

## ABSTRACT

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Title: TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVES ON THE PROMOTION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN OUTDOOR PLAY-BASED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS.

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In early childhood, children are rapidly growing, developing, and learning through their experiences and interactions. Early childhood education is meant to foster children's growth in order to help them become active members of society. A large component of early childhood learning is through play. This study examined the impact of play on social-emotional development for children ages 5-10 and specifically looked at the effects of the participation in Forest Schools, the schooling method of outdoor-play based classrooms, based on the perspectives of active teachers in the field. The data found that outdoor play-based classrooms positively promote early childhood social-emotional development because they provide children with space for freedom and discovery, encourages risk taking, and follows a student-guided learning approach. It can also be concluded through the data that although there are many benefits to Forest Schools, there remaining ethical barriers that have stunted the growth of this approach in the United States resulting in this method to not yet be mainstream.