

Manifestations of Helping Behavior among Preschool Children in a Laboratory School in the Philippines¹⁾

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Abstract

The study investigated helping behaviors in two laboratory preschool classes in a university in the Philippines and the contexts in which these behaviors were displayed. Using non-participant observation, 34 children between 3 to 5 years old were video recorded at least one hour for nine days spread across a period of one month during unstructured class activities. Storytelling sessions followed the observation to identify the ideas children have about helping. Data were organized using event samples and grouped according to Bar-Tal's categories of (a) sharing, (b) aiding, (c) comforting, and (d) giving. A total of 380 incidents of helping behaviors were noted. Findings suggest that aiding (55.79%) is the most displayed helping behavior followed by sharing (34.21%), giving (8.16%), and comforting (1.84%). The helping behaviors were mostly self-initiated (52.37%) and routine-based (32.9%) rather than adult- (13.32%), peer-initiated (10.53%) or modeled behaviors (0.79%). These findings are attributed to the socialization of the class routine and rules at the beginning of the semester.

Keywords : prosocial behavior, social behavior, preschool children, classroom management

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Introduction

Helping others in need is one of the milestones of social development among young children. By definition helping means (1) giving assistance or support and (2) making [things or situations] more pleasant or bearable (Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 2013). Like many other social behaviors, helping is developed through constant interaction with peers and adults (Tuazon, 2000). Bar-Tal, Raviv and Goldberg (1982) identified seven skills that develop when children help others. These include (1) considering a variety of alternative acts; (2) predicting the outcome of one's own behavior, (3) understanding the importance of intention to act, (4) recognizing the other person's needs, (5) empathizing, (6) reasoning morally, and (7) regulating one's self. It is also thought that the development of helping behaviors is a result of cognitive, social, and moral growth in the individual (Bar-Tal, Raviv and Goldberg, 1982). Thus, the above-mentioned skills are related to being able to seek another person's perspective (Feeney, Christensen & Moravcik, 2001).

The forms of helping acts, which Bar-Tal, Raviv and Goldberg (1982) proposed, are sharing, giving, aiding and comforting. These authors define sharing as "donating part of the object or objects in the individual's possession to another" (p.397). Sharing can also be manifested in non-material ways such as by sharing knowledge or information to another person (Tuazon, 2000). Giving, on the other hand, is defined as "donating the whole of the object(s) in the individual's possession to another person without leaving anything for oneself" (p.397). This behavior is most commonly observed among very young children who spontaneously and voluntarily hand an object to an adult or a playmate, in the form of toys or food. Meanwhile, aiding is the "alleviation of non-emotional needs through verbal or motor behavior" (p.397), such as helping in cleaning up or clearing obstacle in the way of another (Tuazon, 2000). Lastly, comforting is defined as the "alleviation of emotional needs of another person through verbal or physical behavior" (p.397) such as hugging or appeasing an individual who is upset (Tuazon, 2000).

Factors Affecting Helping Behaviors of Children

Like other aspects of children's development, different factors influence the development

of helping behaviors. A number of research studies have established the relationship between helping and the age of the child (e.g., Warneken & Tomasello, 2007; Arthur, Powell & Lin, 2014), cognitive and emotional appraisal of the situation (e.g., Warneken, 2013), adults' responses (Mago, 2013) and attitudes towards performance of helping acts (e.g., Feeney, Christensen & Moravcik, 2001).

It has been observed that even toddlers as young as 11 to 14 months are able to recognize another's need for help (Strayer, 1980; Warneken & Tomasello, 2007). For children between the ages of 2 to 5, they are capable of extending help to others (Bar-Tal, Raviv & Goldberg, 1982; Schneck & Grussee, 1987; Tuazon, 2000). Older preschoolers (e.g., 4 years old and above) have been shown to be capable of extending selective and consistent assistance to others even outside the context of play as well as explain their reasons for helping (Blotner & Bearison, 1984; Schneck & Grussee, 1987; Weller & Lagattuta, 2013). Children are also likely to help if they have information about another person's needs and if they are given knowledge about how to help. Blotner and Bearison (1984) further add that the child's perception of interpersonal and situational constraint makes it likely for him or her to help another person. Lastly, children whose language skills are developed are more likely to cooperate in doing tasks (Lawrence, 1984).

Other studies have found that children selected people whom they will help. For example, in a study conducted by Vaish, Carpenter, and Tomasello (2010) among 54 3-year-old German children to see if children would react differentially to adults with varying helpful or harmful intentions toward a third party. This study had two parts. The first part involved two different study situations where children observed adult actors' behaviors. The first situation involved one of the actors deliberately or accidentally causing harm to a third party by breaking his or her materials. The second study situation had a similar design except that the actor was unsuccessful in breaking the materials provided. In the second part of the study, the actor and another person played separately but simultaneously a color-matching game which required them to reach for the same ball. The children were supposed to give the ball to either of the two. If a child does not react, he or she would be asked to point or to give the ball to either of the adults. The study found that the children were able to selectively avoid helping adults with harmful intentions by not choosing to give them a ball. Still, if the harm was accidental the children equally helped that adult as a neutral adult. This suggests that even 3-

year-old children are capable of making moral judgments based on their appraisal of intentions of another person.

Race also played a part in young children's selection of people to help. As a third person in an event, children judged the characters involved in a potential helping incident. Children associate more positive emotions towards helping behaviors displayed within the same racial group than from someone outside of their racial group (Weller & Lagattuta, 2013). In an observational study of 14 preschool children, by Strayer (1980) found that happy children were more likely to empathize with others. Consequently, those who had more expressions of sadness were less likely to respond empathically. Altman, 1974 as cited in Strayer, 1980; Massangkay, et al., 1974 as cited in Strayer, 1980; Feeney, Christensen, & Moravcik, 2001).

There are contradicting studies on the influence of parents in the helping of young children. On one hand, social factors, such as parental attitudes and methods of promoting positive social development, encourage compliant helping. For example, the child's linguistic maturity and parental speech towards the child while conducting household chores are better predictors of the child's cooperative behavior compared to age (Lawrence, 1984). Parents' methods of disciplining and encouraging positive social development also affect children's helping behaviors. Children who were taught positive social behaviors through physical punishments were observed to be more withdrawn and reserved when in the presence of their parents. Meanwhile, verbal reminders and praise, combined with cognitive approaches to discipline resulted in happier children who were more helpful towards their younger playmates (de Leon, 2010).

In contrast to the above studies, Warneken and Tomasello (2013) suggest that children's helping behavior is spontaneous and intrinsically motivated, and is not influenced by the presence and encouragement of their parents.

Helping Behaviors in the Classroom

The classroom is an environment that impacts the development of a preschool child. A child's interactions with peers and adults support their social behaviors. Research shows that when the teacher is affective and patient in explaining expected rules of behavior, the children's helping, sharing, cooperating, and comforting acts increase substantially (e.g.,

Emmer & Evertson, 1981; Prawat & Nickerson, 1985; Ramaswamy & Bergin, 2009). Moreover, when the teacher values both cognitive and affective behaviors of children, they tend to become more affective as opposed to those teachers who emphasize only cognitive or affective development (Prawat & Nickerson, 1985).

Another teacher-related factor that may affect the helping behaviors and positive social interactions among the children are related to classroom management practices. According to Tikunoff and colleagues (1978) as cited in Emmer and Evertson (1981), teachers should establish a classroom management system during the first few weeks of classes to help children become familiar with the class rules and routines. Teachers with better classroom management skills were seen to be more conscientious in monitoring student behavior and promptly dealt with inappropriate behavior than less effective classroom managers.

A number of international research studies have been conducted to showcase the development of children's prosocial behavior. Among these include the relationship between social and cognitive skills (e.g., Meida, 1995 as cited in Aina, 2001; Derscheid, 1997). Several research studies have also examined children's helping behaviors (e.g., Bar-Tal, Raviv, & Goldberg, 1982; Ramaswamy & Bergin, 2009) and social development (e.g., Ashiabi, 2007; Hughes, 2010). However, very few empirical studies have been conducted on similar topics in the Philippines. With the objective of describing the manifestations of helping behaviors among preschool children and the contexts where such behaviors are displayed, this research will produce new knowledge about the helping behaviors among young children in the Filipino preschool setting.

Methods

Setting and Participants

The study aimed to record the helping behaviors of children in the mixed-age classes of a laboratory preschool of a University during specific routine segments which are free play, outdoor play, snack time, and self-help time. The participants were thirty-four 40- to 66-month-old children. Classes last for three hours. There were no instances during the

observation that the children were divided according to their age.

There were equal numbers of male and female participants. At the time of the study, 10 are between 40 to 46 months; 14 are between 48 to 57 months; and 10 are between 60 to 66 months. The mean ages are 4.42 years (53 months) for the boys and 4.27 years (51.24 months) for the girls. Seven of the 34 participants were new to the program and only three children were from low income families. The rest are from middle income families. Table 1 contains the summary of the participants' profile.

Table 1. *Participants' Profile*

Gender / Age*	Male	Female	Total
3	5	5	10
4	7	7	14
5	5	5	10
<i>Mean Age</i>	4.42	4.27	
Total	17	17	N=34

*age as of August 2012

Research Instruments

Two different instruments were used for data collection: (1) observations of children's behavior with the aid of video recorders, and (2) event sampling records to isolate the helping behaviors. The video-recorded observations were done to take note of actual behaviors during four segments of the daily routine and these includes *Work-Play*, *Outdoor Play*, *Snack* and *Self-Help* times. The *Work-Play period* is when children choose play activities in different areas in the classroom. The *Outdoor Play period* is the part of the routine where children are brought to the playground to play. The *Snack time* is when the children are served food provided by the school. Here, the students interact with each other while eating together. Lastly, the *Self-help time* is when the children put back their eating utensils, brush their teeth, change their clothes, and rest. These segments lasted from 10 to 30 minutes and were chosen because most of time is made up of unstructured activities with the least interference from the teacher.

The videos were later transcribed using running records. Helping behaviors were then

isolated from the running records using event sampling which followed the Antecedent-Behavior-Consequent format (Wortham, 2001).

Data Collection Methods

Data collection procedures were composed of three main phases. The first phase is the pre-data collection which involved logistical preparations for the actual data collection. This included sending out of letters of permission and consent to the school administrators and parents of participants respectively. It also covered the desensitization period in which the researchers were in the classroom for one week developing rapport with children and placing the video cameras in the setting. The second phase was the four-week data-collection period where certain routine segments of the classes—Work-Play, Outdoor Play, Snack and Self-Help Times—were recorded using three video cameras. The cameras were positioned in different areas of the room in order to capture the children's interactions. The third phase was the storytelling session which was conducted after the observations. The objective of the storytelling is to find out what children understood about helping behaviors. The head teacher of each class told the story entitled, "Herman the Helper" by Robert Kraus (1987) and illustrated by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey. A set of standard questions about the story were asked to the class. The children were also asked to share their own experiences about incidents when they helped others at home. A researcher was assigned to record the responses of the children to the questions about the story. Data from the storytelling session were used to see how children view the act of helping.

Data analysis

Daily observational data were organized using event samplings. The event sampling was in the form of a three-column table where the observed helping behavior is in the middle column, the antecedent event in the first and the consequent event on the third. Afterwards, the four researchers separately coded and later categorized the observed helping behaviors based on the forms of helping behaviors defined by Bar-Tal, Raviv, and Goldberg (1982). The four researchers then consolidated their coded data and used inter-observer agreement on all of the

incidents of helping behavior. This was done by calculating the agreement rating as follows: $(\text{frequency of agreement on observed behavior} \times 100) / (\text{Frequency of disagreement on observed behavior} + \text{frequency of agreement on observed behavior})$. The average agreement rating for the observed helping behaviors is 75%. Meanwhile the video recording of each storytelling session was transcribed and organized based on children's responses to the questions asked about the story.

Limitations of the study

The study aimed to record the helping behaviors of children in the mixed-age classes of a University laboratory preschool during specific daily routine segments (free play, outdoor play, snack time, and self-help time). Moreover, the children in the study are mostly from middle income families. As such, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other preschool centers having a dissimilar set-up or those who cater to children from families in different socio-economic brackets. For this study, gender differences in the helping behaviors of children were not investigated.

Because the objective of the study focused on identifying the helping behaviors displayed in mixed-age groups, the study is not able to investigate certain social behaviors which may affect prosocial displays such as perceived power, position, and rights within a social group.

Results and Discussion

The study utilized the four forms of helping behavior as proposed by Bar-Tal, Raviv, and Goldberg (1982), which include sharing, aiding, comforting and giving. Based on the results of the study acts of sharing were found when two children were using materials together or trading toys. Sharing was also observed when children were using the playground equipment together. Sharing also included acts of providing information such as answering questions, explaining how things work, reminding others about rules or class routines, telling adults of a classmate's needs or misbehaviors. Aiding behaviors, on the other hand, primarily covered acts that aimed to assist other people such as cleaning up or packing away, assisting those

having difficulty in performing a task or clearing obstacles in another person's way. Meanwhile, comforting behaviors included acts such as appeasing, hugging or patting a person who is upset or crying, and assisting in settling conflicts between classmates. Lastly, giving behaviors are manifested by handing to an adult or peer non-consumable objects in their possession such as toys or books, consumable items such as food, toothpaste, and soap, as well as giving encouragement to an adult or peer who was having difficulty in doing a task.

Children's Ideas about Helping

The storytelling session allowed the children to share their experiences and ideas about helping. For them helping means assisting each other and "working together" and that helping makes them feel good and happy. They reported that they help at home by cleaning the floor, packing away their toys, and feeding their pets. This is probably one of the things that children in the laboratory preschool learn very well. Every day in school, children are expected to clean up after doing tasks to encourage self-reliance and sense of responsibility for the things that they use, whether they own it or not. Indeed, when the class routine and rules are well explained and learning them is facilitated by the teacher, it is likely that the behavior will become socialized in them (Emmer & Evertson, 1981).

Children identified members of their family and friends as the individuals to whom they extend help. This may be attributed to the limited social environment to which the children are exposed. Because these children's daily routine primarily revolve around the home, school, and peer group, the children have little opportunity to help people other than those familiar to them. Another reason could also be their limited capability to extend assistance since children are not as physically strong and capable as adults are. As Albert Bandura in his Social Cognition Theory proposed, one must be able to produce the motor actions necessary to perform a task (Crain, 2004).

When the children were asked for the reason why they help those people, the responses include "so that mommy and daddy will feel happy," "because I feel good when I help," and "because helping is good." Given these responses, it could be said that the children are beginning to see the consequences of their actions as they seek another individual's perspective. It is noteworthy that these children are beginning to evaluate their actions and feelings and empathize with another person.

Helping Behavior in the Classroom

Helping behavior is evident among the children of both classes. From the videos of four unstructured routine segments, a total of 380 incidents of helping behaviors were recorded. Listed on Table 2 are the different incidents of helping behaviors. Among the four forms, aiding appeared to be the most common helping behavior in the children of both classes because it comprised 55.79% of the total helping behaviors. Actual packing away or cleaning up of real materials in the classroom, and pretending to clean up as a part of play, is the most common aiding behavior and it covered 77.36% of total number of aiding acts. The second most common behavior is sharing. This comprised 34.21% of the total helping acts. Sharing materials garnered the higher number of incidents at 57.69% where using together materials is the most exhibited (56.15%). Giving is the third with 8.16% while the last is comforting with 1.84%. This result may be attributed to the setting of the research, which is a preschool, where the children follow a scheduled routine and most of the materials for the children's use are communal.

Meanwhile, many of the incidents of helping listed under aiding are mostly connected to the class rule of cleaning-up-as-you-go which was observed being carried out by children throughout the routine. The children are praised as they pack away, and are reminded by adults or peers to do so when they forget. This supports findings from previous research that claims classroom management promotes positive social behaviors among children (Emmer and Evertson, 1981; Ladd, 2007; Rhee; 2007).

The children are also not allowed to bring personal toys or other materials to school so that they can maximize the learning experiences provided for them in the class. Because there are enough toys and other learning materials in every classroom, this class rule also promotes sharing as it encourages taking turns and using the materials together so that they may socialize with each other as well (Emmer & Evertson, 1981). At face value, these children do learn sharing when they use the materials together. However, it must be noted that other social skills such as caring and cooperation are also promoted when these children play together. These behaviors are reflected in their dramatic and constructive play activities. Examples include 3- and 4-year-old children taking turns in carrying and pretend feeding the baby doll and when a child playing the role of the police officer assisted a "motorist" to an alternative

route because the “bridge is under construction.” Such role-taking strengthens children’s concepts about helping others. Cognitive development is also supported when children are able to create plots for play and contribute ideas as to how their play activities would go.

Table 2. *Occurrence of Helping Behaviors*

Forms of Helping Behaviors	<i>F</i>	%
SHARING		
<i>Sharing materials</i>		
1. Using the same item together	73	
2. Trading/Exchanging objects	2	
<i>Sharing Information</i>		
1. Reminding a classmate about class rules and routines	13	
2. Telling or demonstrating to a classmate how to do things (e.g., during play, doing activities)	11	
3. Telling a classmate where to put or get things	9	
4. Telling a classmate where to do things	5	
5. Answering a question	6	
6. Telling someone on a classmate’s needs or misbehavior	3	
7. Telling a classmate about interesting things	2	
8. Telling an adult about an open faucet	1	
9. Correcting a classmate’s mistake	1	
10. Warning others about possible causes of inconvenience	4	
<i>SUBTOTAL</i>	130	34.21
<i>AIDING-Assisting People</i>		
1. Packing away materials and cleaning up	164	
2. Assisting a classmate as part of play	8	
3. Assisting a classmate who is having difficulty in doing a task	6	
4. Removing obstacles in a classmate’s way	6	
5. Assisting an adult in doing tasks	13	
6. Packing away fallen objects and or giving them to those who own them	1	
7. Opening the door to let others in	4	
8. Assisting a classmate in doing tasks	8	
9. Fixing broken or displaced objects	1	
10. Helping a classmate stand up after falling down	1	
<i>SUBTOTAL</i>	212	55.79
COMFORTING		
1. Appeasing an upset person	3	
2. Patting a crying classmate’s back	1	

3. Assisting in settling a conflict between classmates	2	
4. Saying sorry after accidentally hitting a classmate	1	
<i>SUBTOTAL</i>	7	1.84
GIVING		
<i>Giving materials to another person</i>		
1. Voluntarily handing toys or books to peers or adults as part of play	19	
2. Voluntarily handing materials to peers or adults in order to accomplish a task	1	
3. Handing over consumable items to peers or adults (e.g., soap, toothpaste, food)	8	
<i>Giving encouragement</i>		
1. Encouraging a classmate to eat	3	
<i>SUBTOTAL</i>	31	8.16
<i>TOTAL</i>	N=380	100

Giving is the third most exhibited behavior by the children and many of incidents of giving were done in the context of play and not in real situations. The children would often hand a toy to another classmate as part of their play theme. Incidents of giving in real situations are more often expressed in handing over consumable items such as food, toothpaste or soap. This may be because there are enough materials for everyone in the class, thereby leaving very little opportunities for the children to give something to another child. The same is true for comforting incidents.. Since there are very few incidents of distress that needs comforting, the children did not have several opportunities to display this behavior.

Contexts of Helping Behavior in the Classroom

Based on the observation data, five different forms of prompts were noted. Prompts are the stimuli that prodded the children to help. These prompts were routine based, modeled, prompted by peers, adult-prompted, and self-initiated. Routine based prompts were helping acts done in response to the transition cues such as a teacher's reminder of the number of minutes left to play

A helping act that is displayed as imitation of another person's action is considered modeled behavior. An example of this behavior is a child's extension of encouragement to a classmate who refuses to eat after the teacher reminds the classmate to eat his food. Peer-prompted behavior occurs when a peer responds to a classmate's request for assistance. This

is seen when a classmate seeks for help in wearing her boots. A behavior is said to be adult-prompted when a child responds to an adult's request or instruction to do something, such as packing away toys or sharing materials. Lastly, a behavior is considered self-initiated when the child initiates a behavior on her or his own.

The results of the study suggest that the majority of helping acts are not prompted (52.37%). This means that more than half of the helping acts are voluntarily performed by the children. Meanwhile, 13.32% and 11.05% of the children in this study were prompted by adults and peers respectively. It was also found that one-third of the helping behaviors were prompted by classroom routines. A total of 125 incidents or 39.2% were recorded to be routine-prompted helping behaviors with the majority of these to be packing away after play, snacks or rest (91.2%). Finally, modeling helping behavior was found to be the least prompt found in the Table 3 below shows the forms and contexts of helping behavior exhibited by the children. A dash (-) indicates that there was no display of helping behavior under that prompt while the numerals indicate the frequency of occurrence of the behavior where N=380.

Table 3. *Contexts of Helping Behavior*

Forms of Helping Behaviors	Routine-Based	Peer Prompted	Adult Prompted	Not Prompted	Modeled
Sharing					
- Sharing materials	-	2	1	78	-
- Sharing Information	11	33	4	13	-
Aiding	114	4	55	81	-
Giving					
- Giving Materials	-	3	2	20	-
- Giving Information	-	-	-	-	3
Comforting	-	-	-	7	-
TOTAL	125 32.9%	42 11.05%	62 16.32%	199 52.37%	3 0.8%

N=380

From Table 3, one could see that extending assistance, sharing of materials, and cooperating with others are self-initiated or prompted by transition cues between routine segments of the class. This suggests that the children are already developing self-regulation skills. Consequently, these self-regulation skills benefit not only the child but also the other

children in the classroom with whom the child interacts. This development could be attributed to the management of the routine of the class which includes implementation of the class schedule and rules as well as the social reinforcements that the child receives when performing helping acts.

The findings of the study may be considered incongruent to those of other researches (e.g., Cobb-Moore, 2008; Cobb-Moore, Danby, & Farrell, 2010; Wong, 2011) which suggests that many sharing behaviors were prompted by peers. The differences in the findings may be attributed to the differences in culture as well as the limitation in the younger children's language development. Having a culture that is collaborative in nature (e.g., Miralao, 1997; Medina 2001; de Leon, 2012), children are raised to give high regard to virtues that promote positive social interaction. Moreover, the data suggest that sharing behaviors which are not peer-prompted are often initiated by younger children. In a number of scenarios, 3-year-old and 4-year-old children would join an older peer in doing an activity without any conversations taking place. While this may be considered associative play in Parten's stages of play, it might also be attributed to the limited expressive language skills of the younger children. On the end of the 5-year-old children, since their roles as *kuya* (older brother) and *ate* (older sister) are emphasized early on in the semester, they have somehow imbibed the idea of being caring towards the younger children in the class so much so that when younger children interferes in their play, they just readily allow them to do so.

Rules and routine of the class. Each class is given a month to identify the theme of its curriculum. During this month, the children's skills, interests, activity levels, and temperaments are observed so that the curriculum and the routines are structured in a way that will benefit the group. This observation period is also the time when the teachers first introduce to the children the different rules of behavior. The routines are well-defined and the schedule is followed. For this reason, the children have grown accustomed to the class routine and they can anticipate what happens in their day (Tikunoff, Ward and Dasho, 1978 in Emmer and Evertson, 1981; Feeney, Christensen & Moravcik, 2001).

Teachers consistently enforcing classroom rules might be another reason why the children are able to regulate themselves. Like Tikunoff, et al (1978) in Emmer and Evertson (1981) who found in their studies of three 4th grade teachers during the first seven weeks of classes

that when teachers consistently enforce class rules they become more effective managers of the classroom.

The reminders come not only from the teachers but also from classmates. In the observed classes, the children were able to remind one another to follow the rules of the class. According to Manabu, Shozo, Hiroaki, Masaru and Chizue (2007), when children have mastered a task and are given the opportunity to work cooperatively with each other, more social interaction develops between the children. In this case, there were many opportunities for children to do this during the day.

Reinforcements: Thanks, Praise and Fun. One of the assertions of the operant conditioning system of learning proposed by B.F. Skinner (1904-1990) is that children's development is promoted through appropriate execution of a rewards and punishment system (Crain, 2004). In the present study, this assertion is applicable. Part of implementing the classroom routine and rules include reinforcements and negative punishments. Teachers were observed using more positive reinforcements to strengthen desired behaviors than negative punishments.

Based on the observations the most frequent form of reinforcement that the children experience is being accepted by their peers in a play group. Among the 5-year-old children, more constructive play, rather than dramatic play was observed. When taking part in constructive play, each child shares toys, take part in pretend activities together, and share information on how to make their games and constructive plays more exciting. Children were observed prolonging the play when they would begin playing during clean up time.

Another form of reinforcement that the children enjoy is the words of appreciation from their peers and teachers. According to Kaiser and Rasminsky (2007), positive reinforcements are very effective ways of influencing children to behave in a particular manner. In this research, when the children's classmates or teachers thank them for a favor or doing a task voluntarily, their beaming smiles really show. In the morning class especially, it is more evident how the children would repeatedly do a helping act whenever the teacher praised them.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Although it is a common belief that young children are egocentric, they are capable of seeking the perspective of others especially when someone needs assistance. Whether it is a peer or an adult, children are able to help another person by way of helping a friend pack away materials, using together, offering information to others, giving materials to someone who has none, and by comforting an upset friend. These behaviors seem to have become intrinsic to the children as the class rules and routines were implemented early in the semester. In addition, the guidance, praise and affirmation that the children received from their peers and the adults around them also proved helpful in reinforcing their helping behavior.

This research offers two recommendations for future research. First, since the study found that children prove to be capable of helping others with minimal prompts from adults, it would be useful to consider the children's strategies for negotiating sharing of materials and information as well as their use of power, position, and rights in relation to helping and sharing behaviors. This might help the field in better understanding participation in day-to-day activities, peer interaction, development of self-regulation and management of resources among young children in the classroom. Second, it is recommended that a future study focuses on classroom management styles of preschool teachers in order to identify which of these best promotes positive interactions in a preschool classroom.

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