

How Early-childhood Teachers' Mind-mindedness Relates to Their Beliefs on Emotions and Their Emotion Socialization Styles

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The importance of caregivers' mind-mindedness (MM) has been studied in depth in the family context, while it has been less explored in out-of-home educational settings (Degotardi & Sweller, 2012). The present study advances our understanding of early childhood teachers' emotion socialization practices by innovatively exploring how these relate to their beliefs about emotions and their levels of MM, while controlling for age, level of education, teaching experience and training in emotion education.

Participants were 89 teachers ($M_{age} = 38.29$ years; $SD = 11.06$ years) recruited in 45 nursery schools. They completed two self-report questionnaires assessing their beliefs about emotion and their use of emotion-coaching (EC) versus emotion-dismissing (ED) socialization styles, respectively. Their MM was evaluated via a mind-minded description task.

Results show that teachers' MM was significantly associated to both their beliefs and their emotion socializations styles. Specifically, teachers who believed that it was important to discuss emotion with children and to provide them with an emotion education obtained high scores on the EC-style measure ($r=.33$; $p<.01$) and showed higher levels of MM ($r=.29$; $p<.01$); teachers who believed that children should be protected from experiencing negative emotions got high scores on the ED-style scale ($r=.29$; $p<.01$) and low levels of ($r=-.25$; $p<.05$). Furthermore, training in emotion education appeared to be implicated in the relationships between teachers' emotion beliefs, MM, and emotion socialization practices. Based on these associations, multivariate analyses correctly identify different teachers' profiles.

These findings suggest the need for future research on MM of educational practitioners working with young children, so as to further understand its associations with other psychological skills, as well as to tease out its role in children's development of socio-emotional competences.