

## All it Takes for a Teacher is to Know the Children?

*An empirical study on increasing child development in Vietnamese preschools*

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### **Extended abstract**

Participation in quality education already as from the early years of life, has been promoted by many stakeholders in education as an effective policy strategy for improved life-time outcomes. The question remains, however, of what kind of interventions effectively achieve good quality education, leading to higher developmental outcomes for children below age 6. Based on the previous literature, a focus on process quality interventions can be deemed justified. We further deepen our understanding on the effectiveness of such process quality interventions in this paper, by looking at a teacher professional development trajectory in using process-oriented child monitoring (POM) as a didactic method in class (Laevers, 2003, 2011, 2012, 2017). The idea of the intervention is that teachers learn to monitor children's involvement and wellbeing in the classroom. Teachers can then change their instruction methods or activities in the classroom based on the (learning) needs of the children. The intervention specifically targets children at-risk of barriers to involvement and wellbeing. Teachers learn to reflect on the barriers to learning and use 8 action points to facilitate changes in their teaching.

We evaluate the hypothesis that POM positively influences child development by conducting a pre- and post-intervention study that involves a treatment group and a control group. Child development is assessed on 7 different constructs using the East Asia-Pacific Early Child Development Scales (EAP-ECDS), namely: (1) cognitive development; (2) socio-emotional learning; (3) motor development; (4) language and emergent literacy; (5) health, hygiene and safety; (6) cultural knowledge and participation; and (7) approaches to learning.

Our pilot study benefits from a clustered-randomised sampling approach using randomly chosen districts from 3 provinces in Central Vietnam: Quang Nam, Quang Ngai and Kon Tum. Then again, seven schools, which comprises of the main school and its satellites, were randomly selected in the districts for collecting the data among the same children at baseline and post-intervention. The total sample size consists of 339 unique children in the pre- and post-intervention study or 678 observations.

Results indicate that POM is promising in increasing a wide range of child development scales. 5-year-olds girls show progression in cognitive functioning and socio-emotional development the most, while boys at this age indicate advances in socio-emotional development and health behaviours. Further evidence indicates that changes in teaching children from poor households play out much faster on child development, as opposed to what is observed among wealthier households.