

The Physical Therapy Project for Movement Development in Early Childhood in Communities Surrounding the University

Satit Walailak Pattana Community Early Childhood Development Center and Wat Koklek Early Childhood Development Center, under the Thai Buri Subdistrict Administrative Organization, participated in various activities of the Early Childhood Equity Education Project. The teachers play a crucial role in nurturing and encouraging children's development in alignment with age-appropriate milestones. In 2023, Walailak University collaborated in establishing a High Scope Demonstration Learning Center at the Wat Khok Lek Early Childhood Development Center, the first pilot center of its kind in southern Thailand. The "High Scope" teaching approach emphasizes hands-on learning through play and developmentally appropriate active learning materials. The project reported a 40% improvement in executive function (EF) skills, which are critical for life management and success. However, challenges remain in the area of muscle development, especially fine motor, remained a significant challenge for Early Childhood Development Centers. Additionally, enhancing physical fitness in young children is essential for their healthy growth and development. Ensuring that children have age-appropriate development and physical health is critical to their ability to learn and grow into quality human resources.

Program

The working group of the 4th Year Early Childhood Equity Education Project (ECEEP) integrated the result of the operation with the Department of Physical Therapy, the School of Allied Health Sciences. Together, they organized activities under the project "The Physical Therapy Project for Movement Development in Early Childhood in Communities Surrounding the University," by adjusting the learning processes at the Satit Walailak Pattana Community Early Childhood Development Center and Wat Koklek Early Childhood Development Center to align with the local community context. This involved fostering a shared understanding among administrators, school committees, and teachers from the Thai Buri Subdistrict Administrative Organization's early childhood development centers. After that, the project undertaken educational outreach activities beyond campus in local schools by conducting activities to enhance the capabilities of teachers in observing the development of young children and children with special needs. Also, home visits were carried out with school administrators and teachers to educate parents on observing the development of young children and children with special needs. Field activities were conducted to assess motor development in young children at Satit Walailak Pattana Community Early Childhood Development Center and Wat Koklek Early Childhood Development Center. It was found that 70% had delayed fine motor development and 50% had delayed gross motor development. Following these findings, activities were

conducted to enhance teachers' skills in assessing motor development in young children and children with special needs. This included developing programs aimed at improving fine motor and gross motor skills for young children who exhibit development below normal potential levels, as well as programs aimed at achieving excellence in individual motor skills for young children.

Ad-hoc activities

Additionally, the project team organized the ad-hoc activities partnered with the Wat Khok Lek Early Childhood Development Center to provide support and data to the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization), which contributed to the center's successful completion of external quality assurance, particularly in early childhood center management. The center received excellent scores for its management performance presentation to stakeholders. Furthermore, the project team disseminated the outcomes of their efforts at social engagement exhibitions focused on community service and local research, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to inform the public and representatives of agencies in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province.