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Embracing Mindfulness-Based Professional Development in Early Childhood Education

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EMBRACING MINDFULNESS-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership in Educational Leadership

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Education

by

Drew Giles

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EMBRACING MINDFULNESS-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

by

Drew Giles

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ABSTRACT

EMBRACING MINDFULNESS-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

by Drew Giles

There is a growing need for school districts to identify additional strategies to support the work-related stress and emotional labor ingrained in an early educator's career. By orienting early childhood education (ECE) staff to mindfulness practices, education leaders may identify new approaches to assist early childhood educators' well-being, building healthy work atmospheres, and activities to shift the culture in early childhood settings. This study employs a qualitative exploratory research design, specifically video documentary methodology to better understand how early childhood educators experience a mindfulness-based professional development (MBPD) program designed for ECE staff, explore what they say education leaders should know concerning MBPD in ECE settings, and investigate what staff participants' say about sustaining practices after participating in a mindfulness-based professional development program. The study aims to fill a population gap in the literature surrounding mindfulness in ECE by providing insight into how MBPD can be integrated into the professional development of early childhood educators. The following themes emerged in the study: (1) ongoing coaching support is critical in participants' perceptions of effective professional development factors, (2) increased awareness of using one's breath as a self-regulation strategy for participants, and (3) MBPD opportunities should be integrated into job-embedded professional development opportunities. The findings of this study provide education leaders with recommendations for implementing and sustaining mindfulness-based interventions in ECE systems.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to early childhood educators. You are the unsung heroes, the nurturing guides, and the architects of a better tomorrow. Your tireless dedication to shaping the minds and hearts of the next generation is nothing short of remarkable. Your work is the foundation upon which empathy, kindness, and caring are built.

To my compassionate partner: There are so many things I want to say to you, all of which can be summed up in four simple words – thank you for everything. Your unwavering support, flexibility, encouragement, and belief in me have been the fuel that kept me going. My EdD journey would not have been possible without you.

To my cherished mom, stepdad, and brothers: Your love, sacrifices, and boundless faith in my abilities have been a constant source of inspiration. Your role in shaping my character and work ethic cannot be overstated. Your guidance, resilience, and the values you have imparted have been instrumental in my success. Your belief in me and our bond has been essential throughout this journey.

To my late father: Though you are no longer with us, your presence is felt every step of the way. You were one of the biggest champions in my life and career, and I am deeply honored that I could defend this dissertation on the day that you passed in 2010. Your memory and the lessons you taught me continue to inspire me.

This dissertation is dedicated to all of you, the pillars of my life, who have supported, inspired, and shaped me into who I am today. Thank you for being my rock, my inspiration, and my motivation.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMRA – American Mindfulness Research Association
CASEL – The Collaborative for Academic Social & Emotional Learning
CDC –Center for Disease Control and Prevention
CSEFEL – Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
ECE – early childhood education
ECSE – early childhood special education
EMBRACE™ – Effective Mindfulness, Building Responsive and Confident Educators
MBPD – Mindfulness-based Professional Development
NAEYC – National Association for the Education of Young Children
PD – professional development
PTSD – post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms
OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OUSD – Oakland Unified School District
SEL – social-emotional learning
STS – secondary traumatic stress

Chapter I: Introduction

Early childhood educators serve young children from infancy through age eight (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 1993). Early childhood educators play a crucial role in supporting the development of society's youngest learners as they facilitate learning experiences for young children but also influence a child's social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development. There is an increasing awareness that many early childhood educators face difficult working conditions. At the same time, teaching is one of the most stressful careers in the United States (Greenberg et al., 2016). High stress levels impact early childhood educators' health and well-being and also compromise early educators' job performance and satisfaction, rest, burnout, and turnover (Eadie et al., 2021; Greenberg et al., 2016; Hatton-Bowers et al., 2022; Irvine et al., 2016; Phillips et al., 2016; Totenhagen et al., 2016).

According to Jennings (2015b),

> Many [educators] today are not well prepared for the social and emotional demands of the classroom. Students are coming to school less prepared, while at the same time new levels of accountability demand that [educators] demonstrate academic improvement under different conditions, often without the necessary support systems. Under these stressful conditions, [educators] become more likely to burn out and leave the profession at a time when, more than ever, we need a workforce of calm, supportive, and understanding teachers. (p. xxiv)

As Vietnamese Thiền Buddhist monk and peace activist Thích Nhất Hạnh (Hạnh & Weare, 2017) stated that:

> Educational environments are becoming ever more stressful, with increasing demands placed on teachers and staff; meanwhile, social and economic pressures have brought new challenges to family life. This makes it very important for educators to be able to cultivate their own happiness, mindfulness, and well-being, so they can help children and young adults develop the skills they need to handle challenges and pressures and to find more joy in their daily life right now. By embodying mindfulness,

1

concentration, joy, and peace, educators can bring happiness, stability, and clarity to their community. (p. xxxi)

Damico et al. (2018) noted that allocating resources to address educators' mental health and wellness through professional development opportunities may help relieve educator burnout and assist in building classroom community (Jennings, 2015b). This research study aimed to describe, critically evaluate, and better understand how early educators experience mindfulness-based professional development designed for early childhood educators. Additionally, this research study explored beliefs about early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders, including school district leaders, professional development decision-makers, and policymakers, concerning mindfulness-based professional development in early childhood education (ECE) settings. Finally, this research study investigated whether the staff participants' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors about mindfulness-based professional development changed in their responses from pre- to post-professional development workshops.

This research study occurred within Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), in Oakland, California, USA, the largest city in the East Bay region of the San Francisco Bay Area. Because current community stressors impacting Oakland and the greater San Francisco Bay Area impacted the general ECE profession, OUSD was an ideal location to offer an innovative approach to professional development focused on mindfulness practices and early childhood educator mental health and well-being. Through my role within OUSD, as OUSD's director of quality enhancement and professional development in OUSD's ECE Department, I coordinated professional development opportunities for over 350 OUSD early childhood educators who serve OUSD's youngest learners.

This research study included the making of an exploratory qualitative documentary film. The film described how early educators experience mindfulness-based professional development designed for early childhood educators; it explores beliefs about early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders, including school district leaders, professional development decision-makers, and policymakers concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings. The documentary highlighted the outcomes of participating in a six-month-long mindfulness-based professional development program. Furthermore, the film aimed to provide in-depth information relevant to school district leaders who may consider investing in mindfulness-based professional development opportunities for early childhood educators.

Statement of Problem

Greenberg et al. (2016) noted, teaching is one of the most stressful careers in the United States. Dr. Patricia Jennings (2015b), a former early childhood educator and current distinguished mindfulness researcher at the University of Virginia stated that one of the reasons that teaching is such a challenging profession is that educators must manage their own emotions while supporting the social-emotional needs of the children in the classroom. Jennings (2015b) noted that in most professions, when individuals are feeling stressed or are experiencing strong emotions, they can take a break and remove themselves from the situation; however, when challenges come up throughout the school day, many educators are unable to take a break and must remain in the classroom while they "manage both the situation and [their] emotional response to the situation in the moment" (p. 30).

In March 2022, through my role as OUSD's director of quality enhancement and professional development, I distributed a well-being survey to OUSD's early childhood educators. Forty percent of the staff responded to the survey. The survey results assisted me in developing a plan for professional learning programming for the 2022-2023 school year. The findings revealed that 43% of the respondents reported feeling "not well or whole." Fifty-eight percent of the respondents noted feeling emotionally drained. Furthermore, 83% of respondents desired to participate in OUSD-led mindfulness-based professional development opportunities. In comparison, 93% said they were interested in participating in OUSD-led health and well-being classes (OUSD, 2022b).

In recent years, the world experienced various individual and collective trauma. The COVID-19 pandemic led to millions of lives lost worldwide, which impacted individuals through long-term medical complications, grief, and financial instability (Nicholson et al., 2023). Further, the United States had seen a growth in racial hate crimes, attacks on individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, environmental catastrophes related to climate change, and the war in Ukraine (Gauthier et al., 2021). These factors have increased children's risk of mental health challenges and a crisis rippling across the early childhood profession. Many early childhood educators stayed on the frontlines throughout the pandemic to care for children despite risking their health and well-being. Nicholson et al. (2023) noted that one in seven early education jobs was lost during the COVID-19 pandemic, and many in the early childhood workforce decided to quit the field due to concerns about their health, well-being, and personal finances. Similarly, the ECE profession experienced substantial job turnover rates as early childhood educators left the

field (Zidovsky et al., 2022). In 2007, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future estimated the annual cost of teacher turnover in United States public school systems was $7.3 billion; however, due to inflation, the 2024 cost is estimated to be over $11.1 billion per year if the current costs remain similar to the 2007 study (Carroll, 2007).

Purpose of the Study

Etchells et al. (2021) noted that scholars estimate that approximately 6% of the United States population will exhibit post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms (PTSD) in their life because of experiencing trauma (Boyraz et al., 2016; Kessler et al., 2005; Pietrzaka et al., 2011). Similarly, according to Berger et al. (2016), Cohen et al. (2006), and Saakvitne (2002), individuals who serve individuals who have been exposed to trauma, such as educators, counselors, and social workers, are more vulnerable to secondary traumatic stress. Those individuals may indirectly experience the trauma of the children and families they serve, which may lead to compassion fatigue, an outcome of absorbing the trauma and emotions associated with assisting or caring for others (Etchells et al., 2021).

Investigating approaches to bolster and assist early childhood educator well-being is essential to respond to educators' stressors and ensure a sustainable and high-quality workforce (Eadie et al., 2021). Educators participating in a mindfulness-based professional development program were interviewed to investigate how they talk about mindfulness-based professional development and learn more about which practices, if any, they experienced through mindfulness-based professional development that they use in their ECE settings. Emerson et al. (2017) noted that given the high levels of stress that impact educator health and well-being, which compromises early educators' job performance and satisfaction, rest,

burnout, and turnover, there is momentum to identify efficacious interventions to support educators' mental health and wellness needs and stay within the profession. Furthermore, another goal of the study was to understand better staff participants' beliefs about which factors were most effective or least effective in a mindfulness-based professional development program designed for early childhood educators. Finally, the research study aimed to provide insight into which strategies staff participants believed would assist them in sustaining mindfulness practices after participating in a six-month mindfulness-based professional development program designed for early childhood educators.

Extensive literature highlights mindfulness-based professional development in the United States K-12 system (Chung et al., 2021; Herrmann & Gallo, 2013; Le & Alefaio, 2018; Roeser et al., 2012; Schussler et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2016). For example, Le and Alefaio (2018) found that the K-12 educators who documented making a more substantial effort in the professional development experience noted an increased familiarity and appreciation of the benefit of mindfulness in enhancing their mental state of mind.

Exploratory documentary and qualitative research described what staff participants said were the most effective and least effective factors of a mindfulness-based professional development program designed for early childhood educators after participating in a six-month-long mindfulness-based professional development series. Additionally, the research study aimed to identify staff participants' recommendations for education leaders to consider while implementing sustainable mindfulness-based professional development for early childhood educators in school district settings. Finally, the study investigated which mindfulness practices could be utilized in early childhood education settings learned during

the research (professional development) initiative within OUSD's ECE Department in Oakland, California, USA.

Data collection, including filming, occurred during facilitated one-on-one interviews with staff participants before and after participating in a six-month mindfulness-based professional development series to gather diverse perspectives on mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings. Furthermore, data collection included filming educator professional development sessions with staff participants. Finally, experts were interviewed one-on-one to gather expert perspectives on using mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings.

Definition of Terms

Early Childhood Education

ECE, also known as early care and education, includes any group program in a center, school, or home that serves young children from infancy through age eight (NAEYC, 1993). ECE programs may operate part- or full-day in various settings, including child development centers, schools, and homes. ECE programs may be public, private, for-profit, or nonprofit, inspired by various theories and pedagogical approaches. Funding in ECE settings varies by program type. Funding sources may include locally- or state-subsidized care, Head Start, Early Head Start, or private pay (NAEYC, 1993). The ECE field can be filled with stressors, multiple demands, low pay, low societal value, and infrequent professional learning opportunities (Hatton-Bowers et al., 2022; Nicholson et al., 2020).

EMBRACE™

Clayton Early Learning (CEL), located in Denver, Colorado, USA, is an ECE-focused

organization that developed a mindfulness-based professional development curriculum

specifically designed for early childhood educators called *EMBRACE™*, which stands for

Effective Mindfulness, Building Responsive and Confident Educators. CEL (n.d.) noted that

EMBRACE™ is a healing-centered professional development program to support early

childhood educators' mindfulness exercises. The materials included an educator toolkit and

curriculum guide, journal, self-care materials, mindfulness deck of cards, and sensory gear.

In addition to the teacher toolkit, the *EMBRACE™* program featured six monthly

professional development modules supported by ongoing, follow-up coaching opportunities.

Mindfulness: One of mindfulness's most common definitions comes from Dr. Jon Kabat-

Zinn, the founder of modern mindfulness-based stress reduction practices. Kabat-Zinn (1994)

noted that mindfulness is "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present

moment, and non-judgmentally" (p.4). Mindfulness purposefully brings awareness to the

present moment without judgment or evaluation (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Nyanaponika Thera

(Kabat-Zinn, 2015), a Buddhist scholar and monk, noted that,

> Mindfulness is the unfailing master key for knowing the mind and is thus the starting
> point; the perfect tool for shaping the mind and is thus the focal point; and the lofty
> manifestation of the achieved freedom of the mind and is thus the culminating point.
> (p. 1481)

Furthermore, Jennings (2015b) noted:

> Mindfulness involves three fundamental processes: forming intentions, paying
> attention, and adjusting [one's] attitude (Shapiro et al., 2006). The act of practicing
> mindfulness is intentional—a purposeful act. [Individuals] focus [their] attention on
> the present moment and attend to it with acceptance, care, and discernment.
> Mindfulness is also 'heartfulness' in that it promotes both an openminded and open-

hearted apperception of the world reminding us of its intrinsic goodness and beauty. (p. 2)

Mindfulness-Based Professional Development

Herrmann and Gallo (2013) cited mindfulness-based professional development as an innovative approach to professional learning. Mindfulness-based professional development training and nonreligious meditation approaches are utilized to raise an individual's awareness and reduce distraction (Herrmann & Gallo, 2013). Mindfulness-based professional development is a human-centered approach that honors educators as humans first, rather than seeing them as educators first.

Secondary Traumatic Stress

Secondary traumatic stress (STS) is a secondary trauma that may occur due to indirect exposure to trauma (Figley, 1995).

Self-Care

Self-care is a strategy to restore and enhance one's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN, 2018) advises focusing on cognitive–behavioral and mindfulness-based strategies as an effective way to engage in self-care activities. Self-care activities are individualized approaches based on one's unique interests. Consistently engaging in self-care practices is generally recognized to assist early childhood educators in healing from STSand provide pathways to equip educators with tools to cope with day-to-day stress in their profession (Erdman et al., 2020). According to Nicholson et al. (2020),

> Self-care… is a necessary practice given the inequitable and challenging conditions early childhood educators face on a daily basis and the profoundly important role they

play in supporting young children—especially those further from opportunity—
during the most critical years of their learning and development. (p. 8)

Social-Emotional Learning

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2022) defines

social-emotional learning (SEL) as the approach through which children and adults develop

and utilize the understanding, perspectives, and aptitudes they need to comprehend and

regulate feelings, establish, and achieve pleasant goals, experience, and demonstrate empathy

for others, create and sustain healthy connections with others, and make responsible

decisions.

Trauma

Trauma is an emotional response to a disturbing event, such as a natural disaster or

accident (American Psychological Association [APA], n.d.). According to Statman-Weil

(2018), "Trauma is the result of an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds one's ability

to cope or integrate the emotions involved with that experience. Trauma differs among

individuals by their subjective experiences, not the objective facts" (p. 29).

Trauma-Responsive Practices

Nicholson et al. (2023) noted that at the foundation of trauma-responsive practices is

understanding how trauma and stress influence children's growth and development. Trauma-

responsive early childhood educators construct restorative environments that decrease

children's stress and help them construct resilience that decreases the possibility of children

experiencing feelings of being emotionally triggered and in danger.

Well-being

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2018) documented that well-being incorporates mental health and physical wellness. While there is no agreement around a uniform definition of well-being, there is widespread consensus that well-being possesses the existence of pleasant emotions and moods, the lack of unpleasant emotions, contentment with life, feeling whole, and functioning in optimal ways (Andrews & Withey, 1978; Diener, 2000; Frey & Stutzer, 2002; Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Frameworks

This study was guided by Tang et al.'s (2015) framework related to mindfulness and neuroscience theory, which hypothesizes that mindfulness practices develop specific skills that lead to beneficial outcomes. Tang et al. (2015) suggested that mindfulness practices benefit through enhanced emotional regulation, improved attentional control, and altered self-awareness (see Figure 1). I created Figure 1 based on Tang et al.'s (2015) original framework.

At the heart of the study's development was increasing insight into the role of mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings. Korthagen's (2016) conceptual framework, *Professional Learning 3.0*, assisted in navigating this study's approach (see Figure 2). I created Figure 2 based on Korthagen's original framework. The framework provided professional development leaders with an understanding of what methods to consider while designing and assessing professional development experiences. Korthagen's framework was a strength-based model that honors educators' lived experiences. Korthagen

Figure 1
Theoretical framework of mindfulness practices based on Tang et al. (2015)

Mindfulness Practices

Emotional Regulation Attention Control Self Awareness

Beneficial Outcomes
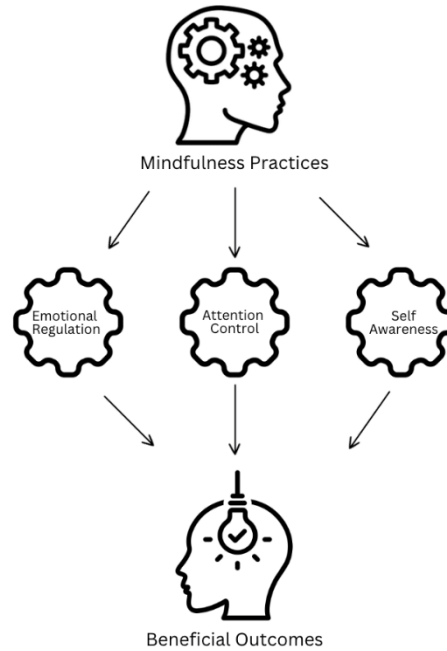
noted that learning takes place for educators when there are connections made intentionally

between person, practice, and theory. The framework noted that educator learning is often

multi-level, unconscious, and multi-dimensional (2016). It highlighted how they came to

their roles as individuals and professionals with assets to develop rather than deficits to be

repaired (Akhavan et al., 2021).

Figure 2
Korthagen's (2016) framework for professional learning
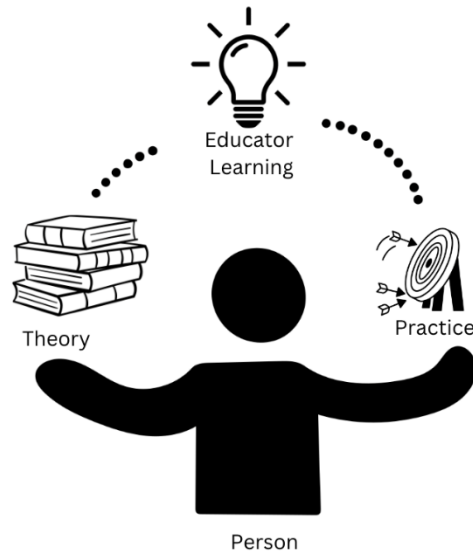
Research Questions

This exploratory research study and accompanying documentary film aimed to understand how early childhood educators experienced a mindfulness-based professional development program designed for early childhood educators. Additionally, the study explored beliefs concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings about early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders, including school district leaders, professional development decision-makers, and policymakers. Finally, the research study investigated whether the staff participants' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors about mindfulness-based professional development changed in their responses from pre- to post-professional development workshops. The following research questions were considered:

1. What professional development program factors do participants say are the most effective or least effective in supporting their use of mindfulness in ECE settings?

2. What are early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings?

3. What do staff participants say about their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors that changed from the pre- to post-professional development interviews?

4. What do early childhood educators say are strategies to sustain mindfulness-based professional development opportunities in their educational settings in the future?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was to contribute to the discussion on utilizing mindfulness-based professional development to support early childhood educator well-being in large public school districts in the United States. An increasing number of educators are experiencing issues related to high levels of daily stress, which compromises educators' health, well-being, rest, and job performance (Irvine et al., 2016; Jena-Crottet, 2017; Jones et al., 2017; McMullen et al., 2020; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019; Thorpe et al., 2020; Totenhagen et al., 2016). Additionally, Etchells et al. (2021) noted the added stress that educators experienced through STS, burnout, and compassion fatigue.

There is a growing need for school district leaders to identify additional strategies to support the work-related stress and emotional labor ingrained in an early childhood educator's career. Additionally, the results of this study may be used to support further

mindfulness-based professional development as a program to enhance the overall experiences of children, families, and early childhood care and education leaders. By orienting ECEstaff to mindfulness practices, school district professional development leaders may have new human-centered approaches to assist early childhood educators' well-being, building healthy work atmospheres and activities to shift the culture in early childhood settings (CEL, n.d.).

Overview of the Study

This dissertation featured qualitative methods, including making a documentary film. This documentary and exploratory research study aimed to describe, critically evaluate, and better understand how early educators who serve three- and four-year-old children in a large urban public school district in Oakland, California, experienced mindfulness-based professional development. Additionally, five experts were interviewed to provide context about mindfulness and how mindfulness-based professional development may be utilized in ECE settings. The film aimed to reach a wide range of audiences worldwide, including educators, school leaders, professional development decision-makers, academic researchers, funders, and policymakers (Gubrium & Harper, 2013). Furthermore, the film assists its audience's efforts to visualize what a six-month-long mindfulness-based professional development program in an ECE setting may look like in action and observe staff participants reflecting on their experience participating in a six-month-long mindfulness-based professional development program called *EMBRACE™,* an acronym for Effective Mindfulness, Building Responsive and Confident Educators.

There were six general phases of the study: (1) Pre-professional development video interviews of early childhood educators who were staff participants in the study, (2) Filming

of early childhood educators participating in mindfulness-based professional learning opportunities, (3) Video interviews of experts in the fields of mindfulness and ECE, (4) Post-professional development video interviews of early childhood educators who were staff participants in the study, (5) Analyzing the findings of interviews and observations, and (6) Selecting and organizing the video clips and constructing a narrative in a documentary format.

Chapter II: Literature Review

As noted in Chapter I, this research study aimed to investigate mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings and to better understand how mindfulness-based professional development may be utilized in ECE settings as a tool to support early childhood educators' mental health and well-being.

Teaching is one of the most stressful careers in the United States (Greenberg et al., 2016). There is a growing awareness that many early childhood educators face difficult working conditions. Eadie et al. (2021) noted that these conditions may lead to high levels of daily stress, which compromises educators' health, well-being, rest, and job performance (Irvine et al., 2016; Jena-Crottet, 2017; Jones et al., 2017; McMullen et al., 2020; OECD, 2019; Thorpe et al., 2020; Totenhagen et al., 2016).

There was comprehensive literature that emphasizes the utilization of mindfulness in K-12 settings (Chung et al., 2021; Herrmann & Gallo, 2013; Le & Alefaio, 2018; Roeser et al., 2012; Schussler et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2016). However, limited literature highlighted how mindfulness-based professional development was utilized within ECEsettings. While engaging in the literature review process, I found less than 20 peer-reviewed articles available in San José State University's library database. Similarly, the reviewed literature exposed a population gap as most studies focus on the K-12 system rather than in ECE settings. This exploratory research and accompanying documentary highlighted in this research study focused on a mindfulness-based professional development program for early childhood educators as staff participants within OUSD's ECE Department.

The second purpose of this research study was to better understand staff participants' experiences with mindfulness-based professional development designed for early childhood educators. Investigating approaches to support and assist early childhood educator well-being is essential to respond to educators' stressors and ensure a sustainable and high-quality workforce (Eadie et al., 2021). Additionally, educators participating in a mindfulness-based professional development opportunity were interviewed to investigate how they talk about mindfulness-based professional development and learn more about which practices, if any, they experienced through mindfulness-based professional development that they use in their ECE settings. The study explored early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders, including school district leaders, professional development decision-makers, and policymakers, concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings. It provided insight into staff participants' strategies for sustaining mindfulness practices, if any, that were learned or reaffirmed while participating in a mindfulness-based professional development program designed for early childhood educators.

The literature review process was informed by the themes related to the research questions, including mindfulness in various settings, social-emotional learning, self-care, trauma-responsive approaches, well-being, and mindfulness-based professional development. As a veteran early childhood educator and leader, registered yoga teacher for adults, registered trauma-informed yoga teacher for children and youth, and American Mindfulness Research Association (AMRA) member, I was interested in developing a better understanding of how mindfulness-based professional development was utilized in ECE settings, learning which factors participants believe are most effective or least effective, and

gaining insight on what staff perceptions of what they believe education leaders, including

school district staff, professional development decision-makers, and policymakers, might

consider about utilizing mindfulness-based professional development programs in ECE

settings. Additionally, I was interested in investigating what staff participants believed were

strategies to sustain mindfulness practices incorporated during mindfulness-based

professional development opportunities and what they recommended to education leaders as

strategies to sustain mindfulness-based professional development programs in their ECE

context.

Literature Topics

As part of this literature review, I located articles via the San José State University's

library database, Interlibrary Loan, and Google Scholar. Additionally, I examined textbooks,

government publications, and websites. Since mindfulness-based professional development-

focused research in ECE settings is limited, I utilized a thematic approach to develop key

terms and identify related articles in the literature review process. Furthermore, the concepts

came from the research study's research questions. The literature review also included a

discussion of (a) early childhood educator well-being, (b) self-care, (c) social-emotional

learning, (d) trauma, (e) trauma-responsive practices, (f) mindfulness, (g) mindfulness in

ECE, and (h) mindfulness in education, (i) professional development, and (j) mindfulness-

based professional development.

Early Childhood Educator Well-being

Eadie et al. (2021) noted that current actions to enhance the quality, accountability, and

professionalism of the ECE workforce have raised demands on educators (Cumming et al.,

2015). Early childhood educators encounter considerable obstacles, including extended working hours, heavy workloads, lack of social status, lack of career advancement opportunities, and limited options for professional development (Cumming et al., 2015; Eadie et al., 2021; Hatton-Bowers et al., 2022; OECD, 2019; Phillips et al., 2016; Thorpe et al., 2020; Whitebook et al., 2014). As noted earlier, the outcomes of these challenges are reflected in compromises on early educators' health, well-being, rest, and job performance (Eadie et al., 2021; Irvine et al., 2016; Phillips et al., 2016; Totenhagen et al., 2016). Well-being can be depicted as regarding life pleasantly and feeling satisfactory (Diener et al., 1997; Veenhoven, 2008). Individuals with increased degrees of well-being experience increased on-the-job productivity and are, therefore, better able to contribute to their communities (Frey & Stutzer, 2002). As teaching becomes more arduous due to increased demands and various challenges, Greenberg et al. (2016) noted a growing demand for more significant innovation in creating and evaluating the efficacy of programs to decrease educator stress and enhance well-being.

Self-Care

Sawyer (2023) noted that self-care supports individuals in restoring their physical, social, emotional, mental, and spiritual health. Additionally, Sawyer (2023) stated that "self-care involves engaging behaviors or activities that promote health and well-being to feel better physically and emotionally" (p. 2). Jennings (2015a) recognized that self-care practices are generally seen as positive, though there is limited literature related to the topic (Roberts et al., 2023). In a well-being-related study involving 133 early childhood educators in the Midwest region of the United States who were surveyed about their experience as early childhood

educators and perspectives about well-being, Roberts et al. (2023) found that "psychological well-being, including self-care and self-compassion, may be relevant focus areas for organizational and systems change efforts or interventions" (p. 1414).

Nicholson et al. (2020) stated that:

> There is more than one way to engage in self-care or to learn strategies that will be effective in caring for and healing the self. Self-care strategies and therapeutic treatments developed to help address stress and trauma are frequently based on Western majority concepts of the self, which tend to adopt an individualist framework. As a result, these strategies carry specific Western-oriented cultural assumptions about the self; relations with others and the framing of conditions such as stress, mental illness and medical interventions or cures. (p. 6)

Nicholson et al. (2020) noted that there are several ways that early childhood educators may utilize culturally responsive self-care practices, including building self-awareness skills, completing body scans to tune into one's body, engaging in mindfulness, meditation, or visualizations, focusing on breathing practices, connecting with nature, or connecting with others while cultivating community. Roberts et al. (2023) stated that self-care activities vary by individual, and "self-care at work represents the person in context, requiring both environmental conditions and personal actions" (p. 1416).

Social Emotional Learning

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is how individuals understand and manage emotions, set, and achieve positive goals, feel, and show empathy for others, establish, and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Niemi, 2020). Hạnh and Weare (2017) noted that "SEL aims to help us learn the skills of understanding and managing ourselves and our feelings and relating to other people" (p. xiii). In optimal learning environments, educators are regulated and mindful of their student's social and emotional

needs and can focus on and embed SEL into their day-to-day experiences. The COVID-19

pandemic left early childhood educators experiencing more stress and less time for self-care,

which leaves them less able to be regulated and meet their students' SEL needs. During the

COVID-19 pandemic, children's SEL were restricted in peer-to-peer and educator-to-student

interactions (Barnett & Jung, 2020) due to protocols related to physical distancing, virtual

instruction, or orders to stay home while in-person classrooms were shut down.

The CASEL defined SEL as including five domains of competency skills: self-awareness,

self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-

making (CASEL, 2012). Additionally, in ECE, the Center on the Social and Emotional

Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) has identified six skills as early learning

competencies that foster school and community success in young children: effective

communication of emotions, ability to pay attention and listen to instructions, ability to

develop relationships, confidence, concentration, and task persistence, and problem-solving

(Santos et al., 2012). According to a survey conducted by CASEL and the Yale Center for

Emotional Intelligence in March 2021, educators experienced frequent anxiety, fear, worry,

overwhelmedness, and sadness (Cipriano, 2020). Jackman (2022) notes that components of

mindfulness practice (attention, awareness, being present, nonjudgement, and openhearted

intention and attitude) are related to the development of CASEL's SEL domains. There are

connections between SEL and mindfulness, as Hạnh and Weare (2017) stated:

> Given its aims and areas of skill development, SEL can be a natural supportive home
> for mindfulness, while the embodied nature of mindfulness practice grounds the
> sometimes goal-oriented, wordy, and cerebral tendencies of SEL. Mindfulness is
> often seen as the 'missing piece' or 'key' that can help ensure that the ambitious aims
> of SEL are realized, not just in words, thoughts, and future intentions, but in the here
> and now, impacting on hearts, bodies, and actions. (p. xliv)

Trauma

As noted in Chapter I, trauma is an emotional response to a disturbing event such as a natural disaster or accident. Etchells et al. (2021) noted that trauma may damage bodily health, including digestive system discomfort, heart and blood vessel diseases, and musculoskeletal distress (Boyraz et al., 2016; Boyraz & Waits, 2018). Most children in the United States have experienced trauma, and the prevalence of being exposed to trauma is most heightened during an individual's early years (Bethell et al., 2017; Nicholson et al., 2023). Exposure to trauma at a young age can adversely affect a child's growth and development in physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, and behavioral domains (Nicholson et al., 2023). Furthermore, in 2019, CDC issued a report describing the dangers of traumatic events occurring in childhood. The report stated that trauma has been designated the nation's top public health challenge and that being exposed to adverse childhood experiences may put children at risk for developing health issues later in their lifetime (Merrick et al., 2019).

Trauma-Responsive Practices. Psychiatrist and post-traumatic stress disorder researcher Dr. Bessel van der Kolk (2014) stated, "Trauma is now our most urgent public health issue, and we have the knowledge necessary to respond effectively. The choice is ours to act on what we know" (p. 356). As noted earlier in Chapter II, exposure to trauma at a young age can adversely affect a child's growth and development in physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, and behavioral domains (Nicholson et al., 2023). Furthermore, exposure to trauma is a common experience for young children (Ghosh Ippen et al., 2011). The literature indicated that most children in the United States have been exposed to trauma, and the likelihood that children are exposed to trauma is at its peak in children's early years (Briggs-

Gowan et al., 2010; Nicholson et al., 2023; Shahinfar et al., 2000). Dr. Nadine Burke, California's first-ever Surgeon General, recognized that childhood trauma had been designated the most significant public health crisis in the United States (Nicholson et al., 2023; van der Kolk, 2014).

Nicholson et al. (2023) documented characteristics that trauma-responsive early childhood educators may exhibit, including the understanding of the neurobiology of the impacts that stress and trauma exposure have on young children's development, recognizing that humans can heal from their exposure to trauma, and committing to identifying and utilizing trauma-responsive practices with the children and families they serve, as well as engaging in self-care, reflective practices, and personal development.

Mindfulness

Hạnh and Weare (2017) noted, "[Mindfulness] is now a firmly secular approach to the cultivation of human happiness and has a direct lineage of 2,500 years of practice and studies in the countries of Asia" (p. xxxviii). Mindfulness, the practice of present-moment experience, can be utilized as an approach for grounding in challenging dialogues and constructing pathways for transformative change (Cash et al., 2021). In addition, mindfulness can enhance personal well-being and offer unique benefits, such as self-regulation skills (Erwin et al., 2017); a more balanced attitude and tranquility (Rogers, 2016); decreased anxiety (Hall, 2009); improved self-efficacy (Bohecker & Doughty Horn, 2016; Pipe et al., 2009); compassion and kindness toward one's self and others (Pipe & Bortz, 2009; Pipe et al., 2009); and decrease of burnout and improved resilience (Cash et al., 2021; Montero-Marin et al., 2015).

Kabat-Zinn (1994) defined mindfulness as "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally" (p. 4). Mindfulness can be comprehended as applying three complementary mental aptitudes and dispositions: (a) focusing attention consciously on the here and now; (b) sensing the present moment in a calm, exact, and truthful way; and (c) encountering each moment just as it is, without biasing cognitive responses or critiques (Young, 2011). Kabat-Zinn (2015) noted that there are many forms of mindfulness, including deliberate and effortless. Kabat-Zinn stated:

> Mindfulness can be thought of as moment-to-moment, non-judgmental awareness, cultivated by paying attention in a specific way, that is, in the present moment, and as non-reactively, as non-judgmentally, and as openheartedly as possible. When it is cultivated intentionally, it is sometimes referred to as deliberate mindfulness. When it spontaneously arises, as it tends to do more and more the more it is cultivated intention- ally, it is sometimes referred to as effortless mindfulness. (p. 1481)

When individuals cultivate mindfulness explicitly, it is referred to as conscious mindfulness. Mindfulness is traditionally taught through structured contemplative practices. Attention is focused intentionally and nonjudgmentally on present-moment somatic and mental experiences in bodily sensations, feelings, mental images, and thoughts (Young, 2011; Roeser et al., 2012). Mindfulness may support the development of self-awareness, reflection, community engagement, compassion, and resilience (Magee, 2021).

According to Shapiro et al. (2006),

> Mindfulness involves three foundational processes: forming intention, paying attention, and adjusting [one's] attitude. The act of practicing mindfulness is intentional—a purposeful act. [Individuals] focus [their] attention on the present moment and attend to it with acceptance, care, and discernment. Mindfulness is also 'heartfulness' in that it promotes both an openminded and open-hearted apperception of the world reminding [practitioners] of its intrinsic goodness and beauty. (p. 2)

Mindfulness in Early Childhood Education

Mindfulness can be an accessible practice in early childhood that aligns with the theory of addressing the whole child's needs. According to Erwin et al. (2017), due to the expeditious and favorable effects linked with mindfulness as well as its accessibility and inclusive characteristics, mindfulness supports children with special needs and other diversity like economic, race, gender, language, and culture due to its open-ended, adaptable, and ever-evolving qualities. Additionally, mindfulness can support children's self-regulation development. Furthermore, Erwin et al. (2017) noted that mindfulness experiences can be embedded into a classroom's routine. Finally, Erwin et al. (2017) suggested that mindfulness is a cost-effective strategy to support children's development as we live in a time of decreased school funding.

Erwin suggested the priority of prosocial human interactions, especially in education settings. Erwin et al. (2017) noted:

> Today's children are growing up in a new reality, one where they are attuning more to machines and less to people than has ever been true in human history… the fewer hours spent with people—and the more spent staring at a digitalized screen portends deficits… Our need to make an effort to have [such] human moments has never been greater, given the ocean of distractions we all navigate daily. (p. 71)

In a mindfulness study that involved 219 kindergarten-age children in the ethnically diverse city of Toronto, Ontario, in southeastern Canada, Viglas and Perlman (2017) utilized the Head-Toes-Knees-Shoulders (HTKS) assessment to measure self-regulation. Viglas and Perlman (2017) found that a short, six-week intervention of a mindfulness-based program increased young children's self-regulation and teachers' ratings of prosocial behavior while

decreasing teacher's observance of hyperactivity compared to a control group who did not receive a mindfulness intervention.

Mindfulness in K-12 Settings

Berila (2016) noted that mindfulness practices have increased in U.S. colleges and universities over the past decade (Shapiro et al., 2011). Mindfulness is sometimes used as a component known as integrated student learning within some U.S. higher education institutions (Berila, 2016). Alternatively, mindfulness is embedded in what is called holistic education, which Miller (1997) noted is "based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to spiritual values such as compassion and peace" (p. 1). Similarly, Nepo (2010) identified the notion of educating the whole child as "transformational education," which is:

> understood as educating the whole person by integrating the inner and outer life, by actualizing individual and global awakening, and by participating in compassionate communities–[it] has become a quiet but sturdy movement that encourages the recovery and development of the academy as a liberating and capacity-building environment. (p. vii)

Professional Development

Joyce and Showers (2002) recognized that in addition to participating in training sessions, an essential component of professional development includes coaching connected to the training content. To support a change in educator practice, Joyce and Showers (2002) suggested that high-quality professional development consists of growing knowledge through participating in training that investigates theory to comprehend the ideas behind a skill or approach, the demonstration or modeling of specific skills, the practice of the skill, and

follow-up coaching to assist in refining and sustaining the skills developed during the professional learning experience.

Elements of effective professional development noted by Bates and Morgan (2018) include coaching and expert support, opportunities for reflection, and sustained duration. Bates and Morgan (2018) noted:

> Job-embedded, ongoing professional development allows teachers to engage in cycles of continuous learning. When the duration of professional learning is sustained, teachers have the opportunity to identify a genuine problem of practice and set about solving it. Teachers need time to apply new thinking to their classrooms, and although some workshops address questions teachers may have, the follow-up and support is usually absent. (pp. 625-626)

Mindfulness-Based Professional Development

Mindfulness as concentrated attention and awareness is increasingly promoted and used as a professional development approach for educators to enhance their and students' mental health and well-being, stress, and learning culture and climate (Le & Alefaio, 2018). Mindfulness-based professional development frequently utilizes structured techniques (e.g., breathing exercises, visualization, body scans) to teach participants skills for dealing with stress and uncertainty (Downey, 2019; Kabat-Zinn, 2009). Additionally, in mindfulness-based professional development training, nonreligious meditation approaches are utilized to raise an individual's awareness and reduce distraction (Herrmann & Gallo, 2013). In a study on mindfulness-based professional development in high school settings, Herrmann and Gallo (2013) identified that traditional forms of educator-focused professional development can no longer be focused on teaching and learning; professional development opportunities can consider an educator's whole life and work in the school settings.

Mindfulness-based professional development experiences may support educators'

heightened awareness of emotional and thought habits (Le & Alefaio, 2018). Educators who

documented making a more substantial effort in the professional development experience

noted an increased familiarity and appreciation of the benefit of mindfulness in enhancing

their mental state of mind (Le & Alefaio, 2018). "[When] educators [are] given access to

tools such as mindfulness [they] become more aware not only of themselves and their

internal dialogue but also of the needs of their students and the social dynamics in the

classrooms" (Le & Alefaio, 2018, p. 638).

In an Australian study involving an eight-week mindfulness-based professional

development series for 104 primary and secondary school educators, Yaari et al. (2019)

noted in survey results that educator participants reported experiencing enhanced attention,

rest, and well-being and decreased anxiety and stress. Yaari et al. (2019) indicated that the

training included two modules. The first module introduced mindfulness and the benefits

related to mindfulness practices. The second module contained teaching strategies for

educators to utilize in their classrooms (Yaari et al., 2019).

As CEL (n.d.) noted, the *EMBRACE™* program is integrated with six months of

comprehensive professional development opportunities, one module per month. The

research-based modules center around contemplative pedagogy objectives and approaches,

including mindfulness, self-awareness, self-development, movement, senses, and

community. Threaded through each professional development session are five central

mindfulness practices: breathing, body scan, meditation, visualization, guided imagery, and

journaling. Adult learning principles are the foundation of each professional development

opportunity, which follows a sequence of introducing the module's objectives, including the research base, and engaging the participants in the module concepts through activities and the five practice principles.

As noted earlier, mindfulness practices intentional and non-judgmental present-moment awareness of the present moment; individuals can non-judgmentally accept their feelings, thoughts, and physical sensations. In addition, mindfulness practice has been found to reduce stress and address the emotional labor inherent in an early childhood teacher's work. Through *EMBRACE™*, CEL (n.d.) developed an approach for early childhood educators to build their emotional resiliency, reduce burnout, experience renewal in their work, and find support in their teams and community. When educators have the tools to cope with classroom challenges and manage their feelings, they are better equipped to manage their students' feelings and help them learn (CEL, n.d.).

Hatton-Bowers et al. (2019) analyzed quantitative and qualitative aggregated data of participants participating in an online mindfulness-based professional development module. Hatton-Bowers found that the early childhood professional's perceptions of the mindfulness module were strongly favorable. "The majority of the respondents (89 percent) indicated they learned 'a great deal' or 'a lot' of information, and 94 percent indicated they would be able to use 'a great deal' or 'a lot' of information they learned with children and families" (p. 383). Thus, mindfulness-based professional development can support early childhood educators in developing social-emotional coping skills to manage typical stressors and being more attuned and less reactionary with children (Hatton-Bowers et al., 2019).

Roeser et al. (2012) hypothesized that mindfulness training may be one method to promote educators' habits of mind, which Costa (2000) defined as "having a disposition toward behaving intelligently when confronted with problems the answers to which are not immediately known" (p. 1). Those habits of mind may promote regulation, stress reduction, and healthy social interactions (Roeser et al., 2012). Additionally, when early educators pause, take a breath, and be mindful when faced with a challenging situation, they can cultivate compassion for the children in their care and find more enjoyment in their work (Hatton-Bowers et al., 2019). Finally, Hatton-Bowers et al. (2019) noted that additional research is needed to analyze the long-term impact of mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings, allowing researchers to learn how participants utilize, reflect, and provide additional feedback on mindfulness-based professional learning.

Summary of Findings and Gap in Literature

Research has shown that mindfulness in ECE settings supports children's development of self-regulation, compassion, and self-awareness (Erwin et al., 2017). Further, mindfulness-based professional development supports educators in cultivating compassion, kindness, and heightened awareness (Le & Alefaio, 2018). Similarly, educators who participate in mindfulness-based professional development may find more enjoyment and less stress in their work (Akhavan et al., 2021; Hatton-Bowers et al., 2019).

Le and Alefaio (2018) identified that educators reported challenges leading mindfulness exercises with their students due to a lack of confidence in teaching the lessons. Le and Alefaio (2018) noted that educators faced challenges in leading mindfulness exercises with their students due to a lack of confidence in teaching the classes. Yaari et al. (2019) indicated

that while mindfulness has increased in early learning centers, there was a practice-research gap. There were gaps in the reviewed literature related to mindfulness-based professional development opportunities in early childhood settings. For example, while engaging in the literature review process, as of December 2023, there were less than 20 peer-reviewed articles on mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings while utilizing the San José State University's library database. Most reviewed literature examined how mindfulness-based professional development was utilized in the K-12 systems (Chung et al., 2021; Herrmann & Gallo, 2013; Le & Alefaio, 2018; Roeser et al., 2012; Schussler et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2016). Likewise, there was a population gap in the reviewed literature as most studies focus on the K-12 settings, not in ECE settings. There was limited literature on how to improve the ECE workplace through mindfulness-based professional development or enhance the experiences of young children through mindfulness-based professional development for early childhood educators.

Chapter II explained the increasing awareness many early childhood educators face in difficult working conditions. Eadie et al. (2021) noted that these conditions might lead to high levels of daily stress, which compromises educators' health, well-being, rest, and job performance (Irvine et al., 2016; Jena-Crottet, 2017; Jones et al., 2017; McMullen et al., 2020; OECD, 2019; Thorpe et al., 2020; Totenhagen et al., 2016). Furthermore, Chapter II described how mindfulness may be utilized in various educational settings, including early childhood, K-12, and professional development. Finally, Chapter II highlighted mindfulness-based professional development and demonstrated the need for further research to be completed in ECE settings.

Next, Chapter III will describe the research methods used in the exploratory documentary research study with an accompanying documentary. It also incorporates a description and rationale for the research design, theoretical framework, the population and sample, instrument development and validation, data collection, study limitations, and a timeline of processes used to conduct the study.

Chapter III: Methodology

This dissertation featured aspects of making an exploratory documentary film and a more extensive qualitative research study. This documentary and exploratory research study aimed to describe, critically evaluate, and better understand how early educators experience mindfulness-based professional development designed for early childhood educators. Additionally, the research study explored beliefs about early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders, including school district leaders, professional development decision-makers, and policymakers, concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings. Finally, the research study investigated whether the staff participants' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors about mindfulness-based professional development changed in their responses from pre- to post-professional development workshops.

Chapter I noted that Oakland, California, is the largest city in the San Francisco Bay Area East Bay region and is one of California's most racially and ethnically diverse cities. As a result, OUSD serves a diverse student population (OUSD, 2022a). Within OUSD's ECE and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Departments, 28 child development centers and numerous elementary schools throughout the City of Oakland serve 2,000 infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and transitional kindergarteners. According to OUSD (2022a), 22% of preschool-age children identified as Black, 26% identified as Asian, 28% identified as Latinx, 6% identified as White, and 6% identified as multi-ethnic or other.

Chapter III highlights the research questions that guide the documentary dissertation project. Then, I describe the study's research methodology, convenience sampling plan, data

collection, proposed shot list for the documentary film, data analysis, documentary production process, limitations, delimitation, as well as my assumptions, positionality, and ethical considerations.

There were six general phases of the study: (1) Pre-professional development video interviews of early childhood educators who were staff participants in the study, (2) Filming of early childhood educators participating in mindfulness-based professional learning opportunities, (3) Video interviews of experts in the fields of mindfulness and ECE, (4) Post-professional development video interviews of early childhood educators who were staff participants in the study, (5) Analyzing the findings of interviews and observations, and (6) Selecting and organizing the video clips and constructing a narrative in documentary and written dissertation formats.

The mindfulness-based professional development program in the research study was called *EMBRACE™*. The *EMBRACE™* program, developed by staff at CEL in Denver, Colorado, included one monthly module during six months of comprehensive professional development opportunities. The research-based modules centered around contemplative pedagogy objectives and approaches, including mindfulness, self-awareness, self-development, movement, senses, and community. Threaded through each professional development session were five central mindfulness practices: breathing, body scan, meditation, visualization, guided imagery, and journaling. Adult learning principles were the foundation of each professional development opportunity, which followed a sequence of introducing the module's objectives, including the research base, and engaging the participants in the module concepts through activities and the five principal practices (CEL,

n.d.). In addition to participating in monthly professional development sessions led by a

facilitator from CEL, staff participants received follow-up coaching from an *EMBRACE™*

coach employed by CEL in Denver, Colorado. CEL (n.d.) noted:

> *EMBRACE™* employs an intensive coaching model to ensure the cognitive learning
> of mindfulness is transferred into practice (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Coaching is a
> goal-driven collaborative process embedded in learning-focused relationships,
> designed to grow, and sustain quality practice leading to optimal outcomes for
> children, families, and staff. After each training session, each classroom team
> receives weekly, formalized coaching support based on a coaching model and
> protocols. (p. 2)

Research Questions

This documentary and exploratory research study aimed to describe, critically evaluate,

and better understand how early educators experience mindfulness-based professional

development designed for early childhood educators. The research study explored beliefs

about early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders, including

school district leaders, professional development decision-makers, and policymakers,

concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings. Finally, this

research study investigated whether the staff participants' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes,

dispositions, and behaviors about mindfulness-based professional development changed in

their responses from pre- to post-professional development workshops. The following

research questions were considered:

1. What professional development program factors do participants say are the most

   effective or least effective in supporting their use of mindfulness in ECEsettings?

2. What are early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders

   concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECEsettings?

3. What do staff participants say about their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors that changed from the pre- to post-professional development interviews?

4. What do early childhood educators say are strategies to sustain mindfulness-based professional development opportunities in their educational settings in the future?

Interview and Research Questions

Initial Pre-Professional Development Interview Questions

The following are the pre-professional development interview mindfulness-related questions developed for and asked of the staff participants:

1. How did you decide to participate in mindfulness-based professional development?

2. What is your hope for participating in mindfulness-based professional development?

3. Which mindfulness practices, if any, are the most useful in the classroom context? In your daily life outside the classroom?

4. What aspect of mindfulness do you find the most helpful to your practice as an early childhood educator? Please describe a specific example, situation, or practice you use in the classroom.

5. Are there practices you experienced through mindfulness-based professional development you use in your ECE setting? If so, which ones? How often?

6. Have you noticed some specific well-being-related benefits since participating in mindfulness-based professional development? Would you tell me about them?

7. Is there anything else important in understanding your mindfulness practice or experience as an early childhood educator?

Post-Professional Development Interview
Questions

The following are the post-professional development interview mindfulness-related questions developed for and asked of the staff participants:

1. What professional development program factors were most effective in supporting your use of mindfulness in ECE settings?

2. What professional development program factors were least effective in supporting your use of mindfulness in ECE settings?

3. What words do you use to describe your experiences as a participant in a mindfulness-based professional development program?

4. What actions do you demonstrate since participating in mindfulness-based professional development in your work and interactions with children and/or adults?

5. What are your learning outcomes (new skills, strategies, abilities) from participating in a mindfulness-based professional development program?

6. Have you noticed any specific mental health and well-being-related benefits since participating in mindfulness-based professional development?

7. Are there practices you experienced through mindfulness-based professional development you use in your ECEsetting? If so, which ones? How often?

8. What do you want school district administrators, policymakers, or professional development decision-makers to know about mindfulness-based professional development experiences?

9. What recommendations or ideas do you have to sustain mindfulness practices in OUSD for future years?

Revised Post-Professional Development Interview
Questions

After the pre-professional development interviews, I realized that I needed to refine and

revise the post-professional development interview questions to ensure that I could better

address the study's research questions. Though the pre-professional development questions

appeared practical on paper, I later determined that when I conducted the initial interviews,

the questions I had initially developed did not assist me in gathering the information I had

intended to gather. I wanted to learn more about how education leaders might support the

implementation of mindfulness-based professional development experiences for early

childhood educators in their settings. I also became curious about how staff participants

might sustain any new knowledge and mindfulness practices acquired or relearned during the

six-month research study. Additionally, I wanted to learn more about the staff participants'

recommendations, if any, for education leaders to consider related to sustaining mindfulness-

based professional development programs in school districts that employ early childhood

educators. Thus, I added the following interview questions to the post-professional

development interview protocol:

- What do you want school district administrators, policymakers, or professional

  development decision-makers to know about mindfulness-based professional

  development experiences?

- What recommendations or ideas do you have to sustain mindfulness-based

  professional development in OUSD, or other school districts or ECE organizations,

  for future years?

Revised Research Questions

After the research study began, I realized that since I was enrolled in a Doctor of Education program focused on educational leadership, I wanted to include a leadership-focused question in the post-professional development interview protocol to develop a better understanding of early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders, including school district leaders, professional development decision-makers and policymakers, concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings. Furthermore, I wanted to learn more about participants' recommendations for considerations that may need to be examined as professional development decision-makers design sustainable mindfulness-based professional development experiences. To address this, I developed two additional research questions:

- What are early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECEsettings?
- What do early childhood educators say are strategies to sustain mindfulness-based professional development opportunities in their educational settings in the future?

Qualitative Methods

The research study utilized documentary and exploratory qualitative research methodology to better understand how early childhood educators experienced mindfulness-based professional development designed for early childhood educators. Qualitative research was appropriate for investigating and comprehending the significance of a social phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). This research study related the phenomenon to staff participants' experiences with a mindfulness-based professional development program

specifically designed for early childhood educators. Because the method applied multiple

mechanisms of data gathering, such as individual interviews and the use of video

documentary methodology, the data analysis was determined based on emerging themes, the

researcher interpreted the significance of the data, and the final report had an adaptable

format (Creswell, 2014).

Video Documentary Methodology

A documentary film was highlighted as the research methodology for this exploratory

study. As an individual with a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism with previous

experience filming and producing videos, I was compelled to produce a documentary film

because of my prior experience and appreciation for the visual medium. Friend and Militello

(2015) noted that film as a research method can revolutionize research from a thing done to

subjects to a thing done with participants by co-creating new understandings by including

original voices that can be distributed to an expansive audience. The documentary film

method was determined for three primary objectives. First, a documentary film is a medium

to educate and champion change using visual video and numerous media outlets such as

Vevo, Vimeo, and YouTube (Gubrium & Harper, 2013). Second, narrative exploration and

documentary film offer important descriptive data that illustrate a glimpse of the current

perceptions of early childhood educator well-being and mindfulness-based professional

development (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Third, the documentary format can reach many

audiences worldwide, including educators, school leaders, academic researchers, funders, and

policy decision-makers (Gubrium & Harper, 2013).

Approving a Mindfulness-Based Professional
Development Series

As noted in Chapter I, in March 2022, in my role as OUSD's director of quality enhancement and professional development, I distributed a well-being survey to OUSD's early childhood educators. The survey was released a few months after the COVID-19 Omicron surge, which may have impacted the results as staff because at this point in the pandemic, several many individuals felt deflated with the constant challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic brought to the community. I used the survey results to assist in developing a plan for professional learning programming for the 2022-2023 school year. Though OUSD's ECE Department had offered yoga and mindfulness as professional development for staff since 2017, the Department had not utilized a formal curriculum to provide mindfulness-based professional development. I had experience utilizing the *EMBRACE™* program in a different San Francisco Bay Area school district. I suggested to the ECE Department's executive director to offer it within OUSD. The executive director supported my recommendation to offer *EMBRACE™* to assist staff in identifying strategies to meet their mental health and well-being needs. The ECE Department had access to COVID-related funding to support employees' mental health and wellness that was set to expire after the 2022-2023 school year; thus, the executive director approved OUSD's first *EMBRACE™* cohort to participate in the program from January 2023 through June 2023 before OUSD ECE Department's COVID-19 funds for mental health supports expired.

Population

With a population of over 400,000, Oakland is one of the United States' most racially and ethnically diverse cities (Newman, 2020) where over 42% identify as White, 28% identify as

Black, 26% identify as Latinx, 18% identify as Asian, 1% identify as American Indian or Alaska Native, and less than 1% identify as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. According to the City of Oakland (n.d.), "Oakland has a long history of activism around issues of justice and equity. Both oppression and this resistance to oppression have shaped the city's past and the lives of its residents to this day." The City of Oakland (n.d.) noted that several initiatives throughout the exist to "create a city where its diversity is maintained, racial disparities have been eliminated and racial equity has been achieved." Similarly, OUSD (n.d.) continues "to build a district-wide initiative to lift up a racial justice, equity and healing mindset for all educators in Oakland."

According to OUSD (2024), during the 2023-2024 school year, there were over 34,000 TK-12th grade students enrolled in district-ran schools where 47% of the students identified as Latinx, 20% identified as Black, 11% identified as White, 10% identified as Asian, and 7% identified as Multi-Ethnic. Furthermore, during the 2023-2024 school year, OUSD (2024) enrolled nearly 1,100 preschool-age children in district-ran child development centers and elementary schools where 46% of the children identified as Latinx, 30% identified as Black, 17% identified as Asian, 6% identified as White, and less than 1% identified as American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander.

According to the City of Oakland (2018), OUSD is one of the largest employers in the City of Oakland. According to OUSD (2024), during the 2023-2024 school year, 41% of the school district's teachers identified as White, 21% identified as Black, 20% identified as Latinx, and 13% identified as Asian. Within OUSD's ECE Department, most educators are women of color whom the OUSD has employed for decades.

Convenience Sampling

A maximum of 11 staff members were recruited to participate in the study. The first 11 participants who expressed interest in participating in the research study were recruited due to restrictions in the group size for the mindfulness-based professional development cohort. Thus, a *convenience sampling* method was employed. Qualtrics (2022) noted that *convenience sampling* is a type of non-probability sampling centered on obtaining information from the participants that is convenient for the researcher to access. The participants were interviewed in this documentary and exploratory research project (the participant list is included below). All participants were over 18 and completed a consent form (see Appendix C) before they were interviewed on camera. Many staff participants knew me before the research study had commenced, as I was an OUSD district leader responsible for leading professional development efforts for OUSD's early childhood educators. The staff participants included lead teachers, early childhood special educators, instructional assistants, site administrators, and an early learning coach in preschool-age classrooms. Footage of the participants was used in the final documentary film. Some video footage was not included in the final film due to edits made to reduce the length of the film, redundancy in staff participant's responses to the interview questions, or poor audio or video quality; however, all participants' interview responses were incorporated into Chapter IV's data analysis of findings and Chapter V's further analysis, conclusions, implications, and applications to leadership and future practice.

As noted earlier in this chapter, this documentary film and exploratory research study aimed to describe, critically evaluate, and better understand how early educators experienced

mindfulness-based professional development designed for early childhood educators. Additionally, the research study explored participants' beliefs about their knowledge expectations for education leaders, including school district leaders, professional development decision-makers, and policymakers, concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings. Finally, the research study aimed to learn more about the outcomes of participating in a mindfulness-based professional development program. The participants comprised 11 staff participants from ECE programs in OUSD who volunteered to be in the study. The participants were recruited via email, personal invitations, and announcements. In addition to serving as the researcher in this study, I was the current director of professional development for the OUSD's ECE department; thus, I had access to a district employee's email address, which assisted my outreach efforts as I recruited staff participants.

To assist in the data collection efforts and in making the documentary film, I prepared interview questions to learn more about the staff participant's prior experiences with mindfulness, mindfulness-based professional development, and their hopes for participating in a six-month-long professional development series centered on mindfulness. Additionally, I requested participation from experts in the field who volunteered to participate in the study. Finally, I used operationalized terms (see Appendix B) for post-professional development interviews.

Staff Participants' Engagement and Participation

Initially, 28 OUSD staff members expressed their interest in participating in the mindfulness-based professional development experience after the recruitment announcement

was emailed to all early childhood educators within OUSD's ECE Department. I had initially aimed for a cohort size of 10. However, after hosting a virtual information session that provided potential participants with details about the research study, the first 11 individuals who volunteered to join the study were selected to participate, and the study employed a convenience sampling method to recruit participants. I permitted all 11 individuals to participate in case anyone had to withdraw their participation in the study. Nine of the 11 participants who initially signed up for the research study completed the study's requirements of completing a pre- and post-professional development interview, attending professional development sessions, and follow-up coaching opportunities. This means the study had an 82% completion rate. Furthermore, the study had a 100% response rate for the pre- and post-professional development interviews as the nine individuals who completed the pre-professional development interviews also completed the post-professional development interviews.

As the researcher in the study, I was moved by the staff participants' responses in the pre- and post-professional development interviews, their engagement in the virtual professional development sessions, and their participation in the virtual coaching sessions. The staff participants' generosity and willingness to participate in on-camera interviews during their own time was a highlight of this experience for me. The staff participants' responses to the questions, reflections, and insights offered motivated me to persevere through the research study. As I observed the professional development sessions, most of the staff were present, engaged, sharing ideas, asking reflective questions, and participating in the learning experiences. While engaging in the post-professional development interviews, it was clear

that, for the most part, the staff participants enjoyed their experience and increased their

ability to respond to questions related to mindfulness-based professional development.

Staff Participants

As noted earlier, 82% of the participants recruited for the study completed the

requirements for participating in the study (completing pre-professional development and

post-professional development interviews, participating in six monthly professional

development sessions, and follow-up coaching opportunities). Of the 11 early childhood

educators who were voluntarily recruited for the research study, two staff participants

withdrew as they attended some, not all, of the required six-monthly professional

development and coaching sessions. Thus, data from the nine staff participants who fully

completed the requirements was included in the data analysis phase of the study. Table 1 lists

the participants, their positions within OUSD, and whether they completed the study.

Table 1
Staff Participant List

Name	Position	Gender	Completed Study?
Staff Participant 1	ECE Administrator	Female	Yes
Staff Participant 2	Preschool Lead Teacher	Female	Yes
Staff Participant 3	Early Childhood Special Educator	Female	Yes
Staff Participant 4	Preschool Lead Teacher	Female	Yes
Staff Participant 5	Early Childhood Special Educator	Female	Yes
Staff Participant 6	Early Childhood Special Educator	Female	Yes
Staff Participant 7	ECE Coach	Female	Yes
Staff Participant 8	ECE Administrator	Female	Yes
Staff Participant 9	Preschool Lead Teacher	Female	Yes
Staff Participant 10	Preschool Instructional Assistant	Female	No
Staff Participant 11	Preschool Lead Teacher	Female	No

Expert Participants

Five experts in mindfulness and ECE were voluntarily recruited to provide a better understanding of mindfulness concepts and learn more about whether the staff participants' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors about mindfulness-based professional development changed in their responses from pre- to post-professional development workshops. Additionally, I investigated what the experts said about what they believe education leaders, including school district administrators, education policymakers, or professional development decision-makers, should understand related to the utilization of mindfulness-based professional development experiences in ECE settings. The experts were identified through research articles, social networking, mindfulness and ECE-related resources, and professional acquaintances. Experts from Zero to Three, CEL, and Erickson Institute volunteered to participate in the research study and documentary film. Table 2 lists the expert participants, their descriptions of their roles, and their fields of expertise.

Table 2
Expert Participant List

Name	Area of Expertise	Gender
Expert 1	Author, Mindfulness, Infant/Toddler	Female
Expert 2	Associate Professor, Mindfulness, ECE	Female
Expert 3	Mindfulness, ECE, Professional Development Specialist	Female
Expert 4	Mindfulness, ECE, Professional Development Coach/Trainer	Female
Expert 5	Mindfulness, ECE	Female

Data Collection

This section explains the data collection strategy. The participants who completed the research study were lead teachers, early childhood special educators, site administrators, and an early learning coach working within OUSD's ECE Department. The participants were recruited through in-person correspondence, email, or announcements made at staff meetings. I facilitated one-on-one interviews with staff participants before and after participating in a six-month mindfulness-based professional development series to gather diverse perspectives on mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings. The participants in this study included a convenience sample of early childhood educators. Furthermore, I sought various perspectives, including those of experts in mindfulness and ECE. The in-person interviews were recorded using a video camera, while the virtual interviews were recorded via Zoom. Virtual interviews took place as the expert participants lived across the United States. The final interview footage was determined by its relevance to address the study's research questions.

All interviews took place outside of instructional hours, and visual (B-roll) footage was recorded during professional development opportunities or instructional hours with consent from the staff participants and guardians of any children present during the filming. B-roll is any supplementary footage that may be secondary to the principal video (Lannom, 2019). Though children and families were not part of the study, parents were notified about the B-roll filming and provided written permission to include their child in the B-roll footage. The B-roll footage did not include staff and children whose parents did not sign a consent form. Staff participants' interviews were recorded using a high-definition (HD) video camera.

Moreover, I utilized memo writing after the interviews as a strategy for record keeping and noted critical ideas and potential themes within each interview (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Additionally, the memos assisted my aim in managing the clips in the video documentary narrative format thematically. The notes provided additional data for Chapter V's further data analysis as it assisted me in cross-referencing data and assessing the study's progress (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Deductive Themes, Participants, and Logistics: Documentary Shot List

On February 20, 2023, I developed a documentary shot list (see Appendix D) to assist in initially developing the documentary film's sequencing. Within the spreadsheet, I drafted ideas for potential images, sounds, and locations to capture while filming or gathering B-roll. Additionally, the shot list included projected time lengths and potential speakers (for example, "expert 1," "staff participant 1," or "narrator") to aid in conceptualizing the film. Furthermore, a "status" column was added to assist me in tracking which work had been completed, needed to be completed, or reshot. I used this iteration of the shot list until I completed all the pre- and post-professional development staff participant interviews and expert interviews. After completing the interviews, I developed a documentary sequence list that may serve a better purpose.

Documentary Sequence List

Upon completing all the expert and staff interviews, professional development observations, and gathering the initial B-roll, I determined that the documentary shot list was not an effective tool to support the development of the documentary film. Thus, on June 29, 2023, I developed a documentary sequence list (see Appendix E) as a tool to incorporate the

staff and expert interview protocol questions. Six sequence sections were created and color-coded to help me organize and sequence the filmed interviews and observations. The sequence number correlated to the different parts of the film from the film's introduction to the end of the film. Creating sequence and question numbers, for example, "1.1" or "5.20", proved to be an asset and timesaving structure as I logged the entirety of the interview footage. Using the system mentioned above to log the interviews by section and question into Adobe Premiere Pro enabled me to build the initial assembly of the film.

Documentary Shot List

A shot list is a visual or graphical representation of a film sequence that breaks down the parts of a film (Maio, 2023). A shot list assists filmmakers in planning out how a film will progress, shot by shot. Additionally, the shot list process aids filmmakers in designing a documentary's visual tone, style, and story (Maio, 2023). I developed a shot list to identify the film's potential elements, including the introduction, background, main event, potential and long-term implications, and conclusion.

Initially, the film began by providing an overview of the background and setting, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the significance of the study. I included B-roll of the mindfulness-based professional development sessions, participant interviews describing their experiences related to mindfulness-based professional development, and expert interviews describing mindfulness and ECE. Additionally, I utilized B-roll film of the participants utilizing mindfulness practices within their ECE settings, participating in meetings, and engaging in day-to-day events in their work settings.

The documentary concluded with reflective questions for viewers such as educators, school leaders, professional development decision-makers, academic researchers, and policymakers to consider what mindfulness-based professional development looks like in action, what early childhood educators' knowledge expectations are for education leaders concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings, and early childhood educators' recommendations for sustain practices learned during the professional development series.

One-on-One Staff Participant Interviews

The study utilized one-on-one interviews with early childhood educators in OUSD's ECE Department. The interviewing process was a crucial documentation source, providing motivations for the phenomenon and insights reflecting participants' viewpoints (Yin, 2018). Additionally, one-on-one interviews promote a high response rate as they were scheduled in advance, and participants commonly feel willing to participate in the interview (Creswell, 2012). Finally, the interview data was utilized to describe and understand how early educators experience mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings.

Pre-professional development interviews occurred before staff participants participated in the mindfulness-based professional development series in January 2023. The duration of each interview was from 30-45 minutes. In addition, post-professional development interviews were conducted in May and June 2023 after staff participants completed the mindfulness-based professional development series. Open-ended questions were utilized as they permitted the participants to candidly communicate their understandings unconstrained by the researcher's viewpoint and prior research findings (Creswell, 2012).

The pre-professional development interviews began with open-ended questions about the participants' experiences in ECE and their beliefs about mindfulness and sharing what, if anything, they learned from their previous experiences of mindfulness-based professional development. Furthermore, in-depth, open-ended questions were offered to gather additional information about participants' experience participating in mindfulness-based professional development.

The pre-professional development interview protocol was organized into two sections. The first section was associated with general questions about the staff participant as an early childhood educator. The staff participants were also asked to describe their reasons and hopes for participating in a six-month mindfulness-based professional development series and their hopes for participating. The second section focused on mindfulness, any previous mindfulness practices learned before participating in the research study, and what practices, if any, they learned through previous mindfulness-based professional development experiences that they use in their ECE setting.

After completing the six mindfulness-based professional development sessions and ongoing, follow-up and intensive coaching sessions, post-professional development interviews took place with the staff participants. As noted earlier in this chapter, some of the interview questions were adapted to better address the research questions. During the post-professional development workshop interviews, the staff participants answered questions about their perspectives on 1) the most effective and least effective aspects of the mindfulness-based professional development program, 2) information about their learning outcomes, and 3) knowledge expectations for education leaders concerning mindfulness-

based professional development in ECE settings and strategies to sustain mindfulness practices after completing the mindfulness-based professional development program.

The post-professional development interview protocol was broken into three sections: (1) Professional Development Experience, (2) Outcomes and Noticings, and (3) Thinking Ahead. The Professional Development Experience-related questions aimed to learn more about the staff participants' beliefs on which professional development program factors they said are most effective or least effective (if any) in supporting their use of mindfulness in ECE settings and identify words or actions that they demonstrated since participating in the mindfulness-based professional development program designed for early childhood educators as related to their work and interactions with children or adults. The Outcomes and Noticings-related questions aimed to better understand the learning outcomes (new skills, strategies, or abilities) staff participants describe from participating in a mindfulness-based professional development program. Additionally, the Outcomes and Noticings-related questions were utilized to identify any mental health and well-being-related benefits staff participants described that they noticed after participating in mindfulness-based professional development and practices they experienced through mindfulness-based professional development they used in their ECE setting since participating in the series. Finally, the Thinking Ahead-related questions aimed to learn more about early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for school district leaders, professional development decision-makers, and policymakers concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings and strategies the staff participants might utilize to sustain mindfulness practices they

learned, if any, during their experience participating in the mindfulness-based professional development program.

One-on-One Expert Interviews

In addition to interviewing staff participants who participated in the mindfulness-based professional development opportunities, I interviewed experts with expertise in mindfulness and ECE. The expert interviews followed the same structure as the staff participant interviews. The expert interviews began with open-ended questions related to their fields of interest, with more in-depth, open-ended questions to follow.

The expert interview protocol was designed to provide a better understanding of mindfulness concepts, learn more about experts' perspectives on potential outcomes of participating in mindfulness-based professional development activities, and learn more about what they believe school district administrators, education policymakers, or professional development decision-makers should understand about mindfulness-based professional development experiences in ECE settings.

Three out of five interviews with experts in mindfulness and ECE were conducted via Zoom to learn more about the meaning and importance of mindfulness-based professional development in ECE. In contrast, two interviews took place in person at CEL. The experts were identified through research articles, social networking, mindfulness and ECE-related resources, and professional acquaintances. Five mindfulness experts from three leading ECE national organizations, CEL, Erikson Institute, and Zero to Three, were recruited and volunteered to participate as expert participants in the research study and documentary film. These experts addressed mindfulness-related questions, what mindfulness may look like in

ECE settings, and the potential outcomes of participating in mindfulness-based professional development opportunities.

Professional Development Sessions

Five of the six mindfulness-based professional development sessions in this research study were led by a trained *EMBRACE™* consultant from CEL in Denver, Colorado, USA. OUSD had contracted CEL to facilitate the *EMBRACE™* mindfulness-based professional development sessions and provide coaching support to the staff participants (see Chapter III). Though the *EMBRACE™* program was initially developed as an in-person professional development series, the professional development and coaching sessions took place via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic as the CEL staff were based in Denver, Colorado. Since the professional development sessions took place outside of the staff participants' contracted work hours, many of the staff participants participated from their homes. The movement module was the only in-person session at an OUSD school site because the group agreed to attend the mindful movement, stretching, and yoga class in person. I led the in-person movement session as the researcher and documentary filmmaker while an OUSD cameraperson filmed the session to collect potential footage that could be used for the documentary film.

Logged Footage Log

Once the interviews were completed, the recorded footage was logged. As Hall and Woelfel (n.d.) noted, logging footage is a process for determining what raw footage is extracted from the recorded source and deposited into a computer or external hard drive. Once extracted from the memory card, the raw footage was uploaded onto a local hard drive

to be manipulated during editing (Hall & Woelfel, n.d.). Since each interview was filmed in one take from start to finish, I broke down each interview into smaller clips that corresponded to each individual question that was asked during each interview. During the logging process, I organized the clips while adding descriptive comments and labels to the clips to assist in the editing and assembly stages of the film.

Using the documentary sequence list, I developed a logged footage spreadsheet to ensure all interviews were properly logged and labeled. While labeling the logged footage, I noted which question each clip was related to, included a short description of the content and keywords from each interview, the participants' deidentified name, and potential placement within the film to assist me in identifying initial themes and sequencing the film footage. Thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the participants' responses to the video interviews for the written dissertation and sample footage for the documentary. While engaging in thematic analysis, I paid close attention to what the interviewees said, as recommended by Reissman (2008). The film footage corresponding to emerging themes was examined, and the study findings were sorted and tallied to answer the research questions in a spreadsheet based on themes that emerged from the participants responses to the interview questions.

The video recordings were saved, examined, organized, and curated to determine the components that describe mindfulness-based professional development in early childhood settings. Before editing and assembling the film, I reviewed the recordings of the interviews to get a deeper understanding of the data, which assisted in the final editing process as suggested by Rapley (2004). Saldaña (2011) recommended to review the data multiple times was a way to develop data familiarity or mental possession of the data. Similarly, rewatching

the footage assisted me in gaining familiarity with the content, identifying new findings, and constructing further understandings that may not have been observed during the interviews. Further, "patterns, categories, and their interrelationship become more evident the more [one] know[s] the subtleties of the database" (Saldana, 2011, p. 95). Consequently, in investigating the attitudes and beliefs of the staff participants, if the data appear in similar themes, the results could help increase the study's internal validity (Yin, 2018).

Documentary Production Process

The exploratory qualitative documentary film production incorporated three main parts: (a) preproduction, (b) production, and (c) post-production.

Preproduction. The preproduction phase of this study included the development of Chapters I, II, and III of this dissertation. Chapter I introduced the background and setting of the research study, the problem statement, the study's purpose, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, research questions, and the definition of terms associated with the study. Additionally, Chapter II described the review of relevant literature. Finally, Chapter III discussed the study's methodology, including the process of convenience sampling, data collection procedures, logging footage (i.e., data analysis), as well as the study's limitations and delimitations and my assumptions, positionality, and ethical considerations.

Further, a crucial element of the preproduction phase included meeting with Dr. Robert Gliner, a dissertation committee member and distinguished documentarian. Throughout the preproduction phase, Dr. Gliner advised me on topics related to the documentary film's production phase, including how to set up the camera, microphone, and lights during one-on-

one interviews. Additionally, Dr. Gliner provided recommendations for collecting B-roll or secondary footage for the film.

Production. The production stage included setting up the camera, microphones, and lighting equipment to film the pre-professional development interviews for the documentary film, collecting the B-roll during the mindfulness-based professional development sessions, gathering the B-roll at the staff participant's child development centers, recording expert interviews, and filming post-professional development interviews.

Set-up. The camera and microphone were set up at the filming location. The camera was set up at the interviewees' eye level. The camera was placed on a tripod to assist with the quality of the footage. The participants were asked to make eye contact with me next to the camera. I wore headphones connected to the camera to ensure the microphone captured high-quality sound. To record all the interviewee's reflections, the video camera recorded throughout the entire interview. Finally, the filming was in a convenient, safe, and tranquil location within OUSD. Various visually and aesthetically pleasing sites were selected to appeal to viewers.

Interviewing Participants in Their Environments. The staff participants had the opportunity to choose a filming location, which included filming indoors at the staff participant's places of work, which were child development centers across Oakland, CA. The staff participants could select OUSD's ECE Department's central office location with access to quality lighting and a quiet indoor conference room. Furthermore, though children and their families were not interviewed in this study, before filming the B-roll at the preschool-age children's development centers, children's guardians were asked to provide written

consent for their child under 18 to participate in the B-roll filming. Additionally, all adults present during the B-roll filming were asked to complete a consent form to appear in the documentary. The consent forms were provided in English and Spanish. Consent forms in other languages would have been made available if needed; however, in this study, only English and Spanish copies were required in this study.

If children's families did not provide written consent for their child to be included in the documentary, the children's faces were not included in the B-roll film. Similarly, any adult over 18 who did not provide written consent to appear in the film was not included in the filming.

Post-Production. The post-production stage included coding the pre-, post-, and expert interviews and categorizing and editing the film footage. Coding is an element of the qualitative analysis and synthesis procedure (Stake, 2010). Through the coding process, I sorted the data sets coherently into topics, themes, and issues significant to the investigation. Coding was not only for organizing the results but also critical for interpreting the study's data sets and storage phases (Stake, 2010). Additionally, the post-production phase included organizing the B-roll and adding narration, music, and subtitles. Furthermore, royalty-free and pre-licensed stock B-roll footage was obtained from Canva, an online graphic design platform, to supplement the B-roll that a KDOL cameraperson or I filmed throughout the research study.

Analyzing and Logging Interview Responses. Film footage was uploaded and categorized into my secure external hard drive. I created folders within the hard drive to organize my data based on emerging themes. As noted in the data collection section, I used

memo writing after the interviews as a strategy for record keeping and noted critical themes within the interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The memos assisted me in organizing 30 to 90-second clips in the video documentary narrative format thematically. The notes and video clips provided additional data for Chapter V's data analysis process, assisting me in cross-referencing data and assessing the study's progress (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The raw footage was loaded into Adobe Premiere Pro as the editing software assisted in logging the footage. Each video clip was labeled according to the interview protocol question number, staff participant, and included a description of the themes of each clip. The final video footage was examined and edited to address the research questions that initially bound the study and any new questions that emerged from the research and documentary process. The interview footage was transcribed and coded during this phase using a spreadsheet that tallied themes based on the expert interviews and staff participants' pre- and post-professional development interview responses. Content analysis was applied to the initial codes. Silverman (2013) noted that content analysis is a method used during data analysis to specify a set of classifications and then calculate the number of examples when those classifications are employed to express a piece of data. The content analysis relied on the positivist concept of variables defined at the beginning of the research process (Silverman, 2013).

Editing the Footage. The first step in editing was connecting the footage to the storyboard created before filming the B-roll footage. An analysis was applied during the editing process to examine and determine suitable audio/visual clips for incorporation into the film (Friend & Caruthers, 2016). Additionally, the main themes from the recordings were

synthesized and conveyed by sequencing the chosen clips in a logical order to describe the experience (Friend & Caruthers, 2016). The shot list contained visual and narrative elements to help tell the story. The narration script was developed based on the themes that emerged during the data analysis phase. The storyline incorporated the following sequence: introduction, background, the main event, staff reflections on the mindfulness-based professional development experience, expert participant recommendations, conclusion, and next steps. On numerous occasions, Dr. Gliner and I met on campus at San José State University to review and edit drafts of the documentary that I worked on in between our scheduled meetings. During those meetings, Dr. Gliner offered critical feedback and assistance to me to produce a high-quality documentary film.

Table 3 lists the research questions with the corresponding source of information, data analysis, and reporting procedure.

Table 3
Sources of Information and Methods for Analyzing Data

Research Questions	Corresponding Source of Information	Corresponding Data Analysis / Reporting Procedure
What professional development program factors do participants say are the most effective or least effective in supporting their use of mindfulness in ECEsettings?	Video and audio clips, including transcriptions of audio of selected interviews with participants and experts	Utilizing a coding method to code video and audio clips to include individual codes and themes leading to a framework for understanding what is important about the visual images and interviews.
What are early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECEsettings?	Open-ended interview questions. Video and audio clips, including transcriptions of audio of selected interviews with participants	Coding of video to include individual codes and themes leading to a framework for understanding what is important about the visual images and interviews
What do staff participants say about their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors that changed from the pre- to post-professional development interviews?	Open-ended interview questions. Video and audio clips, including audio transcriptions of selected interviews with participants.	Coding of video and audio clips to include individual codes and themes leading to a framework for understanding what is important about the visual images and interviews.
What do early childhood educators say are strategies to sustain mindfulness-based professional development opportunities in their educational settings in the future?	Open-ended interview questions. Video and audio clips, including transcriptions of audio of selected interviews with participants	Coding of video to include individual codes and themes leading to a framework for understanding what is important about the visual images and interviews

Limitations

There were two significant limitations in this research study. First, the staff participants'
attitudes, motivations, and dispositions may have changed over time, resulting from pre- to
post-development experience. The threat limitation may have impacted the findings and
results, which are less the result of the professional development activities and more to do
with factors outside the study's context. These other factors may include the time of the
school year of pre- and post-professional development interviews. The pre-professional
development interviews took place during the middle of the school year in January, while the
post-professional development interviews took place during the end of the school year. The
post-professional development interviews occurred in May 2023 after many OUSD educators
participated in a strike for over a week. The strike may have impacted some of the staff
participants' post-professional development interview responses, as some of the perspectives
they shared were related to professional development demands that many educators were
asking to be included in the new teachers' contract.

The findings revealed that coaching was the most effective factor of the mindfulness-
based program in the study. While OUSD early childhood educators have had opportunities
to receive department-wide coaching support since 2015, coaching opportunities were
limited due to the number of coaches in the ECE department and the large number of
classrooms. Since coaching was a requirement for staff participants in this study, they
received more access to job-embedded coaching than most OUSD early childhood educators,
which may have impacted the results; even though each OUSD ECE classroom was assigned

a coach, the degree of coaching in this study was increased for staff participants in this study since not all OUSD ECE educators typically received weekly coaching.

The second significant limitation of this study is my own positionality and personal bias on the importance of well-being. As a yoga and mindfulness practitioner for over 20 years and a yoga and mindfulness instructor for over six years, I was likely biased due to my lived experience and interest in the topic. My personal bias regarding the perceived benefits of mindfulness-based stress reduction activities may have impacted the findings and results of this study.

An additional limiting factor includes the scheduling of the professional development series. Only participants available to attend professional development during the evening could participate in the research study. The findings within the study were limited to the participants' abilities to experience professional development outside of contracted time. Similar research studies during the workday may yield different results.

Furthermore, as Hạnh and Weare (2017) noted, "Mindfulness, in the sense of the core meditative practices, is not for everyone, and if it is, people need to come to it in a way and at a time that is right for them" (p. 262). Thus, the staff participants who volunteered to participate in the research study may have had a biased opinion related to mindfulness as it may be assumed that they were interested in the topic, which may have impacted their responses in the pre- and post-professional development interviews.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the initial staff participants' pre- and post-interview questions were constructed to measure any potential changes in opinions or growth over time. However, after completing the pre-professional development interviews, I realized that

the questions I had initially constructed were not conducive to meeting that goal. Thus, I revised the post-workshop questions to better answer the study's research questions.

While this study analyzed one cohort's experiences participating in mindfulness-based professional development, the study was limited to investigating the experiences and perceptions of early childhood educators in one school district in the San Francisco Bay Area. While these were valuable findings, they were limited by only including staff from one large, urban school district population. This does not ensure that the professional development series would be as effective in other large, urban school districts in the greater San Francisco Bay Area, other parts of California, or the United States. Similar research studies adapted to different locales, including rural or suburban areas, would help clarify the study results further.

Another limitation of the study was the limited sample size and the sampling technique chosen for the research study. The findings in this exploratory qualitative documentary film were limited to the staff participants' perspectives in this study. As noted earlier in Chapter III, convenience sampling was employed as a maximum of 11 staff participants were recruited to participate in the study. Furthermore, though all OUSD ECE educators were invited to participate in this study, regardless of gender, all the participants identified as female, which may be a limitation to the findings and results of the study. A different sampling technique can be utilized in future studies to address this limitation.

The findings of the exploratory study and accompanying documentary film should not be assumed as inferences on the effectiveness of mindfulness-based professional development opportunities in ECE settings or to demonstrate a causal relationship between mindfulness-

based professional development and early childhood educators' use of mindfulness practices in their settings. Instead, this research study will ideally lead to comprehensive discussions of what mindfulness-based professional development looks like in ECE settings, what school district leaders may consider when offering mindfulness-based professional development specifically designed for early childhood educators and how they might sustain mindfulness-related programs, and strategies to sustain mindfulness practices staff participants learned or reaffirmed during their participation in a mindfulness-based professional development program.

Delimitations

The reader/viewer must ultimately judge whether this study's findings can be generalized to other early childhood educators' attitudes and beliefs. Furthermore, the reader/viewer must judge whether this study's findings can be generalized to other non-ECE settings. The reader/viewer will also need to decide whether the location and sample of this study were similar or different from other school districts located in urban, suburban, or rural areas of the United States with differing demographics of students and early childhood educators. This study was conducted with early childhood educators in a large, urban public school district in the largest city in the East Bay region of the San Francisco Bay Area during the 2022-2023 school year. Thus, the findings and results may not generalize to other subpopulations, locations, or periods.

Researcher Assumptions, Positionality, and Ethical Considerations

There were numerous benefits and challenges of serving as both a researcher and an early childhood educator, yoga and mindfulness practitioner, and professional development leader.

Related to my positionality and role in this study, I used my position as an early childhood educator to develop the initial interview protocol, offer mindfulness-based professional development opportunities to OUSD's ECE staff, and identify experts in the field willing to be interviewed for the documentary.

As a yoga and mindfulness practitioner for over 20 years and a yoga and mindfulness instructor for over six years, I have dedicated much of my adult life to exploring yoga and mindfulness-related content and topics. Additionally, I was a member of AMRA, which provided me with access to the latest mindfulness-related research studies. I was aware that, to some extent, my bias regarding the perceived benefits of mindfulness-based stress reduction activities may have impacted this study, which was one of the reasons that I revised my research and interview questions to further limit my bias and positionality.

As the research study was concluding, in May 2023, OUSD educators were on strike for over a week. I assume that the strike impacted some of the staff participants' post-professional development interview responses, as some of the perspectives they shared were related to professional development demands that many educators were asking to be included in the new teachers' contract.

As noted in this chapter, besides serving as the researcher in this study, I was an OUSD district leader responsible for coordinating professional development efforts for OUSD's ECE Department staff. I was aware of their bias regarding ECE-focused professional development programming and the desire to partner with an outside organization to offer an effective professional development program for the educators I am responsible for supporting within OUSD. I was aware that I was known in OUSD's ECE Department as an individual

with a reputation for being passionate about mindfulness. I understood that staff participants may have used the interviews as an opportunity to build relationships and connections related to mindfulness, as they may have thought that I would appreciate hearing if their attitudes and beliefs were like mine. I aimed to be mindful of their positionality regarding the stated benefits of OUSD-sponsored professional development activities. Though I was responsible for coordinating ECE-focused professional development in OUSD, I was not in a power position regarding staff participating in the study, as their participation was voluntary. There was no consequence for staff participants sharing their beliefs and perspectives contradicting my ideas. This was an opportunity to build trust, not an opportunity to betray. Furthermore, I coordinated to represent all views fairly and accurately from the staff participants and experts, whether they affirmed or countered my preconceptions.

Summary

The purpose of Chapter III was to delineate the research methodology that will be utilized to respond to the proposed research questions focused on how the documentary and exploratory research study aims to describe, critically evaluate, and better understand how early educators experience mindfulness-based professional development designed for early childhood educators, explore beliefs about early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings, and learn whether the staff participants' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors about mindfulness-based professional development changed in their responses from pre- to post-professional development workshops.

Finally, Chapter III described convenience sampling, data collection procedures, the documentary production process, the method for logging footage (i.e., data analysis), the limitations and delimitations of the study as well as my assumptions, positionality, and ethical considerations.

Chapter IV: Findings

The exploratory research and accompanying documentary film produced for this research study, *Embracing Mindfulness-Based Professional Development in Early Childhood Education* (accessible on YouTube at https://youtu.be/g0j64WRBStg, Giles, 2024), documented the results of the research study based on pre- and post-professional development interviews with staff participants and interviews with experts that were accomplished as part of the dissertation research study. This chapter summarizes the themes that emerged from this exploratory qualitative research study. Furthermore, these themes were also presented in the accompanying documentary film.

This research study aimed to describe, critically evaluate, and better understand how early educators experienced a mindfulness-based professional development program specifically designed for early childhood educators. Additionally, the study explored beliefs concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings concerning early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders, including school district leaders, professional development decision-makers, and policymakers. The study investigated what staff participants said about strategies for sustaining practices learned during the series and what strategies they believed education leaders should consider to sustain mindfulness-based professional development programs within ECE organizations and school districts. Finally, the research study aimed to learn whether the staff participants' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors about mindfulness-based professional development changed in their responses from pre- to post-professional development workshops. The following research questions were considered:

1. What professional development program factors do participants say are the most effective or least effective in supporting their use of mindfulness in ECEsettings?

2. What are early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECEsettings?

3. What do staff participants say about their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors that changed from the pre- to post-professional development interviews?

4. What do early childhood educators say are strategies to sustain mindfulness-based professional development opportunities in their educational settings in the future?

Restatement of the Purpose

This exploratory research study and accompanying documentary film aimed to describe, critically evaluate, and better understand how early educators experience mindfulness-based professional development designed for early childhood educators. The study aimed to explore beliefs about early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings as well as to investigate staff participants' recommendations for sustaining mindfulness practices after completing a six-month-long mindfulness-based professional development program. Finally, the research study aimed to learn whether the staff participants' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors about mindfulness-based professional development changed in their responses from pre- to post-professional development workshops.

Findings

The findings of this exploratory research study were illustrated in the documentary film

titled *Embracing Mindfulness-Based Professional Development in Early Childhood*

Education (Giles, 2024). The documentary included footage of staff participant interviews,

expert interviews, B-roll, pictures, and narration. I included visual images and statements

gathered from staff and expert participants' interviews to represent themes found throughout

the data analysis process of the research study. Additionally, the interviews included in the

film were chosen based on how compelling they would appear in the visual medium. The

findings presented in this summary were based on interviews with nine OUSD early

childhood educators and five mindfulness experts. This section will summarize the findings

related to each research question based on narratives from the staff participant and expert

interviews conducted.

Research Question 1

What professional development program factors do participants say are the most effective or

least effective in supporting their use of mindfulness in ECEsettings?

Coaching Support was Key. In this research study, the mindfulness-based professional

development program, EMBRACE™, featured ongoing follow-up coaching sessions

connected to the content offered in professional development sessions. In post-professional

development interviews, eight out of nine participants noted that the coaching support was

the most effective feature of EMBRACE. Staff Participant 7 stated:

> Every training needs to be accompanied by coaching… It held me accountable. [The
> coaching] kept me in it. [The coaching] kept me doing it. I kept coming back to it.
> Each week, I set a goal, and in each [coaching session], I checked in on the goal and

set new goals. Practicing different strategies with my goal made a big impact. (Staff Participant 7)

Staff Participant 7 noted that coaching allowed her to transfer the knowledge she learned during the professional development sessions and put it into her daily practice. In a post-professional development interview, she stated:

> Coaching is a key ingredient for learning something. It takes it from theory to practice. [Coaching] brings accountability and getting it wrong, getting it right, talking about it, reflecting on it, and continuing… You need constant repetition of something to get it engrained, and practice-based coaching is the key. (Staff Participant 7)

Educator Toolkit. This research study aimed to better understand what mindfulness-based professional development looks like in ECE settings. The professional development curriculum utilized in this study was called EMBRACE™, an acronym for Effective Mindfulness, Building Responsive and Confident Educators. The EMBRACE™ program incorporates five core mindfulness practices: breathing, body scans, meditation, visualization and guided imagery, and journaling.

One of the professional development factors included in *EMBRACE™* was an educator and classroom toolkit that included a curriculum guide, journal, mindfulness cards, and sensory gear. The sensory gear was designed to support both individual and classroom mindfulness practice. The toolkit contained sensory tools such as a meditation chime, a Hoberman sphere (to physically and visually model inhaling and exhaling), a massage ball, an eye pillow, essential oils and lotion, a breathing stone, a head massage tool, thinking putty, a mindfulness coloring book and colored pencils, pneumonic tools (core practice poster and *EMBRACE™* bracelet), and a water bottle (CEL, n.d.). The staff participants in the research study were invited to keep the educator toolkit for their own personal use after

completing the professional development series, however, they were asked to keep the classroom toolkit in their classrooms.

One staff participant, an early childhood special educator, thought the toolkit was one of the most effective factors of the mindfulness program. In a post-professional development interview, Staff Participant 5 noted:

> I loved getting the [toolkit]. As preschool teachers, everything that we do is so hands-on. To get something for ourselves that was hands-on was like an offering for teachers that it is for ourselves. Somehow, it was the physical reminder that [self-care] comes first. (Staff Participant 5)

Finding Opportunities to Utilize a Journal was Challenging, but Coaching Support Helped. One-third of the participants noted that journaling activities were the least effective factors in the professional development program's implementation. Staff Participant 3 stated that journaling was the most challenging aspect of getting started; however, with her coach's support, she developed a practice during the professional development series. Similarly, another participant noted that her *EMBRACE™* coach assisted her in identifying opportunities to utilize the journal. Staff Participant 4 stated:

> What I used the least was the journal, but not because I was not interested, because of a lack of time. I wanted to do it, but when I found time, work, home, and activities were the ones I used the least. Although my coach told me to try to write it. So, I wrote it with her when I was with her, but it was the least I feel I could have gotten more out of it. (Staff Participant 4)

Research Question 2

What are early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECEsettings?

Leadership Matters. While sharing recommendations on sustaining the mindfulness-based professional development program, one participant said that it is essential for district

74

leaders to model mindfulness practices and talk about them. Staff Participant 3 stated, "It is super important to see my leaders practicing and implementing mindfulness and suggesting and supporting these same practices." Staff Participant 3 said that her family and culture did not talk about mental health and well-being, but seeing leaders at work talk about it made it feel safe for her to talk about it and manage stress. She noted, "It opens up [the] platform and conversation and builds a safe place for [discussing mental health and well-being]."

Expert participant Dr. Amanda Moreno stated:

> Wellness is part of productivity. There are a lot of parts of the world that are on fire right now in many ways and different ways… We are at a turning point in the history of the human race right now… This is coming into just about every workplace. Mindfulness is part of the larger landscape of self-care. There are backlashes again, too. People say, 'Oh, it is just performative.' Or 'Oh, you cannot just take a bubble bath and solve the problems of capitalism and climate change.' While that is true, there should be a backlash against the backlash because self-care is essential for an individual to continue living through this world. So, this is not to say that the system does not need much change. It does. The sooner that the powers that be help us recognize wellness, self-care, and pausing at work do not reduce productivity. It may increase it. Moreover, I know that there is a backlash against that, too. Because we do not want to do mindfulness *just because* it improves productivity… In the end, it is still better to do it than not. And to be a part of a work culture that recognizes that you cannot just simply check your mental health at the door… If you do not have a workspace that promotes [mindfulness], then you will have people who cannot do their jobs or quit, or all the trends we have been seeing. So, we have been making this realization over time… Good leaders know this already.

Embed Mindfulness-Based Professional Development During Contracted Hours.

Four of the nine staff participants stated that professional development opportunities must be embedded in educators' workdays. In a post-professional development interview, Staff Participant 5 noted the value of receiving professional development related to mental health and wellness; however, she shared a desire for training and coaching opportunities to occur

during their contracted work hours. In a post-professional development interview, Staff

Participant 5 noted:

> We care about our students, of course, so we want to [teach] from the bottom of our hearts. But it won't work if we're not given that time to actually [participate in mindfulness-based professional development experiences]. We have our busy lives, and we need it to be built into the day. (Staff Participant 5)

Similarly, Staff Participant 1, an early childhood administrator, noted that mindfulness-based

professional development in ECE settings should not be optional. In a post-professional

development interview, Staff Participant 1 noted:

> This isn't optional. It is not on a resource list. It's something that needs to be embedded in daily life in our educational settings. The language of mindfulness is not going to be heard by everyone. But that does not mean that aspects of it cannot be part of the school culture. And I think that's what is missing. It's more than a missed opportunity; it's a tragedy if we can't make this happen in a larger sense beyond one school, one classroom at a time. [We need to] put our values to work and make these things happen. (Staff Participant 1)

Staff Participant 7 noted that mindfulness-based professional development for early

childhood educators might positively impact the children and adults in a classroom setting as

it may allow adults to heal. The staff participant suggested that once adults heal, they can

give their fullest to children, enabling them to provide the best possible early education

experience. Furthermore, the staff participant believed that all adults, in and out of education,

could benefit from mindfulness-based training as it may support them to live together better,

talk, listen, and grow with one another. In a post-professional development interview, Staff

Participant 7 said that mindfulness-based professional development opportunities might

allow adults to heal from past trauma. As an early childhood educator, Staff Participant 7

stated, "We need to heal. We have so much coming into this space that we need to heal to

give our fullest to the children and give them the best education that we can."

Similarly, a staff participant recognized that mindfulness-based professional development might provide adults with opportunities to support themselves and the children in their care to address mental health and social-emotional skills. Staff Participant 6 stated in a post-professional development interview that:

> If we can't take care of ourselves as educators if we can't help children take care of their own mental health and social-emotional skills, then they can't do all the other things that we want them to do. If all the humans who are at work in a classroom can't regulate, be in the moment, and bring their best selves, then the quality of education is going to go down for everyone. (Staff Participant 6)

Research Question 3

What do staff participants say about their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors that changed from the pre- to post-professional development interviews?

Mindful Selflessness. One goal of the mindfulness-based professional development program was to support an individual's personal development. In pre-professional development interviews, six of the nine staff participants recognized the desire to develop or deepen an internal practice to support the children and families in their care and share their knowledge with their colleagues. Staff Participant 7 stated:

> While we learn mindfulness strategies in the classroom, it is hard to teach the children when you do not embrace and embody [mindfulness] for yourself… One of my hopes for participating in [the mindfulness professional development program] is to learn how to embrace it for myself so that I can share it firsthand with others… [In the past] I got caught up in this a lot, trying to teach mindfulness to my students, but I was not doing it myself. It was not authentic. It did not stick. It did not make sense to the kids. I did not see the calm. I did not see anything that mindfulness is supposed to bring because I was not embodying it. (Staff Participant 7)

After the mindfulness-based professional development series was completed, Staff Participant 7 noted that *EMBRACE*™ helped her become more aware of the benefits of developing a personal mindfulness practice as a strategy to assist her in healing and

recognizing that mindfulness-based professional development for early childhood educators impacts not only the educator, but everyone in the ECE classroom setting. She noted that adults need to heal to give children the fullest and the best early education possible. Furthermore, she stated that mindfulness-based professional development may be a strategy that cultivates self-development, healing, community building which supports adults to learn how to live together, build relationships, listen to one another, and grow together.

Increased Awareness of Self and Others. This study revealed that over half of the staff participants experienced an increased awareness of self, their body, and emotions after participating in the mindfulness-based professional development series. Five of the nine staff participants noted an increased awareness of self, body, and emotions in the post-professional development interviews when asked about what their learning outcomes since participating in the mindfulness series. Thus, the staff participants' ability to express their knowledge more thoroughly about mindfulness-based professional development changed in their responses from pre- to post-professional development workshops. In a post-professional development interview, Staff Participant 2 stated that since participating in mindfulness-based professional development:

> I have developed the ability to be more compassionate with myself… Even being around other people; the compassion part makes you realize that the people you work with may be going through something or may be having a hard day. When the children come into the classroom, sometimes we do not really understand what the transition from home to school looks like. Since participating in EMBRACE, I have learned compassion and awareness of other people's feelings. When you put yourself in other people's [situation], you can better understand that the behavior you are seeing may be present. (Staff Participant 2)

Additionally, two participants stated that because of the mindfulness-based professional development program, they had an increased ability to self-reflect. In a post-professional

development interview, Staff Participant 9 stated that she was more aware of her triggers since participating in the mindfulness-based professional development experience. When challenging situations arise at work, Staff Participant 9 said, "I take more time to step away from the situation and breathe."

Four participants noted an increased awareness of others, more compassion for others, and what others may be going through. One participant stated that she is more conscious of the people around her and has better connections with her team because they were experiencing mindfulness-based stress reduction activities together after participating in the mindfulness-based professional development series. Staff Participant 8 said, "I have new insight into myself and life so that I am more [of] an active participant in life. [Before], I was present but wasn't present."

In a post-professional development interview, a staff participant stated that in her role as a coach for early childhood educators, using skills she learned during the mindfulness-based professional development experience assisted her in working with adults. Staff Participant 7 stated:

> We all come with such engrained sets of perspectives, prior knowledge, and 'what should be'... 'the shoulds.' [Mindfulness] is helping me to take that pause and listen better to what other people are saying. If I start to feel my body reacting to what they are saying, I notice it and pause even more and not let myself react to what I am feeling. (Staff Participant 7)

One commonly known aspect of mindfulness is awareness of the present moment and of one's thoughts and feelings. In an interview, mindfulness and ECE expert Maria Gehl noted:

> When I think of mindfulness, I really think about awareness. Being aware of the present moment, not only our situational presence but also our internal presence. Being aware is happening inside me and outside me… That is a key piece. Part of that is related to some emotional regulation. Having space between whatever is happening

and how I might respond to it. So, mindfulness is being aware of all that is going on at the same time.

Let Them Borrow Your Calm. When asked about what mindfulness practices, if any, staff participants experienced through mindfulness-based professional development they used in their ECE setting, in post-professional development interviews, 100% of the staff participants noted engaging in breathing practices. Educators identified beliefs that breathing exercises support themselves as early childhood educators in creating a calm, loving, and safe learning environment.

In a post-professional development interview, Staff Participant 5 said, "I take a deep breath, and I can see the students borrowing my calm. I also feel it for myself like I know how to get to a grounded place, and I teach from such a stronger place when I am there." Similarly, in a post-professional development interview, Staff Participant 4 said that the mindfulness-based professional development program supported her mental health needs. Staff Participant 4 stated:

> I have more clarity. I have more clarity in my thoughts. I have a more positive attitude. When I come to work, I learn better because my mind is calm and is in the present. [Mindfulness-based professional development] has helped my mental health, and it has helped me a lot in my emotional health. (Staff Participant 4)

Awareness of Breathing, Body, and Senses as Mindfulness Practices Can Be Used in Early Childhood Settings. When asked about which mindfulness practices participants experienced through mindfulness-based professional development that they use in their ECE settings, nine out of the nine staff participants who participated in the post-professional development interview noted an increased awareness of breathing and using one's breath as a strategy to use mindfulness in their ECE settings. After the mindfulness-based professional

development program had concluded, Staff Participant 4 said that she had learned basic

techniques for using her breath. In a post-professional development interview, Staff

Participant 4 noted:

> [Mindfulness-based professional development] opened my mind. It really opened me up to the possibilities of using so many tools that are within my reach. The basics of breathing, the basics that I did not know how to do; simply learning to breathe in the right way and to let go is wonderful. (Staff Participant 4)

In a post-professional development interview, Staff Participant 3 stated that she is more

mindful of using breathing and pausing techniques during the workday since participating in

the *EMBRACE™* program. Staff Participant 3 said:

> [The mindfulness training] has made me pause to check myself to see where I am at. This is going to sound simple, but just breathing more. Taking that deeper breath. More breaths… [Before the professional development series], I used to stop during the day to take a couple of breaths. Now I am taking more time throughout the day to step outside of the classroom to take a breather, do a body scan, or tell myself positive affirmations throughout the day. (Staff Participant 3)

Staff Participant 7 stated that she was more aware of feelings or emotions in her body and

noticed what her body needs to regulate her emotions since participating in the mindfulness-

based professional development program. In a post-professional development interview,

Staff Participant 7 noted:

> Since starting *EMBRACE™*, I have more awareness of what is happening inside my body in different situations. Because of that, I now know how to shift or settle into [those emotions and feelings]. Instead of letting a moment carry me through, I am now better able to feel what my body is telling me. So, if my heart is beating really fast, [I ask myself] what is happening? What do I need to do? If I drive in my car and do not even realize how I got here? I am noticing these things and taking in the moment [by asking myself], what do I feel? Where am I sitting? What do I smell? What do I see? What do I hear? Those skills of getting me back into my body and knowing what my body needs have been one of the biggest takeaways. (Staff Participant 7)

Staff Participant 2, a lead teacher in an ECE classroom, highlighted in a post-professional development interview that strategies learned during mindfulness-based professional development were beneficial for educators and the larger classroom community. Staff Participant 2 noted:

> Not only does it help the teacher individually, but it can also help the student, who in turn may be able to help the parent, who in turn make our community a healthier place for us to thrive by letting our students know that there is a healthier way to work through day-to-day life. (Staff Participant 2)

Maria Gehl, mindfulness and ECE expert, recognized that mindfulness may be a tool that early childhood educators utilize to nurture their self-regulation and support the healthy development of young children's emotional regulation. In an interview for the research study, Maria Gehl stated:

> Mindfulness is helpful in all aspects of life. There is a particular synergy in the early education space because we know that for children to learn how to regulate themselves, they need well-regulated adults around them to scaffold that process and help them. That aspect of mindfulness that supports our regulation and helps us be responsive as opposed to reactive contributes to those secure, calm adults that can be that loving, nurturing presence for children that supports [children's] social-emotional development.

Mindfulness is a Radical, Embodied Educational Practice. Three staff participants identified that mindfulness is an embodied or integrated practice. Khoury et al. (2023) noted, "Embodied mindfulness is a skill/ability that includes elements of attention, awareness, and acceptance involving the mind, body, and mind-body associations" (p. 459). In an interview, mindfulness expert Dr. Amanda Moreno stated:

> Mindfulness is an embodied practice and a present-moment practice. Those two things make it quite radical. Mindfulness is a radical practice because neither feeling embodied in [one's] body nor remaining in the present moment versus being stuck in the past or projecting into the future are not supported in United States culture or

schooling. [Mindfulness] is helpful for adults because they have their metacognition too intact…It is helpful to start with the body.

In a post-professional development interview, Staff Participant 5 highlighted that since participating in the mindfulness-based professional development program, she has a more consistent breathing practice that she integrates into her schedule throughout the school day. Staff Participant 5 noted, "I use deep breaths so many times a day now. It was always a goal, but now it is integrated into my routine. I have confidence in using it and knowing it will work."

Research Question 4

What do early childhood educators say are strategies to sustain mindfulness-based professional development opportunities in their educational settings in the future?

Integrating Mindfulness into Classroom Curriculum. In the post-professional development interview, three staff participants said that mindfulness practices should be integrated into classroom culture and curriculum. Staff Participant 4 stated:

> Mindfulness should be part of our curriculum. This should be content that we must know as teachers and then implement in our classrooms. This should be one of the fundamentals. What about the human part? It is first our human part [of the curriculum] and then the academic part. (Staff Participant 4)

In an interview for this research study, Mindfulness and ECE expert Maria Gehl noted that early childhood educators have many demands placed upon them and that mindfulness practices can be integrated into ECE settings. Gehl stated:

> Early educators have a lot on their plate. There are a lot of expectations and demands, and often it feels like one more thing to do or something they have to add to an already full plate… Mindfulness is not an add-on. We are talking about doing what we are already doing differently. It is like bringing our attention to whatever is happening in a moment; we can practice that. It is not about something separate or different. It is about integration.

In a post-professional development interview, a staff participant noted that early childhood educators need built-in time to integrate mindfulness practices into their practice and curriculum. Staff Participant 5 said:

> For [early childhood educators] to be able to build mindful practices in ourselves, that we then will model to students, time needs to be built into the school day. We need that time to prepare the curriculum and to get the professional development around mindfulness and have our schedules be set in such a way that we have the time to learn those skills and to implement them. (Staff Participant 5)

Integrate Opportunities for Cohorts to Stay Connected, Receive Professional Development, and Ongoing Support. Seven of the staff participants noted a desire to continue receiving ongoing support in various ways after completing the six-month professional development. Many staff participants recommended continuing post-professional development coaching support to sustain and internalize the mindfulness practices they learned during the six-month-long series. Staff Participant 8 suggested that a structure should be developed to offer the gradual release of coaching to participants as a strategy to sustain their mindfulness practices post-professional development experience, which needed to be built into the structure of the mindfulness program. She suggested offering participants to meet with their coach a month after the series to check in about what practices were being sustained and what practices need additional support. Staff Participant 8 stated, "What is it that you are maybe reverting to that you do not want to and look at it again [with your coach] to make it more sustainable? Or [reflecting on] what growth [an individual] wants [take] to another level."

Additional strategies for organizations to embed mindfulness-based professional development opportunities into their structure include offering mindfulness programs in new

employees' onboarding experiences and scheduling mindfulness-based professional development during staff's workdays. Staff Participant 5 recommended that mindfulness-based professional development opportunities be embedded within the contracted hours of educators. Staff Participant 5 noted the value of receiving professional development related to mental health and wellness; however, she shared a desire for training and coaching opportunities to occur during their contracted work hours. In a post-professional development interview, Staff Participant 5 noted:

> We care about our students, of course, so we want to [teach] from the bottom of our hearts. But it will not work if we are not given that time to [participate in mindfulness-based professional development experiences]. We have our busy lives, and we need them built into the day. (Staff Participant 5)

Four staff participants suggested identifying ways to stay connected after completing the professional development series. There was a desire for opportunities to receive refreshers, as a cohort, related to the content initially shared during the professional development sessions. Staff Participant 9 recommended the creation of a group text or messaging system for cohorts to stay connected with each other.

In the post-professional development interview, Staff Participant 1, an early childhood administrator, shared that she had created opportunities to embed mindfulness-based strategies within staff meetings at her child development center. Similarly, because Staff Participant 1 and Staff Participant 3 worked at the same school, they shared that they organically worked together to provide opportunities to bring mindfulness-based practices into their staff meetings. Additionally, they hung *EMBRACE™* posters throughout the school to visually represent mindfulness strategies staff could use to engage in daily mindfulness activities.

Implications and Recommendations

Chapter V will discuss and further examine the themes identified in Chapter IV and illustrated in the exploratory documentary film. Similarly, Chapter V will also include recommendations for implementing mindfulness-based professional development experiences for early childhood educators and suggestions for future research.

Chapter V: Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusion

Investigating approaches to bolster and assist early childhood educators' well-being is essential to responding to educators' stressors and ensuring a sustainable and high-quality workforce (Eadie et al., 2021). Emerson et al. (2017) noted that given the high levels of stress that impact educator health and well-being, which compromises early educators' job performance and satisfaction, rest, burnout, and turnover, there is momentum to identify efficacious interventions to support educators' mental health and wellness needs and stay within the profession. This documentary and exploratory research study aimed to describe, critically evaluate, and better understand how early educators experience mindfulness-based professional development specifically designed for early childhood educators, explore beliefs about early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders, including school district leaders, professional development decision-makers and policymakers, concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings. Finally, this research study aimed to learn whether the staff participants' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors about mindfulness-based professional development changed in their responses from pre- to post-professional development workshops.

The following research questions were utilized to guide the study:

1. What professional development program factors do participants say are the most effective or least effective in supporting their use of mindfulness in ECEsettings?

2. What are early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECEsettings?

3. What do staff participants say about their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors that changed from the pre- to post-professional development interviews?

4. What do early childhood educators say are strategies to sustain mindfulness-based professional development opportunities in their educational settings in the future?

As stated in Chapter III, a documentary film was chosen as the research methodology for this exploratory study. As an individual with a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism, I was compelled to produce a documentary film because of my prior experience, appreciation for the visual medium, and belief that a film might be an opportunity to share my research study with a larger audience. Friend and Militello (2015) noted that film as a research method can revolutionize research from a thing done to subjects to a thing done with participants by co-creating new understandings by including original voices that can be distributed to an expansive audience. Accordingly, the documentary film method served four primary objectives. First, it can be used as a medium to educate and champion public awareness about mindfulness using visual video and numerous media outlets such as Vevo, Vimeo, and YouTube (Gubrium & Harper, 2013). Second, it offers important descriptive data that illustrate the current perceptions of early childhood educator well-being and mindfulness-based professional development (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Third, this documentary format can reach many audiences worldwide, including educators, school leaders, academic researchers, funders, and policy decision-makers (Gubrium & Harper, 2013). Fourth, this documentary film supports the audience's efforts to visualize what mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings looks like in action.

Summary and Implications of Research Findings

Thematic findings of this research study were presented in Chapter IV and the documentary film *Embracing Mindfulness-Based Professional Development in Early Childhood Education* (Giles, 2024). This section presents a summary and implications of findings related to each research question. The summary and findings were based on narratives from the nine staff participant interviews and five expert participant interviews that were conducted. Furthermore, this section will reinforce findings from Chapter IV to emphasize the existing literature.

This study was guided by Tang et al.'s (2015) framework related to mindfulness and neuroscience theory, hypothesizing that mindfulness practices develop specific skills that lead to beneficial outcomes. Tang et al. (2015) suggested that mindfulness practices benefit through enhanced emotional regulation, improved attentional control, and altered self-awareness. This study supported Tang et al.'s theory that mindfulness practices may benefit emotional regulation. Kathleen Strom, an ECE and mindfulness expert from CEL interviewed in the study, noted that early childhood educators who participated in previous mindfulness-based professional development experiences facilitated by CEL noted an increased awareness of being present in the moment, heightened self-regulation, compassion, and empathy. Similarly, Staff Participant 6 said that mindfulness can help her slow down, pause, and be in the present moment.

Research Question 1

What professional development program factors do participants say are the most effective or least effective in supporting their use of mindfulness in ECEsettings?

Coaching is an Essential Component for Successful Implementation. Staff participants in this research study received follow-up coaching support after attending monthly professional development sessions. In post-professional development interviews, eight out of nine staff participants stated that coaching was one of the most effective factors within EMBRACE™, the mindfulness-based professional development program featured in this research study. The findings in this study confirm research related to coaching as a strategy for practical professional development factors. Joyce and Showers (2002) noted that in addition to participating in training sessions, an essential component of professional development includes coaching connected to the training content. To support a change in educator practice, Joyce and Showers (2002) suggested that high-quality professional development consists of growing knowledge through participating in training that investigates theory to comprehend the ideas behind a skill or approach, the demonstration or modeling of specific skills, the practice of the skill, and follow-up coaching to assist in refining and sustaining the skill.

The current study aligns with recommendations by Bates and Morgan (2018). Bates and Morgan (2018) noted that professional development factors must include coaching and support from individuals with content expertise, opportunities for reflection, and sustained duration. *EMBRACE™*, the mindfulness-based professional development program centered in this study, was designed to offer coaching as a fundamental component within the program. The follow-up, ongoing coaching built within the program offered opportunities for staff participants to reflect on their learning, practice new strategies, and identify individual goals to deepen their practice.

Research Question 2

What are early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECEsettings?

Mindfully Embed Ongoing Professional Development Opportunities. Croft et al. (2010) noted that job-embedded professional development allows educators to engage in professional learning designed to enhance educators' instructional practices to increase child outcomes (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Hirsh, 2009). Croft et al. (2010) suggested many formats of job-embedded professional development, such as action research, coaching, peer observation, mentoring, professional learning communities, and data teams. Staff Participant 5 noted, "It will not work if we are not given that time to [participate in mindfulness-based professional development experiences]." Many educators have busy lives outside their contracted hours, which may prohibit their participation in mindfulness-based professional development offered on evenings or weekends.

One staff participant valued the mindfulness-based professional development experience so much so that she suggested that OUSD leadership should make mindfulness-based professional development a mandatory training for all teachers, Hạnh and Weare (2017) cautioned that "it is vital to offer mindfulness to colleagues as a gift and an invitation, and not make it compulsory" (p. 266). Similarly, Hạnh and Weare (2017) noted that "mindfulness, in the sense of the core meditative practices, is not for everyone, and if it is, people need to come to it in a way and at a time that is right for them" (p. 262). To scale training throughout an organization, it may be necessary to offer mindfulness-based professional development opportunities into staff's contracted hours. Similarly, one ECE and

mindfulness expert participant noted in an interview that onboarding is one strategy organizations can use to provide foundational mindfulness training to newly hired employees.

In a post-professional development interview, a staff participant, an ECE principal, noted that early childhood educators typically cannot participate in professional development opportunities during contracted hours. Staff Participant 8 stated:

> We need to build in the time to do it [during the workday]. We really need to take self-care, mindfulness, and yoga as part of our PD. We think of it as separate… The teachers need mental health [support]. If we can incorporate it into our PD sessions, with coaching, so that [early childhood educators] have a place to learn about themselves. If they are better [early childhood educators or leaders], then they will be more supportive of parents and children. How can we embed it where it is more consistent? (Staff Participant 8)

I speculated that the belief in offering mindfulness-based professional development during contracted hours may have impacted the study results due to a labor strike that finished right before the end of the research study. Educators in Oakland had been on strike for over a week, and one of their demands included more professional development time during contracted hours.

Mindful Leadership is Critical. In interviews, staff participants noted the importance of leadership modeling positive mindfulness behaviors and practices and the desire for leaders within ECE organizations to offer mindfulness-based professional development opportunities or other opportunities to meet the mental health and well-being needs of their early childhood educator staff. Brown and Olson (2015) stated, "Educational leaders must engage with these mindfulness practices themselves to legitimately bring mindfulness initiatives to their schools. This requires [leaders] to commit to the practices [themselves] to successfully

embody them" (p. 35). Furthermore, "leading mindfulness is primarily about *modeling* it—about practicing it rather than preaching about its promise (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Sinclair, 2015). Accordingly, while the literature is rife with powerful breathing exercises and meditation techniques that [leaders] can employ" (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2019, p. 91). Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2019) stated that leaders must focus on "the *internal* work of mindful leadership—and the ways it can radiate outward to touch others' lives and experiences" (p. 91).

Cumming and Wong (2019) noted that supporting educator well-being is both an individual's and their employer's joint responsibility. Cumming and Wong (2019) defined early childhood educator well-being as:

> A dynamic state involving the interaction of individual, relational, work-environmental, and socio-cultural-political aspects, and contexts. Educators' well-being is the responsibility of the individual and the agents of these contexts, requiring ongoing direct and indirect support across psychological, physiological, and ethical dimensions. (p. 12)

Organizational leadership is essential, and providing opportunities for early childhood educators to serve as leaders is critical to fostering leadership development within an educational organization. Staff Participant 5 recognized that teacher leadership opportunities are essential for educators to experience ways to build their leadership skills and assist with building capacity in educational organizations. Staff Participant 5 stated that "[teacher] leadership opportunities are great for furthering the *EMBRACE*™ program and in general [because] you are a part of a community. Leading something is a way to understand [content] from a different lens."

Leaders have the duty to create and sustain working conditions that support educators'

positive mental health and well-being. Pipe and Bortz (2009) documented, "When guided by

caring science, leadership has the possibility and responsibility to bring about healing

through the power of transpersonal caring relationships" (p. 35). Hạnh and Weare (2017)

noted:

> Administrators may be attracted to mindfulness because they think it will improve
> academic performance and prevent teachers burning out. But the practice of
> mindfulness can do much more. The practice of right mindfulness can help both
> teachers and students suffer less; they will be able to improve communication and
> create a learning environment that is more compassionate and understanding.
> Students can learn very important things, such as how to handle strong emotions, how
> to take care of anger, how to relax and release tension, how to restore communication
> and reconcile with others. What's the use of learning if that learning doesn't bring
> happiness? The practice of right mindfulness can bring about a deep change both in
> the classroom and the wider education system, so we can educate people in such a
> way that they can be truly happy. If, while doing so, the students can learn more
> easily and quickly, and educators can avoid burning out, that is also wonderful. (p.
> xxvii)

Research Question 3

What do staff participants say about their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and

behaviors changed from the pre- to post-professional development interviews?

Increased Ability to Describe Specific Mindfulness Practices in Post-Professional

Interviews. The current study aligned with Hatton-Bowers et al. (2022), who noted that after

early childhood educators participated in mindfulness-based professional development

opportunities, educators had a "stronger capacity to describe and observe emotions both

within themselves and in the children, they cared for and educated" (p. 1301). In most pre-

professional development interviews with staff participants, when asked about what

mindfulness practices they use in their ECE settings, they were limited in their responses compared to their responses in post-professional development interviews.

In the pre-professional development interviews, many staff participants named breathing exercises like the candle/flower strategy as mindfulness strategies they used in their ECE settings. In this strategy, educators ask children to hold out a finger and smell it like a pretend flower while inhaling and pretend that their finger is a candle they need to blow out while exhaling. However, in the post-professional development interviews, many of the staff participants could describe, in greater detail, which mindfulness-related strategies they use in their classroom context. For example, many of the strategies or tools they used were included in the *EMBRACE™* curriculum and toolkit, like using the Hoberman sphere to model breathing, engaging in body scans, various breathing techniques, guided meditations, or visualization activities, using essential oils to support calming classroom environments, and going on mindful walks outside the classroom.

Hạnh and Weare (2017) identified that mindful breathing may assist educators to teach better. They stated, "Mindful breathing brings our mind home to our body so that we can establish ourselves in the here and the now, fully present to live each moment of our daily life deeply" (Hạnh & Weare, 2017, p. 3). Developing awareness of body and breath awareness may decrease stress and increase happiness (Hạnh & Weare, 2017). Hạnh and Weare (2017) noted, "Staying in touch with our breathing when in the middle of the busy, demanding, and stressful challenges of a teaching day can help us stay centered" (p. 13).

In a post-professional development interview, Staff Participant 4 described that since

participating in the mindfulness-based professional development experience, she believes she

can breathe more effectively. Staff Participant 4 said:

> I have changed a lot. I now have many tools. For me, my anxiety went down. My
> stress went down. I look for my moments. I set a reminder on my phone to remind me
> to take my time to relax and breathe deeply. I learned to breathe with my stomach, not
> my chest. I really learned to recognize my triggers, moments that spike my anxiety or
> stress. And then, of course, because I am calmer, I am more relaxed, more aware,
> more here. Above all, I am more here. I am not worried about what is going to happen
> tomorrow. Now. Here. Present. That has relaxed me a lot. So, I am enjoying being a
> teacher again. (Staff Participant 4)

It is Hard to Name the Benefits of Participating in Mindfulness-Based Professional

Development. As a veteran early childhood special educator, Staff Participant 6 noted that

many forms of professional development are tied to serving immediate outcomes. However,

this mindfulness-based professional development experience provided not only immediate

outcomes but also internal outcomes that need to be identified. Staff Participant 6 said:

> I did have a lot of immediate outcomes from this professional development. However,
> I think many of them are more internal and harder to name than [for example,
> learning strategies] in a new math curriculum. The benefits will last. It is not like I
> learned this thing, and now I am done. I learned this thing that I can continue to learn
> about and grow, implement daily, and teach children about. [Mindfulness-based
> professional development] is so powerful and needs to be there with all the other
> types of professional development, or teachers will not be able to stay in the
> profession. They will not be able to implement all those things and serve children in
> the best way possible if they cannot take care of themselves and if they cannot
> prioritize their mental health and the mental health of their students. A lot of times,
> we will skip right to the academics and testable skills, but if a child is not able to
> regulate, have a calm mind and body, and be in the moment, then they are not going
> to be able to learn the academic skills. (Staff Participant 6)

In a mindfulness-based professional development program study by Hatton-Bowers et al.

(2022), it was found that "learning about mindfulness, self-compassion, and SELappeared to

be acceptable by early childhood [educators]" (p. 1298). Though it may be challenging for

some educators to name the long-term benefits of participating in mindfulness-based professional development activities, it may provide opportunities for educators to learn about mindfulness-related topics such as self-awareness, self-development, social-emotional learning, and compassion. Similarly, mindfulness-based professional development may support early childhood educators' emotional regulation, mental health, and workplace well-being (Hatton-Bowers et al., 2022).

Selflessness: Mindfulness-Based Professional Development for Self But Many Educators Wanted to Bring Back Strategies into Their Classrooms. When asked about the reason for committing to participate in the mindfulness-based professional development series in the pre-professional development interviews, six of the nine staff participants who completed the series noted a desire to learn more about strategies and build knowledge related to self-healing, personal development, or self-awareness. Though the *EMBRACE™* professional development program was designed to address early childhood educator's self-development (CEL, n.d.), one-third of the staff participants stated that one of their hopes for participating in the mindfulness-based professional development series was to learn mindfulness strategies and share them with their colleagues or the children and families in their classrooms. Thus, one-third of the staff participants demonstrated selflessness as this was an opportunity for personal growth even though they planned to share the practices learned during the professional development series with others. Erdman et al. (2020) noted, "The selflessness it takes to work with, nurture, and teach young children is a testament to the commitment that those who have chosen this profession have" (p. 30).

In a post-professional development interview, a staff participant noted that mindfulness allows individuals to get to know themselves first, which supports their ability to form healthy relationships with the children in their classrooms. Staff Participant 5 said:

> Mindfulness is the base of having good social relationships because it [supports] a relationship with yourself and your body first. Everything we teach [young children] about self-regulation, they need to be aware of their body and know that it is a safe place. As teachers, the best way we can teach that is to model it… One of the most powerful things you can do as an [early childhood educator] is to have the tool of mindfulness. (Staff Participant 5)

The current study confirmed findings from a study led by Hatton-Bowers et al. (2022), which involved over 100 early childhood educators in Nebraska, United States, participating in a mindfulness-based professional development program. In their study, Hatton-Bowers et al. (2022) noted, "It was interesting that early childhood teachers were invested not only in learning these tools for themselves but also in proactively implementing mindfulness strategies with children in the classroom" (p. 1298).

Research Question 4

What do early childhood educators say are strategies to sustain mindfulness-based professional development opportunities in their educational settings in the future?

Offer Train-the-Trainer Model of PD to Build Internal Capacity. Attard-Tonna and Bugeja (2018) recognized that train-the-trainer models may help build internal capacity in organizations, assist with education reform, and empower educators and leaders. Two staff participants emphasized the need to provide opportunities for participants who completed the mindfulness-based professional development series to participate in a train-the-trainer opportunity as a strategy to provide additional leadership opportunities and build internal capacity.

Staff Participant 6 stated that because the contracted professional development session facilitator and coaches lived outside of the San Francisco Bay Area, they may not have deep knowledge of the current context within Oakland and that it would be powerful to have OUSD educators trained to facilitate and coach the sessions as they would likely be aware of the context within the City of Oakland and OUSD. Staff Participant 6 stated:

> It would be powerful if there were [educators] within the district that could provide coaching services and professional development. Someone in Oakland who is experiencing similar situations can even better meet [Oakland's educators'] needs. (Staff Participant 6)

Self-Care During Contracted Hours is Not Selfish. In post-professional development interviews, nearly half of the staff participants noted an increased awareness of self-care practices after participating in a mindfulness-based professional development program. One participant noted the need for organizations to embed opportunities to engage in self-care practices during future professional development and coaching opportunities. Additionally, Staff Participant 5 emphasized that school district leaders must offer more opportunities for educators to engage in activities supporting early childhood educators' mental health and well-being during their contracted hours.

Jennings (2015b) noted that many educators believe that they do not have time to practice self-care. Jennings (2015b) stated:

> When I introduce the importance of self-care to groups of teachers in a mindfulness workshop, they often say, 'But I don't have any time to take care of myself.' The fact of the matter is that we have to make self-care a priority and set aside time for self-care activities. It takes time, self-awareness, and practice to find the balance of activities that best promotes our personal growth and development. Mindfulness can help us notice when we're out of balance. (p. 112)

In a self-care guide for early childhood educators, the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (2018) highlighted the importance of engaging in self-care practices as it noted:

> Be sure to recognize the importance of taking care of yourself. The time you invest in your health and happiness will never be wasted. Make yourself a priority. The work you do with infants, toddlers, and their families is priceless, and you deserve every bit of self-care. (p. 2)

Recommendations

This section lists recommendations for (1) school leaders and district policy, (2) improved practice, and (3) future research.

Recommendations for Education Leaders and District Policy

- When coordinating mindfulness-based professional development opportunities and coaching sessions for early childhood educators, aim to offer them during the staff's contracted work hours. By providing it during contracted hours, more educators may be able to participate in the experience.

- Develop school and district policies to invite staff to participate in mindfulness-based professional development and coaching sessions which aligns with Liu's (2020) suggestion that school districts should create policies to provide time to participate in and promote mindfulness activities and identify strategies for educators who sustain their mindfulness practices with the goal of developing intentional mindfulness habits.

- Hạnh and Weare (2017) and Hatton-Bowers et al. (2022) noted that staff should be invited, not required, to participate in mindfulness-based professional development.

Offering mindfulness training aims to develop a culture of compassion, kindness, self-reflection, self-awareness, self-development, and relationship-building. One strategy is to embed mindfulness-based professional development opportunities within in-service training menus or invite new employees to participate in their onboarding experience.

- While developing a plan to offer mindfulness-based professional development opportunities for early childhood educators, ensure a sustainability plan post-professional development series. Many of the staff participants in the study recommended that school districts create opportunities for previous cohorts to stay connected and engaged in additional mindfulness-based professional development opportunities. Some considerations include inviting previous participants to serve as mindfulness teacher leaders trained to become trainers, ambassadors, or coaches. This may assist with building institutional capacity and sustainability while providing educators with leadership opportunities.

- Prioritize funding for healing-centered professional development in a school or district's budget for educators to participate in paid mindfulness-based professional development opportunities, self-care, reflective practice, and coaching. Schön (1983) noted that reflection-in-action, the ability to step away, is where individuals consciously reflect on their practice and adjust their actions while engaged in a behavior. By offering human-centered professional development opportunities, staff may feel more valued in organizations prioritizing funding to support educators' mental health and wellness needs.

- Complete a cost analysis to determine how much it would cost to offer mindfulness-based professional development during educators' contracted workday versus how much it would cost to pay staff to participate in mindfulness-based professional development outside of the contracted workday. Similarly, there may be cost savings if mindfulness-based professional development experiences increase job satisfaction and decrease burnout. If mindfulness practices support staff's mental health and well-being, employees may utilize fewer sick days that require employers to hire substitutes when staff are absent.

- Build sustainable internal capacity and leadership opportunities by developing the infrastructure for staff participants who complete the mindfulness training to become mindfulness leaders within an educational institution. Strategies include offering a train-the-trainer model for past participants to become trained as professional development facilitators and coaches within an organization. If more facilitators and coaches are trained to offer mindfulness programs, it may assist in scaling mindfulness-based professional development throughout an organization, which may impact the culture and climate within the organization.

Recommendations for Improved Practice

- Many educators work hours beyond their contracted time. In this study, the mindfulness-based training and follow-up coaching sessions took place outside the staff participants' work hours, either before or after school. This was challenging for participants who had obligations to address during their personal time. Staff participants noted a desire for future mindfulness-based professional development

opportunities and coaching sessions to be embedded within an educator's contracted hours. If district leaders extend staff's working hours beyond contracted time, they will need to consider how comfortable they are with extending time and what this action means to district budgets. Where will the money come from? Can childcare be offered for staff participants who have children? These considerations must be made to determine how to accurately represent the costs of mindfulness-based training and follow-up coaching sessions.

- Build healing-centered systems of mindfulness, self-care, and SEL within educational organizations. Encourage early childhood educators, school district leaders, professional development decision-makers, and education policymakers to participate in mindfulness-based professional development experiences to build awareness of mindfulness and self-care as a professional development tool for early childhood educators.

Recommendations for Future Research

- There is a need to conduct long-term research on mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings across different demographics (class, race, gender) and geographic locations in urban, suburban or rural areas across the United States. To provide additional knowledge and understanding of mindfulness-based professional development opportunities for early childhood educators, research studies involving control groups will provide more insight into the long-term impact of mindfulness-based professional development practices designed for early childhood educators.

- This study employed a convenience sampling method to select participants. In future studies, I recommend utilizing a randomized sampling method to have a more fair and equal chance of being selected to participate in future studies.

- Studies of the long-term sustainability of mindfulness practices for early childhood educators are needed. Consider following up with the research study participants in three to five years to investigate if and how the participants are utilizing mindfulness in their personal lives and ECE settings. How long will participants' mindfulness practices last? Is there a decline in the effects of the professional development over time? Furthermore, there is a need for future research on the long-term effects of mindfulness-based professional development compared with other kinds of professional development.

- A follow-up study is needed to assess the sustainable outcomes and benefits of participating in a mindfulness-based professional development series. This study allowed participants to participate in a mindfulness-based professional development series for six months; however, more information is needed to determine if the participants could sustain the benefits and practices learned during the research study.

- This research study did not collect demographic data related to age or years of experience. Future research is needed to collect more detailed data related to demographics to investigate any correlations between age or years of experience and the stated benefits, if any, related to mindfulness-based professional development.

- *EMBRACE™* was the mindfulness-based professional development program featured in this study. Future studies need to be conducted analyzing other mindfulness training programs, curriculum features, and methods.

Conclusion

This research study utilized exploratory documentary and qualitative methods to describe the characteristics and qualities and learn more about whether the staff participants' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors about mindfulness-based professional development changed in their responses from pre- to post-mindfulness-based professional development interviews within OUSD's ECE Department in Oakland, California, USA. Data collection included the filming of educator training, interviews with staff participants and experts to gather the perspective of staff participants and observing mindfulness-based professional development in action.

Additionally, experts in the field of ECE and mindfulness were interviewed to assist me in critically evaluating how early educators experience mindfulness-based professional development designed for early childhood educators, explore beliefs about early childhood educators' knowledge expectations for education leaders, including school district leaders, professional development decision-makers and policymakers, concerning mindfulness-based professional development in ECE settings, and learn more about whether the staff participants' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors about mindfulness-based professional development changed in their responses from pre- to post-professional development workshops.

The study aimed to fill a population gap in the literature surrounding mindfulness in ECE by providing insight into how mindfulness-based professional development can be integrated into the professional development of early childhood educators. The following themes emerged in the study: (1) ongoing coaching support is critical in participants' perceptions of effective professional development factors, (2) increased awareness of using one's breath as a self-regulation strategy for participants, and (3) mindfulness-based professional development opportunities should be integrated into job-embedded professional development opportunities. The findings of this study provide education leaders with recommendations for implementing and sustaining mindfulness-based interventions in ECE systems.

The written dissertation is presented in five chapters with an accompanying documentary film. Chapter I provided an overview of the study's background and setting, followed by the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and guiding research questions. In Chapter II, I reviewed the current literature related to (a) early childhood educator well-being, (b) self-care, (c) social-emotional learning, (d) trauma, (e) trauma-responsive practices, (f) mindfulness, (g) mindfulness in ECE, and (h) mindfulness in education, (i) professional development, and (j) mindfulness-based professional development. Most reviewed literature examined how mindfulness-based professional development is utilized in the K-12 systems (Chung et al., 2021; Herrmann & Gallo, 2013; Le & Alefaio, 2018; Roeser et al., 2012; Schussler et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2016). Likewise, a population gap was exposed in the reviewed literature as most studies focus on the K-12 settings, not in ECE settings. Chapter III concentrated on the methodology, research design, and documentary filming process related to the study. I explained why the making of an exploratory documentary film

and a more extensive qualitative research study were selected and presented information about the staff and expert participants, setting, data sources, and data analysis process. Data were collected from videotaped one-on-one interviews and observations. In Chapter IV, the study results were presented for each data source and synthesized to reveal the overarching themes of the study. The chapter also included responses to the research questions. Finally, Chapter V discussed the findings, implications, and recommendations for education leaders and policymakers, improved practice, and future research.

When I reflect on this research study, the word integrate comes to mind. Integrating mindfulness into education-based organizations may benefit not only the educators themselves but also the children, the school community, and the quality of education as a whole. By prioritizing mindfulness-based professional development, educators can create more supportive, compassionate, and effective learning environments for young children. Ultimately, I believe this study reinforced the importance of integrating ongoing coaching connected to professional development opportunities, as well as the need to integrate opportunities for cohorts to stay connected post-professional development series by offering boosters or professional learning communities that cultivate self-development, self-awareness, self-regulation, and social relationships. Both expert and staff participants identified the need to integrate mindfulness into the classroom curriculum which can be done at little or no additional cost to schools. Additionally, both staff and expert participants also noted the importance of leaders integrating mindfulness into their leadership style. Staff Participant 3 stated, "It is super important to see my leaders practicing and implementing mindfulness and suggesting and supporting these same practices." She also said that her

family and culture did not talk about mental health and well-being, but seeing leaders at work discuss these topics made it feel safe for her to talk about it. She noted, "It opens up [the] platform and conversation and builds a safe place for [discussing mental health and well-being]." Finally, integrating self-care and mindfulness into the workplace may not only benefit educators' well-being but also organizational culture and sustainability. By prioritizing self-care and mindfulness, employers can create healthier and happier work environments for everyone.

In early childhood education, we often find ways to meet the needs of the whole child and the whole family, but mindfulness-based professional development may be a helpful strategy to meet the whole early childhood educator's needs. This study may impact the field in several ways. It may increase awareness on the importance of utilizing mindfulness practices to cultivate healing-centered approaches for early childhood educators. Furthermore, this study may assist in recognizing the need to build healing-centered systems of mindfulness, self-care, reflective practice, and SEL that prioritize the whole educator's needs within educational organizations. Finally, I hope this study lifts up the need to prioritize human-centered forms of professional development, such as mindfulness-based professional development, that may support early childhood educators in doing the "inner work" as they heal from STSand provide pathways to equip early childhood educators with tools to cope with day-to-day stress in their profession which may decrease burnout and turnover and support early childhood educators' mental health, well-being, and resilience.

Finally, I'd like to close this chapter with some words from the late mindfulness scholar Thích Nhất Hạnh who said:

> Administrators may be attracted to mindfulness because they think it will improve academic performance and prevent teachers burning out. But the practice of mindfulness can do much more. The practice of right mindfulness can help both teachers and students suffer less; they will be able to improve communication and create a learning environment that is more compassionate and understanding. Students can learn very important things, such as how to handle strong emotions, how to take care of anger, how to relax and release tension, how to restore communication and reconcile with others. What's the use of learning if learning doesn't bring you happiness? The practice of right mindfulness can bring about a deep change both in the classroom and the wider education system, so we can educate people in such a way that they can be truly happy. If, while doing so, students can learn more easily and quickly, and educators can avoid burning out, that is also wonderful. (Hạnh & Weare, 2017, p xxvii)

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me. I appreciate your time. This interview will take about 15-30 minutes, but you may ask to stop the interview at any point. The purpose of this conversation is to talk about your perspectives and experiences with mindfulness-based professional development and well-being. This interview is part of an educational study that is required as part of the Educational Leadership doctoral program at San José State University. I'd like to ask you a few questions about your experiences here. Is that okay? I'd like to ask for your permission to video record our conversation for a documentary. This documentary is intended for use in the classrooms, by educational agencies and organizations and educational and Public Broadcast System (PBS) television stations. If you want me to stop at any time, just let me know. Is this okay with you? Do you have any questions before we get started?

Interview Questions:
1. How did you decide to participate in mindfulness-based professional development?
2. What is your hope for participating in mindfulness-based professional development?
3. Which mindfulness practices, if any, are the most useful in the classroom context? In your daily life outside the classroom?
4. What aspect of mindfulness do you find the most helpful to your practice as an early childhood educator? Please describe a specific example, situation, or practice you use in the classroom.
5. Are there practices you experienced through mindfulness-based professional development you use in your ECE setting? If so, which ones? How often?
6. Have you noticed some specific well-being-related benefits since participating in mindfulness-based professional development? Would you tell me about them?
7. Is there anything else important in understanding your mindfulness practice or experience as an early childhood educator?

Appendix B: Operationalized Definitions

Terms	Definitions
Compassion fatigue	Similarly, Etchells et al. (2021) noted that individuals who serve individuals who have been exposed to trauma, such as educators, counselors, and social workers, are more vulnerable to secondary traumatic stress, as those individuals may indirectly experience the trauma of the children and families they serve which may lead to compassion fatigue, an outcome of absorbing the trauma and emotions associated with assisting or caring for others (Berger et al., 2016; Cohen et al., 2006; Saakvitne, 2002).
EMBRACE™	*EMBRACE™* is an acronym for *Effective Mindfulness, Building Responsive and Confident Educators*. *EMBRACE™* is a mindfulness-based professional development and education curriculum for early childhood educators. It embodies a methodology to build the skillset and the mindset to reduce emotional exhaustion and shape responsive relationships. It is a four-pronged approach combining a Mindfulness Toolkit and Curriculum, intensive training, on-going research-based coaching and a robust evaluation. It includes a menu of tools to promote educator's physical and emotional well-being, strategies to create healthy work environments and actions to positively shift school culture. It is a program designed to increase emotional stamina - equipping teachers with the right tools for the right job. (CEL, n.d.)
Mindfulness	Mindfulness, the practice of present-moment experience, can be utilized as an approach for grounding in challenging dialogues and constructing pathways for transformative change (Cash et al., 2021).
Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction	One of the first contemporary mindfulness practices, developed in the late 1970s with the intention to reduce stress.
Resilience	The umbrella term resilience often describes the extent to which we are protected from declining mental health. However, it is relatively imprecise because each of us has different degrees of vulnerability to various mental health conditions. The notion that meditation is a panacea persists,

	even though most meditation and mindfulness research focus on a limited number of cognitive traits and states. So, it's perhaps important to talk about resilience concerning specific mental health challenges.
Trauma-Responsive Practices	Nicholson et al. (2023) noted that at the foundation of trauma-responsive practices is an understanding of how trauma and stress influence children's growth and development. Trauma-responsive early childhood educators construct restorative environments that decrease children's stress and help them construct resilience that decreases the possibility of children experiencing feelings of being emotionally triggered and in danger.

Appendix C: Informed Consent

RELEASE FOR PARTICIPATION IN EdD RESEARCH STUDY & DOCUMENTARY FILM:

EMBRACING MINDFULFULNESS-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY

CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

I, the undersigned, hereby consent to the use of my name, physical image, and voice in the

educational documentary, EMBRACING MINDFULNESS-BASED PROFESSIONAL

DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (a working title) produced and

directed by Drew Giles. This documentary is intended for use in the classrooms, by

educational agencies and organizations and educational and Public Broadcast System (PBS)

television stations. In giving this consent, I hereby release Drew Giles of any proprietary

rights that I may have regarding this production. I do not expect to be paid for my

participation.

NAME:_____

DATE:_____

SIGNATURE:_____

CONTACT INFORMATION: _____

If under the age of 18, have parent or guardian complete the following:

NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN:_____

SIGNATURE:_____

CONTACT INFORMATION: _____

Appendix D: Documentary Shot List

Frame	Speaker	Image/Action	Sound	Location	Status	Minutes
	Narrator ▼	Scenes of OUSD schools	Intro setting & problem statement	B-Roll ▼	Complete ▼	1
1	Narrator ▼	Scenes of OAK - Flyover Oakland, BART, Lake Merritt	Sounds of OAK - BART, cars, bustling city	City ▼	Complete ▼	0.5
2	Expert 1 ▼	Expert Interview	Expert(s) describing statistics related to workforce stress, challenges, broken system	Zoom ▼	Complete ▼	0.5
3	Recording ▼	Footage from recordings	Recording of newsclips	Recording ▼	Complete ▼	0.5
4	Staff Participant 1 ▼	ECE educator getting ready for school (daily routine)	Pre-interview audio of T explaining challenges of being T & mindfulness explanation	Participant's Home ▼	Complete ▼	1
5	Staff Participant 8 ▼	T preparing classroom	Pencil sharpener, audio from interview	Classroom ▼	Complete ▼	0.25
6	Staff Participant 1 ▼	Participant Interview	Challenges related to stress & wellness	Classroom ▼	Complete ▼	0.25
7	Expert 2 ▼	Expert Interview	Interview audio - stress in ece	Zoom ▼	Complete ▼	0.5
8	Staff Participant 2 ▼	Participant Interview	Challenges related to stress & wellness	Classroom ▼	Complete ▼	0.25
9	Expert 3 ▼	Expert Interview	Interview audio	Zoom ▼	Complete ▼	0.5
10	Staff Participant 2 ▼	Participant Interview	Challenges related to stress & wellness	Classroom ▼	Complete ▼	0.25
11	Staff Participant 4 ▼	Participant Interview	Challenges related to stress & wellness	Classroom ▼	Complete ▼	0.25
12	Staff Participant 5 ▼	Participant Interview	Challenges related to stress & wellness	Classroom ▼	Complete ▼	0.25
13	Narrator ▼	School Scenes	We knew we needed to do something different to address educators' needs	School ▼	Complete ▼	0.5
14	Narrator ▼	Various scenes of schools	Intro research study	School ▼	Complete ▼	1
15	Expert 1 ▼	Expert Interview	What is EMBRACE?	Zoom ▼	Complete ▼	1
	Expert 2 ▼	Expert Interview	Definition of Mindfulness	Zoom ▼	Complete ▼	1
16	Narrator ▼	Training footage	Intro research questions	Training Space ▼	Complete ▼	0.5
17	PD Facilitator ▼	Participant Interview	Explanation of PD Intervention	Zoom ▼	Complete ▼	0.5
	Narrator ▼	Training footage	Definition of MBPD	Training Space ▼	Complete ▼	1
18	Staff Participant 1 ▼	Participant Interview	Pre-Interview Audio (explaining stress, challenges)	Interview location ▼	Complete ▼	0.5
19	Staff Participant 2 ▼	Participant Interview	Pre-Interview Audio	Interview location ▼	Complete ▼	0.5
20	PD Facilitator ▼	Training footage	Sounds from training	Training Space ▼	Complete ▼	3
21	Expert 2 ▼	Expert Interview	Explaining benefits for MBPD	Zoom ▼	Complete ▼	1
22	PD Facilitator ▼	Training footage	Sounds from training (explanation of strategy)	Training Space ▼	Complete ▼	0.5
23	Expert 4 ▼	Expert Interview	Interview audio	Zoom ▼	Complete ▼	0.5
24	Staff Participant 2 ▼	Classroom footage	Seeing strategy in action	Classroom ▼	Complete ▼	0.25
25	Staff Participant 1 ▼	Classroom footage	Classroom sounds	Classroom ▼	Complete ▼	0.25
26	Staff Participant 1 ▼	Participant Interview	Post-PD interview	Interview location ▼	Complete ▼	1

Appendix E: Documentary Sequence List

Sequence of Documentary			
Scene #	Question #	Question	Speaker
1	1	What do you want leaders to know about MBPD?	Expert
1	2	Have you noticed any specific mental health and well-being-related benefits since participating in mindfulness-based professional development?	Staff
2	3	Who are you, and what do you do?	Staff
2	4	How did you decide to become an EC educator? Why is ECE important?	Staff
2	5	What are some of the best parts of working with young children?	Staff
2	6	What are some of the most challenging parts of working with young children?	Staff
2	7	How do you manage stress and burnout as well as cope with the emotional challenges in working in ECE?	Staff
3	8	When you hear the term mindfulness, what are the big concepts or ideas that come to mind?	Expert
3	9	How can mindfulness be used in ECE settings?	Expert
3	10	What mindfulness strategies can be used to manage the cognitive and emotional load that early childhood educators may face?	Expert
3	11	How did you decide to participate in MBPD?	Staff
3	12	What is your hope for participating in MBPD?	Staff
3	13	What are the potential outcomes of participating in MBPD activities?	Expert
4	14	EMBRACE PD Sessions via Zoom	B-roll
4	15	How would you describe the characteristics of educators who practice mindfulness? What kinds of behaviors would you be able to recognize in a teacher who practices mindfulness?	Expert
5	16	What PD program factors (PD sessions, coaching, journaling, materials, etc.) do you preceive as most effective in supporting your use of mindfulness in ECE settings?	Staff
5	17	What PD program factors (PD sessions, coaching, journaling, materials, etc.) do you preceive as most ineffective in supporting your use of mindfulness in ECE settings?	Staff
5	18	What are your learning outcomes (new skills, strategies, abilities) from participating in EMBRACE?	Staff
5	19	What actions do you demonstrate since participating in EMBRACE in your work and interactions wtih kids and adults?	Staff
5	20	What words do you demonstrate since participating in EMBRACE in your work and interactions wtih kids and adults?	Staff
5	21	Is there anything else you think is important in understanding your mindfulness practice or experience as an EC educator?	Staff/Expert
6	22	Are there practices you experienced through mindfulness-based professional development you use in your early childhood education setting? If so, which ones? How often?	Staff
6	23	Which mindfulness practices did you find to be the most useful in the classroom context? In your daily life outside the classroom?	Staff
6	24	What aspect of mindfulness do you find the most helpful to your practice as an early childhood educator? Please describe a specific example, situation, or practice that you use in the classroom.	Staff
6	25	What do you want leaders to know about MBPD?	Staff
6	26	What recs or ideas do you have to sustain your practice?	Staff
6	27	Expert - Powerful closing	Expert