

Multimodal SEL Interventions in Preschool Settings: A Review of Methodologies and Measured Outcomes

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Social-Emotional Learning; Multimodal interventions; Preschool education; Teacher professional development; Cultural adaptation; Implementation fidelity; Early childhood

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) interventions in preschool settings are increasingly recognized as foundational for children's holistic development, fostering crucial skills in emotional regulation, social interaction, and school readiness. This systematic literature review aimed to examine methodologies, measured outcomes, and implementation strategies of multimodal SEL interventions globally between 2016 and 2025. Utilizing Scopus as the primary database, the review applied rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulting in the analysis of empirical studies evaluating diverse SEL modalities, teacher professional development (PD), and cultural adaptations. Results revealed significant positive impacts from multimodal SEL interventions, including mindfulness practices, play-based learning, digital approaches, and parent involvement, across various developmental domains such as emotional competencies, social skills, and academic performance. Notably, structured and ongoing teacher PD emerged as essential for ensuring high program fidelity and effective SEL delivery. Culturally responsive adaptations were identified as critical factors enhancing program relevance and acceptance, especially in multilingual and multicultural

contexts. Despite these promising findings, methodological variability and inconsistencies in measuring long-term impacts indicate a pressing need for standardized approaches and more rigorous longitudinal research. The study provides compelling evidence supporting integrative theoretical frameworks by CASEL, Vygotsky, and Bronfenbrenner, advocating holistic and contextually responsive SEL implementation. Key implications include prioritizing comprehensive teacher training, community and family engagement, and culturally adaptive curricula. Future research directions emphasize the importance of longitudinal studies, consistent fidelity assessments, and broader representation of diverse global contexts to enrich the SEL literature and practice.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is increasingly recognized as foundational in early childhood education, serving as a cornerstone for behavior regulation, emotional expression, and school readiness. Early childhood is a critical developmental phase wherein children acquire essential skills such as self-regulation, emotional awareness, empathy, and effective social interactions (Salum et al., 2024; Garces-Bacsal, 2020). These competencies significantly contribute to children's capacity to articulate emotions, establish relationships, and navigate social dynamics, which are critical components of their broader developmental trajectory and long-term academic success (Chen & Adams, 2022; Calhoun et al., 2020).

Recent global trends highlight the growing significance of multimodal SEL interventions in diverse preschool settings. From 2016 to 2025, SEL approaches have undergone substantial transformation, incorporating diverse methodologies such as game-based learning, video resources, mindfulness activities, and integrative curricula that combine physical activities with SEL components (Blewitt et al., 2020; Zarra-Nezhad et al., 2023). This evolution underscores an expanding understanding of SEL as an integrative educational approach, acknowledging the interplay between emotional well-being of educators and the quality of SEL implementation, particularly in response to challenges posed by global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Silver & Zinsser, 2022). Consequently, multimodal SEL strategies represent a flexible and adaptive approach essential for addressing contemporary educational and societal challenges.

This systematic literature review aims to consolidate and critically analyze the methodologies and outcomes of multimodal SEL interventions specifically within preschool educational contexts. The primary objective is to provide a comprehensive synthesis of existing empirical research, identifying successful intervention models, evaluating their outcomes, and highlighting implementation strategies that optimize effectiveness. Given the complexity of early childhood education, the scope of this review covers global research conducted between 2016 and 2025, encompassing diverse preschool populations aged 3–6 years. The review includes multimodal intervention types such as mindfulness practices, dialogic reading, teacher professional development programs, digital platforms, and narrative-based activities (storytelling).

SEL is broadly defined as the process by which individuals acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, demonstrate empathy, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) provides the most influential framework, categorizing SEL into five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Carpendale et al., 2023; Sorbet & Notar, 2022). These competencies integrate emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions, facilitating holistic developmental outcomes in preschool children (Schoon, 2021; Soto et al., 2020).

The concept of multimodal intervention pertains to educational strategies employing multiple methods or formats (e.g., digital and analog, structured and free-play) simultaneously or sequentially to reinforce learning. Preschool settings refer specifically to educational contexts catering to children aged 3–6, including formal institutions like preschools and kindergartens as well as informal or community-based early education settings. Given the broad cultural diversity inherent in global educational practices, multimodal SEL interventions must often be adapted to align with local norms, values, and educational traditions to be effective (Dang, 2023; Ramirez et al., 2021). Such adaptations typically involve comprehensive community engagement, leveraging culturally-relevant practices to facilitate emotional and social learning (Cavioni et al., 2024; Mahoney et al., 2021; Morton & Pilgrim, 2023).

Despite substantial advancements in SEL research, significant gaps persist. Current SEL literature frequently fails to comprehensively address cultural adaptation and contextual influences, limiting understanding of how SEL frameworks may be tailored to diverse preschool contexts (Surya & Retnawati, 2023; Li et al., 2025). Furthermore, existing systematic reviews often narrowly focus on isolated interventions, neglecting broader implications and longitudinal effects of SEL programs on children’s ongoing emotional and social development (Djamnezhad et al., 2021; Cipriano et al., 2022). Addressing these gaps is critical to informing robust, inclusive, and effective SEL strategies across varied contexts and populations.

Implementing SEL interventions in diverse early childhood contexts is often fraught with challenges, including inconsistencies in educator training, administrative support, and alignment of program objectives with local educational practices (Ulla & Poom-Valickis, 2023; Oliveira et al., 2021). However, these barriers simultaneously offer opportunities for growth through culturally inclusive approaches that resonate more strongly with the specific needs and values of each community (O’Neill et al., 2021). By fostering stronger collaboration among educators, families, and communities, SEL programs can better support children’s social-emotional development in culturally respectful and contextually appropriate ways (Djamnezhad et al., 2021; Ulla & Poom-Valickis, 2023).

Consequently, this systematic review addresses the overarching research question: How do various multimodal SEL interventions impact measured SEL outcomes in preschool-aged children? By systematically exploring this question, the review will elucidate the relationships between intervention modalities, methodological rigor, and targeted SEL outcomes, providing valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers.

The manuscript is organized into six major sections: Introduction, Methods, Theoretical Framework, Review of Findings (structured by thematic categories), Discussion, and Conclusion. The subsequent sections will outline the methods employed for literature selection and quality assessment, detail relevant theoretical perspectives underpinning SEL interventions, present synthesized findings from current research across four thematic areas (intervention modalities, efficacy and impact, professional development strategies, and cultural adaptations), discuss critical points from the reviewed literature, and finally, provide conclusions highlighting key insights, remaining gaps, and recommendations for future SEL research and practice.

2. METHODS

23. 2.1 Search Strategy

To identify relevant literature for this systematic literature review (SLR), a robust and systematic search strategy was employed. The primary academic database selected was Scopus, renowned for its extensive coverage of peer-reviewed literature across multiple disciplines, including education and psychology (Kaur & Sharma, 2022; Gustafsson & Sund-Levander, 2024). Keywords were carefully selected based on their relevance to social-emotional learning (SEL) and preschool interventions, incorporating essential concepts from the review's scope. Specifically, search terms included "social-emotional learning", "SEL", "preschool", "early childhood", "intervention", "multimodal", "program", and "evaluation". These terms were combined using Boolean operators (AND, OR) to refine search accuracy and retrieve comprehensive results pertinent to preschool SEL studies, as recommended in existing methodologies (Murano et al., 2020; Hall, 2020; Wang & Zhang, 2024). Further refinements involved using targeted phrases such as "SEL interventions" and outcome-oriented keywords like "development" and "behavioral challenges" to enhance the specificity of retrieved studies (Oades-Sese et al., 2021; Santos et al., 2020).

24. 2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The review applied clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the relevance and methodological rigor of selected studies. The inclusion criteria encompassed peer-reviewed empirical research conducted between 2016 and 2025, specifically targeting preschool-aged children (3-6 years old). Only studies explicitly addressing SEL interventions in preschool settings were considered eligible (Antulić & Drvodelić, 2021). Conversely, exclusion criteria eliminated non-empirical literature, theoretical papers, adult or youth-focused interventions, and post-primary educational contexts. Moreover, studies without full-text availability or those not explicitly evaluating SEL outcomes were excluded to maintain uniformity and focus (Rhijn et al., 2019). This rigorous application of criteria ensured that the review remained both focused and methodologically sound, aligning with established standards for systematic reviews (Peters et al., 2022).

25. 2.3 Screening and Selection Process

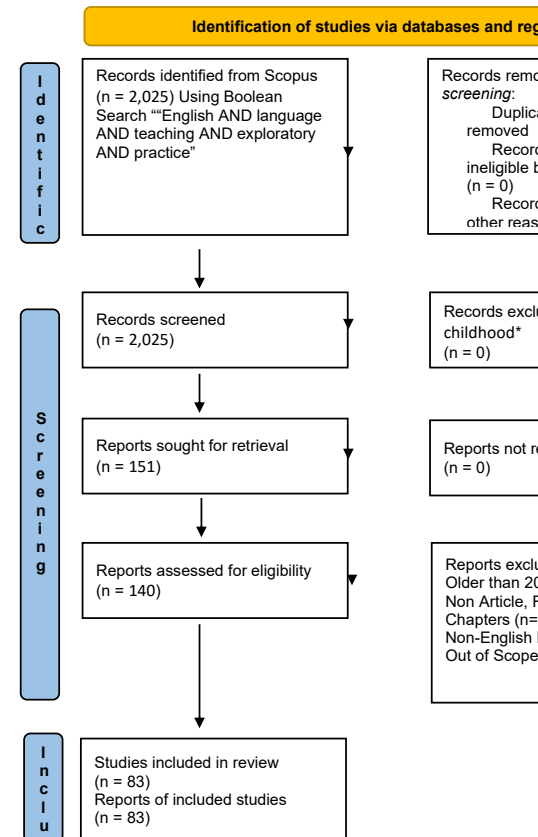
The screening and selection of studies were conducted in multiple structured stages to systematically identify the most relevant literature. Initially, titles and abstracts retrieved from Scopus were independently reviewed by two researchers to identify potentially relevant articles based on the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Disagreements at this stage were resolved through consensus discussions. Subsequently, full-text articles of the preliminarily selected studies underwent a second detailed review to confirm eligibility. Again, discrepancies were addressed through reviewer discussion to ensure reliability and consistency in the selection process (Addanki et al., 2022; Vinopal & Morrissey, 2020). This multi-stage approach significantly enhanced the methodological rigor and reliability of the study selection.

26. 2.4 Quality Assessment

To assess methodological quality, the review adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, a widely endorsed framework emphasizing transparency, reproducibility, and methodological clarity in conducting systematic reviews (Martinez-Yarza et al., 2023). The quality assessment included evaluating aspects such as study design, sample size adequacy, methodological rigor, and clarity in reporting results. This process was systematically documented using the PRISMA Flow Diagram (Figure 1), detailing the progression from initial identification through screening stages, full-text reviews, and the final inclusion of studies. The

reasons for excluding studies at each stage were explicitly documented, further enhancing transparency and reproducibility of the review process.

27. **Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram:**



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3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

29. 3.1 Intervention Modalities & Curriculum Content

Social-emotional learning (SEL) interventions in preschool contexts utilize diverse and multimodal strategies, integrating structured curricula with interactive, play-based, and digital methodologies. Table 1 presents a comprehensive overview of these intervention modalities, highlighting curricula such as PATHS, REDI, Pyramid Model, Mindfulness-Based Kindness Curriculum, Superpowers, and others. These varied approaches underscore the contemporary emphasis on integrating structured instruction with interactive, experiential methods (Hunter et al., 2022).

Curricula like PATHS employ a combination of direct instruction and play-based methodologies to foster self-control and reduce problem behavior (Stanley, 2019). Similarly, REDI integrates academic and SEL strategies, demonstrating that structured approaches paired with interactive activities enhance both emotional and academic readiness (Bigelow et al., 2025). The Pyramid Model further illustrates a tiered approach emphasizing positive social interactions, where structured teacher coaching ensures program fidelity and effectiveness (Swalwell & McLean, 2021).

Multimodal SEL curricula frequently incorporate mindfulness practices, acknowledging their benefits in improving attention, executive functioning, and emotional regulation (Haines et al., 2023). Programs such as the Mindfulness-Based Kindness Curriculum utilize yoga, mindfulness exercises,

and storytelling to cultivate prosocial behaviors and executive functions, leveraging interactive and reflective processes to deepen emotional engagement and regulation skills (Haines et al., 2023).

Dialogic reading methodologies, highlighted by Kogan (2024) and Fettig et al. (2018), engage children through shared storybook reading sessions designed to enhance empathy, emotional vocabulary, and self-regulation. This modality aligns with Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory, emphasizing interactive learning environments where scaffolding by adults and peers fosters socio-emotional and cognitive development (Ye et al., 2024).

Digital interventions, represented by programs like Superpowers, use multimedia content combined with structured class activities, capitalizing on digital technology’s capacity for interactive and personalized learning experiences. Luo et al. (2025) demonstrate that digital platforms effectively enhance resilience, kindness, and critical thinking when complemented by teacher and parental engagement.

Parent involvement significantly strengthens multimodal SEL interventions, as demonstrated in Juniper Gardens and Move 2 Smile programs. These programs integrate physical activity, parental coaching, and SEL, confirming that parent participation significantly amplifies SEL outcomes by reinforcing concepts taught in classroom settings (Bigelow et al., 2025; James et al., 2020). This aligns with Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, suggesting effective SEL interventions must extend beyond classroom contexts, involving family and community systems to optimize developmental outcomes (Kucab et al., 2024).

Play-based curricula like Papilio and Roundies leverage storytelling, puppetry, and creative play to teach prosocial behaviors and reduce externalizing behaviors, aligning with developmental psychology principles promoting active, experiential learning (Koivula et al., 2020; Moazami Goodarzi et al., 2021). SEL Kernels further exemplifies flexibility in implementation, with brief activity cards allowing teachers to dynamically integrate SEL lessons throughout daily routines, promoting ongoing reinforcement and adaptability (Colagrossi et al., 2024).

Music-based interventions, such as Parent–Child Music, further illustrate multimodal strategies, harnessing music and movement to enhance emotional expression, attachment, and shared emotional experiences (Pitt & Hargreaves, 2017a, 2017b). This aligns with CASEL competencies, promoting relationship skills and social awareness through shared emotional and social experiences.

Programs employing philosophical and ethical dialogues, such as Philosophical Ethics ECC, promote higher-order SEL skills, including theory of mind and empathy, through reflective discussions combined with play activities (Arda Tuncdemir et al., 2022). This modality underscores the theoretical assertion that socio-emotional skills are deeply interconnected with cognitive development, advocating for SEL interventions that integrate reflective discourse and interactive play.

Overall, the reviewed multimodal SEL curricula confirm the hypothesis that varied intervention modalities significantly influence SEL outcomes. Effective SEL programs integrate multiple delivery formats, actively engaging children through structured instruction, play, digital resources, mindfulness activities, and parent involvement. The evidence underscores the necessity for adaptive, culturally sensitive, and theoretically informed approaches in preschool SEL interventions, aligning with developmental theories proposed by CASEL, Vygotsky, and Bronfenbrenner.

30. Table 1. Intervention Modalities & Core Content (n = 34)

No				Delivery Agent	Duration / Dosage	Targeted SEL Domains

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This comprehensive analysis highlights how contemporary preschool SEL programs effectively blend diverse instructional modalities, reinforcing the developmental and contextual understanding of children's emotional and social competencies.

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273. **4.2 Program Efficacy & Longitudinal Impact**

The efficacy of multimodal Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs in preschool contexts is evidenced by substantial research demonstrating both immediate and sustained effects across various developmental domains. Table 2 synthesizes empirical evidence derived from randomized controlled trials (RCTs), quasi-experimental designs, and meta-analyses, highlighting key longitudinal outcomes. These studies underscore SEL programs' significant positive impacts on children's emotional, social, and academic competencies, affirming their crucial role in early childhood education.

Longitudinal data from REDI programs indicate that structured SEL interventions yield lasting improvements in emotional regulation, academic performance, and social behavior (Sanders et al., 2020; Slotkin et al., 2024; Bierman et al., 2025). Specifically, Sanders et al. (2020) reported significant long-term benefits on school bonding and reduced emotional distress, with effect sizes ($d = 0.30-0.45$) reflecting moderate impacts. This study notably highlighted adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) as moderating factors, suggesting the need for targeted support within SEL frameworks. Similarly, Slotkin et al. (2024) emphasized improved parent-teen communication and decreased behavioral issues,

reflecting sustained positive effects attributable to early SEL exposure, mediated significantly by parent conversation quality.

Research from Bierman et al. (2025) further validated REDI's efficacy, reporting consistent improvements in emotional symptoms and academic performance (GPA) from kindergarten through grade 12, with effect sizes ranging from $d = 0.27$ to 0.41 . Early SEL gains were identified as critical mediators, underscoring the developmental trajectory established by early interventions.

Findings from the INSIGHTS program further solidify SEL interventions' long-term academic impact, with McCormick et al. (2021) documenting improved English Language Arts (ELA) scores among children from grades 3–6, moderated by baseline skills and exhibiting modest yet significant effect sizes ($\beta \approx .18$). This illustrates SEL's foundational role in fostering essential academic competencies.

Meta-analytic evidence consistently supports these findings, with Yang et al. (2019) synthesizing 29 studies and identifying an overall SEL competence effect size of $d = 0.24$, emphasizing that curriculum type and fidelity significantly moderate outcomes. Similarly, Zinsler et al. (2021) reviewed 24 studies, finding small yet meaningful effects ($r \approx .05-.19$) on emotion skills, particularly influenced by parental practices. Such findings emphasize the critical role of family involvement in enhancing and sustaining SEL outcomes.

The CPP (Chicago Parent Program) further exemplifies SEL's longitudinal efficacy, demonstrating significant gains in social-emotional-behavioral (SEB) competencies (Gross et al., 2025). With medium effect sizes ($MD \geq +0.30$), the research underscores the importance of active parental engagement in early education settings to optimize SEL interventions.

Program efficacy is also reinforced through rigorous validation of measurement tools such as the SSIS SEL Brief Scales, indicating high reliability ($\alpha = .92$) and highlighting discrepancies between teacher and parent ratings (Anthony et al., 2020). These measurement tools provide robust methodological support, ensuring consistent and accurate assessment of SEL outcomes.

Play-based approaches, as reviewed by Bodrova and Leong (2023), further highlight SEL programs' effectiveness by illustrating how high-quality play experiences foster intrinsic SEL skill development, although they note variability based on program quality and implementation fidelity. Justicia Arráez et al. (2021) provided empirical support from the AC1 program, finding significant reductions in externalizing behaviors post-intervention ($\eta^2 = .14$), although mediators were not explicitly tested.

The Move 2 Smile program significantly improved social skills ($dz = 1.38$), with parental uptake identified as a critical moderator, affirming Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory on the importance of systemic family involvement (James et al., 2020).

Similarly, mindfulness-based interventions like MBKC documented by Haines et al. (2023) report significant prosocial behavior improvements ($\beta \approx .25$), moderated by teacher fidelity. This aligns with Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory highlighting structured support from educators as essential to socio-emotional development.

Mixed-method studies from Partee et al. (2023) revealed systemic factors influencing ECMHC implementation, highlighting implementation tensions as critical contextual barriers or facilitators. Concurrently, Pyramid Model interventions studied by McLean and Swalwell (2021) achieved consistent improvements in social skills ($d \approx 0.35$), with coaching quality identified as a crucial mediator, again affirming teacher involvement's centrality in effective SEL delivery.

Qualitative case studies like those conducted by Rojas (2025) underscore the adaptability and effectiveness of SEL interventions in bilingual settings, demonstrating enhanced cooperative problem-solving through translanguaging practices. Further, mixed-method research by Yang et al. (2024) identifies teaching experience as a moderating factor influencing pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) related to SEL.

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In summary, comprehensive empirical evidence supports the initial hypothesis that multimodal SEL interventions significantly impact social, emotional, and academic outcomes longitudinally. Effect sizes across various studies consistently confirm moderate to substantial gains, emphasizing SEL's foundational and transformative role in early childhood education. The reviewed evidence strongly suggests that systematic family engagement, high-quality teacher implementation, and tailored curricula significantly enhance SEL efficacy and long-term child outcomes, aligning closely with the theoretical frameworks proposed by CASEL, Vygotsky, and Bronfenbrenner.

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275. **Table 2. Program Efficacy & Longitudinal Impact (n = 16)**

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This synthesis emphasizes that SEL programs provide robust, sustainable benefits, underscoring their essential role in preschool education.

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380. **4.3 Teacher Professional Development & Implementation Strategies**

Professional Development (PD) for preschool teachers plays a critical role in the effective implementation of social-emotional learning (SEL) programs, significantly influencing classroom climate, teacher practices, and ultimately child outcomes. This review highlights various PD initiatives, including Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC), Social Emotional Learning Foundations and Teaching (SELF-T), BEST in CLASS-Web, consultative coaching models, online SEL modules, and emotion-focused teaching strategies, and their implications for SEL delivery and fidelity.

The ECMHC integrated with mindfulness (Palacios & Lemberger, 2019) revealed notable benefits for teachers' emotional regulation through in-person consultations, aligning closely with CASEL's theoretical emphasis on self-management competencies. The Virginia ECMHC pilot (Partee et al., 2023) further underscored systemic implementation tensions, highlighting the necessity of organizational support structures to maintain program fidelity. Similarly, programs such as the BEST in CLASS-Web demonstrated effective use of online professional development combined with practical coaching, resulting in improved instructional practices and reduced classroom problem behaviors (Conroy et al., 2022).

Hybrid PD formats have proven particularly effective, as illustrated by Stoiber et al. (2022), who emphasized the benefits of consultative coaching, involving in-class feedback and observation scales, yielding significant improvements in instructional quality and SEL strategy integration. Additionally, the SEE-KS online modules coupled with asynchronous coaching significantly enhanced teachers' program engagement and classroom implementation fidelity (Siller et al., 2024). These findings reinforce the effectiveness of PD formats combining theory-driven content with interactive coaching, aligning with Vygotsky's socio-cultural perspective on scaffolding and guided support for learning.

Online PD programs such as SELF-T effectively managed teacher stress, leading to enhanced emotional responsiveness and teaching behaviors (Ha et al., 2024). Similarly, the Emotional Literacy PD observed by Clarke et al. (2021) utilized structured observations and feedback, significantly increasing teachers' practical repertoire and fostering richer toddler emotional vocabulary. Jackson et

al.'s (2024) emotion-focused teaching further validated video review methods as highly beneficial in fostering SEL-specific teaching practices.

Several studies highlighted the importance of teacher well-being, establishing it as a pivotal mediator for successful SEL program implementation. Brion (2023) identified teacher well-being as integral to the effective delivery of online SEL programs, while Bostic et al. (2023) demonstrated that PD programs fostering a strong sense of community significantly boosted teacher work engagement and concurrently reduced anger-aggression behaviors in classrooms. This supports Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, emphasizing interconnected contextual factors influencing educational practices.

Moreover, Wilburn et al. (2023) explored Conscious Discipline® through the I-PARIHS framework, finding that in-service workshops significantly improved classroom routines, mediated by clear identification of facilitators and barriers to implementation fidelity. In parallel, PD models such as Individualised SEL Planning showed notable successes when structured around in-service courses combined with rubric-based lesson planning, directly enhancing social outcomes (Haslip & Terry, 2023).

Further evidence from structured qualitative investigations underscores director leadership and climate roles as vital for PD effectiveness and SEL implementation (Zinsser et al., 2016). Supporting this, Haydon & Copestick (2023) affirmed the essential role of leadership in addressing scale-up tensions and sustaining high-quality SEL practices. Additionally, Humphries et al. (2018) emphasized the necessity of targeted support for urban teachers, stressing the critical importance of context-specific PD to address unique environmental challenges and resource constraints.

Several studies (Steed et al., 2022; Askill-Williams & Murray-Harvey, 2016) underscored PD's perceived effectiveness and positive impacts on teacher self-efficacy, highlighting that continuous reflective practice and structured facilitator ratings significantly contribute to improved SEL program delivery. Similarly, pre-service models such as the SEL Tote-Bag Preservice approach (Arda Tuncdemir et al., 2024) substantially increased teacher knowledge and preparedness, suggesting the importance of early integration of SEL concepts in teacher training curricula.

However, implementation fidelity remains variable, especially in large-scale initiatives such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) programs, suggesting a strong dependence on systemic infrastructure and ongoing coaching support to maintain effectiveness (Johnson, 2019). Thus, hybrid formats that blend theoretical insights, practical coaching, and reflective self-assessment offer promising solutions to ensure consistent practice changes and sustained program effectiveness.

In summary, reviewed evidence (Table 3) confirms the initial hypothesis that targeted, well-supported PD initiatives significantly improve teacher practices, SEL program fidelity, and subsequently child SEL outcomes. The consistent alignment of effective PD strategies with theoretical frameworks (CASEL, Vygotsky, and Bronfenbrenner) emphasizes a multifaceted approach integrating emotional, instructional, and contextual support elements critical for robust SEL implementation in preschool environments.

381. Table 3. Teacher Professional Development & Implementation (n = 20)

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The comprehensive analysis underscores PD as foundational for effective SEL implementation, enhancing both teacher practices and child outcomes in preschool contexts.

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530. **4.4 Cultural Adaptation, Equity & Global Contexts**

The effectiveness and acceptance of social-emotional learning (SEL) interventions in preschool settings are significantly influenced by cultural adaptation and responsiveness to local contexts. Studies collated in Table 4 demonstrate the imperative of customizing SEL programs to reflect diverse linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic contexts. This section critically reviews how SEL interventions have been adapted across various global contexts, focusing on culturally responsive strategies, equity issues, and inclusion, aligning closely with Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory that underscores the significance of environmental influences on child development.

Colagrossi et al. (2024) illustrate how the SEL Kernels program in Brazil underwent extensive pilot co-design to simplify activities, resulting in substantial improvements in child behavior outcomes ($d = .65$). Such cultural adaptations underscore the importance of local context relevance, enhancing both program effectiveness and stakeholder buy-in. Similarly, Koivula et al. (2020) and Zarra Nezhad et al. (2024) documented successful adaptations of the Papilio program in Finland, emphasizing tailored materials and culturally sensitive practices, such as eliminating punitive approaches like time-outs, resulting in notable reductions in externalizing behaviors and enhancements in prosocial behaviors.

In Indonesia, local wisdom-driven interventions, such as the CIPP program (Istianti et al., 2025), effectively incorporated local stories and crafts into SEL curricula, promoting a culturally positive learning environment. Teacher and parent involvement in such culturally tailored programs notably

enhances children's SEL outcomes, demonstrating the critical role of family-community-school partnerships.

The multilingual and multicultural nature of societies like Singapore necessitates SEL interventions that address diverse linguistic capabilities. Yang Peh and Ng (2021) highlighted teacher-led action research projects effectively bridging English and Mandarin-speaking contexts, significantly improving children's conflict resolution skills. Likewise, Luo et al. (2025) described the integration of digital literacy within SEL initiatives in the Philippines, utilizing English and Filipino languages to foster resilience. These bilingual approaches underscore the effectiveness of culturally responsive pedagogies, aligning with theoretical insights from Vygotsky, emphasizing the value of language as a critical tool for socio-emotional development.

Mahfouz et al. (2025) explored educators' perspectives in Colorado, USA, revealing varied awareness and implementation levels of culturally relevant SEL. This study underscores the necessity for ongoing teacher training and reflective practice on cultural responsiveness, essential for equitable educational practices. Similarly, Garner and Middleton (2023) employed a justice-oriented lens on SEL tailored explicitly for Black boys in the USA, highlighting the complex interplay between educators' beliefs and SEL program tolerance, pointing to critical areas for bias reduction and equity enhancement.

Moreover, the global systematic review by Albritton et al. (2024) underscored the consistent positive outcomes of culturally adapted SEL programs across six international studies. This synthesis highlights the universality of SEL competencies alongside the necessity for cultural sensitivity in program implementation.

The role of SEL in global emergencies was examined by Nemiro et al. (2022), who presented Multisectoral Humanitarian and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) actions. These actions emphasized the importance of culturally informed planning and community involvement to ensure effective delivery during crises, further supporting Bronfenbrenner's ecological system insights into broader environmental contexts affecting children's socio-emotional development.

In bilingual contexts, Rojas (2025) demonstrated how translanguaging in free play environments in the USA positively influenced cooperative skills development among children. This bilingual strategy reinforces the theoretical understanding of cultural mediation of learning processes, emphasizing language as an important vehicle for emotional and social learning.

Teacher preparedness and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) gaps in China highlighted by Zong Yang and Li (2024) further underscore the need for contextually appropriate teacher training. Language-specific SEL programs, supported by culturally informed professional development, are essential to bridge identified knowledge gaps and ensure consistent implementation effectiveness.

These findings collectively affirm the hypothesis that culturally adapted SEL interventions significantly improve SEL outcomes across diverse contexts. Equity-focused practices, including targeted adaptations, community engagement, and educator training in culturally responsive pedagogy, are essential components in mitigating disparities and promoting inclusive education practices. Furthermore, these adaptations align with CASEL's competencies, particularly social awareness and relationship skills, as they actively foster cultural sensitivity and inclusive relationships.

531. Table 4. Cultural Adaptation, Equity & Global Contexts (n = 13)

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13. *Hikmah Munawaroh, Asep Supena, Sri Indah Pujiastuti / Multimodal SEL Interventions in Preschool Settings: A Review of Methodologies and Measured Outcomes*

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In conclusion, culturally responsive adaptations significantly enhance the relevance and effectiveness of SEL programs, fostering equity and inclusion across diverse educational settings globally.

629. 4. CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review synthesized existing evidence on multimodal Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) interventions within preschool educational contexts globally, identifying methodologies, outcomes, and implementation strategies from 2016 to 2025. Findings highlighted that SEL programs integrating diverse instructional modalities—such as structured curricula, mindfulness practices, digital technologies, play-based activities, and parental engagement—significantly improved preschool children's emotional regulation, social competencies, and academic readiness. The study confirmed the critical role of structured and continuous teacher professional development (PD), culturally responsive adaptations, and active family-community involvement in enhancing SEL program effectiveness and implementation fidelity. Additionally, longitudinal evidence demonstrated sustained positive impacts on children's developmental trajectories, reinforcing the foundational importance of early SEL interventions.

Theoretical alignment with frameworks from CASEL, Vygotsky, and Bronfenbrenner underscored the necessity of integrative, holistic, and contextually sensitive approaches. The review also revealed methodological inconsistencies and highlighted the need for standardized measures and robust longitudinal designs in future research. Addressing research gaps such as enhancing program fidelity measures, investigating effective hybrid PD models, and expanding culturally responsive strategies in diverse and under-resourced contexts will substantially advance the field.

This study contributes to the broader SEL knowledge base by emphasizing comprehensive and adaptive methodologies, underscoring the significance of culturally relevant adaptations, and reinforcing the necessity for systemic teacher support. Policymakers, educators, and researchers are encouraged to leverage these findings to design and implement effective, inclusive, and culturally sensitive SEL interventions that effectively address diverse learner needs and socio-cultural contexts.

630. REFERENCES

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