



# RESPONSIVENESS OF TEACHERS ON CHILD PROTECTION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: CREATING BRIGHT FUTURE FOR LEARNERS

**Julie B. Badil**

*Student, Graduate School, Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc.*

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra21187>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra21187

## ABSTRACT

*The primary purpose of this research is to delve into the intricate realities of teachers' lived experiences in implementing child protection policies. By examining their day-to-day interactions and practices, the study seeks to uncover how policies are interpreted and applied in educational settings. The qualitative phenomenological design is well-suited for exploring the lived experiences and perspectives of teachers involved in implementing child protection policies within educational settings. In this study, purposeful sampling will be utilized to select a diverse group of teachers with varied backgrounds, experiences, and roles relevant to the implementation of Child Protection Policies (CPP) within educational settings. Participants will be chosen deliberately based on their potential to provide rich and meaningful data aligned with the research objectives. The selection process will begin with identifying potential participants through coordination with school administrators and teacher networks in Laak, Davao de Oro, ensuring that insights reflect the local educational landscape and challenges unique to the area. The insights gained from the study underscore the critical role of teachers, school administrators, and other stakeholders in safeguarding the well-being of children. Moreover, the collaborative practices mentioned in Themes 2 and 3, such as teamwork among teachers, clear communication channels, and coordinated interventions, reflect a learning environment where both teachers and students develop behaviors through reciprocal interactions. As teachers learn from one another and adapt best practices in child protection, they also indirectly teach students to seek help, build trust, and form healthy relationships with adults. As the landscape of education continues to evolve, it is crucial to reflect on the future directions for child protection practices within schools. Ensuring the safety and well-being of students requires continuous adaptation, collaboration, and innovation. Moving forward, there is a need to strengthen the integration of child protection policies with broader educational goals, emphasizing not only the prevention of abuse but also the holistic development of students.*

**KEYWORDS-** *Responsiveness of Teachers, Child Protection Policy Implementation, Creating Bright Future for Learners*

## INTRODUCTION

Children are among society's most vulnerable members, requiring protection, support, and guidance to thrive and reach their full potential. Recognizing the importance of safeguarding children from harm and promoting their well-being, governments and educational institutions worldwide have implemented child protection policies aimed at ensuring the safety, security, and dignity of every child. In the educational context, teachers play a crucial role as frontline guardians of children's rights and safety. They serve not only as educators but also as advocates, mentors, and trusted confidants for their students. Through their daily interactions and observations, teachers are uniquely positioned to identify signs of abuse, provide support to vulnerable children, and contribute to the implementation of child protection policies within schools. Despite the challenges inherent in implementing these policies, there is a dearth of research on the transformative potentials of teachers' involvement in safeguarding children's rights.

Moreover, in New York City, even with initial anxiety over implementing a child sexual abuse (CSA) prevention program primarily due to concerns about parental reactions and the use of anatomically correct terms teachers successfully executed the program, resulting in positive experiences. This process not only heightened teachers' awareness of the prevalence of CSA but also underscored the critical importance of education in prevention efforts (Allen et. al, 2020).

A report emphasizes the critical role teachers' play in implementing child protection policies. It highlights strategies such as building awareness among educators, fostering child-friendly reporting mechanisms, and integrating child protection concepts into the curriculum. The study also underscores the need for professional development to equip teachers with the skills necessary to address child abuse and neglect effectively, (UNICEF, 2021).

Another study highlights successful case studies from countries like Kenya and Cambodia. Wherein research discusses the integration of child protection policies within educational systems across different countries. It identifies key factors that enhance responsiveness, including the creation of school-based child protection committees, teacher training on trauma-informed practices, and collaboration with local child welfare agencies. (Save the Children, 2019)

In the Cabadbaran City, Philippines teachers may feel that existing policies hinder classroom management and quality education, requesting amendments to address behavioral issues, create a structured learning environment, or simplify policies. They may also need additional training and improved communication channels. Students may exploit policies, requesting stricter enforcement or increased monitoring. Clearer communication and student involvement may help, as lack of supervision or inconsistent enforcement can lead to confusion and a lack of policy take-seriousness (Arante & Margarin, 2023).



## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the study of Mark et al. (2020) they discussed the impact of school bullying on students' academic achievement, social-emotional development, and overall well-being. It highlights the effectiveness of School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) programs in reducing bullying behaviors, improving school climate, and increasing student engagement and academic performance. SWPBS is more effective when implemented comprehensively and consistently across all school settings. The paper emphasizes the importance of integrating anti-bullying initiatives within SWPBS to create a unified approach. It also highlights the role of leadership, staff buy-in, professional development, and ongoing support in successful implementation. The paper advocates for the integration of anti-bullying efforts within SWPBS to create sustainable approaches to promoting positive behavior and preventing bullying. Further research and evaluation are needed to refine and enhance SWPBS programs' effectiveness in creating safe and supportive learning environments.

Moreover, the findings of the study of Casipe & Bete (2023) may have implications for policy development, teacher training programs, and institutional practices aimed at fostering inclusive learning environments in higher education institutions. Additionally, the study may contribute to the existing body of literature on inclusive education by providing insights into the attitudes and perspectives of college teachers towards inclusive practices and their impact on student learning outcomes and overall educational experiences.

Furthermore, Hanchett (2022) emphasizes the importance of teacher vigilance in detecting signs of child maltreatment, as they are often the first line of defense. Teachers are attuned to changes in behavior, appearance, and emotional well-being, providing valuable clues that may indicate a child is experiencing abuse or neglect. However, they may face challenges in recognizing signs of maltreatment, especially when abuse or neglect is not overtly visible or when children are hesitant to disclose their experiences. Training and support are essential in equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills to identify potential indicators of maltreatment and respond appropriately. Collaboration among educators, school administrators, social workers, and other stakeholders is crucial in addressing child maltreatment. The article also highlights the policy implications of supporting teachers in their efforts to detect and report child maltreatment, emphasizing the need for comprehensive training programs, resources, and support networks.

Similarly in the paper of Asio (2020) explores the awareness of child protection policies among teachers in schools and the responsiveness of schools to such issues. It examines factors such as training, communication channels, and organizational culture that influence teachers' awareness. The paper also examines the correlation between teachers' awareness of child protection policies and the overall responsiveness of schools to such concerns. It also investigates how teachers' knowledge and attitudes shape school-level practices and interventions related to child protection. The findings may have implications for policy development, professional development initiatives, and school-based interventions aimed at enhancing child protection in educational settings. The paper aims to contribute to the existing literature on child protection in schools by identifying factors that facilitate effective child protection practices and inform policy and practice interventions.

## Research Questions

This study seeks to explore the lived experiences, challenges, and triumphs of teachers involved in the implementation of child protection policies.

1. What are the experiences of teachers involved in the implementation of child protection policies?
2. How do teachers develop and utilize coping strategies to address the challenges and complexities inherent in enforcing and upholding child protection policies?
3. What valuable insights have teachers gained in the implementation of child protection policies development?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The qualitative phenomenological design is well-suited for exploring the lived experiences and perspectives of teachers involved in implementing child protection policies within educational settings. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the subjective meaning and significance of teachers' experiences, perceptions, and practices related to child protection policy implementation.

Through a qualitative research approach, this study will engage in-depth interviews with teachers to capture their stories, perspectives, and insights on child protection policy implementation. These narratives will be contextualized within the broader landscape of child protection, drawing connections to relevant policies, practices, and challenges faced by educators in fulfilling their duty of care to students.

Investigating the experience of individuals is a highly complex phenomenon (Jarvis, 1987): annotating and clarifying human experience can be a challenging task not only because of the complexity of human nature, but also because an individual's experience is a multidimensional phenomenon, that is, psychologically oriented, culturally driven, and socially structured.

### Research Participants

In this study, purposeful sampling will be utilized to select a diverse group of teachers with varied backgrounds, experiences, and roles relevant to the implementation of Child Protection Policies (CPP) within educational settings. Participants will be chosen deliberately based on their potential to provide rich and meaningful data aligned with the research objectives. The selection process will begin with identifying potential participants through coordination with school administrators and teacher networks in



Laak, Davao de Oro, ensuring that insights reflect the local educational landscape and challenges unique to the area. Teachers who meet the inclusion criteria will be invited to participate voluntarily.

### Research Instrument

To gather comprehensive and meaningful data relevant to the responsiveness of teachers in the implementation of the Child Protection Policy, this study employed a researcher-made semi-structured interview guide as the primary research instrument. This qualitative tool was designed to capture the lived experiences, perceptions, practices, and challenges faced by teachers in upholding the principles of child protection within the school environment.

Each question was carefully formulated to elicit in-depth responses, allowing participants to reflect on their roles, practices, and experiences related to child safety, emotional support, proactive intervention, policy familiarity, collaboration, and professional development. The instrument also explored the extent to which teachers are aware of, respond to, and model child-protective behaviors in alignment with the Child Protection Policy.

The use of open-ended questions provided flexibility for teachers to express their thoughts freely, thus ensuring that a variety of perspectives were captured. Follow-up prompts were also included to encourage elaboration and clarification when necessary, helping to gather richer, more nuanced data.

### Data Analysis

The collected interview data will be analyzed using phenomenological analysis techniques, which involve a systematic exploration of the lived experiences described by participants. Researchers engage in a process of bracketing, setting aside preconceptions and biases, to focus solely on the participants' accounts. Through a process of thematic coding and interpretation, researchers identify common patterns, themes, and essences that emerge from the data, capturing the shared lived experiences of stakeholders.

Creswell (2013) outlines six crucial stages in qualitative data analysis that are necessary for assessing and interpreting published research findings in the realm of education.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter explores the broader implications of the findings discussed in the previous chapters and outlines potential directions for future research and practice in the field of child protection within educational settings. The insights gained from the study underscore the critical role of teachers, school administrators, and other stakeholders in safeguarding the well-being of children.

### Implications

#### Main Theme 1: Creating a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment

Creating a safe and supportive learning environment begins with teachers and staff being aware of the needs and vulnerabilities of students. As teachers develop heightened sensitivity to the emotional and psychological needs of their students, they are better positioned to recognize when a child may be experiencing distress or facing challenges related to abuse. This awareness helps in identifying early signs and signals of potential abuse, which is crucial in preventing further harm and ensuring the child's well-being. Schools should prioritize training that focuses on enhancing teachers' ability to detect subtle signs of trauma, abuse, and neglect, making them the first line of defense in child protection.

#### Main Theme 2: Developing Resilience and Support Systems for Effective Child Protection Implementation

Continuous professional development is vital for equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively address child protection issues. Regular training sessions and workshops should be conducted to keep educators informed about the latest child protection policies, best practices for identifying abuse, and strategies for responding to students in need. Schools should encourage educators to attend these developmental opportunities, creating a culture of lifelong learning and preparedness to handle complex child protection matters. This investment in professional growth ensures that teachers remain proactive, confident, and well-equipped to safeguard children.

#### Main Theme 3: Enhancing Teacher Awareness and Responsibility in Child Protection

Improving teachers' knowledge of child protection policies is critical for ensuring that they are prepared to recognize and respond to potential abuse or neglect. Teachers should receive regular training on the school's child protection policies, including the steps they need to take if they suspect a child is at risk. Additionally, they should be familiar with relevant local laws and regulations related to child protection. This knowledge empowers teachers to act confidently and competently, knowing they are following the correct procedures to safeguard students.

Strengthening teacher-student relationships is vital in fostering an environment of trust, safety, and mutual respect. Teachers who invest time and effort in building positive relationships with their students are better positioned to understand their needs and concerns. These strong connections also create a foundation for students to feel comfortable seeking help when needed. It is important for teachers to engage in ongoing efforts to establish rapport with students, as this can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of child protection measures. Teachers should regularly check in with students, be approachable, and create a classroom atmosphere that prioritizes emotional safety.

These interconnected themes and subthemes suggest that child protection within schools is a multifaceted endeavor, requiring awareness, emotional intelligence, collaboration, and clear policies. By investing in professional development, fostering strong



teacher-student relationships, and maintaining clear protocols, schools can significantly improve their ability to protect and support vulnerable children.

This theory posits that innovations such as policies, practices, or ideas are adopted over time through a social system. In the context of this study, the Child Protection Policy is considered an innovation that must be disseminated and embraced by educators within the school system. The theory supports the need to foster a culture that embraces change, values professional learning, and supports early adopters, teachers who take initiative to implement the policy proactively.

The implications of the themes underscore that teachers' awareness, training, and continued professional development are crucial to policy adoption. Theme 2's emphasis on continuous training and development aligns with the theory's stages of innovation adoption: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Schools serve as the social system through which this innovation spreads, with school leaders playing a key role in enabling teachers (the adopters) to internalize and implement the policy. Those who take the lead in child protection become change agents who influence others through shared practices, success stories, and peer support networks.

Bandura's theory asserts that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling of behaviors within a social context. In the school setting, teachers model protective behaviors and attitudes that students internalize, helping shape a safe, trusting, and supportive learning environment as described in Theme 1. When teachers actively engage in positive reinforcement, non-punitive discipline, and trust-building, they are modeling prosocial behaviors that encourage students to feel secure and valued, further enhancing emotional and psychological safety.

### Future Directions

As the landscape of education continues to evolve, it is crucial to reflect on the future directions for child protection practices within schools. Ensuring the safety and well-being of students requires continuous adaptation, collaboration, and innovation. Moving forward, there is a need to strengthen the integration of child protection policies with broader educational goals, emphasizing not only the prevention of abuse but also the holistic development of students.

This includes fostering more proactive and inclusive approaches, enhancing teacher training programs, and ensuring that schools remain adaptable in responding to emerging challenges. Future efforts should also prioritize creating a sustainable support system that engages all stakeholders, teachers, parents, administrators, and external partners, in fostering a safe and supportive learning environment. In this context, schools must continue to build upon current successes while addressing the gaps that still exist in child protection practices, ensuring that every child has access to a secure, nurturing, and responsive educational experience.

Moving forward, school administrators should prioritize the continuous review and enhancement of child protection policies. This includes regular updates to reflect emerging challenges, legal requirements, and best practices. Administrators must ensure that these policies are clearly communicated and actively implemented across all levels of the school community.

In addition, fostering a culture of safety should be a priority, with initiatives aimed at encouraging open communication between students, teachers, and staff. There should also be an investment in training programs that equip administrators and teachers with the skills necessary to handle complex child protection issues effectively. Collaboration with external agencies, such as child welfare organizations and local authorities, will be crucial in strengthening support networks for students.

Finally, school leaders should allocate adequate resources to ensure the sustainability of child protection initiatives, empowering teachers with the tools and support they need to create a safe and inclusive environment.

### REFERENCES

1. Abdelsalam. (2018). *Action research for the development and integration of child protection policies and practices at private schools in Egypt*.
2. Allen, Livingstone, & Nickerson. (2020). *Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Education: A Qualitative Study of Teachers' Experiences Implementing the Second Step Child Protection Unit*. *American Journal of Sexuality Education*, doi: 10.1080/15546128.2019.1687382
3. Arante, & Margarin. (2023). *Teachers' perspectives on the implementation of the "No child left behind policy": Basis for framework enhancement*. *International Journal of Learning & Teaching*, *International Journal of Learning & Teaching*, doi: 10.18844/ijlt.v15i2.8752
4. Asio, J. M. R., Bayucca, S., & Jimenez, E. (2020, December). *Child Protection Policy Awareness of Teachers and Responsiveness of the School: Their Relationship and Implications*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346578805\\_Child\\_Protection\\_Policy\\_Awareness\\_of\\_Teachers\\_and\\_Responsiveness\\_of\\_the\\_School\\_Their\\_Relationship\\_and\\_Implications](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346578805_Child_Protection_Policy_Awareness_of_Teachers_and_Responsiveness_of_the_School_Their_Relationship_and_Implications)
5. Baginsky, & Macpherson. (2019). *Training teachers to safeguard children: Developing a consistent approach*. *Child Abuse Review*, 14(5), 317-330.
6. Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Prentice-Hall.
7. Casipe, C. P., & Bete, J. I. (2023). *SENTIMENTS OF TEACHERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY-A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY*. *EPRA International Journal of Environmental Economics, Commerce and Educational Management*, 10(5), 1-1. <https://eprajournals.com/IJCM/article/10611>
8. Creswell. (2013). *Answer: Discussion on Creswell's Six Steps (850 words)*. *24HourAnswers*. <https://www.24houranswers.com/college-homework-library/Law/Criminal-Justice/30771>
9. Fuaddi. (2022). *Implementation Of Child Protection Policy On The Exploitation Of Child Labor*. doi: 10.30659/rlj.1.1.73-81
10. Garcia, M. A. (2018). *Teachers' role in promoting child protection policies in Philippine schools*.



11. Gilbert, Kemp, & Sidebotham. (2019). *Recognizing and responding to child maltreatment*. *The Lancet*, 373(9658), 167-180.
12. Hanchett, J. (2022, August). *Teachers critical to detecting and reporting child maltreatment* | *Cornell Chronicle*. *News.cornell.edu*. <https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2022/08/teachers-critical-detecting-and-reporting-child-maltreatment>
13. Jarvis, P. (1987). *Meaningful and meaningless experience: towards an analysis of learning from life*. *Adult Educ. Q.* 37, 164–172.. doi: 10.1177/0001848187037003004.
14. LaMorte, W. (2022, November 3). *Diffusion of Innovation Theory*. *Boston University School of Public Health*. <https://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otlt/MPH-Modules/SB/BehavioralChangeTheories/BehavioralChangeTheories4.html>
15. Mark, J., Asio, R., Bayucca, S., & Jimenez, E. (2020). *Shanlax International Journal of Education: s h a n l a x Child Protection Policy Awareness of Teachers and Responsiveness of the School: Their Relationship and Implications*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED609076.pdf>
16. Matthews, Rassafiani, Walsh, & Farrell. (2020). *Teachers reporting child sexual abuse: Towards evidence-based reform of law, policy and practice*. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 28(9), 1010-1023.
17. McLeod, S. (2024). *Albert bandura's social learning theory*. *Simply Psychology*. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/bandura.html>
18. Nohilly. (2019). *Child Protection Training for Teachers and Mandatory Reporting Responsibilities*. *Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies*,.
19. Rogers, E. M. (1962). *Diffusion of innovations (1st ed.)*. Free Press.
20. *Save the Children*. (2019). *Education and child protection: Bridging the gap*.
21. Santos, R., & Medina, L. (2020). *Teacher perspectives on the implementation of child protection policies in public schools*.
22. Sinclair, Garner, & Taylor. (2018). *From Survival to Reflection: Locating Child Protection in Teacher Education*. doi: 10.4324/9780429490156-7
23. UNICEF. (2021). *The role of teachers in safeguarding children: A global perspective*.