



IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT 8980 (EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT (ECCD)) FOR LEARNER'S LITERACY AND NUMERACY PERFORMANCE

RICHARD C. PARAGAS, PhD, LPT

School Principal I, Leon B. Hulipas Elementary School, Schools Division of Aurora, Philippines

Abstract - This study examined the implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) program under Republic Act No. 8980 in Maria Aurora, Aurora, focusing on school context, program delivery, and learner outcomes. The study employed descriptive-correlational research design. Findings revealed that most schools are small, rural, and long-established, operating with limited resources but supported by active leadership and functional systems. ECCD implementation was rated high to very high across key developmental domains, including physical health, cognitive development, language, creativity, character formation, and social-emotional growth. However, gaps were noted in the provision of nutritious meals, availability of learning materials (particularly books and art supplies), and consistent parental involvement. In terms of learner performance, children demonstrated nearly proficient numeracy skills but lagged in literacy, with many identified as emerging readers. Results further showed that school characteristics such as size, age, and special status have some influence on learner outcomes, although most profile variables do not significantly affect program implementation. Notably, ECCD implementation itself was not significantly related to learners' numeracy and literacy performance, suggesting that factors such as teaching quality, access to materials, and home support play a more critical role. Differences were also found in the perceptions of school heads, teachers, and parents, highlighting the need for stronger collaboration and communication. Overall, improving literacy and numeracy requires targeted interventions, enhanced teaching strategies, sufficient resources, and active school-family partnerships to ensure balanced and meaningful early learning outcomes.

Keywords: ECCD Implementation, Learner Performance, Literacy Development, Numeracy Skill, School Profile

INTRODUCTION

Education serves as preparation for life, shaping children's ability to participate meaningfully in society

and fulfill productive social roles in adulthood. The extent to which individuals realize their potential is closely linked to the quality of education received during formative years. Early childhood is especially recognized as a critical stage influencing cognitive, social, emotional, and academic development, particularly literacy and numeracy readiness [1].

Historically, early childhood learning in the Philippines originated from informal education among precolonial communities through storytelling, rituals, observation, and apprenticeship. During the Spanish period, formal education largely served religious and elite purposes, resulting in limited attention to early childhood education. Structured early learning began during the American regime, which recognized the importance of preparing children before formal schooling. This development led to the establishment of kindergarten programs, the Day Care Service Program, and Barangay Day Care Centers that integrated education, nutrition, and social services [2].

These initiatives were reinforced through major educational reforms. Republic Act No. 10533, or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, institutionalized kindergarten as a compulsory stage of basic education, emphasizing the value of early learning [3]. Republic Act No. 10410 strengthened the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council, while Republic Act No. 11148, or the First 1000 Days Law, integrated nutrition and healthcare during early childhood [4][5]. Together, these measures demonstrated the government's commitment to holistic and inclusive child development.

Central to these reforms is Republic Act No. 8980, the ECCD Act, which established a comprehensive and sustainable ECCD system in the Philippines. The law promotes children's physical health, cognitive and language development, socio-emotional growth, creativity, and character formation as foundations of



literacy and numeracy readiness [6]. International commitments and Republic Act No. 6972 further reinforced ECCD implementation by mandating at least one Day Care Center per barangay [7]. However, disparities in access, quality, funding, and human resources continue, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

Government investment has supported ECCD expansion. Through the ₱6.326 trillion General Appropriations Act approved in 2024, funding was allocated for Child Development Centers (CDCs), especially in fourth- and fifth-class municipalities with limited resources [8]. These appropriations strengthened ECCD operations, service accreditation, infrastructure development, and capacity-building to improve foundational learning outcomes.

Despite these commitments, unequal access remains a challenge. Variations in implementation, government support, stakeholder participation, and available resources continue to limit ECCD effectiveness. National data from the EDCOM 2 Year Two Report revealed that approximately 5,800 barangays still lacked Child Development Centers, with many located in low-income municipalities [9]. These conditions contribute to learning gaps reflected in the 2022 PISA results, where Filipino learners performed significantly below expected levels in reading, mathematics, and science [10].

At the local level, these concerns are evident in Maria Aurora, Aurora. Classroom Reading Literacy Assessment (CRLA-Filipino) pretest results for School Year 2025–2026 showed that 44.99% of Grade 1 learners were low emerging readers, while only 4.09% reached grade-level reading proficiency. Likewise, Rapid Mathematics Assessment results indicated that 79% of learners remained at emerging proficiency levels.

These findings frame the present study within historical, policy, and fiscal contexts. The study aims to evaluate the implementation of Republic Act No. 8980 in ECCD schools in Maria Aurora, Aurora, and examine how school and contextual factors influence literacy and numeracy outcomes. Ultimately, it seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations to strengthen ECCD implementation and improve foundational learning among young learners.

Research Problems

The study aimed to assess the implementation of the Republic Act 8980 or the Early Childhood Care and Development Act in Maria Aurora, Aurora and its implications to learners' literacy and numeracy performance, in order to propose an action plan to enhance its implementation. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. Describe the profile of the schools in Maria Aurora in terms of:

- 1.1 size;
- 1.2 location;
- 1.3 school's years of existence;
- 1.4 school's status;
- 1.5 years of experience of the assigned school heads; and
- 1.6 School-Based Management Level

2. Describe the implementation status of RA 8980 in Maria Aurora, Aurora in terms of:

- 2.1 Physical Health, Well-being, and Moral Development;
- 2.2 Cognitive and Intellectual Development;
- 2.3 Language Development;
- 2.4 Creative and Aesthetic Development;
- 2.5 Character and Values Development; and
- 2.6 Social and Emotional Development

3. Describe the performance of the learners in terms of:

- 3.1. numeracy performance; and
- 3.2. literacy performance

4. Identify if there is a significant relationship between the school profiles and the implementation status of RA 8980.

5. Identify if there is a significant relationship between the school profiles and the performance of the learners.

6. Identify if there is a significant relationship between the implementation status of RA 8980 in Maria Aurora and the performance of the learners.

7. Identify if there is a significant difference on the respondents' responses on the implementation of Republic Act 8980.



8. Draw implications on learners' literacy and numeracy performance from the results of the study.

9. Propose an action plan based on the results of the study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive–correlational research design to examine the implementation of Republic Act No. 8980 or the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Act and its implications for learners' literacy and numeracy development. A descriptive–correlational research is a quantitative approach used to describe variables and determine relationships among them without manipulating the research environment [11]. Data gathered through research instruments were analyzed statistically to identify patterns and associations among variables.

In this study, the research design was used to assess the extent of ECCD implementation and determine how existing practices, policies, and conditions aligned with the objectives of RA 8980 in supporting learners' holistic development. It also examined the relationship between ECCD implementation and learners' literacy and numeracy outcomes under existing conditions without experimental intervention.

The findings generated through this design provided a basis for understanding the current status of ECCD implementation and identifying areas for strengthening policies and practices to improve foundational learning among young learners.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study included school heads, ECCD teachers, and parents of former ECCD learners from selected public elementary schools in Maria Aurora, Aurora under DepEd Aurora. These groups were purposively selected to provide comprehensive perspectives on the implementation of Republic Act No. 8980 or the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Act.

School heads were included due to their roles in school leadership, policy implementation, and program

monitoring. ECCD teachers served as key respondents because of their direct involvement in delivering ECCD services across developmental domains mandated by RA 8980. Parents of former ECCD learners who are now in Grade 1 provided insights on children's school readiness, literacy and numeracy development, and family participation in ECCD implementation.

The study covered 33 public elementary schools with functioning ECCD programs and considered school accessibility, classification, and school-based management (SBM) level to ensure varied educational contexts. The inclusion of these respondent groups enabled a holistic assessment of ECCD implementation and its implications for improving literacy and numeracy outcomes among learners.

Instrumentation

The primary instrument of this study was a structured, researcher-made questionnaire developed based on Republic Act No. 8980, relevant DepEd policies, and the National Early Learning Framework (NELF). The instrument underwent expert content validation and pilot testing prior to administration.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts: (1) School Profile Information, which gathered data on school characteristics, and (2) Assessment of ECCD Implementation, which evaluated implementation across six NELF domains: Physical Health, Cognitive Development, Language Development, Creative Development, Character and Values Development, and Social-Emotional Development using a 5-point Likert scale.

To determine the implications of ECCD implementation on learner outcomes, the study also utilized Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) and Rapid Mathematics Assessment (RMA) pretest data of former ECCD learners now in Grade 1. These official DepEd diagnostic tools measured learners' literacy and numeracy readiness.

The instrument was validated by experts from ASCOT and DepEd Aurora and pilot-tested in selected schools in Baler, Aurora, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.87, indicating high reliability. Ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout data collection.



Procedures

The data gathering procedure followed a structured and sequential process consisting of five phases: preliminary preparation, initial contact, questionnaire distribution and retrieval, data verification, and data organization.

Approval to conduct the study was secured from NEUST Graduate School and DepEd Aurora, followed by coordination with selected schools in Maria Aurora and validation of the survey instrument by experts from ASCOT and DepEd Aurora. Orientation and informed consent were conducted among school heads, kindergarten teachers, and parents prior to data collection.

Validated questionnaires were distributed through printed or online formats. Complete enumeration was applied to school heads and teachers, while parents were selected through stratified random sampling. Collected responses were reviewed for completeness and accuracy.

To determine the implications of ECCD implementation on literacy and numeracy outcomes, CRLA and RMA results of former ECCD learners now in Grade 1 were retrieved from school records. All verified data were encoded and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS for interpretation and reporting.

Statistical Treatment

Data were analyzed using SPSS Version 22.0 and JAMOVI. Frequency and percentage were used to describe school profiles (Research Problem 1). Weighted mean was applied to determine the status of RA 8980 implementation across the six ECCD domains (Research Problem 2) and to describe learners' literacy and numeracy performance based on CRLA and RMA results (Research Problem 3).

Chi-square Test of Independence was used to determine the relationship between school profile and ECCD implementation (Research Problem 4). Correlation analysis determined the relationships between school profile and learner performance (Research Problem 5), and between ECCD implementation and literacy and numeracy outcomes (Research Problem 6). ANOVA was used to identify differences in perceptions among school heads,

teachers, and parents (Research Problem 7). Textual analysis was employed to interpret the implications of the findings on literacy and numeracy development (Research Problem 8), while results from all analyses served as the basis for developing a contextualized Action Plan to strengthen ECCD implementation (Research Problem 9).

RESULTS

1. Profile of the Schools in Maria Aurora, Aurora

Table 1. Profile of the Schools in Maria Aurora, Aurora

Schools' Profile	Categories	N	%
Size	Large	1	3.00%
	Medium	4	12.10%
	Small	28	84.80%
Location	Rural	23	69.70%
	Semi-Urban	1	3.00%
	SII	9	27.30%
School's years of existence	below 10 years	1	3.00%
	11-20 years	13	39.40%
	21-30 years	3	9.10%
	31-40 years	4	12.10%
	41-50 years	3	9.10%
School's Status	51 years an	9	27.30%
	IPED	3	9.10%
	Last Mile	3	9.10%
	Multigrades	2	6.10%
Years of Experience of the assigned School Heads	Regular Class	25	75.80%
	10 years below	22	66.70%
	11-20 years	7	21.20%
	21-30 years	3	9.10%
School-based Management Level	above 31 years	1	3.00%
	Level II	22	66.70%
	Level III	11	33.30%

2. Status of Implementation of RA 8980 in Maria Aurora, Aurora

Table 2. Status of Implementation of RA 8980 in Maria Aurora, Aurora

Developmental Domains	School Heads	Teachers	Parents	Grand Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Physical Health, Well-being, and Moral Development	4.33	4.26	3.97	4.19	Highly Implemented
Cognitive and Intellectual Development	4.21	4.37	3.87	4.15	Highly Implemented
Language	4.55	4.72	4.26	4.51	Very Highly



Development					Implemented
Creative and Aesthetic Development	4.36	4.50	4.04	4.30	Very Highly Implemented
Character and Values Development	4.72	4.86	4.53	4.71	Very Highly Implemented
Social and Emotional Development	4.61	4.85	4.24	4.56	Very Highly Implemented
Overall Weighted Mean	4.46	4.59	4.15	4.40	Very Highly Implemented

Legend: 4.21 - 5.00 Always-Very Highly Implemented; 3.41 - 4.20 Often-Highly Implemented; 2.61 - 3.40 Sometimes-Moderately Implemented; 1.81-2.60 Rarely-Lowly Implemented; 1.00 - 1.80 Never-Not at all Implemented

3. Performance of the Learners in terms of Numeracy and Literacy

Table 3. Performance of the Learners in terms of Numeracy and Literacy

Learner's Performance	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Numeracy	2.70	Developing (Nearly Proficient)
Literacy	1.58	Low Emerging Reader

Legend: CRA: 1.00 - 1.80 (Low Emerging Reader); 1.81 - 2.60 (High Emerging Reader); 2.61 - 3.40 (Developing Reader); 3.41 - 4.20 (Transitioning Reader) 4.21 - 5.00 (Reading at the Grade Level) RMA: 1.00 - 1.80 Emerging (Not Proficient); 1.81 - 2.60 Emerging (Low Proficient); 2.61 - 3.40 Developing (Nearly Proficient); 3.41 - 4.20 Transitioning (Proficient); 4.21 - 5.00 At Grade Level (Highly Proficient)

4. Significant Relationship between the School Profiles and the Status of Implementation of RA 8980

Table 4. Significant Relationship between the School Profile and the Status of Implementation of RA 8980

School Profile Variable	ECCD Domain	r-value	p-value
Years of Existence	Physical Health, Well-being, and Moral Development	-0.382	0.028
Location	Character and Values Development	-0.382	0.028
School Status	Character and Values Development	-0.357	0.041

Significance level: $p < .05$

5. Significant Relationship between the School Profiles and the Performance of the Learners

Table 5. Significant Relationship between the School Profile and the Performance of the Learners

Learner Outcome	School Profile Variable	r-value	p-value
Numeracy	Size	-0.347	0.048
Numeracy	Status	0.352	0.045
Numeracy	Experience	-0.396	0.023
Literacy	Years of Existence	-0.392	0.024

Significance level: $p < .05$

6. Significant Relationship between the Status of the Implementation of RA 8980 in Maria Aurora and the Performance of the Learners

Table 6. Significant Relationship between the Status of the Implementation of RA 8980 in Maria Aurora and the Performance of the Learners

Learner Outcome	ECCD Domain	r-value	p-value
None	None	—	$p > .05$

Significance level: $p < .05$

7. Significant Difference on the Respondents' Responses on the Implementation of Republic Act 8980

Table 7. Significant Difference on the Respondents' Responses on the Implementation of Republic Act 8980

ECCD Domain	F-value	p-value
Physical Health, Well-being, and Moral Development	173.931	.001
Cognitive and Intellectual Development	365.017	.001
Language Development	219.459	.001
Creative and Aesthetic Development	271.182	.001
Character and Values Development	130.308	.001
Social and Emotional Development	454.038	.001

Significance level: $p < .05$

Discussion

Table 1 presents the profile of participating schools in Maria Aurora, Aurora. Findings show that most schools were small (84.80%), indicating that ECCD implementation largely occurred in smaller educational settings where learning environments may be more personalized despite possible limitations in facilities and resources. Studies suggest that smaller schools can provide closer teacher-learner interaction that supports early childhood learning and foundational skills development [12].

In terms of location, most schools were situated in rural areas (69.70%), while a considerable number were located in special, indigenous, and geographically isolated areas (27.30%), indicating the need for inclusive and context-responsive ECCD implementation. Rural and geographically challenged schools remain essential in promoting equitable access to early learning opportunities [13].

Regarding years of existence, the largest group of schools had operated for 11–20 years (39.40%), followed by schools existing for 51 years and above (27.30%), suggesting that many institutions already possess established systems that may support



sustained ECCD implementation and learner development [14].

Most schools were classified as regular classes (75.80%), although some operated under IPED, Last Mile, and multigrade arrangements, reflecting varied educational contexts that may require flexible instructional approaches [15]. Furthermore, most school heads had 10 years or below of administrative experience (66.70%), while the majority of schools attained SBM Level II (66.70%), indicating functional management practices and developing leadership capacities that may contribute to effective ECCD implementation [16].

Overall, Table 1 suggests that ECCD implementation in Maria Aurora primarily occurred in small, rural, and established schools supported by functioning school management systems, creating opportunities to strengthen literacy and numeracy development among young learners.

Table 2 shows that the implementation of Republic Act No. 8980 or the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) program was Very Highly Implemented, obtaining an overall weighted mean of 4.40. This result suggests that ECCD practices were generally well-established and consistently implemented across participating schools, reflecting strong support for children's holistic development [17].

Among the developmental domains, Character and Values Development (WM = 4.71) received the highest rating, indicating that ECCD implementation strongly emphasized values formation, positive behavior, and social responsibility among young learners. This was followed by Social and Emotional Development (WM = 4.56) and Language Development (WM = 4.51), suggesting that schools provided supportive environments that promoted emotional growth, social interaction, and communication skills essential for school readiness and lifelong learning [18][19].

Likewise, Creative and Aesthetic Development (WM = 4.30) was also rated as very highly implemented, indicating that learners were given opportunities to develop imagination, creativity, and self-expression through varied learning experiences [20].

Meanwhile, Physical Health, Well-being, and Moral Development (WM = 4.19) and Cognitive and

Intellectual Development (WM = 4.15) obtained relatively lower ratings, although both remained within the highly implemented level. These findings suggest that while these developmental areas were sufficiently addressed, additional efforts may still be needed to strengthen health-related services and enrich cognitively stimulating activities for young learners [21].

Overall, the findings indicate that ECCD implementation under RA 8980 was comprehensive and aligned with its goal of promoting total child development. However, the variation across domains highlights opportunities for continuous enhancement to ensure balanced support across all areas of child growth and development [22].

Table 3 shows differing outcomes in learners' literacy and numeracy development. Numeracy obtained a weighted mean of 2.70 (Developing/Nearly Proficient), indicating that learners demonstrated emerging competence in basic mathematical skills such as counting, number recognition, and simple problem-solving. This suggests that ECCD implementation effectively supported numeracy through interactive and experience-based learning strategies [23][24].

In contrast, literacy obtained a weighted mean of 1.58 (Low Emerging Reader), indicating that learners remained at the early stage of reading development with difficulties in decoding, comprehension, and foundational reading skills. This finding suggests that literacy development may require stronger instructional support, greater access to reading materials, and more structured literacy interventions [25].

The results imply that ECCD implementation in Maria Aurora was more effective in developing numeracy than literacy, highlighting uneven learning outcomes across domains [26]. Thus, strengthening literacy-focused programs, improving access to print resources, and enhancing family involvement may help achieve more balanced foundational learning among young learners [27].

Table 4 presents the relationship between school profile variables and the implementation of RA 8980 in ECCD schools. Results generally showed no significant relationship, indicating that school size, school head experience, and SBM level did not substantially



influence ECCD implementation across developmental domains [28].

However, selected variables demonstrated significant relationships. Years of school existence showed a significant negative relationship with Physical Health, Well-being, and Moral Development ($r = -0.382$, $p = 0.028$), suggesting that older schools may require updated health and developmental interventions [29]. Likewise, school location had a significant negative relationship with Character and Values Development ($r = -0.382$, $p = 0.028$), indicating possible implementation challenges in rural and geographically isolated settings [30].

Similarly, school status showed a significant negative relationship with Character and Values Development ($r = -0.357$, $p = 0.041$), suggesting that IPED and Last Mile schools may require more contextualized support and interventions [31].

Overall, the findings imply that ECCD implementation in Maria Aurora remained generally effective regardless of school characteristics, although school age, location, and status influenced selected developmental domains. Thus, the null hypothesis was partially rejected, and targeted support may further strengthen equitable ECCD implementation across schools [32].

Table 5 presents the relationship between school profile variables and learners' literacy and numeracy performance. Results showed that selected school characteristics had significant relationships with learner outcomes [33].

For numeracy, school size showed a significant negative relationship ($r = -0.347$, $p = 0.048$), school status showed a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.352$, $p = 0.045$), and years of existence showed a significant negative relationship ($r = -0.396$, $p = 0.023$). These findings suggest that school context influences numeracy development and that older schools may require instructional enhancement [34][35].

For literacy, only years of existence showed a significant negative relationship ($r = -0.392$, $p = 0.024$), indicating that older schools tended to have lower literacy outcomes, while other variables showed no significant association [36].

Overall, the findings indicate that school profile had a greater influence on numeracy than literacy. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected, suggesting that selected school characteristics significantly influenced learners' foundational performance and may require targeted interventions to strengthen learning outcomes [37].

Table 6 presents the relationship between the implementation of RA 8980 and learners' literacy and numeracy performance. Results showed no statistically significant relationship between all six ECCD developmental domains and learners' numeracy and literacy outcomes ($p > .05$), indicating that program implementation did not directly predict learner performance [38].

Although ECCD implementation remained highly evident across developmental areas, improvements in literacy and numeracy may depend on other factors such as instructional practices, availability of learning materials, parental support, and learner engagement [39][40].

The findings suggest that strong ECCD implementation alone is insufficient to guarantee higher academic outcomes and that targeted interventions are still necessary to strengthen foundational learning [41]. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between RA 8980 implementation and learners' performance development was accepted [42].

Table 7 showed statistically significant differences in respondents' assessments of the implementation of RA 8980 across all six developmental domains ($p = .001$), indicating that school heads, teachers, and parents perceived ECCD implementation differently [43].

The greatest variations were observed in Social and Emotional Development ($F = 454.038$) and Cognitive and Intellectual Development ($F = 365.017$), reflecting substantial differences in stakeholder perspectives [44]. These differences may be explained by variations in roles and involvement, with school heads focusing on program management, teachers on instructional delivery, and parents on observable learner outcomes [45].

The findings suggest gaps in communication, stakeholder engagement, and shared understanding of ECCD implementation [46]. Therefore, the null



hypothesis was rejected, indicating that stakeholder category significantly influenced perceptions and highlighting the need for stronger school-home collaboration and monitoring systems [47].

8. Implications on Learners' Literacy and Numeracy Performance

The findings imply that improvements in literacy and numeracy are influenced more by the quality of instruction and learning experiences than by school profile factors such as size, school head experience, and SBM level. However, school age and status showed relationships with learner performance, suggesting the need for updated teaching practices and targeted support, particularly in older schools.

Results also revealed that the implementation of RA 8980 alone did not significantly relate to literacy and numeracy outcomes, indicating that learner development is also affected by teaching strategies, availability of learning materials, learner monitoring, and parental support. Differences in perceptions among school heads, teachers, and parents further highlight the need to strengthen school-home collaboration. Overall, improving foundational learning requires coordinated efforts among schools, families, and communities.

9. Proposed Action Plan

This action plan was developed to address identified gaps in the implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) program under Republic Act No. 8980. Although ECCD implementation was generally high, differences in literacy and numeracy outcomes remained evident, particularly among older schools and those in rural or special-status areas. Variations in instructional practices, resource availability, parental involvement, and stakeholder perceptions also affected learner outcomes.

The plan emphasizes that effective ECCD implementation requires quality instruction, continuous teacher development, regular monitoring, and strengthened school-community partnerships. It therefore proposes evidence-based interventions to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, support holistic learner development, and promote equitable access to quality early childhood education.

II. General Objectives

This action plan generally aims to strengthen ECCD implementation and improve learners' literacy and numeracy outcomes through enhanced instruction, adequate resources, and collaborative stakeholder engagement.

Specifically, it seeks to:

- Improve teaching practices and access to learning resources;
- Strengthen teachers' competencies through continuous professional development;
- Enhance literacy and numeracy integration in ECCD instruction;
- Establish systematic learner monitoring and evaluation;
- Promote parental involvement and school-home collaboration;
- Provide targeted support to rural and special-status schools;
- Strengthen coordination among stakeholders; and
- Support holistic learner development and sustainable resource management.

Goals / Issues Addressed	Strategic Actions	Responsible Individuals	Resources	Timeline	Expected Output	Proposed Budget
Improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, particularly in older schools	Conduct needs assessment, provide teacher training on updated literacy and numeracy strategies	School Heads, Teachers, ECCD Coordinators, Division Office	Assessment tools, training materials, instructional guides	1-3 months	Improved instructional practices and intervention plans	₱25,000-₱40,000
Strengthen classroom instruction and learner support	Implement learner-centered teaching, integrate literacy and numeracy activities, provide adequate learning materials and monitor learner progress	Teachers, School Heads	Books, manipulatives, assessment and monitoring tools	3-6 months	Improved learner engagement and academic performance	₱50,000-₱80,000
Increase parental and stakeholder involvement	Conduct parent orientations, strengthen communication and joint evaluation mechanisms	School Heads, Teachers, PTA	Orientation materials, communication tools	Ongoing	Improved home-school collaboration and shared program understanding	₱10,000-₱20,000
Support rural and special-status schools	Provide targeted resources, localized interventions, and teacher support	Division Office, School Heads, Teachers	Teaching materials, training support	3-6 months	More equitable ECCD implementation and learner outcomes	₱60,000-₱100,000
Enhance teacher capability and learner monitoring	Conduct periodic training, mentoring, classroom observation, and standardized monitoring	School Heads, Teachers, ECCD Coordinators	Training modules, monitoring templates	Every 6 months	Strong themed teacher competencies and data-driven interventions	₱20,000-₱55,000
Ensure sustainability and holistic development	Establish resource management plans and integrate literacy, numeracy, socio-emotional, and values education	School Heads, Teachers, PTA, LGUs	Resource inventory, storybooks, learning materials	Ongoing	Sustainable resources and balanced learner development	₱20,000-₱50,000

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that the implementation of Republic Act No. 8980 or the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) program in Maria Aurora, Aurora was generally strong and well-established across participating schools. Most schools were characterized as small, rural, and long-operating institutions supported by functional management systems and school leadership structures, indicating that ECCD implementation has been



sustained despite contextual and resource-related limitations.

The findings further revealed that ECCD implementation across the six developmental domains was generally very highly implemented, demonstrating strong adherence to the goals of holistic child development embodied in RA 8980. High implementation was observed in language, character and values, creative and aesthetic, and social-emotional development, reflecting schools' commitment to nurturing learners beyond academic preparation. However, areas related to physical health support, nutrition services, access to learning materials, and parental participation still present opportunities for enhancement to ensure balanced implementation across all domains.

In terms of learner outcomes, ECCD learners demonstrated stronger performance in numeracy than literacy. Learners reached a developing or nearly proficient level in numeracy, indicating progress in foundational mathematical skills. In contrast, literacy remained at a low emerging level, suggesting continuing challenges in reading readiness, access to print-rich environments, and structured literacy support. These findings imply that while early childhood programs support foundational development, literacy requires more focused instructional intervention and sustained home and school support.

The analysis also showed that most school profile variables did not significantly influence ECCD implementation, suggesting that schools generally maintained consistent implementation regardless of size, school head experience, or SBM level. Nevertheless, selected contextual variables particularly school age, location, and school status demonstrated significant relationships with specific developmental domains, indicating that implementation conditions vary across contexts. Thus, the null hypothesis on school profile and ECCD implementation was partially rejected.

Meanwhile, selected school profile variables, specifically school size, school status, and years of existence, were found to have significant relationships with learners' literacy and numeracy performance, indicating that school context contributes to variations in learner outcomes. However, school location, school

head experience, and SBM level did not significantly affect performance development. Consequently, the null hypothesis on the relationship between school profile and learner performance was rejected.

Further findings revealed that the overall implementation of RA 8980 did not significantly relate to learners' literacy and numeracy performance. This suggests that strong program implementation alone does not automatically translate into improved academic outcomes, as learner development is also influenced by instructional quality, availability of resources, family engagement, and classroom practices. Therefore, the null hypothesis regarding ECCD implementation and learner performance was accepted.

The study likewise established significant differences in the perceptions of school heads, teachers, and parents across all ECCD domains, indicating that stakeholder groups evaluate implementation from different perspectives based on their roles and experiences. This confirms that stakeholder category significantly influences assessment of ECCD implementation and highlights the importance of strengthening communication, collaboration, and shared accountability among schools and families.

Overall, the findings underscore that improving literacy and numeracy outcomes requires more than compliance with ECCD policies. Sustainable improvement depends on responsive teaching practices, adequate learning resources, strengthened parental involvement, targeted support for older and special-status schools, and coordinated stakeholder participation. In response, the proposed action plan was designed to address identified gaps through instructional enhancement, improved resource provision, stronger school-community partnerships, and systematic monitoring mechanisms to strengthen ECCD implementation and promote equitable foundational learning outcomes among young learners in Maria Aurora, Aurora.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, several recommendations are proposed to further strengthen the implementation of Republic Act No. 8980 and improve literacy and numeracy outcomes among ECCD learners in Maria Aurora, Aurora.



Schools may continue maximizing existing leadership capacities and available resources while strengthening partnerships with communities, local organizations, and stakeholders to support sustainable program implementation. School heads are encouraged to provide continuous professional development and instructional guidance to teachers to improve classroom practices, particularly in literacy and numeracy instruction.

Teachers may intensify the use of structured and learner-centered approaches by incorporating explicit literacy activities such as phonics instruction, read-aloud sessions, and increased access to age-appropriate reading materials, while also strengthening numeracy through interactive and developmentally appropriate activities. Differentiated instruction may likewise be employed to address the varied learning needs of learners, especially in multigrade, IPED, and Last Mile school settings.

School administrators may prioritize the provision of instructional resources, including printed literacy materials, manipulative tools, and learning aids, particularly for older, rural, and special-status schools where contextual challenges are more evident. Regular monitoring of learner progress in literacy and numeracy should also be strengthened to identify learning gaps early and implement timely interventions.

Parents are encouraged to become more actively involved in supporting learning at home through shared reading activities, numeracy-based games, and reinforcement of classroom learning experiences. Strengthening communication and collaboration between schools and families may also improve shared understanding of ECCD goals and increase participation in school-based activities.

Furthermore, Local Government Units (LGUs), the Department of Education (DepEd), and ECCD coordinators may continue providing technical assistance, funding support, instructional resources, and targeted programs for schools requiring additional assistance, particularly older and geographically challenged institutions. Modernization of instructional approaches and expansion of support services may help ensure more equitable learning opportunities.

Overall, sustained collaboration among schools, families, communities, and education stakeholders is essential to ensure that ECCD implementation goes beyond compliance with RA 8980 and translates into measurable improvements in literacy, numeracy, and holistic child development outcomes.

REFERENCES

- [1] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2021). Right to pre-primary education: A global study. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/>
- [2] Martin, I. P. (1980). The historical development of early childhood education in the Philippines. Ministry of Education and Culture.
- [3] Republic Act No. 10533. (2013). Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph>
- [4] Republic Act No. 10410. (2013). Early Years Act (EYA) of 2013. Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph>
- [5] Republic Act No. 11148. (2018). Kalusugan at Nutrisyon ng Mag-Nanay Act (First 1000 Days Law). Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph>
- [6] Republic Act No. 8980. (2000). Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Act. Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph>
- [7] Republic Act No. 6972. (1990). Barangay-Level Total Development and Protection of Children Act. Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph>
- [8] Republic of the Philippines. (2024). General Appropriations Act Fiscal Year 2025. Department of Budget and Management. <https://www.dbm.gov.ph>
- [9] Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II). (2025). Year Two Report: Fixing the foundations. EDCOM II. <https://edcom2.gov.ph>
- [10] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2023). PISA 2022 results (Volume I): The state of learning and equity in education. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/53f23881-en>
- [11] Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. Sage publications.
- [12] Karki, S., Aryal, P. N., Acharya, S., Dahal, M., Upadhyay, J., Ghimire, D., & Singh, K. (2018). Evaluation of the national early childhood development program. Kathmandu, Nepal: Oxford Policy Management Limited.
- [13] Kendeou, P. (2024). A theory of knowledge revision: The development of the KReC framework. Educational Psychology Review, 36(2), 44.
- [14] Kirui, C. C. (2024). Determinants of the choice of teaching-learning methods in early childhood development and primary education in Mount Elgon Sub-County, Bungoma County, Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, University of Eldoret).
- [15] Kumar, A. (2020). Create a rich language environment in the environment of early childhood development and



- improve children's language expression ability. *Journal of Educational Research and Policies*, 4(8).
- [16] Lin, Y., Kadir, M. A. A., & Kaur, D. (2025). Preschool Educators' Perceptions on Values Education. *EducationSciences*, 15(2), 140. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci1502010>
- [17] Lovat, T. (2022). Values education, efficacious learning, and the Islamic connection: An Australian case study. In *Encyclopedia of teacher education* (pp. 2149–2154). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
- [18] Marlina, S. (2026, November). Character values development in early childhood through traditional games. In *3rd International Conference on Early Childhood Education (ICECE 2016)* (pp. 404-408). Atlantis Press.
- [19] Makhubele, J. C., & Baloyi, T. V. (2018). Challenges impeding the successful implementation of early childhood development programmes in South Africa: Implications for practice. *Gender and Behaviour*, 16(1), 10773-10783
- [20] Meyer, M. S., Rosenthal, A., Bolden, K. A., Loewy, R. L., Savill, M., Shim, R., ... & Niendam, T. A. (2020). Psychosis screening in schools: Considerations and implementation strategies. *Early Intervention in Psychiatry*, 14(1), 130–136.
- [21] Molnár, G., & Csapó, B. (2019). Making the psychological dimension of learning visible: Using technology-based assessment to monitor students' cognitive development. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 1368.
- [22] Nores, M., & Fernandez, C. (2018). Building capacity in health and education systems to deliver interventions that strengthen early child development. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1419(1), 57–73.
- [23] Norris, E., van Steen, T., Direito, A., & Stamatakis, E. (2020). Physically active lessons in schools and their impact on physical activity, educational, health and cognition outcomes: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *British journal of sports medicine*, 54(14), 826-838.
- [24] Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2020). Review of education policies. GPS Education. Retrieved May 11, 2025, from <https://gpseducation.oecd.org/revieweducationpolicies/#!node=&filter=all>
- [25] Patel, H. D. (2025). PLAY, performance and pedagogy: Arts as a foundation for childhood learning. *Policy, Perspectives and Pedagogy in Early Childhood Care and Education*, 200.
- [26] Phuntsho, T., & Penjor, D. (2022). The Impact of Early Child Care and Development in Children: From the Lenses of Pre-Primary Teachers in Eastern Bhutan. *RABSEL*, 23(1).
- [27] Raikes, A., Rao, N., Yoshikawa, H., Cohrssen, C., Behrman, J., Cappa, C., ... & UKRI GCRF Harnessing the power of global data to support young children's learning and development research group. (2023). Global tracking of access and quality in early childhood care and education. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, 17(1), 14.
- [28] Republic of the Philippines. (2024). General Appropriations Act, FY 2025 (Vol. 120, No. 53). Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines.
- [29] Retnaningrum, W., & Hazhari, A. (2024). Analysis of Character Education for Social and Emotional Development in Early Childhood. *Raudhatul Athfal: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 8(2), 145-157.
- [30] Santos, J. E., & Villanueva, P. R. (2022). Parental awareness and engagement in early childhood care and development programs in geographically isolated areas. *International Journal of Early Childhood Education Studies*, 14(2), 78–92.
- [31] Sibal-Tumbali, N. (2023). Child Development Centers' Profile and Compliance to Quality Standards: Input for Municipal Ordinance. *International Journal of Arts, Sciences and Education*, 4(3), 55-76.
- [32] Silay, Ö. Ü. N. (2022). The significance of character education during early childhood at preschools. *The Journal of Academic Social Science*, 127.
- [33] Singh, A. S., Saliassi, E., Van Den Berg, V., Uijtdewilligen, L., De Groot, R. H., Jolles, J., ... & Chinapaw, M. J. (2019). Effects of physical activity interventions on cognitive and academic performance in children and adolescents: a novel combination of a systematic review and recommendations from an expert panel. *British journal of sports medicine*, 53(10), 640-647.
- [34] Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj, I., & Taggart, B. (2020). Effective pre-school, primary and secondary education project (EPPSE): Influences on students' development from age 3 to 16. Department for Education
- [35] Szeto, E., & Cheng, A. Y. N. (2018). Principal–teacher interactions and teacher leadership development: Beginning teachers' perspectives. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 21(3), 363–379.
- [36] Torres, L. M., & Bautista, C. D. (2024). Stakeholder alignment and program effectiveness in early childhood education: A Philippine context. *Journal of Educational Policy and Development*, 9(1), 101–118.
- [37] Tudge, J. R. H., Payir, A., Merçon-Vargas, E., Cao, H., Liang, Y., Li, J., & O'Brien, L. (2016). Still misused after all these years? A reevaluation of the uses of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 8(4), 427–445. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12165>
- [38] Tyilo, P. N., Luggya, S. K., & Mdaka, V. N. (2020). Challenges faced by educators in implementing early childhood development (ECD) policies. *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*, 8(4), 209-214.
- [39] Ulep, V. G., Casas, L., Manuel, A. C. G., Mendoza, J. P. D., Bagas, J., & Luna, K. L. G. D. (2024). Behind the slow start: An assessment of early childhood care and development in the Philippines (No. 2024-04). PIDS Discussion Paper Series.
- [40] Unar, N., Hussain, N., Tunio, S., Lobo, N. J., Jabeen, R., & Unar, F. (2024). Exploring the role of teachers and curriculum for moral development among the students of primary schools. *Migration Letters*, 21(8), 1168-1178.
- [41] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2020). Global education monitoring report 2017/8: Accountability in education—Meeting our commitments. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/>
- [42] Verbo, R. J. C., Fernando, A. I., & Cabrera, W. C. (2023). Principals' Leadership Style towards the



Implementation of Decentralized School-Based Management in Selected Secondary Public Schools in Mandaluyong City, Philippines. *International Journal of Economics Development Research (IJEDR)*, 4(1), 48-72. <https://doi.org/10.37385/ijedr.v4i1.970>

- [43] Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- [44] Whorrall, J., & Cabell, S. Q. (2021). Supporting children's oral language development in the preschool classroom. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 44, 335-341.
- [45] World Health Organization. (2018). *Global nutrition report: Shining a light to spur action on nutrition*. WHO. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/>
- [46] Saavedra, J. M., & Prentice, A. M. (2023). Nutrition in school-age children: a rationale for revisiting priorities. *Nutrition Reviews*, 81(7), 823-843.
- [47] Salminen, J., Khanolainen, D., Koponen, T., Torppa, M., & Lerkkanen, M. K. (2021, November). Development of numeracy and literacy skills in early childhood—A longitudinal study on the roles of home environment and familial risk for reading and math difficulties. In *Frontiers in Education* (Vol. 6, p. 725337). Frontiers Media SA.