECM teachers to learn more.

An area of continuing education that this research study did not explicitly cover was the impact that state licensing has on the training in the area of social and emotional competencies. There are a large number of WELS ECMs that are not licensed by the state and therefore have no requirement for continuing education in the area of social and emotional competencies. State licensure does not guarantee continuing education in the area of social and emotional competencies as not all states require it. A synod wide



recommendation will help set a standard that for all WELS ECMs that will only strengthen the quality of care that they offer.

### **Investigate Discrepancy Between ECM Leaders and Teachers**

It is important for ECM leaders and teachers to be in agreement in all areas of a child's development, especially regarding the priority of social and emotional competencies. Research shows that social and emotional competencies are linked to academic success and behavior. Therefore, when a program is unified on the importance of teaching those skills to children, the children will be set up for success not only in the ECM, but later in life as well. As a result, additional research is recommended in order to further evaluate the discrepancy between how WELS ECM leadership and teachers view their program's prioritization of social and emotional competencies. Discovering why WELS ECM teachers and the ECM leadership prioritize social and emotional competencies differently can only help WELS ECMs become stronger and provide an even higher quality of education for the children that we serve.

### **In Conclusion**

This research study has looked to learn the importance of social and emotional competencies in WELS ECMs. God has created children to be such wonderful and unique individuals that require WELS ECMs to know how to support all of their needs. Strengthening the understanding and knowledge of social and emotional competencies of the ECM leaders and teachers is one way for WELS ECMs to provide children with the highest quality of care possible.

God has given us the distinct privilege of caring for his little lambs. We not only get to teach them about their letters, numbers, colors, and shapes; but, most importantly

about their Savior's unending love for them. Ultimately, we know that while we can educate ourselves on the best practices in social and emotional competencies, surrounding the children with the love and forgiveness of their Savior will have far greater impact on their lives. Jesus tells us this when he says, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14, ESV 2001).

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**Appendix A: Introduction Letter**

Dear WELS Director, WELS Principal and Teacher,

My name is Kayte Gut and I am serving as Preschool Director and Teacher at Shepherd of the Valley in Westminster, Colorado. I am working on my thesis capstone project to complete the Masters Program through Martin Luther College. I am conducting a survey to gather descriptive information regarding how our WELS Early Childhood Ministries (ECM) teach social and emotional competencies in their programs. I am asking you to complete this survey: [Director/Principal and Teacher Survey](#) because you are a WELS director, principal, or teacher in a WELS ECM. The survey contains about 10 questions and should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. You will have the opportunity to remain anonymous when you respond to this survey. The findings will be shared online in my completed thesis via the MLC library.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time and honest answers to the questions.

In Christ,

Kayte Gut

[kayte.gut@gmail.com](mailto:kayte.gut@gmail.com)

## Appendix B: Survey

### Social and Emotional Learning - Director/Principal and Teachers

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) defines social and emotional learning competencies as "the developing capacity of the child from birth through five years to form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, regulate, and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways; and explore the environment and learn."

Please rate the following:

**\* Required**

1. Role in ECM \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ Director

☐ Principal

☐ Teacher

2. Program Type (mark all that apply) \*

*Check all that apply.*

☐ Preschool (ages 3-5)

☐ Infant -age 5 or school age

☐ Stand Alone

☐ Connected to LES

3. How do you teach social and emotional competencies? Check all that apply \*

*Check all that apply.*

☐ I haven't thought about it

☐ Books and Discussion

☐ Direct Instruction

☐ Specific Social/Emotional Curriculum

4. Does your ECM use a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ Yes

☐ No

5. If yes, what curriculum do you or your ECM use?

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6. How often do you teach social and emotional competencies? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ Never

☐ Almost Never

☐ Occasionally

☐ Almost All the Time

☐ Frequently



7. How important are social and emotional competencies to a child's overall development in: \*

Mark only one oval per row.

	not at all	slightly important	neutral	moderately important	extremely important
Self-awareness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social awareness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responsible decision making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. How do you feel your program prioritizes these social and emotional competencies? \*

Mark only one oval per row.

	not a priority	somewhat a priority	neutral	moderate priority	essential priority
Self-awareness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social awareness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responsible decision making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Is teaching social and emotional competencies a priority in your classroom? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ not a priority
- ☐ somewhat a priority
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ moderate priority
- ☐ essential priority

10. Please rank the following skills (#1 being the most important and #5 being the least important) \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Handwriting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Literacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mathematical Knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social and Emotional Learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listening Comprehension	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. How much time do you spend, on average, teaching the following skills in a typical day? \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	0 minutes	1-5 minutes	6-10 minutes	11-15 minutes	15+ minutes
Handwriting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Literacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mathematical Knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social and Emotional Skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listening Comprehension	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. How much training in social and emotional competencies is required by your state each year? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ 0 hours  
☐ 1 hour  
☐ 2 hours  
☐ 3 hours  
☐ Other

13. If other, please explain your answer

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14. How does your program encourage/promote teacher growth in social and emotional competencies? \*

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**Appendix C: Survey Results****Question 1**

<b>Role in ECM</b>		
<b>Answer Option</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Director	35%	57
Principal	14.7%	24
Teacher	50.3%	82

**Question 2**

<b>Program Type (mark all that apply)</b>		
<b>Answer Option</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Preschool (ages 3-5)	80.4%	131
Infant-Age 5 or School Age	18.4%	30
Stand Alone	13.5%	22
Connected to LES	58.3	95

**Question 3**

<b>How do you teach social and emotional competencies? Check all that apply</b>		
<b>Answer Option</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
I Haven't Thought About It	5.5%	9
Books and Discussion	80.4%	131
Direct Instruction	62%	101
Specific Social/Emotional Curriculum	17.2%	28

**Question 4**

<b>Does your ECM use a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum?</b>		
<b>Answer Option</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	15.3%	22
No	86.5%	141

**Question 5**

<b>If yes, what curriculum do you or your ECM use?</b>	
<b>Response Text</b>	<b>Response Number</b>
High Scope	5
One in Christ	1
Pyramid	1
SEFEL	1
Lasting Lessons (personally developed)	1
Conscious Discipline	2
Yes, I don't know	1
Counselor Created	2
2nd Step	5
Love and Logic	1

**Question 6**

<b>How often do you teach social and emotional competencies?</b>		
<b>Answer Option</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Never	1.2%	2
Almost Never	1.2%	2
Occasionally	25.2%	41
Frequently	41.1%	67
Almost All the Time	31.3%	51

**Question 7**

<b>How important is social and emotional competencies to a child's overall development in:</b>					
<b>Answer Option</b>	<b>Not at All</b>	<b>Slightly Important</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Moderately Important</b>	<b>Extremely Important</b>
Self-Awareness	1	7	5	39	111
Self-Management	1	6	2	17	137
Social Awareness	1	6	6	39	111
Relationship Skills	1	6	1	17	138
Responsible Decision Making	1	6	3	31	122

**Question 8**

<b>How do you feel your program prioritizes these social and emotional competencies?</b>					
<b>Answer Option</b>	<b>Not at a Priority</b>	<b>Somewhat a Priority</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Moderate Priority</b>	<b>Essential Priority</b>
Self-Awareness	1	13	23	72	54
Self-Management	0	11	17	45	90
Social Awareness	0	12	20	74	57
Relationship Skills	1	10	9	49	94
Responsible Decision Making	0	11	14	55	83

**Question 9**

<b>Is teaching social and emotional competencies a priority in your classroom?</b>					
<b>Answer Option</b>	<b>Not at a Priority</b>	<b>Somewhat a Priority</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Moderate Priority</b>	<b>Essential Priority</b>
	1	24	6	49	83

**Question 10**

<b>Please rank the following skills (#1 being the most important and #5 being the least important)</b>					
<b>Handwriting</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Handwriting	32	21	40	22	48
Literacy	28	30	46	34	25
Mathematical Knowledge	13	42	33	54	21
Social and Emotional Learning	64	18	10	23	48
Listening Comprehension	30	48	25	38	22



**Question 11**

<b>How much time do you spend, on average, teaching the following skills in a typical day?</b>					
<b>Answer Option</b>	<b>0 minutes</b>	<b>1-5 minutes</b>	<b>6-10 minutes</b>	<b>11-15 minutes</b>	<b>15+ minutes</b>
Handwriting	15	77	44	25	2
Literacy	3	5	33	45	77
Mathematical Knowledge	2	21	57	52	31
Social and Emotional Skills	2	12	25	32	92
Listening Comprehension	1	8	39	49	66

**Question 12**

<b>How much training in social and emotional competencies is required by your state each year?</b>					
<b>Answer Option</b>	<b>0 Hours</b>	<b>1 Hour</b>	<b>2 Hours</b>	<b>3 Hours</b>	<b>Other</b>
Response Number	73	8	12	5	65

**Question 13**

<b>If other, please explain your answer</b>	
<b>Response Text</b>	<b>Response Number</b>
I Don't Know	55
Not required	5

**Question 14**

<b>How does your program encourage/promote teacher growth in social and emotional competencies?</b>	
<b>Code</b>	<b>Response Text</b>
1	play based learning leads to social and emotional growth
1	we don't
1	not sure, we have some very gifted teachers who just do it on their own
1	just an important part of preschool teacher being aware
1	doesn't really
1	it is not happening, but should be
1	no
1	it doesn't really
1	law and gospel applications to God's Word
1	we need to work at it
1	something I want to learn more about
1	not much
1	no formal training
1	nothing is ever been talked to me about social and emotional teaching..i came from public school teaching...I just brought with me the training and knowledge I had from the public schools which they emphasize very important!!
1	working from a background that has promoted SE growth in children...continue to embed it in our daily interactions in the classrooms
1	haven't thought about it
1	I have to say we do not receive encouragement to pursue this topic.
1	it currently doesn't
1	I am self taught and do a lot on my own

1	Not sure
1	We don't
1	not much training and growth in this area
1	I don't know
1	We need to up our game in this
1	none that I am aware of
1	left up to the teacher
1	online classes are probably available
1	they don't
1	we don't
1	You have me thinking we should
1	it doesn't really
2	continuing education not specific
2	general continuing education
2	at least one class/seminar/webinar a year
2	through conference/workshops
2	we go to many trainings throughout the year
2	I do what I can to expand my knowledge
2	teacher/staff is required to have 25 hours of continuing education hours a year. the director encourages a wide range of trainings/courses
2	I do what I need to do
2	some of the classes we take are about this topic
2	staff are required to have 16 clock hours per year of continuing ed
2	local public school offers lots of support for the community
2	sectionals year round

2	teacher conferences
2	general continuing education
2	we take 15 clock hours of continuing ed each year
2	we have professional developments
2	We attend Gateways to Opportunity workshops every month. Every moth feachers a different competency focus area
2	teacher's conference
2	continuing education in various fields
2	promote growth in classes or presentations by they don't highlight what growth needs to be in
2	MLC online classes
2	professional development across a variety of age and content appropriate levels
2	we are encouraged to continue taking courses, attending workshops, conferences and training opportunities to promote our teacher growth, but not geared directly to a specific area such as this
2	many in house PDs and encouraged to attend others
2	synod teachers convention periodically
2	general classes
2	supports teacher choices in educational growth
2	encouraged to take classes toward CDA credential which includes classes on social emotional development
2	encourages continuing education
2	professional development classes
2	staff are required to have 16 hours per year of continuing ed
2	monthly continuing ed articles
2	it is up to the individual teacher to find sessions to complete their training

2	school pays for continuing education
2	pay for director/teacher professional development opportunities
2	we give financial support to the teacher's professional growth
2	funding for any continuing ed
2	money in the budget for professional growth
3	state requirements
3	workshops and trainings
3	encouraging attending class or seminar on the subject
3	as a director I strongly encourage my staff to attend professional development classes
3	staff take the Wisconsin Social Emotional training (SEFEL)
3	trainings offered by state yearly
3	some of the classes we take to meet state requirements of clock hours are on this topic
3	online professional development through state licensing
3	webinars and read useful articles
3	webinars, workshops, online seminars, books, learning the Love and Logic program
3	mental health specialist from the state comes in approximately once a week to help the teachers in the center learn more about social-emotional development
3	classes
3	take classes or attend conferences
3	provide training opportunities
3	encourage staff to sign up for trainings that cover these topics
3	and working closing with pediatric therapy clinic
3	I seed out workshops/conferences dealing with this topic
3	workshop and conference sectionals

3	attend workshops/seminars
3	It is up to the individual teacher to find sessions and complete their training
3	through classes, seminars and articles
3	sectionals, online articles and online courses
3	continuing education
3	professional development
3	conferences and training in social and emotional development
3	professional development through books, webinars, workshops, classes
3	3 hours of social/emotional training required by state
3	we have made this a priority through our counseling department
3	we encourage staff to take at least one growth opportunity in this area every school year
3	Teachers are encouraged to take courses yearly on the subject as required by the state
3	training
3	workshops
3	training opportunities
3	conferences and resources
3	classes through ECPAC
3	attend workshops on best practices that are supported through use or research
3	teacher conferences and workshops
3	online classes or workshops
3	all training in this area is passed on
3	training
3	teacher conferences

3	continuing education through Trauma Sensitive Development Training on the WDPI website
3	we have professional development opportunities offered to help us grow
3	attend workshops and trainings
3	through workshops and conference sectionals
3	training
3	we are encouraged to take classes and read on this
3	through seminars
3	conferences and seminars
3	teachers conferences
3	some sectionals at teachers conference
3	conferences
3	promote local workshops/conferences and continuing ed opportunities
3	Through workshops and continuing education which is required
3	trainings and workshops
3	2 different in-depth webinars
3	online training
4	we support teacher's desire to purchase resources in this field
4	some funding
4	pay for director/teacher professional development opportunities
4	take classes as finances allow
4	congregation will reimburse as needed
4	funding for any continuing ed
4	currently budgeting monies to send all or some of our staff to workshops

4	we have some funds available to help them continue training
4	school pays for continuing education
4	monies are available for continuing education
4	money in the budget for professional growth
4	classes paid by the congregation
4	we pay for trainings
4	we pay for any trainings that teacher might want to take
4	financial support for teacher's professional development
4	there are monies available for any training
4	some funds available to help them continue training
4	we give financial support to the teachers professional growth
5	monthly faculty meetings we discuss ways in which we can implement a positive environment
5	monthly meeting
5	we read professional literature and have meetings to discuss
5	trainings in staff meetings
5	discussion during faculty meetings
5	teachers share ideas/successes/frustrations
5	entire faculty reads books
5	study and discuss topics that apply to this as a faculty
5	I have done my own training and instruction to my staff on social/emotional teaching in the classroom
5	books and chapters discuss and professional development meetings
5	staff meetings
5	shared articles
5	we discuss various ways to incorporate it into our daily schedule



5	continue to support each other as well as reading up on literature provided
5	we meet monthly and go through different ways to teach
5	read articles and blogs
5	through staff development meetings
5	topical staff meetings
5	give advice on specific social/emotional behaviors we need help with
5	faculty meetings
5	daily discussion and meetings
5	faculty meetings
5	every Thursday during our team meetings
5	talking to the teachers and discussing
5	we are working our way through Conscious Discipline
5	faculty meeting discussions
6	our focus is a play based curriculum and we do not push skills outside of context of play
6	we training our teachers using the social emotional component of the HighScope Preschool curriculum
6	looking into social and emotional curriculum for next year
6	looking at curriculum to enhance teachings
6	2nd STEP promotes teacher growth by advertising becoming member of Committee for Children
6	curriculum
6	we use the curriculum we developed
6	studying the curriculum
6	CorAdvantage assessments
6	provide materials from our curriculum

<b>Code</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of Comments</b>	<b>Response Percentage</b>
1	No Encouragement	31	17%
2	Encouragement for Professional Growth	38	21%
3	Specific SEL Encouragement/Requirement	57	32%
4	Indicated Compensation for Trainings	18	10%
5	Director Lead/Faculty Meetings	26	14%
6	Reliance on Curriculum	10	6%