

OUTDOOR TIME PRACTICES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: PARENT AND  
TEACHER VIEWS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
THE MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

MELİKE KANDEMİR

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN  
THE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

OCTOBER 2020



Approval of the thesis:

**OUTDOOR TIME PRACTICES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION:  
PARENT AND TEACHER VIEWS**

submitted by MELİKE KANDEMİR in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Science in Elementary and Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Education, the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI  
Dean  
Graduate School of Social Sciences

---

Prof. Dr. Feyza Tantekin ERDEN  
Head of Department  
Early Childhood Education

---

Assist. Prof. Dr. Serap Sevimli ÇELİK  
Supervisor  
Early Childhood Education

---

**Examining Committee Members:**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sühendan ER (Head of the Examining Committee)  
TED University  
Early Childhood Education

---

Assist. Prof. Dr. Serap Sevimli ÇELİK (Supervisor)  
Middle East Technical University  
Early Childhood Education

---

Assist. Prof. Dr. Hasibe Özlen DEMİRCAN  
Middle East Technical University  
Early Childhood Education

---



**I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.**

**Name Last name:** Melike KANDEMİR

**Signature**

## ABSTRACT

### OUTDOOR TIME PRACTICES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: PARENT AND TEACHER VIEWS

KANDEMİR, Melike

M.S., Department of Early Childhood Education

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Serap SEVİMLİ-ÇELİK

October 2020, 151 pages

This study was conducted with three aims which are exploring early childhood teachers' and parents' views regarding the outdoor time and examining teachers' outdoor time practices. Qualitative approaches were used to deeply investigate, gain a deeper understanding, and provide a broader perspective on the outdoor time concept during early childhood education. The sample of this qualitative study is 12 early childhood teachers who worked in a private kindergarten and 35 parents whose children were registered the same kindergarten in Çankaya, Ankara. Data sources were semi-structured interviews with teachers and parents, observation of teachers' outdoor practices, and document analysis of outdoor activities in the monthly education plans. Results displayed that both teachers and parents valued outdoor time due to the positive effects on development and learning. However, the study also found that views of the teachers and the parents vary according to some components like safety and weather. Parental concerns, weather conditions, and inadequate outdoor materials were stressed as some of the barriers to outdoor time. It was also observed that outdoor time was mostly aimed for exploring nature, providing free play, and releasing extra energy of children. Also, it was revealed that outdoor practices changes according to components like teachers' outdoor education background, developmental levels of children, and parental concerns. Based on the document analysis, it was reached that the frequency of outdoor plans changes according to age and seasons. Furthermore, nature-related topics were mostly

focused and learning materials were preferred as natural components in outdoor activity plans.

**Keywords:** Early childhood education, outdoor time, early childhood teachers, parents, qualitative study

## ÖZ

### ERKEN ÇOCUKLUK EĞİTİMİNDE AÇIK HAVA ZAMANI UYGULAMALARI: ÖĞRETMEN VE VELİ GÖRÜŞLERİ

KANDEMİR, Melike  
Yüksek Lisans, Okul Öncesi Eğitimi  
Tez Yöneticisi: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Serap SEVİMLİ-ÇELİK

Ekim 2020, 151 Sayfa

Bu araştırma ile okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin ve velilerin, anaokullarında gerçekleştirilen açık hava zamanına ilişkin görüşlerinin ve açık hava zamanı uygulamalarının incelenmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Araştırma amaçlarına paralel olarak detaylı ve derinlemesine bilgilere ve daha geniş bir perspektife ulaşmak için nitel araştırma metodu kullanılmıştır. Ankara, Çankaya'da özel bir anaokulunda çalışan 12 okul öncesi öğretmeni ve çocukların bu anaokulunda kayıtlı olan 35 veli araştırmanın çalışma grubunu oluşturmaktadır. Çalışma verileri öğretmenler ve veliler ile yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler, açık hava zamanı sırasında yapılan gözlemler ve aylık eğitim planı içerisinde yer alan açık hava etkinliklerinin incelenmesi ile toplanmıştır. Okulun dış mekâni oyun alanı, botanik bahçesi ve arka bahçesi çalışmanın gözlem alanlarını oluşturmaktadır. Araştırma bulguları, öğretmenlerin ve velilerin çocukların gelişim ve öğrenme süreçlerine olumlu katkılarında bulunduğu için açık hava zamanına önem verdiklerini göstermektedir. Öte yandan bu çalışma öğretmenlerin ve velilerin açık hava zamanına ilişkin görüşlerinin güvenlik, hava koşulları ve hijyen gibi çeşitli unsurlarla değiştigini ortaya koymaktadır. Veli endişesi, iç mekân etkinliklerinin yoğunluğu, soğuk hava koşulları, yetersiz dış mekân ve dış mekân materyalleri gibi unsurların açık hava zamanını engellediği öğretmenler tarafından ileri sürülmüştür. Açık hava zamanının çoğullukla doğayı keşfetme, serbest oyun oynama ve enerji atma amacıyla kullanıldığı gözlemlenmiştir. Ayrıca açık hava zamanının yapısının, sikliğinin ve sürekliliğinin çocukların gelişim seviyeleri, hava koşulları ve veli endişesine göre değiştiği

gözlemlenmiştir. Doküman analizine bağlı olarak, açık hava etkinlik planlarının sıklığının yaş gruplarına ve mevsimlere göre değiştiği, planlarda genel olarak doğa ile ilgili temalara odaklanıldığı ve öğrenme materyali olarak doğal materyallerin yer aldığı sonuçlarına ulaşılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Okul öncesi eğitim, okul öncesi öğretmenleri, ebeveynler, açık hava zamanı, nitel çalışma

*To my family...*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation for the people who supported and encouraged me in the completion of this thesis. First of all, I would like to thank and express my deepest and most sincere gratitude to my supervisor Assist. Prof. Dr. Serap SEVİMLİ-ÇELİK for her guidance, support, and valuable contributions throughout this thesis. She has always been an excellent role model for me. Without her never-ending encouragement, patience, support, trust, and criticism, it would not have been possible to complete this thesis. I would like to thank and express my gratitude to my committee members, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sühendan ER and Assist. Prof. Dr. Hasibe Özlen DEMİRCAN for their valuable comments, contributions, and suggestions to enhance my study.

I would like to express my gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Adile Gülşah SARANLI and Assist. Prof. Dr. Elif Karslı ÇALAMAK for their expert opinions to enhance the thesis's method. I would like to thank Meryem Gühan for her expert opinion in method and I would like to thank Ayşenur MUMCUOĞLU for her valuable support in data analysis. I am also deeply indebted to Uzm. Psk. Senem ÖZDEMİR who enabled me to conduct this research, support for the whole process, and also being an excellent guide in my teaching life. For her positive energy, valuable suggestions, support, and guidance during all processes, I am thankful to Kadriye AKDEMİR I also would like to thank Gizem SOLMAZ for her support at the beginning of my journey.

I am grateful to my friends Ayşenur MUMCUOĞLU, Büşra MEMİŞOĞLU, and Rahime İNAN for their enormous support in my personal and professional life. I am thankful for our friendship that always nourishes me. For their precious friendship and encouragement, I am also thankful to my dear friends Sidre Ilgin EZER, Nurgül ÇİVİCİ, and Cansu ÖZTÜRK for their life energy and moral support. I feel lucky to have friends like you. I need to thank participant teachers and parents for their involvement in the study and sharing their valuable insights and knowledge with me. I wish to thank wholeheartedly to all the children in my teaching life. They have always been my inspiration to start and continue my journeys. Lastly and most importantly, I would like to thank my beloved family. I am grateful to my mother Nurhan KANDEMİR and my father Alaettin KANDEMİR for their love, encouragement, and endless support throughout my life. I am always honored to be their daughter. Also, special thanks to my sister Meltem KANDEMİR for being a supportive and loving sister.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                                        |      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| PLAGIARISM .....                                                                       | iii  |
| ABSTRACT .....                                                                         | iv   |
| ÖZ.....                                                                                | vi   |
| DEDICATION .....                                                                       | viii |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....                                                                  | ix   |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS .....                                                                | x    |
| LIST OF TABLES .....                                                                   | xiv  |
| LIST OF FIGURES.....                                                                   | xvi  |
| CHAPTERS                                                                               |      |
| 1.INTRODUCTION.....                                                                    | 1    |
| 1.1 Statement of the Problem .....                                                     | 3    |
| 1.2 Research Questions .....                                                           | 6    |
| 1.3 Significance of the Study .....                                                    | 6    |
| 1.4 Definition of Terms.....                                                           | 8    |
| 2.LITERATURE REVIEW .....                                                              | 9    |
| 2.1 Historical and Theoretical Base of Outdoor Time in Early Childhood Education ..... | 9    |
| 2.2 The Outdoor Time within the Framework of the Recent Studies .....                  | 14   |
| 2.3.Theoretical Framework of Outdoor Time in Early Childhood Education .....           | 22   |
| 2.3.1. Affordance Theory.....                                                          | 24   |
| 2.3.2. Ecological Systems Theory.....                                                  | 26   |
| 3.METHOD .....                                                                         | 27   |
| 3.1. Research Design .....                                                             | 27   |
| 3.2. Participants.....                                                                 | 28   |

|                                                                  |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 3.3 The School Setting .....                                     | 31 |
| 3.4. Data Collection .....                                       | 34 |
| 3.4.1. Semi-structured Interview Protocols.....                  | 36 |
| 3.4.1.1 Interview Protocol for the Teachers .....                | 37 |
| 3.4.1.2 Interview Protocols for the Parents .....                | 38 |
| 3.4.2. Observation Protocol .....                                | 39 |
| 3.4.3. Document Analysis.....                                    | 42 |
| 3.5 Data Analysis .....                                          | 43 |
| 3.6. Researcher Role& Motivation for the Study.....              | 45 |
| 3.7 Ethical Consideration .....                                  | 47 |
| 3.8 Trustworthiness of the Study .....                           | 48 |
| 4. FINDINGS.....                                                 | 49 |
| 4.1 Teachers' Views Regarding the Time Spending Outdoors .....   | 51 |
| 4.1.1. General Views .....                                       | 51 |
| 4.1.2. Duration of Spending Outdoor Time .....                   | 54 |
| 4.1.3. Communication with Parents on Time Spending Outdoors..... | 56 |
| 4.1.4. Outdoor Time Practices .....                              | 57 |
| 4.1.5. Protocols Before and During Outdoor Time.....             | 59 |
| 4.1.6. Outdoor Time Materials.....                               | 61 |
| 4.1.7. Frequency of Outdoor Environment Areas' Usage.....        | 61 |
| 4.1.8. Roles and Responsibilities during Outdoor Time.....       | 62 |
| 4.1.9. Ideal vs. Actual Outdoor Environment.....                 | 64 |
| 4.2. Parents' Views Regarding Outdoor Time .....                 | 66 |
| 4.2.1. General Views .....                                       | 66 |
| 4.2.2. Views about Ideal Outdoor Time .....                      | 69 |
| 4.2.3. Ideal vs. Actual Outdoor Environment .....                | 70 |
| 4.2.4. Knowledge About Outdoor Time Practices .....              | 74 |
| 4.3. Observations of Outdoor Time Practices .....                | 75 |

|                                                                          |        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 4.3.1. Teachers during Outdoor Time Practices .....                      | 76     |
| 4.3.2. Materials Used during Outdoor Time Practices.....                 | 78     |
| 4.3.3. Types of Practices during Outdoor Time.....                       | 78     |
| <br>4.4.Document Analysis of Outdoor Time Plans .....                    | <br>79 |
| 4.4.1. Monthly Distribution of Outdoor Time Plans .....                  | 80     |
| 4.4.2. Distribution of Outdoor Time Plans Regarding Activity Types ..... | 81     |
| 4.4.3. Required Outdoor Materials in the Monthly Plans .....             | 81     |
| 4.4.4. Subjects Focused During Outdoor Time in the Monthly Plans.....    | 82     |
| 4.5.Summary of the Findings .....                                        | 84     |
| <br>5.DISCUSSION .....                                                   | <br>86 |
| 5.1 Discussion of the Findings .....                                     | 86     |
| 5.2 Implications .....                                                   | 99     |
| 5.3 Limitations and Recommendations for Further Studies .....            | 104    |
| REFERENCES.....                                                          | 106    |
| <br>APPENDICES                                                           | <br>   |
| APPENDIX A: HUMAN SUBJECT ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL.....                 | 123    |
| APPENDIX B: VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION FORM FOR TEACHERS .....              | 124    |
| APPENDIX C: VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION FORM FOR PARENTS .....               | 125    |
| APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR TEACHERS .....                        | 126    |
| APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PARENTS .....                         | 128    |
| APPENDIX F: OBSERVATION FORM .....                                       | 129    |
| APPENDIX G: OUTDOOR PRACTICES PHOTOS.....                                | 130    |
| APPENDIX H: TURKISH SUMMARY/ TÜRKÇE ÖZET .....                           | 139    |
| APPENDIX I: THESIS PERMISSION FORM/ TEZ İZİN FORMU .....                 | 151    |

## **LIST OF TABLES**

|                                                                                    |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Table 3.1. Descriptive Information about Teachers .....                            | 30 |
| Table 3.2. The Exemplary Interview Questions for Teachers .....                    | 37 |
| Table 3.3. The Exemplary Interview Questions for Parents .....                     | 38 |
| Table 3.4. Exemplary Observation Session .....                                     | 40 |
| Table 3.4. Continued Exemplary Observation Session .....                           | 41 |
| Table 4.1.1. Teachers' Views Regarding Spending Outdoor Time.....                  | 54 |
| Table 4.1.2. Outdoor Time Frequency and Duration According to Seasons .....        | 55 |
| Table 4.1.3 The Time Spending Outdoors.....                                        | 56 |
| Table 4.1.4. Communication with Parents on Time Spending Outdoor .....             | 57 |
| Table 4.1.5. Outdoor Time Practices and Purposes of Using Outdoor Environment..... | 58 |
| Table 4.1.6. Protocols Before and During Outdoor Time .....                        | 60 |
| Table 4.1.7. Materials are Used during Outdoor Time.....                           | 61 |
| Table 4.1.8. Teacher Roles During Outdoor Time.....                                | 63 |
| Table 4.1.9. Teacher Responsibilities During Outdoor Time .....                    | 63 |
| Table 4.1.10. Ideal vs. Actual Outdoor Environment.....                            | 65 |
| Table 4.2.1. Parents' Views Regarding Spending Time Outdoors .....                 | 67 |
| Table 4.2.1. Continued Parents' Views Regarding Spending Time Outdoors.....        | 68 |
| Table 4.2.2. Ideal vs. Actual Outdoor Environment.....                             | 71 |
| Table 4.2.3. Animals in Outdoor Environment.....                                   | 73 |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|                                                                         |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Figure 1.Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems.....                       | 26 |
| Figure 2.Fathers&Mothers in the Study.....                              | 29 |
| Figure3. Playground Photos (Front Outdoor Environment) .....            | 32 |
| Figure3 Continued Playground Photos (Front Outdoor Environment) .....   | 33 |
| Figure 4.Botanic Garden Photos (Side Outdoor Environment).....          | 33 |
| Figure 5.Sand Pool and Dining Bench (Back Outdoor Environment).....     | 34 |
| Figure 6.Daily Schedule of an Age Group.....                            | 34 |
| Figure 7.Data Collection Procedures and Timeline.....                   | 35 |
| Figure 8. Data Collection Tools Used Concerning Research Questions..... | 35 |
| Figure 9. Document Analysis Categories.....                             | 43 |
| Figure 10. Descriptive Information about Observation Session.....       | 76 |
| Figure 11. Number of Outdoor Time Plans by Month.....                   | 80 |
| Figure 12. Outdoor Time Plans by Activity Types.....                    | 81 |
| Figure 13.Required Outdoor Materials in the Monthly Plans.....          | 82 |
| Figure 14. Subjects of Outdoor Time Plans.....                          | 83 |

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In a rapidly changing world, education is of utmost importance for individuals as well as societies since it is the education that provides strength and improvements for individuals, communities, groups, institutions, and countries' developmental capacities (Türkkahraman, 2012). Considered as the first stage of education, early childhood education refers to diverse processes of growth, development, and education from birth to age 8 (Unicef, 2012; Morrison, 2015). Education in the early childhood period can have powerful effects on the various developmental areas in young children. (Vandenbroeck, Lenaerts, & Beblav, 2018). This period is considered as critical since children's brains develop rapidly, thus optimizing overall development is aimed through early childhood education. Gains related to social, cognitive, and physical development are demonstrated by children participating in early childhood education. Hence, the early childhood education period should not be considered as just a process before primary school (Unicef, 2012; Bredekamp& Copple, 1997).

The learning and development of a child occur through interaction between the child and his/her environments while exploring and investigating environments (Davies, 2004; Ancheita, 2005). Learning and development can take place differently in diverse settings including indoors and outdoors. Indoor education is a type of education that is conducted through aiming maximum focus of children on the learning topic and teachers' instruction by using mainly multi-media instruments such as presentations, videos, computer programs (Franzoni & Assar, 2009; Phillips, 2017). While indoor education assists children about being focused, outdoor environments mainly enable children to use their senses more during learning compared to hearing teachers' instruction or visualizing learning topics which is presented by technological devices, handouts, or writing. Learning becomes deeper and more permanent with the usage of senses in the outdoor environment (Auer, 2008).

When learning is carried to outdoors, it becomes more experiential and it occurs through behavioral changes by gaining direct experiences. Experiential learning comes from the personal reflection of children on their own experiences instead of teachers' endeavors to establish a link between the existing and new knowledge thus the involvement of the learner is the main difference between these two types of learning. So, the purpose of experiential learning is increasing the learners' level of involvement so as to make learning more relevant and meaningful (Berry& Hodgson, 2011).

At this point, outdoor education and experiential learning have some common points inasmuch as outdoor education occurs in outdoor environments and it provides experiential learning activities that involve cooperation skills and nature content knowledge right along with science integrated subjects like planting and weeding within group learning and learning about recycling while composing (Mirrahimi, Tawil, Abdullah, Surat & Usman, 2011). Outdoor education delivers effective context for the learning subjects through enabling the student to go beyond classrooms and connect with the physical and cultural aspects of the outdoor environment. For instance, children can learn about the dynamic relationship between animal habitats and plant habitat in a forest or traveling to a historical site to support them to learn about historical events that occurred in this site (Miller, 2017).

Outdoor education takes place in any setting outside of the school building so this setting can be a forest, lake, meadow, or schoolyard (Ford, 1986). Outdoor education is comprised of fundamental elements connecting with nature and also living sustainably with nature (Heath, 2015). Outdoor education also involves a set of adventurous activities assisting children to build character, gain cooperation skills for group work, and develop leadership (Wattchow & Higgins, 2013). Furthermore, the motor abilities of children are supported as they spend time in outdoor environments. To illustrate, a child can develop climbing skills through climbing a tree and this child can run in a meadow (Fjørtoft, 2001).

In research conducted by Humberstone (2015), it was concluded that outdoor environments deliver real benefits for children's health through providing therapeutic contexts to heal various mental health aspects. For instance, water areas like rivers, ponds, and seas are considered as blue spaces both reduce the stress and provide a positive effect on the well-being. Through accessing outdoor environments, children's abilities and skills related to self-confidence, responsibilities, cooperation, problem-solving, and sense of pride are supported. To give an example, a child can learn and develop her cooperation skills in order to take

responsibility with the help of group learning during a planting activity (Mirrahimi et al., 2011). In parallel with this, another research emphasizes that outdoor environments nurture a person's body and mind so it can be said that outdoor environments affect a person's well-being by the help of delivering social inclusion in cultural events, and pushing physical and psychological boundaries (Robertson, 2015). School's outdoor environment also develops skills related to creativity and problem solving, and also it enables children in order to interact with nature and people (Wood&Martin, 2000).

Moreover, children become inspired towards learning alongside with becoming conscious toward crucial global issues inasmuch as children have chances to form connections with their teachers, education, environment, lives, and significantly future lives through outdoor environments. As a consequence of this situation, outdoor environments can be considered as significant stimuli for motivation and inspiration for the learning of young children (Mirrahimi et al., 2011). Hence, young children should benefit from outdoor environment opportunities so as to develop not only social but also personal skills which make them more active, skilled, and safe in the outdoor environments, and also in order to protect and give care for the environment (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1999) (as cited in Brown & Heaton, 2015).

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

The gap between nature and children is increasing day by day through spending free time in indoor environments more than outdoor environments because of diverse reasons like excessive usage of technological devices and uncontrolled screen time (Louv, 2008; Oksal, 2005; Kernan & Devine, 2010) Within developments in the technology area, play begins to change from hands-on engagement with real objects to virtual ones (Frost & Sutterby 2017).

Outdoor play, outdoor learning, and their opportunities have been decreasing over the past half-century in diverse developed nations (Gray, 2011). In a study conducted by Clements (2004), the outdoor playtime of children compared with their mothers' outdoor time in the USA so 830 mothers were asked to describe their own outdoor play experiences and their children's outdoor play experiences within a survey. It was reached that children spend less outdoor time compared to their mothers' generation. Based on the findings of the study conducted by Berland (2016) with 12.000 families as participants, it was stated that 10% of

children never play outdoors and 80 % of parents state that children play virtual sports on the screen instead of playing in real life. Therefore, it was indicated inadequate outdoor environments and increasing usage of technology leads to less outdoor experiences in terms of children.

Diverse people around the world collaborate so as to reconnect children with nature and enriching education and development process towards rapid technological and societal changes (Frost, 2010). Schools focusing on outdoor learning could be considered as one of the diverse ways to reconnect children and nature (Knight, 2013; Barrable&Booth, 2020; Frantz, 2014; Barrable, 2019; Frost, 2010). Preschool programs have a significant role by providing a safe and supervised outdoor environment within the adequate outdoor time for children so developmental risks like obesity could be decreased and children can learn and develop their abilities in a healthy way. (Story, Kaphingst & French, 2006; Larson, Ward, Neelon& Story, 2011). Copple and Bredekamp (2009) emphasized that it is significant for children to spend time in outdoor environments as well as indoor environments so they can have a healthy development and learning process. Dyment (2005) described a school's outdoor environment as a setting that delivers opportunities to support outdoor learning. In addition to this, a school's outdoor environment assists children to meet their physical, cognitive, language, and social-emotional needs, so it must be available during the school day and the whole school year as well as indoor environments inasmuch as children reach opportunities in order to experience freedom, benefit from wide-area and fresh air, and also time so as to work in parallel with their interest (Bilton, 2010).

Both the outdoor environment and outdoor time need to be assessed so as to enrich the outdoor time for the benefits of children. The national early childhood education curriculum suggests that the teachers could conduct learning activities in the outdoor environment as much as feasible (MONE, 2013). As a researcher who evaluated Turkish outdoor education's conditions, Öztürk (2009) highlights that public kindergartens' outdoor environments are not adequate in order to enrich the process of outdoor education in Turkey. In a qualitative study conducted with 30 Turkish early childhood teachers, the results showed that teachers allocate less time for outdoor play because of the inadequate outdoor environment, safety concerns, and low self-efficacy regarding planning outdoor time and conducting outdoor practices (Çetken&Sevimli-Çelik, 2018).

Even though teachers stated their view that playing in an outdoor environment supports children in terms of diverse developmental areas, teachers emphasized diverse barriers like inadequate physical layout, difficulties with time and classroom management, and also lack of necessary outdoor education background (Renick 2009). Ernst (2007) also emphasizes that the education background of teachers and their awareness related to the environment are significant components affecting their educational practices. Due to these reasons, teachers' views hold a significant place regarding the preparation of the outdoor environment and outdoor plans as well as effectively managing the outdoor time process. Outdoor environments of schools also need to be highly qualified within diverse and developmentally appropriate materials or equipment as well as learning activities.

Only examining views of teachers is not adequate to enrich spending time outdoors, parents also significant since parental views are affecting educational practices in a school (Sevimli-Celik, Kirazci&Ince, 2011). Hence effective working collaboration between parents and teachers is a necessity in order to provide the best chances for young children (Loughran, 2008; NAEYC, 2009; Morrison, 2015). In other words, communication, support, and collaboration should be formed between parents and teachers so as to reach qualified early childhood education process, so it is significant to demonstrate needs to be improved through the agency of revealing teachers' and parents' views regarding not only outdoor environment but also outdoor practices (Yalçın, 2015). Hence, the examination of parents' views about playing in the outdoor environment is significant to provide opportunities in the outdoor environment (İvrendi, Cevher-Kalburan, Sandseter, Storli, & Sivertsen, 2019).

Parents' societal and cultural views affect outdoor play practices (Maureen, Caroline, Maja & Anna, 2018). Wiseman, Harris & Downes (2019) emphasizes that parents' views have significant and direct effects on children's play preferences in an outdoor environment. Even though some of the studies indicated that parents believe the importance of playing in an outdoor environment on the development and the learning process parental concern related to the outdoor environment was also demonstrated (Michek, Nováková& Menclová, 2015; Jayasuriya, Williams, Edwards& Tandon, 2016 Little, 2010; Ernst, 2018). To illustrate, Cevher-Kalburan (2014) reached that parental concerns regarding safety as one of the barriers limiting play practices in the outdoor environment. Parents believe that outdoor play is highly significant since it provides sensory experiences, and make children freer and happier. Besides considering these developmental benefits of outdoor play, parents also anxious about ensuring safety during outdoor play (Kernan& Devine, 2010)

Despite being crucial for cognitive development, parents limit outdoor play practices of their children since they are afraid of getting sick or they believe that they do not have enough time for outdoor play because of their working hours (Undiyaundeye, 2014). Parents begin to demonstrate a restrictive attitude toward playing in outdoor environments day by day (Heritage Council, n.d.) Due to these reasons, views of both the teachers and parents of children in the early childhood period and also outdoor practices of the teachers need to be examined holistically in order to reach broader views related to outdoor time in a kindergarten setting.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

So as to examine views of parents and teachers regarding outdoor time, and investigate practices during the outdoor time, these following research questions have been developed to guide the current study;

1. What are the views of teachers regarding the time spending outdoors?
2. What are the views of parents regarding the time spending outdoors?
3. What are the teachers' practices implemented during the outdoor time?

## **1.3. Significance of the Study**

The current study may support the awareness of teachers and parents about using the school's outdoor environment as learning environments in the early childhood period. Furthermore, implications section provides educational practices that teachers can follow to reduce barriers and enrich outdoor time for benefit of children. Therefore, teachers may also be informed about the solutions to outdoor time problems.

Parents may also shape the educational practices of private schools through their demands. In a study conducted by Sevimli-Celik, Kirazci, and Ince (2011) it was indicated that the demands of parents are important factors affecting the formation of physical activity practices. Parents' views on children's education are affected by their educational experience and culture (Sigel& McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2002). Frost, Wortham, and Reifel

(2012) emphasized that play practices are significantly affected by the culture of a society. Diverse studies in national and international area demonstrate parental concern regarding outdoor time (Yalçın, 2015; Valentine&Kendrck, 1997; Kalburan, 2014; Xu, Wen, Hardy, & Rissel, 2017; Barnes, Colley, & Tremblay, 2012; Little, 2010; Ernst, 2018; Maynard&Waters, 2007; Erbay & Saltalı, 2012). In terms of a cultural context, Turkish parents can carry concerns related to bad weather conditions (Yalçın, 2015). This study may take a significant place for concerned parents to demonstrate outdoor time that is crucial due to it's benefits on children's development and learning process.

Moreover, some studies concluded that spending time outdoors in school can minimize the effects of negative aspects such as obesity, excessive use of technology, and nature-deficit disorder (Clements,2004; Sobel,2016; Frost&Sutterby, 2017; Waller, Sandseter, Wyver, Arlemalm-Hagser, & Maynard, 2010; Ansari Pettit & Gershoff, 2015 ). Therefore, it is highly significant to create awareness of the amount of time allocated to outdoor environments in schools. So as to emphasize this significance, this study might be beneficial by demonstrating how the duration and frequency of outdoor times are affected.

Diverse studies related to the outdoor environment in early childhood education were conducted in Turkey. These studies were focused on different topics related to outdoor such as views about outdoor play and usage of outdoor environments, benefits of outdoor play, materials, and equipment of outdoor environments, comparison of outdoor environments, and so on. Some of the studies were focused on the views regarding qualities of the outdoor environment and outdoor practices (Alat, Akgümüş& Cavalı, 2012; Başbay, 2012; Burçak; 2018, Huz & Kalburan, 2017; Kaçan, Halmatov &Kartaltepe, 2017; Kılıç, 2013) while some of the studies were conducted so as to examine physical qualities and materials of kindergartens' outdoor environments (Düzenli, Yılmaz&Eren, 2018; Çelik, 2012; Gönen & Saranlı, 2014; Kalburan, 2014). Besides these studies, also some studies were focused on outdoor play (Ata, 2016; Çetken&Sevimli-Çelik, 2018; Yalçın, 2015). When these studies examined in terms of participants and data collection tools, it could be concluded that the majority of the studies included one group of participants that is generally teachers, and one data collection tool as interview form or related scale of measurements.

Even though the number of studies related to outdoor subjects has been gradually increasing in Turkey, the reviewed literature recommends that studies related to outdoor time and outdoor environment could be conducted through diversifying the data by using the

triangulation approach and involving diverse views to examine the research subject deeply (Burçak, 2018; Tepebağ, 2017; Yalçın, 2015; Alat, Akgümüş& Cavalı, 2012; Kalburan, 2014; Ata, 2016; Çetken, 2018). Due to all these reasons, the current study also involves parents as participants and it aims to explore early childhood teachers' and parents' views regarding the outdoor time and examine teachers' outdoor time practices in a kindergarten setting through the usage of the triangulation method.

#### **1.4. Definition of Terms**

The current study involves highly significant terms that were focused on throughout the study process. Definitions of main terms used in the current study are given as follows;

*Early Childhood Education (ECE):* Education, growth, and development process of a child under the age of eight (Morrison, 2015). In the current study, early childhood education encompasses children aged between two to six years old.

*Experiential learning:* The learning process occurring through creating knowledge resulted from grasping and transforming diverse hands-on experiences (Kolb&Kolb,2011).

*Outdoor education:* Outdoor education can be defined as learning experiences occurring outdoors including experiential learning activities (Mirrahimi, Tawil, Abdullah, Surat & Usman, 2011). In the current study, the outdoor environment refers to the whole garden area (including the playground, botanic garden, and backyard) of the school that the researcher collected the data from.

*Outdoor play:* Play activities occurring in the outdoor environment and supporting free choice, active engagement, and first-hand experiences (Maynard&Waters,2014).

*Outdoor time:* Outdoor time is referring to the time that the teachers and children spend in the outdoor environment in a specified time slot during the school hours in this study.

*Outdoor practice:* Outdoor practice is referring to actions conducting for purposes of learning or play in the outdoor environment.

*Parent:* Person who provides care whether he or she is biological, relative, foster, adoptive, or non-related (Berger & Riojas-Cortez, 2015).

*View:* It's "a way of thinking about or understanding something" (Longman, 2011, p.1953)

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This review of the literature consists of three chapters that are demonstrating the significance as well as theoretical and historical base related to outdoor time in early childhood education. The historical and theoretical base of outdoor time in early childhood education is given in chapter 2.1. In chapter 2.2., the significance of outdoor time is demonstrated within the framework of recent studies conducted in the outdoor education area. As the last part, the theoretical framework of outdoor time in early childhood education is given in chapter 2.3.

#### **2.1. Historical and Theoretical Base of Outdoor Time in Early Childhood Education**

In the history of early childhood education, the concepts of nature and child are connected by schools' outdoor environments. That's why, it could be concluded that outdoor environments of schools have been significant vehicles in the education and development process of children in the early years (Burçak, 2018).

Rousseau (1712-1778) considered childhood as a specific life period giving significance to the highly crucial outdoor environments in order to educate children even if he had no chance to practice his ideas but his ideas about nature in childhood inspire like-minded educators (Graves, Gargiulo, & Sluder, 1996; Wellhausen, 2002). In parallel with this perspective, Rousseau considered the aim of education develops a person based on nature. Therefore, the education program should be designed through the agency of following the nature of the child, so Rousseau divided childhood into diverse stages involving information about the developmental characteristics of a child and how he/she should take education (Shahsavari, 2012). For the learning processes of children, natural approaches such as nature play and environmental studies are the best vehicles in terms of Rousseau's ideas on the education of young children (Morrison, 2015). The methods of education should be suitable for the level of development and interest of the child. Hands-on experiences should be at the core of the education inasmuch as the child is less likely to forget what he does, compared

with what he reads and listens. For Rousseau, there are three teachers that are nature, people, and objects (Shahsavari, 2012).

As one of the historical figures who influenced early childhood education today, Frobel (1782-1852) was the first educator who formed a curriculum that is planned as a systematic program for the purpose of education of children in the early years. Frobel considered a child as a seed to be planted and to be grown by a gardener who is the teacher. That's why; Frobel named schools are similar to gardens so he named early childhood institutions as kindergartens that namely is a garden of children. Frobel argued that children should be brought up with both their own nature and nature of the world (Morrison, 2015).

Frobel argues that nature can be used as a base for further learning experiences in terms of interconnectedness. To give an example, a primrose can be used as a means so as to teach about subjects such as art, craft, and arithmetic. Furthermore, nature can be integrated with stories for an effective learning process. In other words, stories are helpful to teach about nature (Palmer, 2016). The school's outdoor environment is at the center of the educational activities of Frobel. To illustrate the first kindergarten established by Frobel, provided an environment enabling children to gain real-life experiences besides play and movement activities in the school's outdoor environment. So as to promote interaction with nature, Frobel gave specific small areas for each child that is responsible for as well as encouraging children to observe nature. These perspectives of Frobel inspired and shaped nature-based education approaches like forest schools in our days (Sobel, 2016).

Inspired by Rousseau's ideas, Pestalozzi (1746-1827) developed his ideas by focusing on the integration of three components that are house life, vocational education, and literacy education. During developing his ideas, Pestalozzi followed Rousseau's perspective that the natural development of a child should guide the child's education process, so he integrated nature with the education process of young children. In parallel with his ideas, Pestalozzi developed object lessons focusing on learning through senses since Pestalozzi emphasized that gaining sensory experiences and discovery learning are highly significant and they are the best ways in order to learn concepts, so a child could reach his natural potential (Morrison, 2015)

Moreover, Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner, and Loris Malaguzzi are the educators who emphasized the significance of integration between nature and early childhood education

(Burçak, 2018). As the developer of the Montessori method for education of children, Maria Montessori (1870-1952) believed that children learn through the agency of gaining sensory experiences, so Montessori developed unique learning materials that are not only sensory-based but also help children for self-correcting (Morrison, 2015). Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) developed Waldorf education as an alternative approach in the education area. Steiner involved in natural components as parts, such as nature walks in the developed curriculum for this approach, and also natural learning materials like sea shelf and stones for nature play since he advocated that nature play promotes the development of scientific perspective for the future life of children (Sobel, 2016; De Souza, 2012). Furthermore, Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994) was one of the educators who affect educators in the outdoor education area. Through Reggio Emilia developed by Malaguzzi, it was emphasized that nature enables children so as to explore and learn by doing within supporting curiosity, so nature could be considered as a companion during the learning and development processes of young children (Morrison, 2015; Sobel, 2016)

Today the connection between nature and children gets weaker since humanity begins to be confined to live in skyscrapers within staying distant from green areas because of rapid population growth (Talay, Aslan & Belkayalı, 2010). In terms of education, schools resemble prisons through their qualities such as high rise buildings, concrete gardens, indoor learning activities requiring to sit for a very long time, buildings surrounded by high walls, inadequate physical education lessons, and so on (Başar, 2000) (as cited in Alat, Akgümüş & Cavali, 2012) Even if many individuals were thinking classrooms or walls of the schools themselves while considering the significance of school as learning environments whereas school has wider learning environment or spaces (Bowker & Tearle, 2007).

Outdoor environments are a necessity for children since these environments are beneficial for children who live in city centers by contributing to their learning processes and meeting their need for play. In parallel with these children who spend most of their time in such closed areas like homes and internet cafes, in front of televisions and computers will have been encouraged to use the outdoor spaces through outdoor education. Consequently, they will be healthy individuals who had experience with nature in their childhood, who know the environment, and who have more practice and permanent information than theoretical information (Acar, 2014). Therefore, outdoor education can be considered as an indivisible connection between humanity and nature (Brown & Heaton, 2015). Furthermore, the outdoor environment delivers an ideal environment in order to not only teach but also reinforce

perspectives and concepts related to several fields, such as plant science, biology, soil science, math, and chemistry. Also, more significantly students will develop a horizon about the natural world understanding when they have a chance so as to engage in scientific inquiry through outdoor learning (Rutgers, 2013).

Schools that are established in outdoor environments and embraced outdoor education pedagogy are delivering real benefits for the developmental areas and social well-being of young children (Humberstone, 2015). In a study conducted in a school setting in Australia, it was reached that outdoor implications develop physical area 51,4% of boy students' percentage while physical development increases within a 41,6% of girl students' when the researches explore the relation between physical skills and outdoor implications (Zask, Van, Beurden, Barnett., Brooks & Dietrich, 2001). Witt and Kimple (2008) state that their research project became successful through accomplishing project aim creating environmental awareness in pre-school children with the help of providing interactive opportunities in order to expose to new environmental ideas as well as learning ways to show respect for surroundings. Furthermore, not only respect but also responsibility toward the environment is learned by young children through outdoor learning. Hartle (1994) conducted a play related study in a kindergarten setting by observing the social interaction of 27 children. According to the findings of this study, it was reached that outdoor play develops children's empathy feeling that helps them to understand the needs and emotions of other children. In a botanic garden project, children who come from challenging home and school environments gained positive experiences through hands-on gardening and science activities (Morgan, Hamilton, Bentley & Myria, 2009).

Pre-school years are the most convenient times so as to teach about the environment inasmuch as pre-school children are especially receptive in order to learn about new concepts. Due to this reason, learning about the environment can be an appropriate median in order to teach several areas such as science to young children. Therefore, outdoor learning can assist young children in order to hold their attention with the help of hands-on lessons engaging them in the learning process. Moreover, the development of students is facilitated when they involve hands-on learning experiences in real-life contexts, specifically through the agency of supervised agricultural experiences. To illustrate, knowledge and understanding related to ecology and environment, it will be assisted by the help of project-based learning in outdoor environments in terms of students (Witt & Kimple, 2008).

As well as providing benefits for young children's developmental abilities and academic achievement, outdoor learning also has several benefits for teachers and schools. Ratcliffe, Merrigan, Rogers, and Goldberg (2009) defend that schools outdoors can fortify the school curriculum and not only physical but also social learning environments. Bowker and Tearle (2007) emphasized schools' outdoor environments as areas that can provide an effective context for engaging in the school curriculum, and it assists students in a deeper understanding of ecological systems helping students in order to become individuals who have environmental awareness of both global issues and solutions. Also, outdoor areas in schools carry a significant place in order to make young children gain awareness about nature (Şişman & Gültürk, 2011).

Owing to these beneficial outcomes, outdoor learning experiences should be at the center of the school curriculum that aims to raise individuals who care for the environment (Heath, 2015). Due to all these benefits, learning environments do not only consist of classrooms but also outdoor environments should be taken into consideration as learning environments inasmuch as these environments are supporting young children's developmental areas such as physical, cognitive, mental, and so on right along with fortifying sustainability and quality of education (Kaçan, Halmatov & Kartaltepe, 2017). Contemporarily, the benefits of outdoor time are emphasized by several researchers so teachers should provide opportunities for young children so as to benefit from outdoor environments in early childhood institutions (Acar, 2014). Due to the great benefits of the outdoor environment on science education, Kapelari (2015) defends that there should be fundamental changes in the current science education curriculum. These changes must refer to that science education environments should involve not only indoor but also outdoor environments.

Children's intrinsic motivation and constructive engagement are key elements during the learning process in outdoor education. Children's motivation and engagement in outdoor education facilitate the development of belonging feeling to school and self-efficacy skills. Approaching outdoor environments as an instructional median and spending adequate outdoor time facilitate children's enthusiasm and interest in academic activities promoting their learning and development process in school (Skinner, Chi., & As, 2014). Robertson (2015) emphasizes that outdoor environments deliver real benefits such as pushing physical limits and feeling in control. A positive impact on learning and children's attitude toward school was stated by Bowker and Tearle (2007) as results of their study about the perception of children about the outdoor environment.

## **2.2. The Outdoor Time within the Framework of the Recent Studies**

There are diverse studies examined practices of early childhood institutions during outdoor time. Free play is mostly preferred by teachers as outdoor practice based on the findings of a study that was conducted to examine outdoor practices in early childhood education (Hunter, Syversen, Graves& Bodensteiner, 2020). Speedlin (2010) conducted a case study in Nebraska Lincoln, USA to teachers practices related the outdoor time. 25 teachers participated in the study. Based on the statements of teachers, it was found that 50% of teachers do not prepare outdoor activities for a daily education plan. 50% of teachers prefer physical activities as outdoor practices and benefit from the outdoor environment for purposes that are taking some fresh air and recess. In the study conducted by Kaçan, Halmatov, and Kartaltepe (2017) who investigated outdoor practices and barriers for outdoor time in preschools, a survey model was used with the participation of 56 early childhood teachers in Ankara and Muğla. Based on the findings, science, play and movement activities were concluded as the most preferred outdoor time practices

Besides outdoor practices of early childhood teachers, Mart, Alisinanoğlu, and Kesicioğlu (2015) examined the outdoor environment through conducting a survey study. 156 teachers participated in the study from different regions of Turkey via filling the online survey related to the usage of outdoor environments. Teachers stated that 46,2% of schools have an empty playground area, 40,4% of schools have swings, 37.8% of schools have a sandbox, 39.1% of schools have no material in outdoor environments. According to teachers, 84, 6% of schools do not involve natural areas, 6.4% of schools do not use the outdoor environment while 84% of schools just use the outdoor environment in the spring season. 9% of teachers emphasized that they do not use the outdoor environment in the winter season. Furthermore, 38, 5% of teachers stated that they prepare to learn centers in the outdoor environment while 57, 1% of teachers do not prepare any learning center in the outdoor environment.

Children participate actively in outdoor activities if the outdoor environment is well organized and it also involves developmentally appropriate outdoor materials and equipment within the suitable outdoor surface according to findings of a mixed-method study conducted by Helen (2012) in Kenya, with 572 children in 34 kindergartens in order to examine children's participation in outdoor activities implemented in outdoor environments of kindergartens. It was also concluded that the supervision of children is easier in these types of outdoor environments in terms of early childhood teachers. Fjørtoft (2001) conducted an

experimental study on the usage of the natural environment as a playground in Norway. Results demonstrated that children's outdoor play practices were enriched in environments including diverse natural components since it provides multiple choices during outdoor play.

In another qualitative study conducted by Cevher-Kalburan (2014) to examine physical qualities, usage, and developments of private and public kindergartens' outdoor environments in Denizli, it was reached that both kindergartens' outdoor environments do not involve enough natural materials, children do not adequately participate in the decision making process, and cognitive development is not aimed as an area to be developed with outdoor implications even if the outdoor environment is considered as a learning environment. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that private kindergartens form more written outdoor rules that are mostly decided by the school administrator while public kindergartens collaborate more with society so as to develop the outdoor environment of the school. Herrington (2008) studied views regarding outdoor environment design, structure, and qualities of plant components in schools' outdoor environment through the agency of conducting focus group meetings with 78 early childhood teachers in Canada, Vancouver. Statements of teachers were analyzed with the Kruskal-Wallis test. According to the results of the study, 79,6% of teachers stated that there should be materials, such as plant and water so as to provide a sensory stimulus for children. 64% of teachers' stated wider area, 57% of teachers emphasized more compelling outdoor materials such as climbing materials while 50% of teachers stated less concrete floor in outdoor environments.

Children's outdoor experiences are not formed by just outdoor environment. It is also formed by educators and parents who nurture experiences in the outdoor environment (Syversen, Graves& Bodensteiner, 2020). Therefore, it is highly significant to explore not only the views and practices of teachers but also the views of parents regarding the outdoor experiences of children. Diverse studies examined views of teachers and parents related to outdoor time, as well as outdoor practices. Findings of a study related to the school's outdoor environment demonstrate that learning opportunities of children are affected by teachers' views regarding outdoor time (Tarmar&Tarmar, 2011). Okoruwa (2017) aimed to investigate early childhood teachers' views and roles about outdoor play through a descriptive survey study within the participation of 439 Nigerian teachers. Most of the teachers stated that playing in an outdoor environment protects children toward obesity, assists children to understand and respect nature, and develops creative skills and mood of children. In Australia, Davies (1997) conducted a study with 22 early childhood teachers in

order to examine the interaction of teachers with children during outdoor time. Interview sessions related to views regarding outdoor implications were conducted with teachers and interactions during outdoor implications were observed via observing sessions. According to findings of interview sessions, 68% of teachers consider that outdoor implications develop physical skills while 50% of teachers stated the benefits of outdoor implications in the social development of children. In terms of findings of observation sessions, the researcher observed 28,6% of teachers are near the children, and just 10% of the 28,6 percentage of teachers interacted with children who were near them. Furthermore, 4,4% of teachers participated in activities of children by making comments or talking with them while 3,7% of teachers were involved in children's activities via directing behaviors and reminding the rules. Moreover, 1,9% of teachers preferred to play with children while 1,8% of teachers provided physical support and 1,6% of teachers conducted an active teaching role during outdoor time.

Bilton (2014) examined teachers' views and practices related to outdoor education in early years through conducting a survey study including 184 teachers as participants. Results demonstrated that most of the teachers described the aim of outdoor practices as supporting physical development skills. Furthermore, most of the teachers consider outdoor education as more positive and meaningful since a child feels freer, more confident, and exploratory in the outdoor environment. It was stated that children are more active and they demonstrate more positive behaviors in the outdoor environment compared to indoor environments. In another study, it was concluded that outdoor practices support children especially during learning a new language. Furthermore, the learning of concepts like color, shape, and number becomes more permanent through increasing attention span and being active in the outdoor environment in terms of teachers' viewpoint (Schilling, McOmber, Mabe, Beasley, Funkhouser, & Martinez, 2006). Benefits for social-emotional development mostly emphasized by early childhood teachers based on findings of the study that was conducted by Speedlin (2010). Copeland, Kendeigh, Saelens, Kalkwarf, and Sherman (2012) conducted semi-structured interviews with early childhood teachers to examine teachers' views regarding benefits and barriers to physical activity practices in schools. It was concluded that generally, teachers state the benefits of outdoor practices for the physical development of very young children.

The role of teachers in outdoor education is crucial inasmuch as teachers are responsible so as to defend young children's rights to benefit from outdoor environments (Nedovic &

Morrisey, 2013). Because of this reason, it would be better for educators so as to understand how outdoor environments are considered within conditions that are social, cultural, and ecological (Wattchow & Higgins, 2013). It was demonstrated that teachers carry some concerns about the physical limits of outdoor environments in the play and learning process of young children (McClintic & Petty, 2015). Hunter, Syversen, Graves, and Bodensteiner (2020) investigated the roles and practices of teachers during outdoor time. It was found that teachers mostly consider their role as guides and facilitators through monitoring and guiding children's behaviors. In another qualitative study conducted by Renick (2009) related to early childhood teachers' views regarding outdoor play, 10 teachers, who work in Texas, participated in the study via face to face interviews. The study's findings emerged that teachers believe that supervision during outdoor play is highly significant as well as following outdoor rules. The physical structure of the outdoor environment was considered as a barrier for preparation, planning, and conducting outdoor activities in terms of teachers. Also, it was stated that teachers do not have enough knowledge about outdoor play even if they believe the benefits of outdoor play on the development process of children in the early years' period. In a study conducted by Bilton (2014) 112 early childhood teachers described their outdoor time role as supporting, scaffolding, and interacting with children. Supervising for safety, observing, and teaching is stated as roles by other participant teachers.

Early childhood teachers' views and practices regarding their roles and responsibilities during play in the outdoor environment were also examined by Davies (1997). Based on findings of interview and observation sessions of 8 preschool teachers, teachers believe that children should be free to manage their outdoor play practices and minimum intervention should be done by adults if it is necessary, so the teachers consider their responsibilities and roles as preparing the environment for outdoor play, observing and monitoring outdoor practices and redirecting inappropriate behavior. In a multi-case study conducted by Goodling (2016) in Pennsylvania, the USA, semi-structured interviews, observation sessions, and document analysis were conducted as the participation of 9 early childhood teachers in order to explore teachers' views regarding outdoor implications in education. According to the findings of the study, it was reached that teachers take a supervisor role during outdoor implications even if they value outdoor implications. Furthermore, the researcher observed that the implications of teachers vary based on the supervision of free play and interaction with children. Also, it was found that teachers can easily reach learning materials during outdoor implications and they interact more with children in natural outdoor environments.

On the other hand, teachers interact less with children if the outdoor environment involves artificial and mixed outdoor materials. Okoruwa (2017) examined teachers' views on outdoor play and their roles during play in the outdoor environment besides outdoor play opportunities provided by the school. As descriptive survey research, the sample was formed as 439 preschool teachers in Nigeria. Results revealed that children have limited outdoor play opportunities because teachers believe that outdoor play does not support the learning process and it is just beneficial for recreational aims, so opportunities like providing materials are limited through more focusing on indoor learning environments. Teachers consider their roles as supervisors through passing instructions, ensuring safety, and directing the play process. Also, getting injured, kidnapping, and getting lost were described as barriers for playing in the outdoor environment by teachers.

Diverse definitions were made for the roles of teachers during play. Co-Player teachers have active roles in children's play through involvement in the process without directing it. To illustrate, co-player teachers spontaneously involve in play and take the play role that is given by children. Besides co-players, play leader teachers actively play, direct, or lead the play process through the enriching process via providing new themes for play and asking questions for extension of the process. Teachers are described as onlookers if they stay near to the play area and observe children who are playing while making some verbal and nonverbal comments or asking questions related to play practices of children. Another role was described as stage manager. Stage manager teachers take active roles for the preparation of the environment and extension of the ongoing play but they are not active about involving in play. They give some advice to enhance play process and they support the process if help is needed. The last teacher role is director/redirector. Director/redirector teachers make warnings related to play's content, how to play (quiet, calm and so on), play materials, environment, and tidying up. These teachers also benefit from play as a teaching tool (Gülhan, 2019).

Barriers for the outdoor time were also concluded by other studies in the early childhood education area. Teachers believe the major barrier is the low self-sufficiency feeling of teachers during outdoor time. Besides this barrier, bad weather conditions, hygiene concerns, and insufficient classroom management were stated as other barriers for outdoor time practices, as significant findings of a qualitative study conducted in the USA with the participation of 49 early childhood teachers in focus group meetings (Copeland, Sherman, Kendeigh, Kalkwarf& Saelens, 2012). In parallel with these concerns, it is known that

teachers prefer to conduct indoor activities during lessons even if there are several opportunities for conducting outdoor activities (Özür, 2010) (as cited in Ürey & Çepni, 2015). In another case study that conducted by Speedlin (2010) to examined teachers' views about outdoor practices, teachers stated that science activities could be conducted in the outdoor environment but they do not prefer to conduct these activities because of difficulties like children's allergies and classroom management so they conducted these types of activities in indoor environments. Budget and lack of space were determined as barriers for forming a qualitative outdoor environment for the schools in terms of teachers' views in the survey study which was conducted by Kaçan, Halmatov& Kartaltepe (2017). Conducting outdoor learning activities is highly affected by the teachers' level of knowledge about outdoor learning environments (Bostan Sarıoğlan, & Küçüközer, 2018)

There are various studies investigating the views of parents related to outdoor education and outdoor environments. In a study conducted with parents, it was reached that parents prefer forest kindergarten as a better learning environment compared to the learning environment of a kindergarten that is typical (Michek, Nováková&Menclová, 2015). In another study investigating parents' perspectives regarding outdoor activities, the researchers concluded that a positive attitude for outdoor activities is demonstrated by parents within the desire that usage of more outdoor environments in the kindergarten (Jayasuriya, Williams, Edwards& Tandon, 2016). Furthermore, another study examined the sociocultural context affecting perspectives of parent's outdoor play implications. In this study, researchers state that parents' both cultural and societal norms affect their perspectives related to outdoor activities (Maureen, Caroline, Maja & Anna, 2018).

According to the findings of a study conducted by Tandon, Zhou, and Christakis (2012) with 8,950 children participants in Seattle, it was reached that almost half of the children cannot spend time outdoors because of restrictions of their parents. Mothers acknowledge the learning and developmental benefits of playing in an outdoor environment but they carry fears and concerns regarding ensuring the safety of their children even if they desire to provide opportunities for outdoor play in the study conducted by Little (2015), who examined 26 Australian mothers' views related to outdoor play via semi-structured interviews. Hence the researcher demonstrated a contradiction between parents' views on the benefits of outdoor play and parents' practices related to being safeguards during outdoor play.

Parental concerns related to weather and clothing as outdoor time barriers were revealed by Parsons and Traunter (2019) who investigated parents' and teachers' views regarding outdoor learning. For this aim, questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. As another finding, it was indicated that parents consider the outdoor environment as an effective learning environment if the outdoor time is structured and guided by adults. Also, less than 50 min per day and 3 times a day were stated as appropriate durations for the outdoor time by most of the parents. Through incorporating curriculum with outdoor learning, parents desire to see that children engage in more intentional and pedagogical outdoor practices compared to free play (Hunter, Syversen, Graves & Bodensteiner, 2020). In another study, researchers investigate and compare the outdoor play experiences of children and their parents. The sample consists of 389 parents within their children aged 3-6 and living in Adana, which is located in the south of Turkey. Results revealed that children are less engaged in outdoor play compared to their parents and the parents consider the reason of the decrease in outdoor play as safety and health concern, inadequate outdoor opportunities, and excessive usage of technological devices like computer and television (Aktaş-Arnas & Sarıbaş, 2020)

Views of parents and teachers were also investigated in some cross-cultural studies in the early childhood education area. Yalçın (2015) conducted a cross-cultural study with teachers (n=14) and parents (n=14) in Turkey and Finland so as to examine their perspective and outdoor implications through semi-structured interviews and observation sessions. The findings of the study demonstrated that both teachers and parents believe the benefits of outdoor play on the development and learning processes of children. Moreover, Turkish and Finnish parents stated different perspectives related to barriers to outdoor play. According to findings, Turkish parents have health-related concerns about outdoor play in the winter season. Finnish teachers emphasized bad weather conditions and teachers' inactivity as outdoor barriers while Turkish teachers stating parental concerns as an outdoor barrier. Besides this, it was observed that both teacher groups' outdoor implications matched each other, and both teacher groups' roles were observed as being a supervisor.

Mart and Bilton (2014) aimed to compare early childhood teachers' views related to outdoor time practices from two diverse countries that are England and Turkey. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews were used for data collection and the sample was formed as 5 Turkish teachers and 5 English teachers. Based on findings, it was found that Turkish teachers consider weather conditions and parental concerns as barriers for outdoor time

practices while English teachers do not regard these components as outdoor time barriers. Researchers interpreted this finding as a cultural difference affecting the time spent on outdoor practices. Furthermore, English teachers aim to enable children to explore, take risks, have fun, and be free via outdoor practices while Turkish teachers aim to support the learning process.

Values and expectations of society shape views and practices regarding play opportunities in the outdoor environment and were demonstrated through also other cross-cultural studies. In a qualitative study, researchers examined outdoor play-related views of parents in Denmark and the U.S. via semi-structured interviews. Compared to parents in the U.S., it was found that Danish parents are more valued providing outdoor opportunities for children to support exploration and risk-taking skills despite barriers like environmental conditions (Vandermaas-Peeler, Dean, Biehl, & Mellman, 2019). McFarland and Laird (2018) aimed to examine early childhood educators' and parents' views and practices related to outdoor risky play. For this aim, the data was collected through online surveys. Most of the parents stated the young age of the child and safety as barriers while emphasizing the significance of outdoor risky play. Also, it was indicated that teachers believe the significance of outdoor risky play and they provide appropriate outdoor play opportunities so as to support gross motor and exploration skills as well as risk assessment skills. As a difference between the two countries, Australian teachers specified outdoor risky play opportunities as significantly more crucial compared to teachers in the U.S. On the other hand, findings did not reveal any differences in the rating of importance for parents in two countries.

Parents' and early childhood teachers' views about the barriers of outdoor play in five diverse European countries were investigated by Sandseter, Cordovil, Hagen, and Lopes (2020). 32 teachers and 184 parents formed the sample and questionnaires were used to collect data. It was found that Norwegian teachers are less concerned about taking risks during play in the outdoor environment compared to teachers in southern European countries. Inadequate play facilities, weather conditions, the concern of getting injured, and lack of time were stated as barriers by teachers. On the other hand, Norwegian teachers did not state any barriers to play in the outdoor environment. Furthermore, traffic was described as a barrier by most of the parents from all countries. As other outdoor play barriers, stranger danger, inadequate play spaces, and media alerts were described more by southern European countries like Greece and Portugal compared to Norway. In the light of outdoor-related studies within the participation of teachers and parents, this study carries three aims which

are exploring early childhood teachers' and parents' views regarding the outdoor time and examining teachers' outdoor time practices.

### **2.3. Theoretical Frameworks of Outdoor Time in Early Childhood Education**

Two theories are guiding this study so as to explore and understand the views of early childhood teachers and parents, and also the outdoor practices of teachers in the research setting. These theories are affordance theory introduced by Gibson (1977) and the Ecological Systems Theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979).

#### **2.3.1. Affordance Theory**

The theoretical framework of this study can be examined within the affordance theory introduced by Gibson (1977). The affordance theory delivers practical utility for researchers who study children's environments (Falcini, 2014). Affordance can be described as a relation established between an organism and an object regarding the organism's needs. To give an example, a tree can afford many diverse aspects, such as hiding from a tracker, sheltering for rain, and food source for the organism. So this tree can afford various things to various organisms at the same time.

Furthermore, affordance should be perceived with not only opportunities but also constraints. For instance, a hammer affords in order to break rocks but it constrains users with weight (Hammond, 2010). Gibson's theory of affordances is explaining how the actions of an organism are affected by the physical environment through the agency of an organism's interpretations. (Falcini, 2014). Gibson studied the perception of people about their actions and exploration in the physical environment within focusing on the significance of people and affordances interaction. To illustrate, walkability is afforded by flat surfaces, and actions like grasping, carrying, and throwing are afforded by diverse objects. According to the affordance theory, people's perception related to the environment depends not only on the perceiver but also on the perceived. That is why; both of the aspects should be addressed in the studies (Kernan, 2010).

The theory of affordances was further developed by Heft (1988) as a tool in order to describe how a child perceives properties that are crucial in terms of function in the environment and

adapts their behaviors based on their sources like their fear, competence, or strength (as cited in Bjørgen, 2016). In order to describe the outdoor environment's properties for a child, Heft (1988) applied this theory through the agency of focusing properties' functions instead of their form. (as cited in Falcini, 2014). Moreover, Leobach (2004) used the theory of affordance so as to assess affordances for a child in the early years setting. In this study, the researcher states that affordance theory is beneficial for highlighting differences in children's and adults' perspectives related to the usage of children's outdoor environments, and what these environments afford for children (as cited in Beasley, 2015). The affordance concept supports a child to learn about not only the environment's functional properties such as events, objects, and layout but also about themselves through the agency of usage of the environment thanks to their developing skills. Therefore, the affordance theory provides an effective analytic vehicle for researchers involving pedagogical studies done with young children in the early childhood period (Falcini, 2014).

The affordance theory directed the current study for the examination of outdoor time views and their effects on outdoor time practices. As stated in the theory, behaviors of people are affected by their interpretations of the physical environment. Concerning the current study, outdoor practices are affected by the views of teachers and parents via their interpretations of the outdoor environment. To illustrate, mud is perceived as dirty by some of the parents and teachers while it could be an effective learning material. As a result of this interpretation, galoshes are dressed by teachers, and muddy areas are not preferred as suitable environments to conduct outdoor practices. Teachers' restriction of outdoor time could be given as another example to demonstrate relation with affordance theory. Because of perceiving cold weather conditions as a significant threat for children's health, teachers' and parents' actions are shaped within this perception, and affordances of the outdoor environment are restricted during cold weather. For instance, teachers decrease the duration of outdoor time during winter seasons.

In the current study, the affordances of the outdoor environment are limited to the development of risk-taking skills because parents and teachers perceive some outdoor materials as dangerous. For instance, going up to slide is banned as an outdoor rule because of safety concerns so the slide cannot afford the development of gross motor and risk-taking skills. In parallel with this safety perception, teachers prefer outdoor practices like examination of natural components in the environment compared to practices developing risk-taking skills. Furthermore, diversity in the outdoor environment affords to conduct

different outdoor practices. To illustrate, the botanic garden affords children to learn about plants and their life cycles as well as supporting fine motor skills through actions like digging. In the sandbox, the development of creative skills is afforded by sand since children create products like castles, houses, bridges via using sand.

### **2.3.2. Ecological Systems Theory**

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory was developed in order to explain and understand the development of a person within a system of relations forming the environment of the person (Johnson, 2008). The effects of diverse social and cultural environments on the development of the person in the center are emphasized in this theory (Härkönen, 2007). The environment involves four systems that interact in a complex way, and also these systems can not only affect but also be affected through the agency of development of the person (Johnson, 2008).

The microsystem is defined as a kind of pattern involving components such as roles, activities, and relations that is directly experienced by the child in the center within specific material and physical aspects. As related to the current study physical qualities of the outdoor environment, outdoor materials, teachers, and parents form microsystem. As the center of this microsystem, the child directly interacts with materials in the outdoor environment. Besides the outdoor environment and materials, the child interacts with teachers during outdoor time. To illustrate, the teacher becomes a play friend if the co-player role was embraced by this teacher or the child regulates his/her behavior according to warnings or directives of the teacher.

Furthermore, the outdoor experiences of the child are actively affected by offered practices during outdoor time. So there is an active relation among teacher, environment, practices, and child in the microsystem. Interrelations among two or more settings that the developing child actively involves in, creates mesosystem. In other words, the mesosystem contains the relations among components of the microsystem (Morrison, 2015). The collaboration and communication between parents and teachers on outdoor time could be given as one of the relations in the mesosystem. Furthermore, the child's outdoor time experiences with parents could be interrelated with outdoor experiences in school. Therefore, these relations could affect the development of the child in the center.

After the mesosystem, the exosystem is described as settings that do not involve the developing child as an active person but it affects him/her (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For the current study, the exosystem consists of diverse components. As related to the current study, the over-protective parenting style could be given as an example of limiting the child's risk-taking skills during outdoor play (Cevher-Kalburan&Ivrendi, 2016). Moreover, outdoor education background and school budget could be given as examples resulted from this study. Teachers' knowledge related to outdoor education affects the outdoor practices of the child. Educators could enrich the outdoor environment through an adequate school budget. So the child does not an active person in parenting styles, teachers' educational background, and school budget but all of these components could directly affect the child's outdoor time practices.

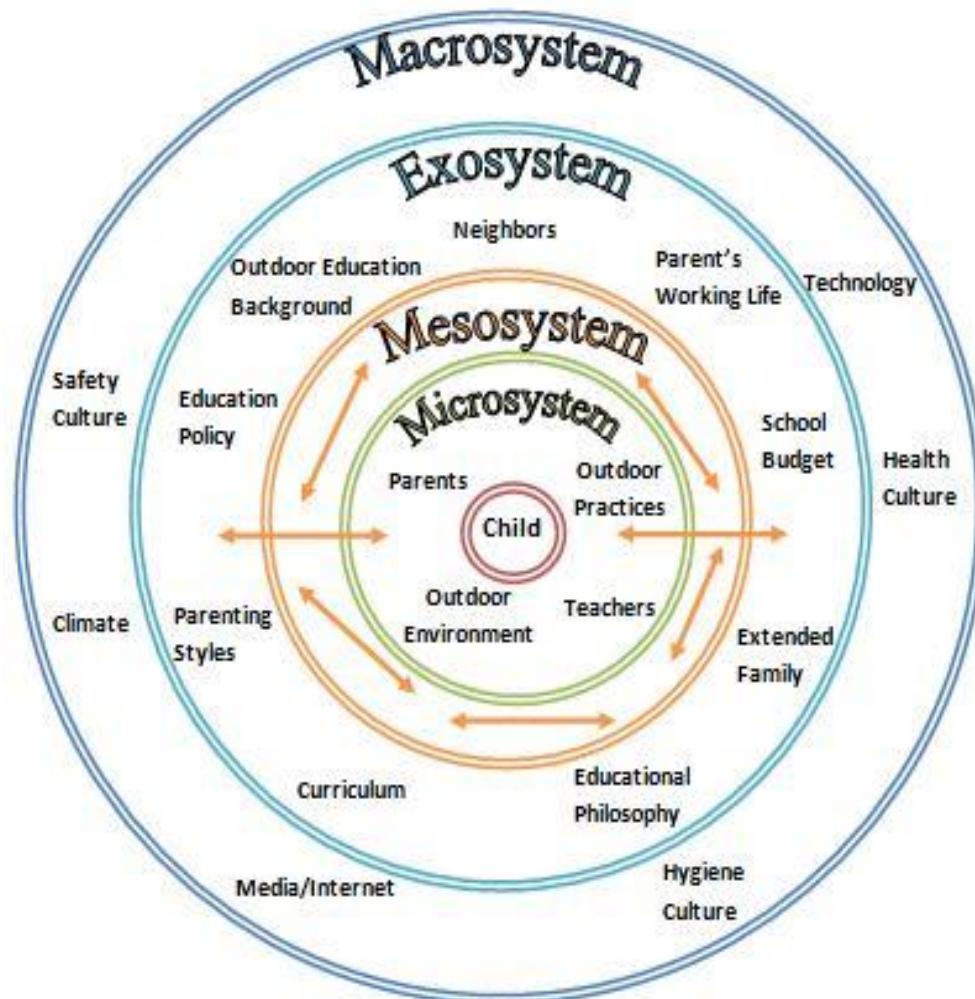
As the last surface of ecological systems, Johnson (2008, p.3) describes that "the macrosystem can be thought of as the "social blueprint" of a given culture, subculture, or broad social context and consists of the overarching pattern of values, belief systems, lifestyles, opportunities, customs, and resources embedded therein". Concerning the current study, parents' and teachers' cultural values related to safety, hygiene, and health significantly affect practices during outdoor time. To illustrate, cultural views related to getting dirty or ensuring the safety of children could limit or enrich the outdoor practices. Besides this, attitude toward bad weather conditions could affect the frequency of outdoor time and active usage of outdoor environments in schools as cultural effects on outdoor time. Moreover, views related to the usage of technological devices like computers and television affect the child's outdoor habits. To illustrate encourage the child to play outside more rather than watching a cartoon in a society that considers the negative effects of technological devices. So the child is influenced by these cultural values although the child does not have much freedom in forming these cultural values.

Morrison (2015) states some of the effects of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory on modern education. Firstly, Morrison states that teachers and parents collaborate in order to provide positive environments or diminish the negative effects. Moreover, not only teachers but also parents are aware of the development process of a child depends on the nature of this child and his/her environment. As the last effects of this theory, teachers are more conscious about how diverse environments form the lives of children in various ways are. For this current study, early childhood teachers can develop their awareness regarding more usage of the outdoor environment of the school if they realize the positive effects of outdoor

environment on the development and learning process of young children. Furthermore, the education staff must consider and examine environments that are culture, community, school, and home in detail so as to understand the developing child in the center of the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Details can be seen in Figure 1;

**Figure 1.**

*Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems*



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHOD**

This chapter will provide a detailed explanation of the employed methodology including study design, participants, research setting, data collection instruments, the procedure of data collection, data analysis procedure, ethical considerations, and trustworthiness of the study. In section 3.1, research design within research questions and research aims will be mentioned. Descriptive information about the participants of the study will be explained in section 3.2. The school setting where the research was conducted and the data was collected will be explained in detail through the agency of section 3.3. In section 3.4, information related to the instruments of the data collection, and how the data has been collected will be mentioned. After the data collection procedure, the steps of the data analysis procedure will be explained in section 3.5. The role of the researcher will be given in section 3.6. Ethical principles that were followed during the research will be given in section 3.7. As the last section, section 3.8. will give information related to how the trustworthiness of the study is ensured through the usage of diverse methods.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

The data in the current study was collected through qualitative research approaches. The qualitative research approach focuses on exploring situations through looking from individuals' diverse viewpoints so researchers see the world as multiple realities involving the same occasion's diverse views which are constructed socially (Frankel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). Silverman (2005) emphasized that qualitative researchers gather data through the agency of making observations in the environment and connecting content and findings based on not only the environment but also culture during the research process. This study aims to examine the views of the teachers and parents, and also explore the outdoor practices of the teachers who participated in the study. Within these aims, the study focuses on the following research questions;

1. What are the views of teachers regarding the time spending outdoors?
2. What are the views of parents regarding the time spending outdoors?
3. What are the teacher practices implemented during the outdoor time?

In parallel with the research purposes and research questions, the researcher aims to have deeper knowledge relate to participants' views and the teachers' outdoor practices. That's why the qualitative approach was considered as a suitable approach for the study since it delivers a more detailed perspective related to the context so qualitative methods were used following the study's purposes. Creswell (2014) describes qualitative research as the research method in order to explore and understand the perspectives of an individual or group via using methods such as observations and interviews. Document analysis, interview, and observation methods were used as the data collection methods for this study. In order to prepare data collection tools, the researcher firstly reviewed the related literature and then experts' opinions were taken about the drafts of data collection tools. With the help of expert opinions, data collection tools were finalized via editing.

### **3.2. Participants**

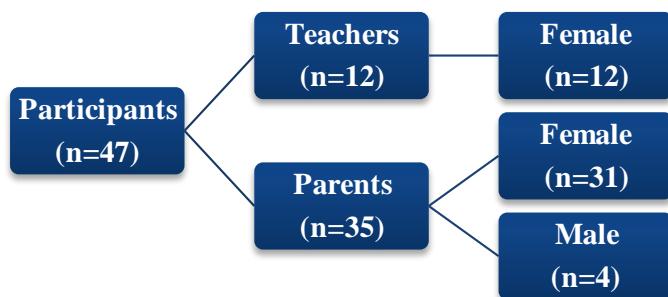
The participants of the current study included two various groups who were the parents and in-service teachers. The study was conducted in a private kindergarten located in Çankaya, Ankara. In order to select the sample, the convenience sampling method was used for the study because the researcher was currently working as a teacher in the school that the study was conducted.

Frankel, Wallen, & Hyun (2012) describe convenience sampling as a sampling method that chooses participants who are not only available but also accessible to the researcher. Convenience sampling is one of the non-random sampling methods that the researcher benefits from non-systematic selection (Neuman, 2014). Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) highlight that the main purpose of the convenience sampling is collecting data from the participants who are conveniently available as a data source for the researcher. Therefore, this type of sampling was not only affordable but also easy as well as being readily available. That's why the research setting was determined as the outdoor environment of the school that the researcher currently works as one of the teachers. The researcher worked with the

teacher participants and parent participants in the research setting. Teachers (n=12) were the ones of six age groups that are between 24 months and 72 months. And the researcher collected data from the parents (n=35) of children who are between 24 months and 72 months. Except for three parents, all of the parents and teachers were female. Details can be seen in Figure 2;

**Figure 2**

*Fathers&Mothers in the study*



Parents were represented with a “P” letter. Four of them are fathers and thirty-one participants are mothers in the study. Ten parents have a graduate degree, one parent has an associate degree and three parents have a high-school diploma while others have a bachelor's degree. Participants' age ranged from 30 to 47 years ( $M= 35, 77$ ). All the teachers represented with a “T” letter during the results sections were female. Participants' age ranged from 24 to 35 years ( $M= 28, 08$ ). Nine of the teachers have a bachelor's degree and three teachers have an associate degree. In terms of graduation area, five of the teachers were graduated from the child development department and five teachers were graduated from the early childhood education area. On the other hand, two teachers were graduated from out of education areas which are tourism and biology but they have pedagogic formation.

In terms of course or seminar about outdoor education, seven teachers took outdoor education as a part of their course during their undergraduate and associate degree and two teachers took outdoor education as a part of seminars and projects but three teachers did not take a seminar or course about outdoor education. Teachers' experiences vary between 5-10 years (n=2), 2-5 years (n=9), and one teacher has 16 years of experience. Teachers are responsible from 6 age groups that are 24 months (n=1), 24-36 months (n=1), 36-48 months

(n=1), 48-60 months (n=2) and 60-72 months (n=1). Also, each age group has 2 teachers. Data collected from both two teachers of each age group since both teachers are equally responsible for the development and learning processes of children. The descriptive information of the teacher participants was demonstrated in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1**  
*Descriptive Information about Teachers*

| Age Group  | Codes | Age | Education       | Outdoor Education Background         | Years of Experience | Number of Children |
|------------|-------|-----|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 24 mnth.   | T1    | 35  | AA (Child Dev.) | No                                   | 10                  | 10                 |
| 24 mnth.   | T7    | 27  | AA (Child Dev.) | Yes ("Methods of Teaching" course )  | 2                   | 10                 |
| 24-36 mnth | T2    | 32  | AA (Child Dev.) | No                                   | 16                  | 7                  |
| 24-36 mnth | T5    | 24  | AA (Child Dev.) | Yes (course)                         | 2                   | 7                  |
| 36-48 mnth | T9    | 35  | BA (ECE)        | Yes (course)                         | 2                   | 15                 |
| 36-48 mnth | T10   | 28  | BA (ECE)        | Yes (course)                         | 3                   | 15                 |
| 60-72 mnth | T6    | 25  | BA (ECE)        | Yes (course)                         | 2                   | 7                  |
| 48-60 mnth | T8    | 27  | BA (ECE.)       | Yes (course)                         | 3                   | 9                  |
| 48-60 mnth | T11   | 27  | BA (Biology)    | Yes ("Development and play" seminar) | 4                   | 10                 |
| 48-60 mnth | T12   | 29  | AA (Child Dev.) | Yes (social responsibility project)  | 7                   | 10                 |
| 60-72 mnth | T3    | 24  | BA (ECE)        | Yes ("Play and Learning" course)     | 3                   | 7                  |

### **3.3. The School Setting**

The research was conducted in a private kindergarten located in Çankaya, Ankara, which is the capital of Turkey. As a teacher who was working in the school setting, the researcher conducted observation sessions in the outdoor environment of the school. In school, 19 staff work, and 14 of the staff are kindergarten teachers. There are seven age groups in the school and each age group has 2 teachers as partners. The age groups of classrooms were divided as 24 months (n=1), 24-36 months (n=1), 36-48 months (n=2), 48-60 months (n=2) and 60-72 months (n=1). The number of students in each class varies between 7 to 15. One of the age groups (36-48 months) was removed from the study because the researcher is the teacher of this group. As well as the age group, one teacher did not participate in the study as being a partner teacher of the researcher. Because of these reasons, the research was conducted with 12 teacher participants and classrooms. The school opens from 08:00 am to 6:30 p.m. Each class starts the activities after breakfast time served at 09.00 am (See table 3.2). In the school, the classrooms are used as ateliers that were constructed to support certain development areas of children. To illustrate, children work on art skills in art atelier to support the development area of creativity. Due to the aim of benefiting from all the ateliers, the school administrator adjusts a rotation plan that demonstrates which age group uses which atelier and for how long the age groups stay in the atelier.

As ateliers inside of the school building, also the school's outdoor environment is involved in the rotation program (see figure 6) and it is used as an atelier by all age groups. Furthermore, the age groups follow the rotation program for the outdoor environment because there is limited space for the environment. So there are two reasons for a school to place the outdoor environment in a rotation program. These reasons are considering the outdoor environment as one of the ateliers in the school and limited space of the outdoor environment. Therefore, usage of the school's outdoor environment is planned through the agency of allocating specific periods for each age group. A group stays for 45 minutes as one session in the outdoor environment. Two sessions are given in a week for the usage of the outdoor environment for an age group but if no one uses the outdoor environments teacher can decide to use it with their age group. The rotation program is not changed based on weather conditions. Also, if one session was adjusted to be in the morning hours, the other session is adjusted to be in the afternoon hours in a weekly rotation program for an age group.

The outdoor environment area is 280 square meters and it involves three different areas that are front outdoor environment (see figure 3), side outdoor environment (see figure 4), and back outdoor environment (see figure 5). The front outdoor environment involves the playground area, which has just a slide and two swings. Apart from the playground toys, there is also a water engine in a small and locked cottage, garden lamps, a park bench, and diverse plants like trees, flowers. The side outdoor environment is used as the botanic garden, which involves soil surface that children conduct some planting activities with their teachers. There are different flowers and vegetables like beans, potatoes, and tomato in this area. Moreover, there are gardening tools that are just suitable for adult usage so teachers generally do not allow children to use these tools. The back outdoor environment involves a sandbox used for sand play and there are different sand play toys like shovels, cups, buckets as materials used in a sandbox. Furthermore, there is a wooden dining bench in this area and sometimes teachers conduct story reading activities there. Like plants, there is a walnut tree that is used for outdoor practices like plant examination in the back part of the area. On the surfaces of three outdoor environments, there are diverse sensory path designs to help children to support motor developments.

**Figure 3**

*Playground Photos (Front Outdoor Environment)*



**Figure 3 Continued**

*Playground Photos (Front Outdoor Environment)*



**Figure 4.**

*Botanic Garden Photos (Side Outdoor Environment)*



**Figure 5**

*Sand Pool and Dining Bench (Back Outdoor Environment)*



**Figure 6**

*A daily schedule of an age group*

|             |                                  |             |                         |
|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 08.00-09.30 | Arrival to school                | 12.00-12.45 | Lunch & Self Care       |
| 09.30-10.00 | Breakfast                        | 13.00-15.00 | Sleep Time              |
| 10.00-10.30 | 1 <sup>st</sup> Atelier          | 15.00-15.30 | Snack Time              |
| 10.30-11.15 | Garden (2 <sup>nd</sup> Atelier) | 15.30-16.15 | 4 <sup>th</sup> Atelier |
| 11.15-12.00 | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Atelier          | 16.15-17.00 | 5 <sup>th</sup> Atelier |
|             |                                  | 17.00-..... | Getting Ready for home  |

### 3.4. Data Collection

Data collection was completed within 6 months which started in February, 2019 and ended in September, 2019 (see Figure 7). The data was collected through multiple instruments: semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. The use of multiple data collection tools delivers benefits for a strong research process since diverse aspects are discovered by each method (Patton, 1999).

**Figure 7.**

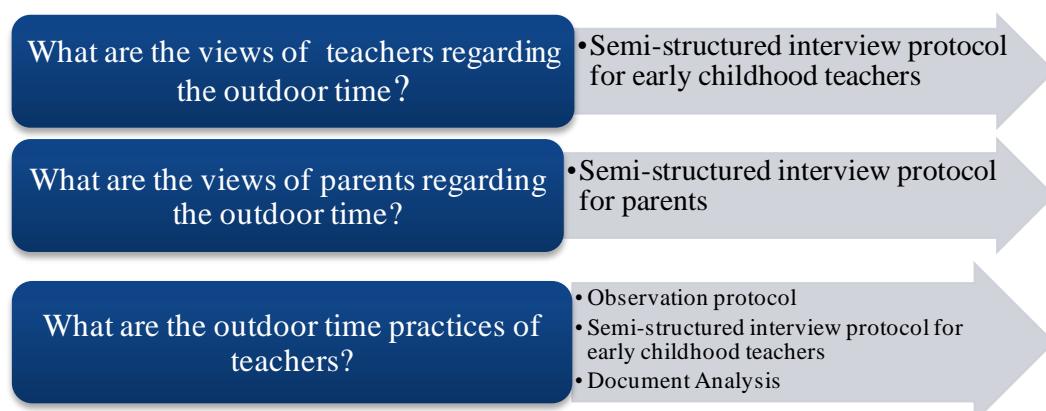
*Data Collection Procedures and Timeline*



For the semi-structured interviews, two different interview protocols were used (see Appendix D and Appendix E). The first semi-structured interview protocol was used for the teachers so as to gain in-depth knowledge about their points of view related to outdoor time and outdoor practices. Besides the first interview protocol, a second interview protocol was used for parents in order to gain in-depth knowledge about their views related to outdoor time. Apart from semi-structured interview protocols an observation form (see Appendix F) was used to elicit information about outdoor practices that are conducted by the teachers in their natural settings. Figure 8 demonstrates the data sources and their relation with research questions.

**Figure 8**

*Data collection tools used concerning research questions*



### **3.4.1. Semi-structured Interview Protocols**

Exploring views of teachers and parents was one of the aims of this current study so semi-structured interview protocols were used for this study aim. After taking the feedbacks of three experts in the field of early childhood education and reviewing the related literature, the semi-structured interview protocols were prepared by the researcher. The semi-structured interview was used as an instrument in order to gather data and it includes the number of open-ended questions assisting participants to generate more details related to the topic (Roulston, 2010). Two different interview protocols, including open-ended questions, were implemented for the research since teachers' interview protocol also includes questions to explore practices of outdoor time alongside perceptions, and parents' interview protocol includes open-ended questions to explore their views regarding outdoor time.

The researcher started collecting observation data first because cold and rainy conditions also aimed to be observed to enrich the data. After two months, interview sessions were also started to conduct while conducting observation sessions. So the researcher conducted observations and interview sessions simultaneously during three months in order to provide a broader perspective for the study. Semi-structured interviews with parents were conducted between April 2019 and September 2019. The researcher and teachers arranged an interview schedule that suits not only participant teachers but also the researcher. With the permission of participant teachers, audio records were taken during the interview process in order to make transcribe interviews. All the teachers participated in the study so 12 interview sessions were conducted for the study. Once again, participant teachers were informed about research confidentiality so as to prevent unreliable information that will come from teachers because of any kind of prejudices and fear.

While conducting semi-structured interview sessions with the teachers, the researcher started to arrange an interview schedule for parents. As the first step, the researcher communicated with parents via face to face way when they come to school so as to bring and pick their children. Face to face communication was preferred in order to easily build a strong rapport with parents as participants. With the help of this communication method, the researcher informed parents about the research aims and the research process. Furthermore, parents easily asked about research related questions. As the next step, the researcher adjusted different meeting times for each interview session to be suitable for both parent participants and the researcher.

The interview sessions were recorded with an audiotape after taking permission of parents and research confidentially related to audio records reminded parents so as to prevent any kind of fear and prejudices. In order to elicit demographic information, related questions were asked at the beginning of the interview sessions. Each interview session lasted in approximately 30-45 minutes. Demographic information and educational background were asked at the beginning of the interview sessions. After the interview sessions, the researcher formed transcriptions of the audio records. After completing the transcription of the interviews' audio records, the researcher sent transcriptions to participants via mail to ensure the accuracy of data and review the statements. Transcripts were reviewed by participant teachers and parents to ensure accuracy for trustworthy results.

#### **3.4.1.1. Interview Protocol for the Teachers**

The semi-structured interview protocol prepared for the teachers involves 7 open-ended questions with sub-questions besides 4 demographic questions that are the first questions in the interview protocol. Through demographic questions, information related to gender, age, educational background, years of experience, and the number of children in their classrooms were gathered. 7 interview questions are mostly related to general view about outdoor time, effects of outdoor time on learning and development of children outdoor time practices, ideal outdoor time, before and during protocols for outdoor time, an ideal outdoor environment were asked through this protocol. As the last part, observations related to children during the outdoor time were asked. Table 3.2 demonstrates example interview questions within the topics that they focused on;

**Table 3.2**

*The Exemplary Interview Questions for Teachers*

| Main Topic        | Exemplary Questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Viewpoints</b> | <p>-What do you think about outdoor learning and outdoor play?</p> <p>-How would you describe an ideal outdoor environment for children?</p>                                                                                              |
| <b>Practices</b>  | <p>-Could you describe one of your outdoor time sessions with children? Which activities do you conduct with children in an outdoor environment?</p> <p>-Which components do you pay attention to before and during the outdoor time?</p> |

### **3.4.1.2. Interview Protocol for the Parents**

The participation of parents is a significant aspect of the early childhood education program (MEB, 2006). Parents and teachers share responsibilities regarding healthy development and learning process of children in the early years so examination of parents' views and comparison with teachers' views provides better understanding in order to form effective practices in early childhood education (Göl-Güven, 2016).

Views of parents were collected as another data source in this study. The semi-structured interview protocol of parents consists of 7 open-ended questions with sub-questions besides 6 demographic questions that are the first questions in the interview protocol. Information about gender, age, educational background, and occupation was gathered. Furthermore, information related to their children's age and kindergarten backgrounds were taken with these questions. 7 interview questions are mostly related to general view about outdoor time, effects of outdoor time on learning and development process of children, the outdoor time they spend with their children, ideal outdoor time, and an ideal outdoor environment. As the last part, parents' observations related to their children during the outdoor time were asked. Table 3.3 demonstrates some of the interview questions as exemplary questions within the topics that they focused on;

**Table 3.3**

*The Exemplary Interview Questions for Parents*

| <b>Main Topic</b> | <b>Exemplary Questions</b>                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Viewpoints</b> | <i>-What do you think about the ideal outdoor time for children<br/>-Do you think that the frequency and the duration of outdoor time should be changed based on seasonal conditions?</i> |
| <b>Practices</b>  | <i>-What do you know about outdoor practices in the school?<br/>-What do you think about the effects of outdoor practices on learning and development for children?</i>                   |

### **3.4.2. Observation Protocol**

The data collection procedure started with the observation sessions since the researcher preferred also to observe the month of February to elicit information about the teachers' outdoor practices during that time. So, observing outdoor practices during snowy, rainy, and cold conditions enriched the observation data for the study. Before the observation sessions, the researcher informed the teachers about the research aims and the process of the study. 15 observation sessions were conducted with diverse age groups. Some of the planned observation sessions could not be observed because outdoor time sessions were canceled due to bad weather conditions, completing indoor activities, field trips, collective events like parties and guest speakers, and so on. Therefore schedule of observation sessions changed according to the suitability of the teachers and the researcher. Observation sessions were conducted between 20-45 minutes depending on age groups' duration of outdoor time. At the end of each observation session, the researcher completed the observation protocol by writing the details of the observations.

Observation provides first-hand data for more holistic interpretation when it is combined with document analysis and interviews (Merriam, 2009). Observation is used to explore the outdoor practices of the teachers who were involved in the current study as participants. Merriam (2009) defines observation as a qualitative data collection tool used for reaching trustworthy results while focusing on specific research questions. The researcher is able to study participants in natural settings of them in order to understand the phenomena from perspectives of them through the agency of observation as a qualitative method (Baker, 2006). Through observation, the researcher also explored the consistency between teachers' statements regarding outdoor practices and outdoor practices conducted by teachers during observation sessions.

For the researchers, there are many diverse roles that they can take, in order to observe participants in their natural setting (Baker, 2006). In parallel with the research aims and research questions of the study, the researcher decided to take the non-participant observer role during observation sessions to reach more trustworthy results. Frankel, Wallen, & Hyun (2012) describe nonparticipant observation as the observation type that the researcher only watches the activity instead of directly involved in the activity. According to Baker (2006), the researcher should always remember his/her main role as a researcher and stay separated enough so as to gather and analyze the relevant observation data in spite of diverse

observation roles. Creswell (2012) describes the role of being a nonparticipant observer as an observer who takes notes and conducts the observation process without involving it. Furthermore, the observer elicits concrete observations through the agency of being a nonparticipant observer who removes self from experiences that are real.

Exploring the practices of teachers was one of the aims of this current study so observation protocol was used for this study aim. Before conducting the observation sessions, the observation protocol was prepared by the researcher by reviewing the related literature so as to record observation notes systematically. Creswell (2012) emphasizes that the observation protocol is used in order to record observations' notes related to behaviors that are observed during the process. As the next step, the observation protocol was revised after taking the opinions of three experts in the early childhood education area. The content of field notes in observation protocol is described within two parts that are descriptive and reflective. Based on this description, the researcher records what he/she hears and sees in the observation setting through the agency of taking field notes while reflective field notes enable the researcher to reflect personal viewpoints on collected observation data (Bogdan&Biklen, 1998). Frankel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012) state descriptive field notes involving components that are participants' portraits, conversations between participants, characteristics of the observation setting, description of activities, and so on. According to related literature, the used observation form includes four parts (see Table 3.4);

**Table 3.4**

*Exemplary Observation Session*

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Observed Teachers:</b> T3-T6 (60-72 months)<br>(Observation 10)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Season:</b> Spring<br><b>Weather:</b> Partly cloudy<br><b>Time:</b> 35 minutes |
| <b>Used Areas:</b> Playground, bench, botanic garden<br><b>Materials:</b> storybook, leaves, sticks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Activities:</b> Story reading, plant examination, comparison                   |
| <p><b>Preparation Before Outdoor Time:</b> Through the direction of T3, the first children went to the toilet and after they wore their outdoor shoes. Teachers said that "you don't need to take your coat because it is not too cold". T6 took a book out of the class bag and she said children to line up. While the children are preparing, T6 takes a book with him to read outside, and shows the book about planets to the children and says, "We will read this first outside." The children go backyard with their teachers.</p> |                                                                                   |

**Table 3.4 Continued***Exemplary Observation Session*

**Interaction and communication:** They sit at the bench and settle down. T6 starts reading the book by showing it to the children. While reading, she asks questions about the book. T3 warns two children who speak and she says that they should listen to the story. After reading the story, T6 says, "Let's collect the branches in the garden, everyone will find one." While collecting branches, one of the children comes to the side of T3 and says that s/he found more than one and showed the branches in her/his hand. Another boy says "there is a spider here" and points to the spider on the soil. T3 says "don't be afraid! it won't do anything to you". One of the kids says, "It is too little, it can't do anything to us." After the children find their branches, T6 wants them to line up the branches next to the sandbox. Then "line up from big to small," says T3. As the children arrange their branches according to their height, T3 and T6 follow them. Then T6 asks children which branch is the biggest and which is the smallest. After that, T6 sows a dry leaf to children and she asks "What might have happened to this leaf?" The children give answers by saying, "It is like this because of rain, it was eaten by insects, someone has thrown the ground." Then T6 takes the leaf and holds it next to the green leaf and asks the children to compare the two leaves. Children talk about the colors, size and so on. T6 asks which tree this leaf is from. One of the children says "pine tree". Another child says that if it belonged to a pine tree, there would be thorns, and pine trees do not shed their leaves. Meanwhile, T3 takes a video of the activity to send to parents. With the guidance of T6, the children collect leaves in the garden and compare them with the leaf in the hands of the teacher. T3 asks the similarity of the leaves collected by children. After T3 asks "what happens after the leaf falls on soil?" One of the children says they rot and mix with the soil. After the speech, teachers allow children to play freely at the playground for about 10 minutes. During free play, teachers sit on the park bench and talk with each other while observing children. 2 children swing while a child looks at them. Four children play a version of the tag game. One of them screams that "I am the fire and I throw fire to bad guys". While they are running, one of them goes to the teachers and says "I am tired, I want to sit". After T3 said to the children "Time to go, let's go inside" Teachers wait for children to get together and make a line. Then they go inside.

The first part of the observation form focuses on general information about the setting so it involves questions in order to elicit information related to the target teacher, number of the children in session, season, weather, and duration of the observation session. Based on the related literature review, research questions, and research aims, the second part includes components that area materials, activities, and the used area of the outdoor environment were noted. The third part involves preparations of teachers and children before going for outdoor time. As the last part, conversations and interactions between participants were noted descriptively by the researcher. Most researchers prefer to take notes during the session and write details in notes related to their observations after observation sessions (Merriam, 2009). During the observation process in the current study, the researcher took notes and more details were added as soon as possible after the observation session ended.

After taking the necessary permission, the researcher took photos during some of the observation sessions. The photos were taken in order to record observations of some outdoor practices, and also strengthen and enrich the data. So the photos provided chances to record

practices of individuals as well as the environment's observations. Moreover, the researcher benefited from photos to go back to collect data during the analysis process to catch missed points. Photos were also examined and discussed with another researcher during the data analysis process. The photos support the data analysis procedure through providing more sufficient time and comprehensive information (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hun, 2016).

### **3.4.3. Document Analysis**

As the last step of the data collection process, document analyses were conducted by the researcher. The examination of monthly plans was chosen because the school does not have any mission and vision in relation to outdoor education. Also, there is no letter to inform parents about the school's outdoor policies and outdoor practices. Hence, it was decided to analyze monthly plans via document analysis.

Merriam (2009) defines documents as physical artifices and written or visual materials in the qualitative research area. The researcher used document analysis in the current study in order to obtain information related to outdoor practices. Moreover, to be able to see the consistency between outdoor practices observed during the sessions and interview statements related to outdoor practices of the teachers. The document analysis procedure was conducted in July 2019 after completing interview sessions with the teachers and observation of outdoor time practices. Through the completion of observation sessions, consistency between observation notes and examined plans was investigated efficiently.

Document analysis should be conducted within a systematic procedure within a set of criteria that are determined for the analysis process (Creswell, 2012). Hence the researcher conducted the document analysis process within some determined criteria. As the first step, the researcher selected lesson plans that use the outdoor environment as a learning environment from monthly plans. After, lesson plans in the observation process were examined. Namely, the lesson plans between the months of February and June. For the next step, predetermined categories were used for the analysis process. Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2016) explain that categorization occurs through reviewing literature before analysis or during the analysis process. Therefore, plans were systematically reviewed according to predetermined categories that are determined based on reviewing related literature. Categories were formed as monthly distribution, activity types, and materials, and focused

subjects (see Figure 10). Based on these categories; four summary figures were created to summarize and interpret codes.

**Figure 10**  
*Document Analysis Categories*



### **3.5. Data Analysis**

Data analysis procedure can be described as the procedure of making sense out of data through the agency of consolidating, reducing, and interpreting the collected data (Merriam, 2009). For the current study, Creswell's (2007) data analysis steps were implemented through the following steps that are organizing and preparing the data, making sense of general information, coding, describing, representing, and interpreting.

Interviews and observations' data analysis procedure started as soon as possible after the data collection process via sources. As the first step in the content analysis procedure, obtained data were organized by the researcher. In order to organize the research data, transcripts of audio records were written by the researcher. After transcripts of audio records were written, the "INT" code was given so as to represent transcripts of interview sessions, and numbers were given to order transcript documents. Additionally, a "P" letter was given for parents and a "T" letter was given for teachers in order to differentiate two groups of participants from each other. To illustrate, "T2-INT" means the interview transcript of the second teacher while "P5-INT" means an interview transcript of the fifth parent. In this way, data became easier to make a general sense of information. Collected data were analyzed separately based on data sources which are observation sessions, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Semi-structured interview data clusters were analyzed based on participants who are parents and the teachers. Relation among data clusters was formed in the discussion part of the study. Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2016) emphasize that the

content analysis enables the researcher so as to compare diverse participant groups' beliefs and attitudes, and also the researcher can systemize and quantify the collected data with the help of the content analysis method. As a research method, content analysis is used in order to make inferences that are both replicable and valid, from collected data (Krippendorff, 2003). Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2016) highlight the significance of content analysis by stating that content analysis is crucial in order to analyze not only observation data but also interview data. In order to make valid inferences from the collected visual, verbal, and written research data and to quantify as well as describe a phenomenon; content analysis can be used as a qualitative research method delivering not only systematic but also objective medians (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Due to these reasons, content analysis was used as the data analysis method during the data analysis procedure by considering suitability for the current qualitative study.

Yıldırım and Şimşek (2006) describe the process of content analysis approach via stating that collected data is categorized through the agency of similarity from the standpoint of specific concepts and themes, and then these categories are organized and evaluated in a way that study's reader can understand. Furthermore, Creswell (2012) highlights that crucial themes were formed in order to reduce codes to themes after the identification of codes in the collected data. The transcripts, observations notes, and monthly plans were read several times in order to become more familiar with collected data and gain early insight into categories. Codes were identified through rereading and finding similarities in the written forms of the collected data. Then categories were formed via sorting related codes together. In the same way, coherent categories were sorted together in order to form themes. At the end of forming the process of the themes, the researcher controlled all themes in order to ensure clarity and coherency. After the data analysis procedure, the researcher summarized the analysis by forming themes tables and made interpretations related to themes tables. Monthly plans were examined through categories that are determined before the analysis procedure. Categories were determined via reviewing related literature. Firstly, the researcher chose activity plans using the outdoor environment as the learning environment. After these plans were examined according to determined criteria that are distribution by months, activity types, required materials, and focused themes

In order to enhance the reliability of the study and ensure the authenticity of the coding process, inter coding agreement was used. The first coder was the researcher and the second coder was a research assistant in the early childhood education department and has an

interest in outdoor education. Firstly, the second coder individually read, examined, and coded organized data that randomly selected. Two coders discussed emerged themes during the independent coding process. In order to reach an agreement, the inter-rater reliability formula of Miles and Huberman's (1994) was applied. According to this formula reliability of the study equals the number of agreements/number of agreements + disagreements. The rate of agreement was found to be as 85, 5%. This rate demonstrated that the analysis process is consistent between two coders because the lower boundary of this rate was stated as 80% (Miles& Huberman, 1994). One expert from the early childhood education are also checked the analysis procedure and emerged themes within categories.

### **3.6. Researcher Role & Motivation for the Study**

I worked as an early childhood teacher for 2 years during 2018-2020 in a preschool. I worked with 36-month-old children for a year and 60-month-old children for another year through kindergarten's system that was changing group teacher for each year.

During my teaching experience, I implemented lots of outdoor activities with children in my age groups. Through those experiences, I had many chances to observe the effects of outdoor time on the learning and developmental process of children. The first and most significant observation was that the children were really happy when they were outside. So being happy brought many diverse benefits for their development and learning, and also for my teaching process. During my outdoor practices, I was easily attracting children's attention after giving them time to release energy and play freely. Furthermore, I began to observe the development of positive social and emotional skills in the case of conducting outdoor time regularly.

To illustrate, children generally were calmer and focused for the rest of the day after outdoor times since they could discharge energy without any limitations. This helped me to connect with children who feel anxious during the school day. On the other hand, I also experienced barriers to conducting outdoor time during cold and rainy weather. I concerned about going outside during cold weather because of the parental concerns like children might get sick as a result of going outside, so I tried to take children outside for shorter periods like 15 or 20 minutes in the winter season since I believe in the significance of taking fresh air for the healthy physical development of young children even if I had concerns about getting sick. I

experienced a parental concern that some of my parents asked me to not conduct outdoor time in the winter season and especially in bad weather conditions and also I was complained once to the school administration by a parent about the muddy shoes of her child. In parallel with these physical layouts of the outdoor environment was beginning to be a problem for me since I was experiencing difficulties because of muddy areas. While trying to manage barriers for outdoor time, these experiences motivate me to investigate views and practices related to outdoor time to answer this question if other teachers have parallel outdoor experiences like me.

Due to observing and experiencing the benefits of outdoor time on children in my age groups, I began to think and research so as to find ways to provide more qualified outdoor time for children. I tried to use different learning materials such as rhythm sticks for conducting diverse outdoor implications such as music activities or rhythmic walking as one of the movement activities. After completing my courses in master's degree, I selected the "outdoor time" topic for my thesis. Hence, I could conclude that the selection of my thesis topic was affected by my teaching experiences. My research journey started with readings on forest schools. Afterward, I focused on more limited physical areas like outdoor environments of schools inasmuch as I consider that these areas were easier in order to prepare learning environments and activity plans for the teachers and also conducting activities were more suitable in order to change parents' negative reactions related to safety and bad weather conditions into positive perspectives regarding outdoor time. In other words, I believe that outdoor environments of kindergartens are perfect areas to start changing negative perspectives regarding outdoor education.

We are in a world that children started to live and grow in indoor environments more than outdoor environments. As educators, we have to take responsibility so as to provide developmentally appropriate conditions for children to develop and learn in healthy ways. Therefore, outdoor time could be considered as a significant vehicle to provide chances for the qualified learning and development process of children in the early years. Moreover, children are willing to learn more in the outdoor environment inasmuch as they are simply happy and feel free in outdoor environments. With the help of conducting sessions of outdoor time regularly, also early childhood educators help parents who cannot provide qualified outdoor time because of reasons like working hours, concerns related to bad weather conditions, and so on. Every aspect of daily life has been significantly affected by COVID-19 emerging in 2020. In the education area, this situation begins to change the world

of children, so the decisions we have made to protect ourselves toward COVID-19 will be some of the most important changes in generations for education. In other words, we could say that COVID-19 begins to change education. At this point, outdoor education and outdoor environments become more and more important day by day due to the necessity of social distancing. Therefore, these environments immediately need to be considered as crucial learning environments that provide opportunities for healthy development and effective learning process of young children in the early childhood education area.

In conclusion, I consider kindergartens' outdoor time as highly significant periods that should be in the learning and development processes of children in the early years since I believe in its benefits for these children. Therefore, the teachers and parents of children in kindergarten settings should work together in order to enhance outdoor time through collaborations turning negative perspectives into positive ones. Due to these reasons, I decided to study on "outdoor time" topic in this thesis that aims to explore views of teachers and parents, and also teachers' outdoor practices.

### **3.7. Ethical Consideration**

The researcher firstly applied to the Human Subject Ethics Committee (HSEC) of Middle East Technical University (METU) in order to take the research ethics committee's approval. During the approval process, necessary documents like detailed research procedure, observation protocol, and questions of semi-structured interview protocol were given to the ethics committee. The ethics committee's approval could be seen in the Appendix A. The researcher gave information related to the current study and the aims of the study. The same procedure was followed so as to get necessary permissions from the principal of the school where the research setting is.

The ethical consideration is highly crucial for studies in the social area, particularly in data collection and findings distribution due to relation between researchers and participants as well as involving humans as participants in the study (Merriam, 2009). Before the data collection process, the researcher informed teachers and parents about the research process and it was asked to fill the consent form if they want to participate in the study, so volunteer participants filled consent forms in order to participate in the study. The researcher explained the option of withdrawing participation in the study at any time for all participants.

Furthermore, the identities of participants kept confidential by the researcher, and pseudonyms were used during the study for the participants. The study's all documents were kept on a password ensured computer that is at the home of the researcher. Because of being one of the teachers in the school, the researcher benefited from diverse methods to maintain the researcher's role without mixing the teacher's role to objectively collect and analyze the data. Firstly, and most importantly, the researcher's partner teacher and also the researcher's students with their parents were not included in the sample of the study. Furthermore, the triangulation method and involving more than one participant group provided chances to look at research from every angle. To illustrate, outdoor time in bad weather conditions was talked with not only teachers but also parents to objectively examine the perspectives of both sides. Moreover, the researcher experienced that some of the teacher participants demonstrate concern about keeping identities confidentially and not sharing with school administration. Because of this reason, the researcher made more explanation about pseudonyms, keeping data on a password ensured computer, and so on.

### **3.8. Trustworthiness of the Study**

In order to provide the trustworthiness, diverse methods were used by the researcher in this study that aims to explore views of teachers and parents, and also teachers' outdoor practices. Reliability means the consistency of research findings over components that are location, time, and situations (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2016). Furthermore, Merriam (2009) argues that the probability of getting more reliable results is highly probable through ensuring the validity of the study, and also triangulation could be acceptable as the main method to provide reliability and validity. Validity which is the accuracy of the research could be ensured through the agency of methods like triangulation or member checking (Gibbs, 2007; Creswell, 2007).

To increase the validity of this study, diverse methods that are triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement were used in this study. The validity of the study is enhanced when the researcher used the triangulation method that is collecting data through the agency of diverse instruments (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2016). Triangulation could be applied through the agency of four ways that are multiple methods usage, usage of multiple data sources, multiple theories, and multiple investigators (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Cross-checking and comparing data are done by using multiple data sources, conducting

observations at diverse times or in a diverse environment, and involving diverse perspectives resulted from interviews with the different participants (Merriam, 2009). For the current study, multiple methods including semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observations were used in the data collection process. With the help of this method, the researcher checked the statements of teachers via observation sessions. Moreover, the data was collected not only from parents but also from teachers. By triangulation method and using two different data sources such as parents and teachers, the researcher aimed a more broadened integrated and valid perspective for further researches in the early childhood education area.

In the study, prolonged engagement was used as another way to improve the trustworthiness of this study by the researcher. Prolonged engagement can be described as spending adequate time for the data collection process for diverse aspects such as building trust and learning the research field's culture (Creswell, 2007). As the suggestion made by Merriam (2009), the qualitative data could be collected until the researcher starts to see and hear repeated findings. Therefore, the data collection procedure lasted five months in the research setting. Moreover, member checking is another way to make the study more credible. Creswell (2007) describes member checking as sharing interview data with the participant so as to check what he or she narrated during the process by taking participant's feedback. With the help of member checking, the researcher has the opportunity to verify both accuracy and completeness of results, so the study's validity will be improved (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). After interview processes with parents and teachers, participants checked their statements through transcript reviews, so teachers and parents had the chance to add or change their statements by reviewing transcript documents in order to ensure the accuracy and completeness of data. Written interview data were sent to teachers and parents via mail. From participants who replied to emails, 7 parents and 2 teachers made changes by adding more comments to their interview data while others made no changes.

As another method so as to ensure the trustworthiness of the current study, the researcher benefits from the rich thick description method by providing detailed information related to participants, research setting, and findings. Furthermore, direct quotes were used to support a rich thick description for the current study. Thick description is defined as quite detailed information on what the researcher has heard and seen in the research setting so the researcher is like painting a portrait in a research report for readers (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2016). Hence, the researcher presented detailed and descriptive information for

readers so that the transferability of research findings because of similar characteristics can be determined. Lastly, the reliability of the current study was supported through inter coding agreement which was implemented in the data analysis procedure through discussing an agreement on codes and themes that were formed independently by the researcher and the second coder.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

This chapter presents the findings of the current study. Views of the teachers are demonstrated in section 4.1 and parents' views are demonstrated in section 4.2. Apart from the views of the teachers and parents, the observations of outdoor implementations are demonstrated in section 4.3. Moreover, the lesson plans of each age group were analyzed and findings are demonstrated in section 4.4. Lastly, section 4.5 will summarize the findings of the study. The interview findings will be demonstrated in the line of the study's semi-structured questions. Each finding is organized in accordance with the codes. The codes, the categories, and the themes are demonstrated in tables. Also, explanatory examples are given within categories. Exemplary quotes for the interviews are given within the "INT" code and exemplary quotes for the observations are given within the "OBS" code. Interviews' transcripts were used so as to demonstrate a connection with the codes and the categories.

#### **4.1. Teachers' Views Regarding the Time Spending Outdoors**

Exploring teachers' views related to the outdoor time was one of the aims of this study. For this aim, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 teachers. Findings will be demonstrated through nine sections that are general views, duration, communication with parents, practices, and purposes, protocols, materials, frequency of environment usage, roles, and responsibilities, and also ideal and actual environment.

##### **4.1.1. General Views**

Teachers' general views regarding the time spending outdoors were asked. The responses to the question were analyzed and two themes which are growth & development and concerns emerged from responses. The first theme of the question includes four categories that are

cognitive (n=66), social-emotional (n=25), physical (n=28), and self-care (n=7). Teachers generally emphasized the benefits of spending time outdoors on the cognitive development of children during interviews. For instance, teachers stated that learning becomes more permanent (n=12) and children have lots of diverse opportunities through learning by doing (n=11) during outdoor time. Also, critical thinking skills (n=11) such as problem-solving, making decisions, brainstorming is developing via spending time outdoors in terms of teachers' views. As the second category, physical development was highlighted most after cognitive development. Teachers mostly believe that children's gross motor skills (n=13) like running, balance skills, and jumping are supported via spending time outdoors. For physical development, the development of gross motor skills (n=13) was more indicated compared to fine motor skills (n=4) development. Furthermore, teachers mostly pointed out feeling freer (n=6) and supporting communication skills (n=6) in the theme of the social-emotional benefit. Lastly, the self-care theme was arranged based on codes like learning to meet their own needs (n=3) and learning to be clean (n=2).

As the second theme of the question that shares a general view regarding spending time outdoors, concerns theme was arranged via organizing four categories that are parent-related (n=7), teacher-related (n=6), school-related (n=6), and season-related (n=2). Mostly teachers stated that parents' concerns (n=7) related to spending time outdoors limit outdoor time. Teachers gave safety, hygiene, sickness as examples to these concerns during interviews. Besides parental concerns, school-related barriers also limit spending time outdoors according to teachers. For instance, the school's rotation program (n=3) demonstrating time intervals to benefit from the outdoor environment for each age group, affects outdoor time negatively.

Daily plans (n=2) and the physical layout of the outdoor environment (n=1) is also stated by teachers as concerns about spending time outdoors. Furthermore, safety (n=4) and being sick because of cold weather (n=2) were shared by teachers as teacher-related concerns (n=2). As the last concern, teachers stated concerns resulted from the effects of seasons (n=2). Detailed information about teachers' views on outdoor time can be seen in Table 4.1.1.

**Table 4.1.1***Teachers' Views Regarding Spending Time Outdoors*

| Themes                        | Categories                 | Codes                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GROWTH&DEVELOPMENT<br>(n=126) | Cognitive<br>(n=66)        | permanent learning (n=12)<br>developing critical thinking skills (n=11)<br>learning by doing (n=11)<br>being more motivated for learning (n=7) |
|                               | Social-Emotional<br>(n=25) | feeling freer (n=6)<br>supporting communication skills (n=6)<br>feeling more relaxed (n=3)<br>having more fun (n=3)<br>being happier (n=2)     |
|                               | Physical (n=28)            | supporting gross motor skills (n=13)<br>supporting sensory development (n=4)                                                                   |
|                               | Self-Care (n=7)            | learning to meet own needs (n=3)<br>learning to be clean (n=2)                                                                                 |
| CONCERNS<br>(n=12)            | Parent Related<br>(n=7)    | parental concern (n=5)<br>balancing parents' requests (n=2)                                                                                    |
|                               | School Related<br>(n=6)    | negative effects of rotation program (n=3)<br>negative effects of daily plans (n=2)<br>physical layout of outdoor environment (n=1)            |
|                               | Teacher Related<br>(n=6)   | safety concerns (n=4)<br>being sick because of cold weather (n=2)                                                                              |
|                               | Season Related<br>(n=2)    | effects of the season on outdoor time (n=2)                                                                                                    |

**Exemplary** quotes are given below for growth and development theme;

T12-INT

“Children should learn in the outdoor environment because they have a chance to try and they feel more comfortable and free. So it extends the duration of the activity, increases active participation, and makes learning permanent.”

T1-INT

“Outdoor activities affect all development areas. For instance, gross motor development is supported when you run, jump, and climb. Generally, we think motor development is affected but also cognitive development is affected through ranking planned activities such as firstly swinging, then slide, and then running. These ranking skills help this child in regulating future life. For social-emotional development, they communicate and establish dialogues with friends while playing so that they express themselves. Children move freely because they reflect their ideas and emotions better with their bodies.”

**T6-INT**

“Children express themselves better, feel freer, learn by doing, so children become more self-confident. Furthermore, they think more analytically through making experiments and thinking that what will happen if they do this. For instance, the child thinks about questions like how to shape this mud bowl, how much water s/he should add, how s/he can balance water and mud through making a mud bowl. With this process, thinking skills are developed. So we can say that child becomes a divergent thinker.”

**T8-INT**

“Children demonstrate their creativity and they learn better because the outdoor environment is open-ended. Also, we can support them to learn based on their interest and abilities in this environment. In terms of self-care development, children learn to protect themselves from dangerous situations. They begin to know themselves and meet their own needs. Socially, they learn to support other friends and cooperate to solve problems. They are happier because they discharge their energy. They act with group consciousness by playing group games. They learn about their limits and what they can do.”

**Exemplary** quotes are given below for concerns theme;

**T6-INT**

“Daily plans and parents’ demands are hindering factors for us compared to the physical environment. Honestly, we had to change our lesson plans according to parents’ demands because we took feedbacks like children will start first grade so they have to involve in more academic activities like doing worksheets. They assumed that children are not learning in the garden. On the contrary, they learn freely but we changed our schedule according to parents’ feedbacks and we limited our outdoor time by shortening durations and decreasing the frequency of outdoor time. I made this change involuntarily and I am not comfortable at all. On the other hand, we tried to balance outdoor time-frequency for parents who want outdoor time.”

**T3-INT**

“For outdoor activities, we need suitable physical conditions. For instance, our garden’s conditions are not suitable for winter so we didn’t use the garden in the winter season because the soil becomes mud in the rain. The mud is nice but we take negative reactions about mud from parents so we generally don’t prefer to go outside during wintertime.”

#### **4.1.2. Duration of Time Spending Outdoor Time**

The teachers were asked how many times they allocated time spent outdoors in a week. For the summer season, half of the participants (n=6) stated that they spend three times a week. Also, the duration varies between 35 minutes to 40 minutes. For the winter season, it was reached that most of the teachers (n=5) do not spend time outdoors. During the interviews, teachers also explained the factors affecting the duration and the frequency of time spent outdoors. In terms of the teachers’ view, winter conditions (n=5), sickness (n=6), and

parental concerns (n=7) were the main factors. Detailed information can be seen in Table 4.1.2

**Table 4.1.2**

*Outdoor Time-Frequency and Duration According to Seasons*

|               |           |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SUMMER</b> | Frequency | 3 times (n=6)<br>2 times (n=3)<br>1-2 time (n=2)<br>Every day (n=1)                   | <b>Outdoor time might change because of...</b><br>Parental concerns (n=7)<br>Sickness (n=6)<br>Winter conditions (n=5)<br>Being a young age group (n=1)<br>Narrow playground (n=1)<br>Rugged surface (n=1)<br>Danger of falling (n=1)<br>Need to take fresh air (n=1)<br>Number of kids (n=1) |
|               | Duration  | 35-40 min. (n=6)<br>45 min. (n=4)<br>20-25 min. (n=2)                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>WINTER</b> | Frequency | Never (n=5)<br>3 times (n=1)<br>2 times (n=3)<br>1 time (n=3)                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|               | Duration  | Never (n=5)<br>45 min. (n=1)<br>35 min. (n=2)<br>20-25 min. (n=2)<br>10-15 min. (n=2) |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

**Exemplary** quotes are given below;

T1-INT

“Risk of getting sick is higher because of being a young age group. That’s why we don’t go to the garden during winter seasons and children easily lost their attention after 15 minutes so 20-25 minutes for outdoor time is enough for us”

T10-INT

Since this is not the case in Turkish culture, our parents think that children get sick easily during winter seasons when they go outdoors.”

T3-INT

“We are going to the garden after wearing galosh. Despite wearing galosh, some parents complain about muddy shoes and they say things like “did kids wear galosh when they go outside?” Galoshes come out because children are active and they run so we cannot limit them because of their shoes but parents lose their nerves when they see muddy or dirty shoes.”

T4-INT

“Parents do not want an outdoor time when the weather is rainy or snowy because they think that their children will be sick but the real reason to be sick for these children is not going outdoor time in the winter season. In other words, the child does not develop enough immunity so s/he gets sick. Also, a child’s psychology is affected negatively when s/he stays inside because this child thinks that why s/he is inside while others are outdoor.”

As another interview question related to the duration of the time spent outdoors was asked to teachers. Most of the teachers emphasized that the duration in the daily routine is not enough (n=8) since they believe that children need to spend more time outdoors due to their developmental needs (n=3) and also teachers emphasized that they get feedback from children regarding not having enough time spending outdoors (n=3). Details can be seen in Table 4.1.3

**Table 4.1.3**

*The Time Spending Outdoors*

|                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Outdoor time is sufficient(n=4)     | <p>-Outdoor time is sufficient due to...</p> <p>Being young age group (n=2)<br/>Hard to manage class (n=1)<br/>Short concentration (n=1)<br/>Getting bored (n=1)<br/>Danger of falling (n=1)<br/>Sickness (n=1)<br/>Parents' feedback (n=1)</p> | <p>Exemplary quotes are given below;</p> <p><b>T1-INT</b><br/>“I think it is enough because we are the youngest age group. Our children's attention span is too short and after 15 minutes they get bored. Also, the physical layout makes it difficult to benefit from the outdoor environment for us. For example, the surface is so rough and children fall too much, especially in winter if the surface is muddy. That's why time is sufficient for us.”</p> |
| Outdoor time is not sufficient(n=8) | <p>-Outdoor time is not sufficient because...</p> <p>Kids need more for developmental needs (n=3)<br/>Kids' feedback (n=3)<br/>Not enough playtime (n=2)<br/>Rotation program (n=1)<br/>Surplus energy of children during the day (n=1)</p>     | <p><b>T5-INT</b><br/>“Duration is not enough for us because we have to go inside even if they did not discharge their energy”</p> <p><b>T8-INT</b><br/>“2 days in a week is not enough but our rotation program requires that. I want to go every day for 2 hours and also children are not happy and they miss going outside while waiting for our group's turn in a rotation program. So the situation needs to be improved.”</p>                               |

#### **4.1.3. Communication with Parents on Time Spending Outdoors**

Teachers were asked to describe the topics that parents focus on during communication regarding spending time outdoors. Parents communicate with teachers regarding the time (n=14), hygiene (n=6), and the activities (n=2). Details can be seen in Table 4.1.4.

**Table 4.1.4***Communication with Parents on Time Spending Outdoors*

| <b>Topics Discussed With Parents</b> | <b>Exemplary quotes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Time (n=14)                          | T8-INT "About the duration of outdoor time, some parents are too persistent and oppressive more than enough. When things go further, although our manager also supports us, sometimes we follow the demand of parents because our administrator gets in between. Parents want us to never go out for winter period"                                                                                                                                              |
| Hygiene (n=6)                        | T3-INT "One of our students' shoes was so muddy. When his mom came to school to take him, she saw his shoes and she asked that do children wear galosh when you take them out. Of course they wear galosh but the galoshes get stuck in the mud because the children play freely, they are in a bustle. So we go out after wearing galosh because parents get annoyed when they see muddy shoes. So I can say that we get serious feedbacks about mud on shoes." |
| Activities (n=2)                     | T1-INT "We generally play group games. Parents wonder that if their children participate in outdoor practices or not. They ask that does he/she run too much or they ask questions like does she/he use the swing or slide."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

#### 4.1.4. Outdoor Time Practices

As another interview question, the teachers were asked to describe what they were doing during outdoor time. Based on the results of this question play (n=41), plants (n=19), animals (n=14), math (n=7), art (n=2) and literacy (n=1) were adjusted as six categories. As the play category, most of the teachers explained that they prefer free to play (n=16) in outdoor time for several reasons like supporting children to be more focused before outdoor practice and giving priority to children's interests and needs.

Besides free play, some teachers also prefer to conduct structured play activities such as hide and seek and footrace. In terms of plant-related activities, teachers generally stated that they observe natural components (n=9) of the outdoor environment is the most conducted practice in the plants' category. Under the animals (n=14) category, teachers mostly stated that they examine bugs (n=7) which they found in the environment. Besides these categories, also some math practices (n=7) like counting (n=3) and repeating concepts (n=2) were given as example practices by teachers. As the last categories, teachers stated some practices such as

painting (n=2) in the art category and reading books (n=1) in the literacy category. Details can be seen in Table 4.1.5;

**Table 4.1.5.**

*Outdoor Time Practices and Purposes of Using Outdoor Environment*

| Themes                        | Categories     | Codes                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CURRICULUM RELATED ACTIVITIES | Play (n=41)    | free play (n=16)<br>Structured play (n=10)<br>playing with playground toys (n=8)<br>skipping rope (n=2)    |
|                               | Plants (n=19)  | observing nature (n=9)<br>examining autumn leaves (n=3)<br>examining soil (n=2)<br>examining flowers (n=1) |
|                               | Animals (n=14) | examining bugs (n=7)<br>talking about animal nests (n=4)                                                   |
|                               | Math(n=7)      | counting (n=3)<br>Repeating concepts (n=2)                                                                 |
|                               | Art (n=2)      | painting (n=2)                                                                                             |
|                               | Literacy (n=1) | Reading books(n=1)                                                                                         |

**Exemplary** quotes are given below;

T1-INT

“After free play, we make circle time and we generally repeat concepts in circle time. Then we play a group game. Later we make examinations related to our topic. To illustrate, we try to find ant nests and we discuss why worms live under the soil. So we spent our time focusing their attention on one topic.”

T11-INT

“Recently, we studied numbers by writing numbers on the sand in the sand pool. They wrote individually and they were so excited. If I had made this activity indoor, children would not have demonstrated the same excitement and I would not have taken the same productivity.”

T6-INT

“Even if we have a plan, children do not like planning much because they do not like sentences such as we will do this, we will play this game and so on...They are so free and I care about this but I have to protect them because they can get hurt. If so, we take parents' negative feedback about the safety of children. That's why we have to play structured games.”

T3-INT

“Outdoor time is not enough for us. We have a little time so children want to play free. That's why we don't play structured games.”

**T8-INT**

"We play games. Also, we use the environment for free play, movement activity, science activity. Moreover, we draw on grass through observing clouds, environment, so I can say that we draw based on our observations. We read books also. I think every activity can be done at an outdoor activity if the weather is good."

#### **4.1.5. Protocols Before and During Outdoor Time**

The teachers were asked to describe the protocols that they pay attention to before and during the use of the outdoor environment. Preparing the environment (n=10) and preparing the children (n=16) were formed as two points through examining the answers of teachers. For preparing the environment, teachers mostly stated safety (n=5) issues by giving examples like identifying and removing hazards. Also, teachers highlighted that the area should be wide (n=2) for practices like running. Flat surface (n=2) and easy to use toys (n=1) were stated as examples.

As another point, preparing the children involves diverse protocols for groups before outdoor time. Generally, teachers emphasized the planning process (n=10) that takes place before outdoor environment usage. To illustrate, teachers highlighted the importance of child-centered plans and the relation of outdoor activity plans with daily plans. Furthermore, talking about the outdoor time rules with children (n=3), sharing outdoor plans with them (n=1), suitable clothing for weather conditions (n=1), and talking about the weather (n=1) are points that teachers focused.

In terms of the protocols during the outdoor time, classroom management (n=7) and safety (n=7) points were mentioned by the teachers. For classroom management; teachers mostly emphasized the balancing energy of children (n=4) via free play. On the other hand, some of the teachers stated what they pay attention to ensure the safety of children during outdoor time through stating examples like not allowing to run (n=1) and being careful about strangers (n=2). Details can be seen in Table 4.1.6;

**Table 4.1.6***Protocols Before and During Outdoor Time*

|                     |                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Before Outdoor Time | Preparing the Environment | <p><u>T1-INT:</u> “playground toys and areas should be easy to use for children. For instance, the swings should be adjusted according to the height of children. Also, the surface should be flat and wide so children can move or run freely and I consider physical characteristics of the surface while preparing outdoor activities.”</p> <p><u>T4-INT:</u> “Before the activity, we examine the outdoor environment to identify what can harm children. This can be a toy, a stone, or a puddle so a child can fall over.</p> <p><u>T2-INT:</u> “When I come to school, I examine daily plans for the day, and if I have outdoor time for the day I decide which activity can I implement in the outdoor environment. I decide outdoor activity according to the needs and interests of children, and the applicability of the activity for the outdoor environment. Sometimes I choose an experiment, sometimes I choose a game or book reading.”</p> |
|                     | Preparing Children        | <p><u>T9-INT:</u> “Before outdoor time, we talk about outdoor time rules like being nice to friends, lining up, and listening to teachers and so on. They are so young and some of them still cannot follow rules”</p> <p><u>T5-INT:</u> “Before every outdoor time, we speak outdoor time rules such as no running. Also, we mention the activities that we will make. Activities such as playing basketball, playing with toys, searching for a worm in mud, and so on...When we mention activities before outdoor time, children listen to us with excitement and they follow plans. If the garden is muddy, we change our plans. So plans are shaped according to mud. Also, we wear galoshes if the garden is muddy before going out.”</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| During Outdoor Time | Classroom Management      | <p><u>T3-INT:</u> “We want children not to run because the physical structure of our outdoor environment is not suitable for this. There are stones and there is a marble area in the environment so these are so dangerous because children can fall.”</p> <p><u>T2-INT:</u> “During outdoor implications, I let children play free and spend alone time at the beginning of outdoor time. In this way, they move and discharge energy for 10 minutes because they lost their attention when we directly start an activity and also they want free play before the activity. After that, I do a calmer activity so I can help them to focus their attention easily.”</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                     | Safety                    | <p><u>T4-INT:</u> “I pay attention to make them run since they cannot discharge their energy without running. If a child falls and gets hurt, I call his/her parent to inform about the situation.”</p> <p><u>T6-INT:</u> “For instance, children try to reverse the slide even in winter. This is seriously dangerous so I have to limit them. On the other hand, I think this is beneficial for their development but I have lots of children in my group so it could be an accident if I overlooked one of the children.”</p> <p><u>T11-INT:</u> “I observe the behaviors of children. For instance, if a child is going to hurt another one, I call this child and give a responsibility like let's carry this material together, to prevent any kind of accident.”</p>                                                                                                                                                                                  |

#### 4.1.6. Outdoor Time Materials

Teachers were asked about the materials they used in the outdoor environment. Teachers mostly stated balls (n=6) as the most used material for spending time outdoors. Furthermore, a rainbow parachute (n=5), paper (n=4), and paint (n=4) were stated as the most used materials after balls by teachers. Details can be seen in Table 4.1.7;

**Table 4.1.7**

*Materials used during outdoor time*

| Materials                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ball (n=6)                     | Exemplary quotes are given below;                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| rainbow parachute (n=5)        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Paper (n=4)                    | T4-INT “We have a rainbow parachute. We spread over the parachute and sit on it. We made circle time on this material. We have a set of flashcards. By using these flashcards, we talked about the weather, colors, seasons, and school rules. Sometimes we use books for story reading time.” |
| paint (n=4)                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| water (n=3)                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| containers (n=2)               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Rope (n=2)                     | T6-INT “To paint different natural texture, we used art materials. For instance, we put papers on trees and painted.”                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Sponge (n=2)                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| bottle (n=1)                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| bubble blowing materials (n=1) |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| hula-hoop (n=1)                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| puzzle (n=1)                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| magnifying glass (n=1)         | T12-INT “We play water games, especially in summer. They love to carry water with sponges from container to container.”                                                                                                                                                                        |
| blocks (n=1)                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| paintbrush (n=1)               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| puppet (n=1)                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

#### 4.1.7. Frequency of Outdoor Environment Areas' Usage

Except for one teacher (n=1), every teacher state that they use the playground area (n=11) for several reasons such as being a wide area, being more comfortable, and so on. Exemplary quotes are given below;

T2-INT

“I try to balance the areas we use. For instance, if we play at the playground for 2 days of the week, we go to the sandbox to make relaxing activities. So I choose the area according to the needs of children. That's why I cannot say we use an area the most.”

T6-INT

“We use the playground area as the most used area because it is wide compared to others. This area is not so practical but it is wide so we can monitor all children in the same area.”

T8-INT

“We use the playground area because we cannot feel comfortable in other narrow areas. We cannot use other areas, for example, the sandbox, on rainy or snowy days. Also, we can use the botanic area for specific times, so I can say we use the playground because of seasonal reasons.”

#### 4.1.8 Roles and Responsibilities during Outdoor Time

Teachers were directly asked to describe the roles that teachers should have during outdoor time. Mostly teachers stated being a co-player (n=6) as a role for the teacher during outdoor time. Besides co-player, stage manager (n=5), play leader (n=4), onlooker (n=3) and director/redirector (n=3) roles were emphasized by teacher during interviews. For roles theme exemplary quotes are given below;

**Table 4.1.8.**

*Teacher Roles during Outdoor Time*

| Teachers' Roles              | Exemplary quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Co-player (n=6)              | T12-“A teacher mostly should be a play friend. Children really like to play with their teachers since they think that the teacher is one of them as well as being a role model. Also, I like to act like a child when I am with children. Children become very happy when I play with them during outdoor time”                                                                                            |
| Playleader (n=4)             | T5-“I think it can be a playmate by participating in play. Rather than being a teacher, you can play or you can examine something with them, it can be a playmate. So I think my role as making children happy. Yes, this is the most important thing for me”                                                                                                                                              |
| Onlooker (n=3)               | T10-“I believe that we should provide more freedom for children in the outdoor environment. Therefore I consider the role of a teacher as not a leader or a director but an observer since the outdoor environment is a good place to observe children. The teacher can observe children from a blind spot to see which play they prefer, which friends they play with, and what kind of play they set up” |
| Director/<br>Redirector(n=3) | T1-“Actually our role is directing children. I mean, in the free play or something, for example, we direct and lead them. While playing street games, for example, we run with them, play hide-and-seek with them, so we direct them to teach how to play. So of course we shape children with our direction. The teacher's role is huge”                                                                  |

**Table 4.1.8. Continued***Teacher Roles during Outdoor Time*

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stage Manager(n=5) | T6-“In my opinion, the role of the teacher in outdoor time is not leadership. If the teacher takes the lead, this time something will happen there is no child's space, it becomes the teacher's field. The teacher really needs to pay attention to this, if there is a teacher who directs everything, he or she breaks the excitement of the children. For example, when you are an observer, they come and complain about the play, you advise them to solve it together. Children feel freer and comfortable like this. You are also directing them, you are aware of what is done and you also establish a relationship with the child, I think this is best” |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

As well as teachers' roles during the outdoor time, teachers' responsibilities were also asked. In terms of teachers' view, teachers are mostly responsible to provide security (n=9) during outdoor time. Apart from providing security, encouraging children (n=3), observing children (n=3), and preparing materials (n=3) were emphasized mostly by teachers. Details can be seen in Table 4.1.9;

**Table 4.1.9***Responsibilities during Outdoor Time*

| Responsibilities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Exemplary quote                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-providing security (n=9)</li> <li>-encouraging kids (n=3)</li> <li>-preparing materials (n=3)</li> <li>-observing kids (n=3)</li> <li>-providing controlled movement (n=1)</li> <li>-assessing the teaching process (n=1)</li> <li>-supporting for hands-on learning (n=1)</li> <li>-being knowledgeable (n=1)</li> <li>-implementing activities (n=1)</li> </ul> | <p>T2-INT “The responsibilities of the teachers are too much. We select suitable materials, observe and direct children, and we conduct the activity. As for my responsibilities, I think my first responsibility is to provide the safety of children. Later, it comes playing with them and having a pleasant time. After this, it comes to conducting the activity and assessing the learning process.</p> <p>T6-INT “I believe that we should not direct children too much during outdoor time. Just we should be careful about situations harming children. We should observe problematic behaviors. Also, we have to provide materials for children, especially loose materials so they can associate materials with nature to form games.”</p> <p>T12-INT “The most important responsibility is ensuring the safety of children. We should remove dangerous materials in the environment. For example, a child can find a stone and throw it to other children. We should speak with the child by saying that this material is dangerous so I need to take this. So we need to explain the reasons for our actions while directing children. To illustrate, there is a child who is climbing at a high place during outdoor time. So we should say that this place is high and you can fall down, please go down and play with us.”</p> |

#### **4.1.9. Ideal vs. Actual Outdoor Environment**

Teachers were asked to describe their ideal outdoor environment. So as to give an answer to this question, teachers stated more than one component while describing their ideal outdoor environment. Physical layout (n=32), materials (n=21), natural elements (n=28) and practices (n=14) are formed as the points for their ideal environment. Teachers generally stated that an ideal outdoor environment should have a wider area for general use (n=10). This environment should involve a botanic garden (n=5) and it should be a safe environment (n=3) for children. In terms of materials of the ideal outdoor environment, teachers mostly emphasized many playground toys (n=7) like slide and swing. As well as these materials, also ideal outdoor environment should include materials like parkour (n=4), a sand pool (n=3), and stones (n=3). Also, natural elements include plants and animals that teachers consider for an ideal outdoor environment. Teachers described an ideal environment that includes farm animals (n=8), trees (n=6), and diverse plants (n=4), so children can interact with nature. Lastly, teachers stated botanic activities (n=6) like planting and harvesting activities and animal-related activities such as feeding and examining animals as outdoor time practices that could be conducted in an ideal outdoor environment.

After describing the ideal environment, teachers were asked to describe alterations that they want to do for the actual outdoor environment. So as to give an answer to this question, teachers stated more than one component while describing their ideal outdoor environment. Physical layout (n=17), materials (n=18), nature (n=13) and practices (n=6) are indicated for ideal environment. Generally, teachers focused on making existed areas wider (n=6) even if they stated that this is not possible because of the borders of the school's outdoor environment. Furthermore, teachers stated that the surface should be covered with more grass (n=5) because of reasons like looking more natural and aesthetic. Regarding materials, putting more playground toys (n=13) was stated generally by the teachers. After playground toys, mud pool (n=2), and gardening clothes (n=2) were mostly stated by teachers. In terms of nature, teachers mostly stated pet animals (n=6) such as dogs and cats that could be in the environment. Conducting more botanic activities was emphasized by teachers in outdoor practices (n=4). Details can be seen in Table.4.1.10.

**Table 4.1.10***Ideal vs. Actual Outdoor Environment*

| CATEGORIES                                       | CODES                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                  | ACTUAL OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT                                                                                                                                                                  | IDEAL OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| PHYSICAL LAYOUT<br>Actual (n=17)<br>Ideal (n=32) | Wider area (n=6)<br>grassy surface (n=5)<br>flat surface (n=2)<br>flower area (n=1)<br>winter garden area (n=1)<br>child made areas (n=1)<br>jumping area (n=1)<br>wider botanic area (n=1) | Wider area for general use (n=10)<br>botanic area (n=5)<br>should be a safe garden (n=4)<br>grassy surface (n=4)<br>play area (n=3)<br>a suitable area for animals (n=2)<br>should be suitable for the winter season (n=1)<br>jumping areas (n=1)<br>risk taking area (n=1)<br>music area (n=1) |
| MATERIALS<br>Actual (n=18)<br>Ideal (n=21)       | playground toys (n=13)<br>mud pool (n=2)<br>gardening clothes (n=2)<br>musical instruments (n=1)<br>puppets (n=1)<br>sensory path (n=1)                                                     | playground toys (n=7)<br>Parkours (n=4)<br>sand pool (n=3)<br>stones (n=3)<br>logs (n=2)                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| NATURE<br>Actual (n=13)<br>Ideal (n=28)          | pets (n=6)<br>farm animals (n=3)<br>flowers (n=2)<br>trees (n=2)<br>well-groomed grass (n=1)                                                                                                | farm animals (n=8)<br>trees (n=6)<br>diverse plants (n=4)<br>pets (n=3)<br>flowers (n=3)<br>pots (n=2)<br>pipes (n=1)<br>vegetables (n=1)                                                                                                                                                       |
| PRACTICES<br>Actual (n=6)<br>Ideal (n=14)        | botanic activities (n=4)<br>animal related activities (n=2)                                                                                                                                 | botanic activities (n=6)<br>animal related activities (n=6)<br>water games (n=1)<br>mud activities (n=1)                                                                                                                                                                                        |

For the ideal outdoor environment some of the exemplary quotes are given below;

#### T3-INT

“The outdoor area should be wider than the school’s building area. The area should be suitable for the winter season. For instance, there can be an upper part like an awning that can be opened and closed for the area whose walls could be glass. Also, it can be air-conditioned, so this structure can be expensive. Also, materials should be instructive and related to concepts that children learn because they learn better while playing.”

#### T8-INT

“The area should be natural, wide, safe and it should encourage children to research, explore, and learn by doing. As materials, there can be logs and different sizes of stones.”

**T11-INT**

“We always turn around in the same place, so I think we should have a difference from the hamsters. Therefore, we need a wide area. Also, there can be animals to be in touch with nature. There should be diverse trees within the grass surface. Moreover, I think there shouldn't be black iron hedges around the outdoor environment because there are black iron hedges in prisons. Instead of this, these hedges can be colored with designs like hearts, singers, and so on...Also, it can be speakers in the environment so we can listen and imitate nature sounds through this material.”

For actual outdoor environment some of the exemplary quotes are given below;

**T1-INT**

“Firstly, I would make the area wider because our outdoor environment is narrow compared to our school's building area and children cannot run easily. I would like to have more playground areas like more than one swing. I would make surface flat and grass.”

**T2-INT**

“Trees could be more. I would put a different area just for flowers. A coop for chickens or a dog could be nice.”

**T8-INT**

“I would want a more naturalistic environment. Our playground toys are nice but the area should be open-ended and children should design their environment. For instance, we made our playground toys for our neighborhood when I was a child. So the area should be child made. It should not be an area just for the use of children”

## **4.2. Parents' Perspectives Regarding Spending Time Outdoors**

Exploring parents' views related to the outdoor time of was one the aims of this study. For this aim, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 35 parents. Findings of the interview sessions will be demonstrated within four sections that are general views, ideal outdoor time duration, ideal and actual outdoor environment, and knowledge related to outdoor time practices.

### **4.2.1. General Views**

Parents' views on outdoor time were asked and five categories, which are cognitive development (n=90), physical development (n=82), emotional development (n=70), social development (n=36), and self-care development (n=4) were organized. Generally, parents believe that spending time outdoors supports the cognitive skills of children. Even if some parents highlighted that outdoor distract the attention of children (n=2), most of the parents stated that children focus their attention better (n=14) during outdoor time. Parents emphasized that children can learn through exploring (n=15) nature around them during

outdoor time. Moreover, parents stated the benefits of outdoor time on creativity skills (n=8) and the learning process by giving examples like making learning more permanent (n=9).

Development of gross motor skills (n=19) like running, jumping and climbing was the most emphasized aspect by parents. Moreover, parents emphasized that the senses of children develop (n=10) effectively through spending time outdoor and they get fresh air and sunshine (n=9) which are significant for a healthy body via outdoor time. Furthermore, some parents stated that they have concerns related to falling down on the ground (n=2) during outdoor time. Following physical development, emotional development was emphasized by parents. According to the parents' view, children feel more relaxed (n=18) and freer (n=11) during the outdoor time, and they are also happier (n=14) than being in an indoor environment. In terms of social development, parents stated that children have more chances to spend time with their friends (n=22) during outdoor time. Furthermore, children learn significant social skills like waiting in a line (n=3) for a playground toy and taking responsibilities (n=2) while doing gardening. As the final category of development theme, the self-care category was organized via parents' answers that are learning self-protection (n=1) and to be clean (n=1). Also, children start to recognize their own abilities that if they can do or not (n=1) during the outdoor time in terms of parents' view. Details can be seen in Table 4.2.1;

**Table 4.2.1**

*Parents' Views Regarding Spending Time Outdoors*

| THEMES                 | CATEGORIES                      | CODES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DEVELOPMENT<br>(n=278) | Cognitive Development<br>(n=90) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-learn by exploration (n=15)</li> <li>-focuses attention better (n=14)</li> <li>-learning by doing (n=10)</li> <li>- permanent learning (n=9)</li> <li>-learning more efficiently (n=9)</li> <li>-creativity develops (n=8)</li> <li>-learn with senses (n=7)</li> <li>-learn faster (n=7)</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-makes kids more curious (n=3)</li> <li>-supports communication skills (n=2)</li> <li>-supports problem-solving (n=1)</li> <li>-peer learning (n=2)</li> <li>-learning about plants (n=2)</li> <li>-learning about animals (n=1)</li> <li>-hard to focus attention (n=2)</li> </ul> |

**Table 4.2.1 Continued***Parents' Views Regarding Spending Time Outdoors*

|                            |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>DEVELOPMENT (n=278)</b> | <b>Physical Development (n=82)</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-develops gross motor skills (n=19)</li> <li>-developing senses more (n=10)</li> <li>-getting sun and some fresh air (n=9)</li> <li>-being more active (n=8)</li> <li>-develops muscles (n=6)</li> <li>-discharging energy (n=6)</li> <li>-need to live a natural life (n=6)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-improve nourishment quality (n=4)</li> <li>-falling down (n=4)</li> <li>-developing balance skills (n=3)</li> <li>-develops fine motor skills (n=2)</li> <li>-being healthy (n=2)</li> <li>-Gaining strength (n=1)</li> <li>Improve sleep quality (n=1)</li> <li>-supports to increase height (n=1)</li> </ul> |
|                            | <b>Social Development (n=36)</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-spending more time with friends (n=22)</li> <li>-learning to wait in line (n=3)</li> <li>-taking gardening responsibilities (n=2)</li> <li>-directing play process (n=2)</li> <li>-learning to cooperate (n=2)</li> </ul>                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-creating a healthy base for habits and behaviors (n=1)</li> <li>-developing conscience feeling (n=1)</li> <li>-learning to share (n=1)</li> <li>-Making own decisions (n=1)</li> <li>-seeking one's right (n=1)</li> </ul>                                                                                     |
|                            | <b>Emotional Development (n=70)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-feeling relaxed (n=18)</li> <li>-being happier (n=14)</li> <li>-being free (n=11)</li> <li>-being more brave (n=7)</li> <li>-being more self confident (n=6)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-having more enjoyable time (n=6)</li> <li>-more willing to learn (n=5)</li> <li>-gaining human values (n=2)</li> <li>-developing sense of belonging (n=1)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                           |
|                            | <b>Self-Care (n=4)</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-learning to be clean (n=1)</li> <li>-learning self-protection (n=1)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-knowing own limits and boundaries (n=1)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

Exemplary quotes are given below;

**P2-INT**

"I want children to grow outside as much as possible, not in the apartment. Even an outdoor hour is beneficial for their development as I observed. After our outdoor time, they are hungry and they have an appetite, so they eat very well then they sleep. He discharges his energy. On the other hand, if children stay inside all day in front of the television, their muscles do not develop because they do not get tired and they sleep late. My child socializes more and his self-confidence increases. Now he directs me in games by saying sentences like "let's do this or that". So he is a playmaker"

**P3-INT**

"For us, the most important thing was the outdoor environment of school while getting used to school. For a while, he did not want to play or go to another park because he just wants to play in the school's outdoor environment. Even if there is just one slide in the playground, the outdoor environment improved his sense of belonging to the school."

**P11-INT**

"Children's self-care skills are developed since they need to wash their hands when they get dirty during outdoor time. So they realize and they wash their hands after outdoor time. In terms of motor development, children imitate their

friends' behaviors by observing them. For instance, they climb up a slide through seeing from each other. In this way, they test and learn their limits."

**P30-INT**

"I believe outdoor experiences affect physical development. For example, children, who have more outdoor experience, are more able to control body movements and balance skills. My son is not like them because I limit him in the playground, so he does not have more outdoor experience. Newly he begins to learn his limits by testing risks."

**P6-INT**

"Outdoor environment attracts his (parent's child) attention more and he becomes more eager to learn since he loves learning with senses. That's why he can learn fast during outdoor time. It affects the learning process positively since children observe and touch real objects instead of just learning from power points. In this way, they can easily revive things they learn in their mind. Their curiosity increase toward animals and plants by looking at ants and watering plants. During watering plants, their conscience and mercy feelings develop related to feeding instinct."

**P9-INT**

"I have concerns about outdoor time. For instance, I think that she (the parent's child) will fall and hurt herself. I am so afraid that I feel irritated and I start to limit her during the outdoor time and she does not like it. Because of this reason, I do not prefer to go outside with her so she goes outdoor time with her dad instead of me.

#### **4.2.2 Views about Ideal Outdoor Time**

Two questions of how often children should have outdoor time and how long they should stay outside were asked to parents. The answers were analyzed and interpreted in terms of the summer season representing good weather conditions and winter season representing unpleasant weather conditions for parents. Parents generally emphasized more amounts of time such as more than three hours (n=1), between two and three hours (n=5), and two hours (n=4) for the summer season while giving less amount of time like two hours (n=1), one hour (n=7) and between 30 minutes and one hour (n=5) for winter seasons. On the other hand, the majority of parents emphasized that children need to have outdoor time for every day so parents gave nearly the same frequency for the summer season (n=26) and the winter season (n=25). Exemplary quotes are given below.

**P1-INT**

"Children need to experience rain and snow because there are things to learn about them. For this reason, children should have outdoor time even in winter season but if the weather conditions are very bad like too much cold or too much wind then I do not want them to go outside because they may be sick."

**P3-INT**

"Even going outdoor environment for 10-15 minutes is good for children since they get some fresh air and outdoor time affects their health positively. I think

outdoor time should be shorter for winter season because it is hard for children to move with thick clothing and they sweat so it can be hard to protect them from getting sick.”

P9-INT

“I wish that children could have outdoor time every day but an adult thinks that children may get sick because of cold weather. I think getting sick is not related to cold weather, so it does not matter for me if it is summer or winter. Duration and frequency are related to children’s situations in school. Namely, children should not go outside at a time that is close to sleep time or lunchtime because they would be restless or hungry. Maybe they can go outside after breakfast.”

P13-INT

“Teachers know better how often outdoor time-frequency and duration should be. At least, I know they go for outdoor time. Weather conditions are crucial. For instance, children can have longer outdoor time in summer if it is not too sunny but an hour would be long for winter because of cold weather. Also, it is hard for the teacher to manage crowded groups about checking their clothes during the outdoor time in winter.”

#### **4.2.3. Ideal vs. Actual Outdoor Environment**

Parents were asked to describe their ideal outdoor environment. To answer this question, parents stated more than one component while describing their ideal outdoor environment. Four themes, which are physical layout (n=96), materials (n=88), practices (n=11), and others (n=14) categories were adjusted through the agency of analyzing the answers of parents.

Having a wider area for general use (n=16) is the most emphasized physical layout by parents. Along with wide area, parents generally stated ideal outdoor environments should have lots of plants (n=12) and their surfaces should be grass (n=13). As materials, most diverse playground toys (n=30) were stated by parents. Even if most of the parents stated toys like slides and swings, some of the parents stated different toys such as a chess set, trampoline, and carousel. In the practice theme, parents highlighted botanic activities (n=8) and group games (n=2) as outdoor practices that could be conducted in the outdoor environment. Apart from these categories, parents also highlighted that the ideal outdoor environment should look like a forest (n=5) in other categories.

Based on an ideal environment, parents were asked to describe changes that they want to make for the actual outdoor environment where the outdoor environment of the school is. Four themes, which are physical layout (n=32), materials (n=20), practices (n=18), and others (n=2) categories were adjusted through the agency of analyzing the answers of

parents. In the physical layout theme, parents want to see more plants (n=16) in the outdoor environment of the school.

Besides plants, making surface grassier (n=6) was emphasized by parents. As materials, parents stated that a climbing wall (n=4) and more playground toys could be put (n=7) in the environment. In terms of outdoor practices, parents mostly emphasized conducting more botanic activities (n=13) during outdoor time. Furthermore, some parents highlighted that frequency and duration of outdoor time should be extended (n=2). Details can be seen in Table 4.2.2

**Table 4.2.2**

*Ideal vs. Actual Outdoor Environment*

|                                                        | <b>ACTUAL</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>IDEAL</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>PHYSICAL LAYOUT</b><br>Actual(n=32)<br>Ideal (n=96) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- plants (n=16)</li> <li>-grassy surface (n=6)</li> <li>-wider botanic (n=4)</li> <li>-diverse surface (n=3)</li> <li>-empty green area (n=2)</li> <li>-water area (n=1)</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- wider area for general use(n=16)</li> <li>-grassy surface (n=13)</li> <li>-plants (n=12)</li> <li>-playground (n=7)</li> <li>-diverse surfaces (n=7)</li> <li>-empty green area (n=5)</li> <li>-botanic (n=5)</li> <li>-Soft surface (n=4)</li> <li>-water area (n=4)</li> <li>-soil surface (n=3)</li> </ul>                            |
| <b>MATERIALS</b><br>Actual(n=20)<br>Ideal (n=88)       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-playground toys (n=7)</li> <li>-climbing wall (n=4)</li> <li>pool (n=4)</li> <li>-wider sandbox (n=4)</li> <li>-gardening tools (n=1)</li> </ul>                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-more playground toys (n=30)</li> <li>-climbing wall(n=14)</li> <li>-no plastic materials (n=14)</li> <li>-sandbox (n=7)</li> <li>-pool (n=7)</li> <li>-tree house (n=4)</li> <li>-sensory walk path(n=4)</li> <li>-cars (n=2)</li> <li>-stones (n=2)</li> <li>-tires (n=2)</li> <li>-trampoline (n=1)</li> <li>-bicycles (n=1)</li> </ul> |
| <b>PRACTICES</b><br>Actual(n=18)<br>Ideal (n=11)       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- botanic activities (n=13)</li> <li>-climbing activities (n=1)</li> <li>-garden yoga (n=1)</li> <li>-outdoor picnics (n=1)</li> <li>-art activities (n=1)</li> <li>-sand play (n=1)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-botanic activities (n=8)</li> <li>- group games (n=3)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>OTHERS</b><br>Actual(n=2)<br>Ideal (n=14)           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-extending outdoor time and frequency (n=2)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-should be like a forest (n=5)</li> <li>-should be a well-cared garden (n=4)</li> <li>-should develop physical skills (n=2)</li> <li>-should develop creativity (n=2)</li> <li>-should be like a Survivor area (n=1)</li> </ul>                                                                                                            |

Exemplary quotes are given below for the ideal outdoor environment;

**P1-INT**

“I would want a creative outdoor environment that develops mobility and exploration skills of children as well as providing an area for playing more than standard swings and slide. There could be a trampoline, tires, and so on...The environment can be like a Survivor environment.”

**P2-INT**

“I would want a wide area where children can run easily. The area could involve climbing wall, diverse play areas which support muscle development, and age-appropriate sports equipment.”

**P6-INT**

“Surfaces like grass surface or sand surface can be based on playground areas for the exploration of children but I do not want stone surface because children can fall and hurt themselves. Water could be for the outdoor environment. For example, a pool would be good to have fun for children. They would play with water. In this way, they would experience and learn water. They could learn the benefits of water”

**P7-INT**

“There can be diverse surfaces including stone surfaces since children should know everything and they should not grow in a much-protected area. They will come across everything when they grow up. Playground toys should be bulky. I do not want sharp or pointed toys. Also, the hygiene of the outdoor environment is so crucial”

**P8-INT**

“Outdoor environment is the first place that children come across when they come to school. Hence, this area should remind them of love. The area should involve things to remind children to come to school again when they go home. For example, I was motivating her (parent’s child) to dance with the gate’s bell melody when she did not want to come to school last year. The surface should be grass because the surface was very muddy last winter and grass surface reminds nature and make children more pleasant.”

**P20-INT**

“I think that botanic activities are good for children since they experience planting and observing of a seed’s growth. Children would be more respectful when they know the planting and harvesting process of food because we are in a consumer society, so I try to raise his (parent’s child) awareness by saying things like vegetables and fruits need time, effort, and love to grow. That’s why we should not play with our food. I hope him to be more patient through observation of a seed’s growth.”

Exemplary quotes are given below for the actual outdoor environment.

**P2-INT**

“Grass surface would be better compared to muddy surface. I would want to add materials that children can develop their skills and abilities. For example, a chess set could be in the playground area. We have a sandbox in the backyard but it is so small. That’s why the sandbox could be wider. There could be a small decorative pool that children could play with toy ships to have fun.”

**P22-INT**

“For example, there is just one slide in the playground so accidents happen sometimes because of that since all children want to use the slide at the same

time. That's why I would want to add more swings and slides or I would remove existed toys and put different playground toys.”

P30-INT

“There can be miniature gardening tools such as grass mower. In this way, appropriate gardening responsibilities could be given to children.”

P9-INT

“I would want more botanic activities and more active botanic area. Put as many swings as you want and slide there, but it's not as valuable as a potato planted there. I want to show my daughter to see the value of effort and building something. I want to develop her mercy feeling. I know children like to swing and play in the playground but I care more about botanic activities

P34-INT

“Education program can be developed by adding more planting activities. In this way, children will learn how plants grow, how food is produced, and so on.”

P26-INT

“I would want to increase the frequency and duration of outdoor time because children generally are in an indoor environment so it would be good.”

During describing ideal and actual outdoor environments, also animals were talked with parents. So parents stated why animals should be in an outdoor environment (n=50) and elements to pay attention to animals in an outdoor environment (n=13). From parents' point of view, animals should be in outdoor environments to teach kindness mostly to animals (n=22) and learn about animals (n=9) but the care of the animals is hard (n=4) and animals' allergies should be paid attention to (n=4) as elements to pay attention about animals in the outdoor environment. Details can be seen in Table 4.2.3;

**Table 4.2.3**

*Animals in Outdoor Environment*

| ANIMALS IN GARDEN (n=50)                |                                           |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| To teach moral values (n=22)            | To observe (n=4)                          |
| To learn about animals (n=9)            | To support responsibility (n=3)           |
| To improve mood (n=6)                   | To support communication skills (n=2)     |
| To get used to animals (n=5)            | To motivate for learning (n=1)            |
| THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT ANIMALS (n=13) |                                           |
| Care of the animals is hard (n=4)       | Should not hurt kids (n=2)                |
| Should be careful about allergies (n=4) | Hard to explain when they die (n=1)       |
| Animals should be vaccinated (n=1)      | kids can hurt animals without notice(n=1) |

**Exemplary quotes are given below for the actual outdoor environment.**

P5-INT

“There could be any animals that children will interact with. I would want animals in the outdoor environment because children firstly would learn kindness to animals. Moreover, they would observe animals. For instance, they would observe how animals eat food and they would feed them.”

P7-INT

“It would be good if there were animals in the outdoor environment because children do not have so many chances to touch animals nowadays and they consider animals as wild ones. For instance, sometimes they see a bird but they are afraid of getting close or touch it.”

P33-INT

“Animals would be good for children but it would not be good for animals because children could be a bit brutal at this age if they did not grow with an animal. Hence, I would not have animals in the outdoor environment because I think in terms of them. For instance, children can hurt like pulling a tail or ear while playing with animals.”

P8-INT

“I would want animals because children would learn kindness toward animals and protecting animals. The more you love animals, the more you love humans”

P27-INT

“Animals would be good but we should be careful about children who have animal allergies. Also, it could be hard to explain when animals die. Hence, I am not sure about animals in an outdoor environment. The death part should be well thought.”

#### **4.2.4. Knowledge about Outdoor Time Practices**

To learn parents' knowledge about practices during the outdoor time, questions about what they know and how they learn about practices were asked. Parents mostly stated that free play (n=18) is being preferred as outdoor play practices in school as they know through diverse communication vehicles. Exemplary quotes are given below;

P7-INT

“They examine fruits and vegetables in the botanic area. Based on seasons they look at the weather and learn about snow, rain, and so on. For instance, she (the parent's child) did not know mud before starting school and she learned in outdoor time. As parents, we do not say “let's look or examine snow, mud.”

P17-INT

“I guess that they play with toys but I feel they do not enjoy nature and make nature-related activities as I want. Of course, it is good to be in an outdoor environment but they are not exactly in nature, so they have free play generally and they play with their toys. They do not make activities like collecting stones, making something with leaves, examining plants, and so on.”

P29-INT

“They use the outdoor environment in summer and autumn more than winter because of cold weather. They play games with the rainbow parachute. I do not know if they play with the ball.”

As the answer to the question of how you learn outdoor practices that are implemented in school, parents stated mostly technological vehicles (n=18) like daily messages (n=7), videos (n=6), and photos (n=4). Furthermore, some of the parents specified that they learn outdoor time implications by chatting with children on how they spend the day (n=15). Exemplary quotes are given below;

P20-INT

“He (parent’s child) was talking about the time they spend in the sandbox because he loves to play with sand in summer. Also, he talks about worm searching in soil and they saw a cricket one day. He also loves bugs. One day, they made a craft for feeding birds and put bird food. He was checking it to learn if birds ate the food or not.”

P21-INT

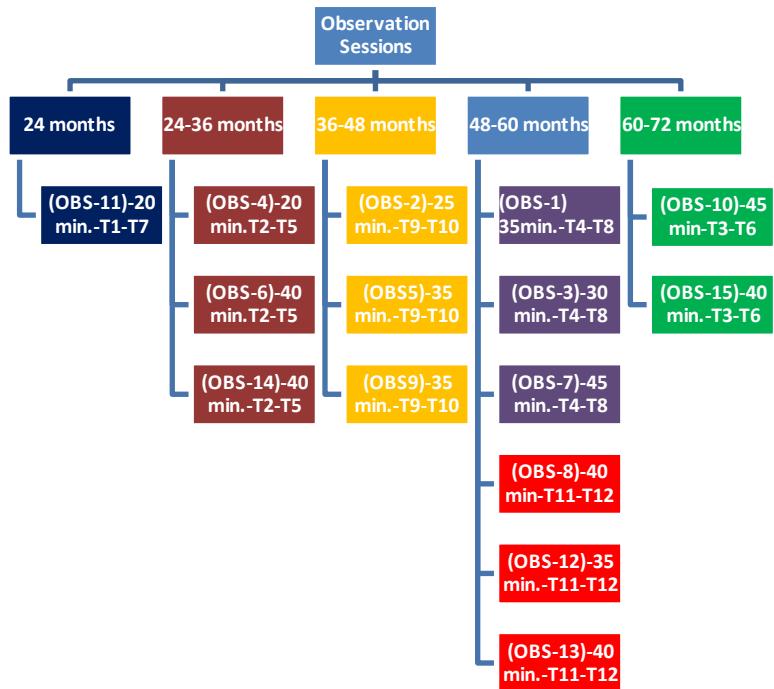
“I do not know their outdoor time implications so much. I just read daily messages that teacher just writes they spent time in the outdoor environment. Also, I sometimes watch their videos of implications. They play games like tagging game, fire, and ice, and so on...”

#### **4.3. Observations of Outdoor Time Practices**

This chapter demonstrates findings that were collected through observations in several outdoor time sessions. Exploring early childhood teachers’ outdoor time practices was one of the aims of this study. For this aim, 15 non-participant observation sessions were conducted. Six age groups were observed during the process. Observations times range from 20 minutes to 40 minutes. As can be seen in figure 4.3, each group was represented with a color. Observation data will be shared through three groups that are observations related to teachers, used materials, and types of practices. Descriptive information about observation sessions can be seen in figure 10;

**Figure 10.**

*Descriptive Information about Observation Session*



#### 4.3.1. Teachers during Outdoor Time Practices

It was observed that teacher roles were changed based on implications, situations, and environment areas. During observation sessions, mostly director/redirector role observed compared to onlooker, stage manager, co-player, and play leadership roles. Also, more than one role was observed during an outdoor time session. For instance, T8 takes the director/redirector role through deciding and explaining using the sandbox as outdoor activities that they will make, and also they take the co-player role by involving in sand play in OBS1.

##### **OBS-1 (48-60 months) (teacher as director/redirector, teacher as co-player)**

Before going outdoor, children talk about playing a kind of catching game named “cops and robbers” so T8 calmly explains what they will do during the outdoor time in the changing room.....After helping children get into the sandbox, T8 also gets into the box. She takes a shovel and participates in a group’s play.

##### **OBS-11 (24 months) (teacher as stage manager, teacher as play leader)**

...T7 controls children's clothes before going outside. She checks every one to ensure that they wear their hats, mittens, and scarves.....T7 approaches two

girls looking at their footprints on the snow. She says to them “let’s compare our footprints on snow” (see photo 12)...

In terms of classroom management, it was observed that teachers implied diverse methods to manage children during outdoor implications. Different verbal warnings are made by teachers to focus attention and prevent unwanted behaviors. For instance,

**OBS-14 (24-36 months) (warning on protecting worm)**

...T5 finds a worm after digging the soil to find potatoes. She holds the worm on her hand. She says to children “do not touch the worm, just look, otherwise it can be scared” (see photo 16.1-16.2)....

**OBS-10 (60-72 months) (warning on the listening story)**

...Children sit to listen to a story which is read by T3. During the story reading, two children talk to each other. T6 warns them by saying ‘please listen to the story’...

**OBS-11 (24 months) (safety warning to terminate unwanted behavior)**

...T1 plays with a snowball with the children. While playing, one of the children throws a snowball on a friend’s face. T1 sees it and she says “do not throw snow on her face, it can hurt her eyes...

**OBS-6 (24-36 months) (safety warning to prevent behavior)**

...T5 goes to a child who tries to climb up to slide. T5 holds the child while saying that “you know we have outdoor time rules, so we do not climb up the slide. Also, your friends cannot use the slide because you are doing like that”....

Furthermore, singing a transition song was used by T2 during going outside in OBS-3. Organizing children to sit as semi-circle during story reading and changing places of children were used as management methods by T5 in OBS-6. Moreover, some of the teachers shared outdoor plans involving both of which activities they will do and time management for the whole outdoor time. For instance,

**OBS-8 (48-60 months) (explaining schedule for outdoor)**

...T11 calls the children to line up and go inside but one of the children says “let’s stay more”. T11 says “we had 40 minutes. Our outdoor time is over and another group will come for outdoor time so we should go inside...

Moreover, teachers demonstrated some practices related to providing care during observation sessions. Checking clothes and concerns related to hygiene were observed. In order to illustrate T9 decides an activity and the area that they will use according to the muddy garden to prevent shoes from getting muddy;

**OBS5 (36-48 months) (concern related to dirty shoes)**

.....T9 looks from a window and says “let’s stay on the green carpet at the botanic area because the garden is muddy” to T10..... (See photo 15)

### **OBS3 (48-60 months) (concern related to dirty shoes)**

....Children wear galosh before going playground because T4 said it....

Lastly, it was observed that teachers generally use and implement their activities in the playground more than the back garden and botanic area

#### **4.3.2. Materials Used during Outdoor Time Practices**

During the observation sessions, diverse materials were used by children and teachers. These materials were listed as natural materials, movable materials, and playground materials. As natural materials, generally, water and ice are used by teachers and children for diverse purposes. Besides these materials, materials such as sand in the sandbox, snow, stones, leaves, sticks, walnuts, and potato are also listed during observations of outdoor practices. To illustrate;

#### **OBS12 (48-60 months) (observing melting)**

...After playing with ice and water, T11 and T12 allow children to take small pieces of ice. T11 says "We will observe melting. We will put our ice in the sink to see how it melts"....children put ice in the sink. Some of the children also mix ice with water (see photo 10).....

#### **OBS14 (24-36 months) (examining potato)**

...T2 is holding the potato that they found during digging soil (see photo 10). She let the children see, smell, and touch....

Moreover, teachers used books for story reading activities, sand play toys for sand play, hoe for botanic activities, and toys for free play. Furthermore, swings and slides were used by children as playground materials.

#### **4.3.3. Types of Practices during Outdoor Time**

Structured and unstructured activities were observed in the practices of teachers. It was observed that children mostly engaged in pretend play by using natural materials such as leaves and sticks. For instance;

#### **OBS 13 (48-60) (pretend play with natural materials)**

...Two children collect natural materials to make a kind of circle stack. One of them waters the stack. A third child comes and he asks what they do. The child explains with these

sentences; “It is a transportation place. We put also water. If you want to go to another place, you should put your hand like this (see photo 9).....

#### **OBS 13 (48-60) (pretend play with natural materials)**

.....A child digs the soil to plant a tree in his free play. He holds a branch that he found as the tree. The teacher asks him what he is doing. He says that he is planting a strawberry tree. The teacher asks how strawberries grow in the group. Children say that “these are special strawberries” (see photo 26)

Apart from play, also nature-based-practices were observed. Teachers generally conducted nature exploration practices such as plant exploration appealing five senses of children. For instance,

#### **OBS10 (60-72 months) (ordering sticks)**

...T3 tells children to find one stick and collect all sticks in one place.... Then children collect sticks and put on the sandbox's side. T3 says to them to order sticks from the shortest to the longest. While ordering, teachers observe children. Then T3 wants them to point the smallest stick and after the biggest stick...

#### **OBS5 (36-48 months) (counting walnuts)**

....T10 finds a walnut and shows children. Children touch the walnut. T9 explains “If we plant this walnut, this will be a tree”. T10 says “let's find walnuts” through directing children to the walnut tree area. Teachers pick up walnuts on the ground with children. After T10 says “we need to germinate walnuts, so they can grow easily when we plant them. We need water, let's throw walnuts into water.” She throws walnut into the puddle on the closed sandbox with the children. Two children throw other materials like sticks and stones. T9 warns them by saying “that's enough”...T10 says “Let's count walnuts in the puddle”. She counts walnuts with children...(see photo 19.1 and 19.2)

As well as the exploration of nature, also other types of outdoor practices were observed. These practices were organized as reading, singing songs, racing, language activity, listening to sounds in the environment, and drawing. To illustrate,

#### **OBS7 (48-60 months) (language activity)**

...One of the children finds a tiny white stone in sand and he shows T4. T4 asks him “what is this?”. The child says “it is someone's teeth”.....T4 finds another tiny white stone and she says to the child “look! I have teeth” while showing two stones. Then she says “look now I have a tooth” while showing one stone.....

### **4.4. Document Analysis of Monthly Plans**

The researcher examined documents of schools' monthly plans that are implied during the observation process of outdoor practices. So, monthly plans between February and June were analyzed for this purpose. The researcher selected activities in plans that the outdoor environment was used. Plans were examined based on predetermined categories that are

monthly distribution in five months, activity types, required outdoor materials, and focused subjects.

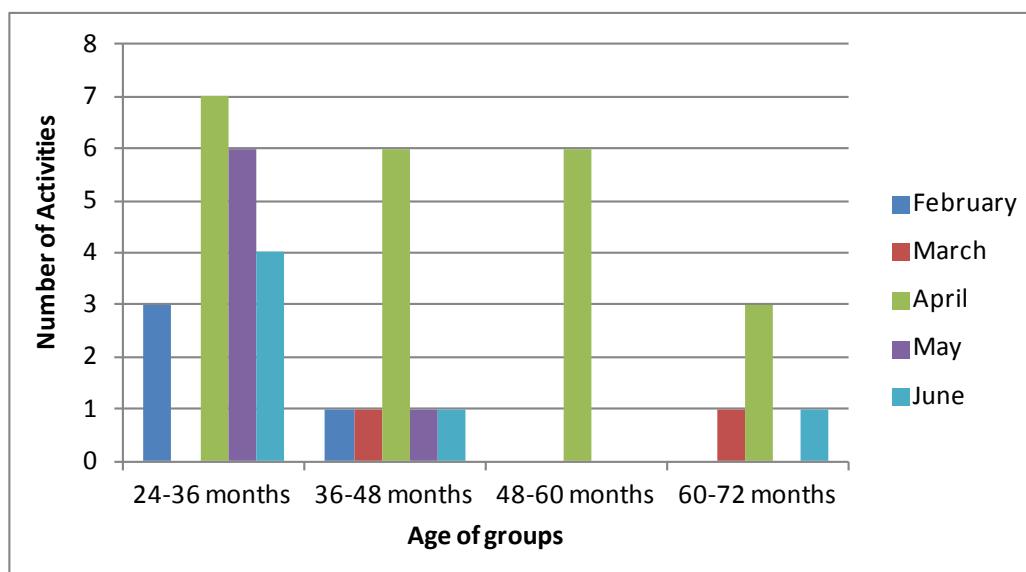
#### 4.4.1. Monthly Distribution of Outdoor Time Plans

As the first step of document analysis, outdoor plans were analyzed with number criteria. The researcher examined how many outdoor plans age groups have in five months that is the observation process of the researcher. In a total of five months, 24-36 months age groups have the highest number of outdoor time plans ( $n=20$ ), and the 60-72 months age group has the least outdoor plans ( $n=5$ ) compared to other age groups' that are 36-48 months ( $n=10$ ) and 48-60months ( $n=7$ ).

In terms of comparison by months, the number of outdoor activities increases in April that is in the spring season, and the number decreases towards summer. In April ( $n=22$ ), the number of outdoor activities is at the highest, and March ( $n=2$ ) has the least number of outdoor activities for all age groups. Compared to these months, February has four outdoor plans in total while May and June have the same number of activity which is seven. Furthermore, there are no outdoor time plans for some months. For instance, 24-36 months age groups have no outdoor plans in March, 48-60 months have no outdoor plans in February, March, and May, also the 60-72 age groups do not have outdoor plans in February and May. Details can be seen in Figure 11;

**Figure 11**

*Number of Outdoor Time Plans by Month*

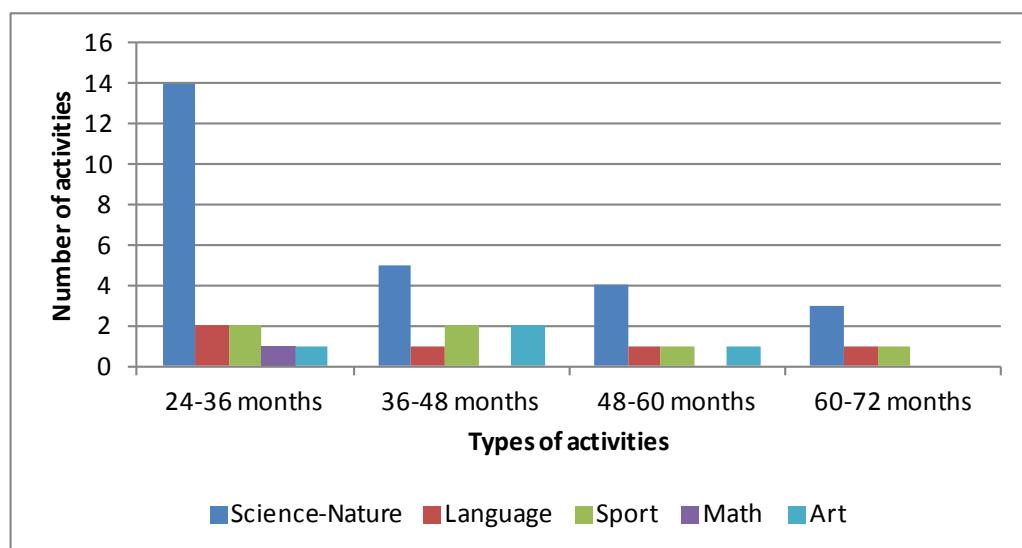


#### 4.4.2. Distribution of Outdoor Time Plans Regarding Activity Types

Five different activity types were analyzed from the document analysis in the five months of planning. Mostly, science-nature-related activities (n=26) were given and there is only one art-related activity (n=1) for five months. Furthermore, there were language-related activities (n=5) and sports-related activities (n=6) for different age groups. Details can be seen in Figure 12;

**Figure 12**

*Outdoor Time Plans by Activity Types*

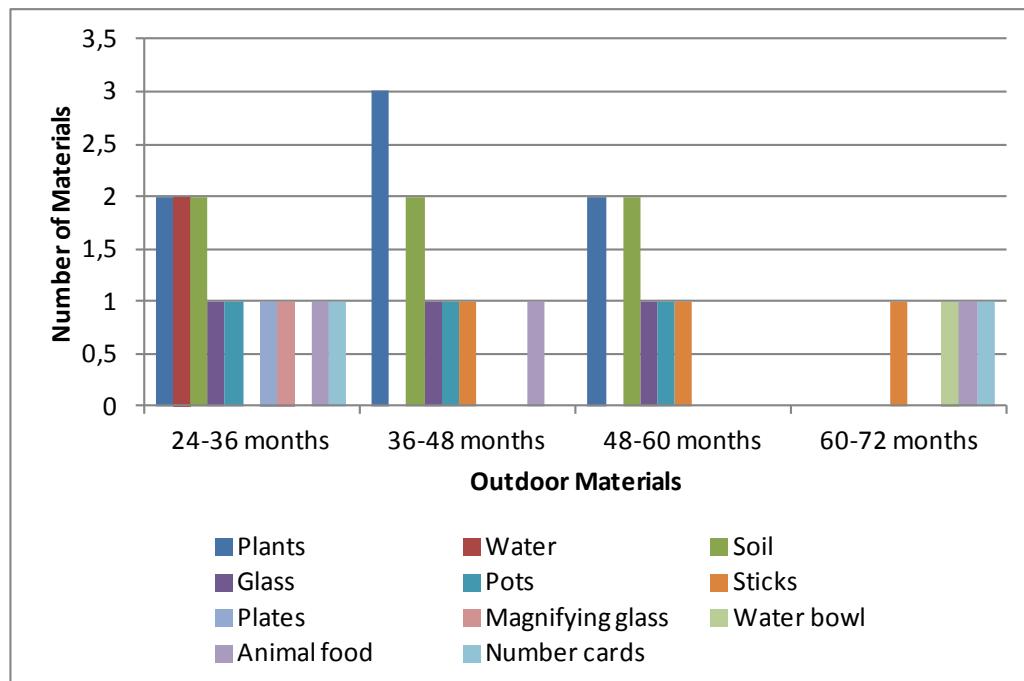


#### 4.4.3. Required Outdoor Materials in the Monthly Plans

As the third step of document analysis, outdoor plans were analyzed through the required materials criteria. Diverse materials were written in outdoor time plans to be used during implementations. Some of the activities (n=4) do not require additional materials since they were related to the examination of natural components like a tree in the outdoor environment. These activities were represented as “no need” in Table 4.4.2. Mostly natural components such as water (n=2), soil (n=6), sticks (n=3), and flowers (n=3) were used in outdoor time plans as materials. Details about materials in outdoor time plans can be seen in Figure 13;

**Figure 13**

*Required Outdoor Materials in the Monthly Plans*



Examples of different used materials in outdoor plans are given below from monthly plans;

#### **24-36 Months Age Group Plan- (science and nature activity) (April)**

The teacher gives plates to the children. Children put soil on plates after they touch and examine the soil. The teacher gives glasses that are full of water for children. Children pour water on the soil to mix water and soil for making mud

Apart from natural components, other materials such as pots (n=2), number cards (n=1), and magnifying glass (n=1) were placed in outdoor time plans. For instance, pots are used as materials in this activity;

#### **36-48 Months Age Group Plan- (science and nature activity) (April)**

Pots are distributed to children and ask them to examine pots. Questions that are “what grows in a pot?” and “why there are holes under the pot?” will be asked to children. After, children will fill pots with soil and plant flowers in the soil.”

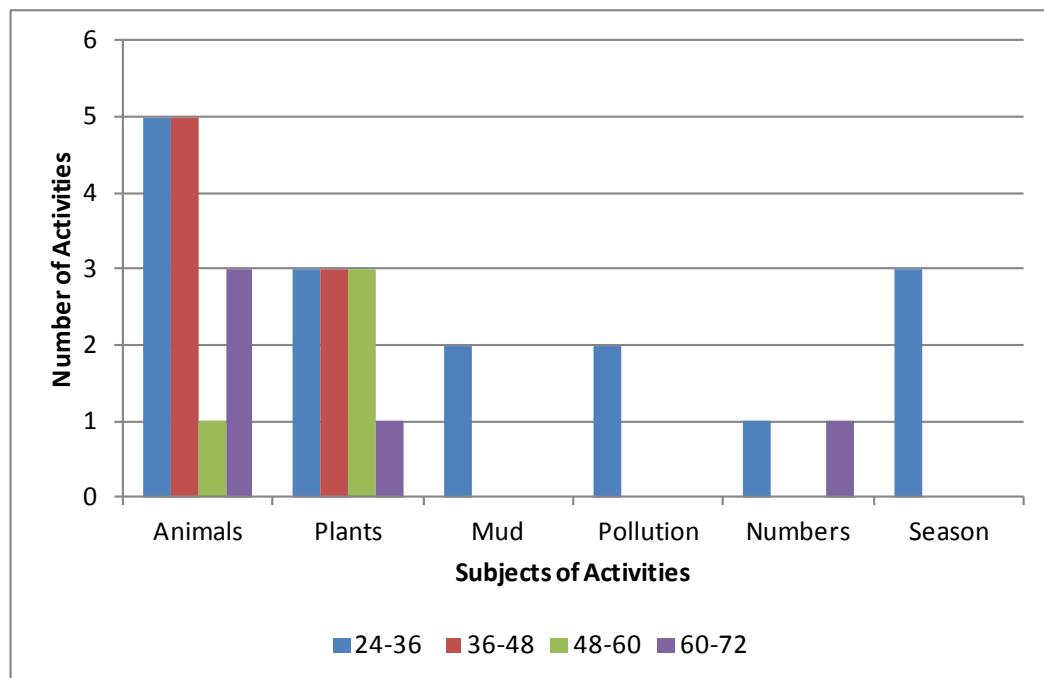
#### **4.4.4. Subjects Focused During Outdoor Time in the Monthly Plans**

Based on document analysis, it was displayed that monthly plans focus on diverse subjects. For instance, the planting topic is written twice in the plans of 36-48 months age group (n=2)

and twice for 48-60 months age group (n=2) and one time for 24-36 months age group (n=1) in April, so the planting topic (n=5) is implemented for five times in April. Besides nature-related themes like planting (n=5), spiders (n=3) and environmental pollution (n=1), also different games (n=6) and sport activities (n=1) were placed in the plans. Details of subjects can be seen in Figure 14;

**Figure 14**

*Subjects of Outdoor Time Plans*



Examples of different themes in outdoor plans are given below from monthly plans;

#### **60-72 Months Age Group Plan- (animals) (April)**

Children make animal walking in a single line in the garden. They start with turtle walking. After walking accelerates, children start running. They jump like a rabbit after running. Hands hold applause above the head by raising the arms up and down. Children lean and touch their toes.

#### **24-48 Months Age Group Plan- (math activity) (April)**

Children collect numbers of cards scattered in the garden. After they order number cards that they found, on number line which looks like a crocodile. The crocodile number line will be prepared by the teacher.

#### **4.5. Summary of the Findings**

The current study was conducted for three purposes that explore views of early childhood teachers and parents about spending time outdoors and also examining outdoor practices of teachers. In parallel with research aims, qualitative approaches were followed so as to reach a broader perspective and deeper understanding. The data are collected through observation of outdoor practices, interviews with teachers and parents, also document analysis of outdoor plans. 12 teachers and 35 parents participated in this qualitative study.

In the light of the results, it can be concluded that teachers and parents valued spending time outdoors in general. Both participant groups highlighted that children learn by exploring during outdoor time. In terms of the ideal outdoor environment, wider is for general use, grass surface, animals, and more plants were stated by teachers and parents. On the other hand, views of parents and teachers vary in terms of diverse aspects. Based on the results of interview sessions with teachers, it can be concluded that teachers have been experiencing parental concerns affecting their outdoor time practices negatively. Besides parental concerns, bad weather conditions, excessive indoor activities, and rotation plan also affect the duration of outdoor time, and outdoor implications negatively. Outdoor practices are mostly conducted to support the physical development area through discharging energy and taking some fresh air. Besides this developmental purpose, most teachers prefer to let children engage in unstructured play during this time. In terms of the learning process, teachers generally emphasized that learning becomes more permanent if it occurs in the outdoor environment. In terms of outdoor time protocols, teachers pay attention to the preparation of the environment and children before going outdoors. Also, safety and classroom management are significant aspects that were stated by teachers for the protocol during outdoor time.

As another result of interview sessions, teachers mostly defined their roles as co-player through emphasizing examples like playing with children, and also their responsibility provides security according to teachers. On the other hand, it was observed that teachers mostly took the director/redirector role by deciding and directing children for outdoor activities during outdoor time. Furthermore, teachers described components like winter garden area, mud pool, musical instruments, and gardening clothes as the alterations that they want for the school's outdoor environment. Teachers think that outdoor time mostly supports children's cognitive development skills while parents mostly benefit from outdoor time on physical development. To illustrate, teachers stated that children's ability to think critically and creative skills are supported through outdoor time while parents gave the

development of gross motor skills like jumping, running, and climbing as examples. Differently from teachers, parents stated outdoor time benefits on self-care skills, taking responsibility, a sense of belonging to the school, eating, and sleeping. Parents want less winter outdoor time because of weather conditions and safety concerns. Furthermore, parents did not consider risk-taking as an appropriate acquisition for toddlers compared to teachers' views on risk-taking. Water areas, wooden playground toys, active usage of the botanic area, and individual botanic areas were described by parents as desired alterations that are wanted for the outdoor environment of the school.

Through observation sessions and document analysis, diverse results were reached. Furthermore, the 24-36 months of age group has the most number of outdoor activities while the 60-72 months of age group has the least number of activities in the monthly plan. These age groups had less outdoor time compared to other age groups based on observations. Moreover, the unstructured play was mostly preferred as outdoor practice during outdoor time besides nature-based outdoor practices like examination of flowers and observing worms. In parallel with outdoor practices, natural materials were mostly preferred for outdoor practices. During outdoor time practices, teachers mainly took the director/redirector role based on observations like warnings about how to play in the environment. It was observed that teachers restricted the usage of outdoor areas that have a muddy surface and they did not conduct activities related to making mud even if the monthly plans placed activities related to making mud.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a discussion in parallel with related studies and the conclusion of the current study. For this aim, related main parts were formed after summarizing the whole research process of the study. Discussion and conclusion of the current study will be presented in this chapter through sections of 5.1. For administrators, policymakers, program developers, and in-service teachers, practices will be mentioned in section 5.2., limitations of the study, and recommendations for further studies will be given in section 5.3.

#### 5.1. Discussion of the Findings

The current study is conducted for three purposes, first is to examine the views of early childhood teachers and parents regarding the outdoor time. The second is to explore teaching practices during outdoor time. The data were collected from diverse sources: semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. For the selection of the participants, the convenience sampling method was used since the researcher was a teacher in the research setting. 12 teachers and 35 parents participated in the study.

The observations and the interviews were conducted after selecting participants for the study. Semi-structured interview questions were asked to teachers and parents so as to understand their views regarding outdoor time. Interviews were recorded with an audiotape and coded after taking permission from the participants. Interview sessions were conducted eight weeks after starting the observation process because of setting an interview schedule. Also, the majority of the participants did not come to arranged interviews, so a new interview schedule was arranged for these participants. Fifteen observation sessions were conducted with diverse age groups in the school in order to observe the outdoor practices of groups during outdoor time. Document analysis of outdoor practices was conducted after completing the observation process. So as to enrich the observation data, photos were taken during some observation sessions. All the ethical permission was taken and also participants were informed about the study's purposes before conducting the study. For data

collection, the triangulation method was used through the agency of collecting the data from diverse sources that are observations, interviews, and document analysis, in order to increase the trustworthiness of the study.

The current study concluded a relation between the experiences and outdoor education backgrounds of teachers with their outdoor practices and view. During observations of outdoor practices, it was observed that some teachers' outdoor practices were more diversified compared to other teachers' who preferred free play as outdoor practice. Within 16 years of experience, T2 integrated mathematical skills like counting and comparing with outdoor practices. Furthermore, teachers who took courses related to outdoor education conducted practices like book reading, art, language, and number writing during outdoor time. This situation demonstrated that courses, seminars, or training related to outdoor education help teachers to conduct more diversified outdoor practices. Furthermore, teachers who have an outdoor education background answered questions of semi-structured interviews by giving more detailed responses compared to other teachers. To illustrate, the risky play was a component talked during interviews of these teachers. Furthermore, teachers with outdoor education background stated that they try to conduct outdoor time in winter even for a short time despite barriers since they believe the developmental benefits of outdoor time.

As also related to demographic information, it was observed that the outdoor practices of teachers differed in terms of the age of children. To illustrate, the 60-72 months age group conducts a brainstorm on leaves and tree types so as to support cognitive skills while 24 months age group examines natural components like snow in order to support sensory skills. So it can be said that 24 months and 24-36 months age groups mostly work with sensory skills while 36-48 months, 48-60 months, and 60-72 months age groups engage in activities to support cognitive skills and more structured games. According to the findings of the document analysis, 24-36 months of age group has the most outdoor activities while the 60-72 months of age group has the least activity time outdoors. The document analysis was supported by the teachers' statements during the interview. According to the teachers of 60-72 months of age group, monthly program is one of the barriers since there are so many indoor activities and the teachers need to limit the number and duration of outdoor time so as to complete indoor activities. A similar finding is reported in the study conducted by Ata (2016), that high frequency of indoor activities limits outdoor play opportunities. Furthermore, less outdoor time sessions of 60-72 months age group were observed compared to other age groups in the current study. Similarly, play opportunities are

gradually restricted because of focusing more on indoor activities in most European and American schools (Kalpogianni, 2019; Waller, Sandseter, Wyver, Arlemalm-Hagser & Maynard, 2010).

Learning by doing and feeling freer were stated by most of the participants in the current study. In parallel with this finding, Yalçın (2015) also illustrates that children feel freer through moving in open space without restrictive rules in terms of parents' points of view based on findings of the study. Some of the teachers in the current study emphasized outdoor time's positive benefits like focusing attention more and being calm on indoor activities. Besides these components, teachers generally emphasized benefits such as permanent learning and learning in a fast way for the learning process. In a study conducted by Bostan Sarıoglu, and Küçüközer, (2018), it was concluded that the outdoor environment provides lasting learning for children according to the viewpoints of teachers. Dowdell, Gray, and Malone (2011) highlighted that teachers believe the crucial role of the outdoor environment in order to motivate children to engage in learning. Parents in the current study also stated the benefits of outdoor time on eating and sleeping habits of children from the point of physical development and contributions for children's self-care skills such as washing hands. In terms of the general views about outdoor time parents mostly focused on the benefits of outdoor time on the development process of children

As another component, parents stated reasons like spending too much time indoors and need of interacting with nature related to why children need to have outdoor time. In the study conducted by Goodling (2016), outdoor play was emphasized as a way to interact with nature for children by parents. In the current study, it was also mentioned that the outdoor environment creates and supports the sense of belonging to school inasmuch as they love outdoor and the outdoor environment reminds children of love and the feeling that they should come back to the next day by parents. A parent emphasized that the school's outdoor environment helps their child to get used to school during the first week of the school. In parallel with this result, Eroğlu (2018) concluded a similar result that feeling of willingness related to coming school increased with the help of the school's outdoor education program according to the view of parents. Children demonstrate increased interest and a high level of motivation regarding going to school in general, and especially on the days that outdoor practices are conducted. Like increasing motivation related to going to school during the transition period, developmental benefits of the outdoor time were demonstrated in this study in terms of diverse perspectives and also emphasized by

different studies in the early childhood education area. Hence, early childhood educators should approach outdoor practices seriously.

Socialization was emphasized by the parents for outdoor time in the current study. According to parents, generally, outdoor time helps children with socialization based on their observations about children's outdoor time. During the outdoor time, a child develops significant relationships with his/her friends since the child has the opportunity in order to express himself better and feel freer (Doğan & Boz, 2019). Yalçın (2015) also found that parents consider outdoor play as a crucial way for children's socialization. In terms of learning styles, learning by doing was highlighted by both parents and teachers as one of the benefits of outdoor time on children's learning in the current study. The parents also stressed that children learn about responsibility through the agency of gardening works such as watering plants from the point of children's social and emotional development. Furthermore, teachers did not mention the benefits of outdoor time on taking responsibility. In parallel with this finding, it was also observed that teachers generally take leadership roles during outdoor practices generally because of safety and hygiene concerns. Namely, they prefer to take responsibility instead of giving children responsibilities to support their social and emotional development, so it can be concluded that the findings of observation and interview sessions are supported by each other.

The current study concluded that teachers generally conduct outdoor time plans related to the examination of natural components such as plants and animals in the garden. Apart from the lesson plans, it was also observed that children construct play focusing on the examination of natural materials. Çetken and Sevimli-Çelik (2018) stated that children prefer to observe and make experiment with natural materials during the outdoor time if there are natural materials such as pine cones and bugs in the outdoor area. Besides nature examination, most of the teachers prefer implementing unplanned outdoor activities based on conditions of the environment and children resulted from observation sessions in the current study. The teachers who mostly prefer to conduct unstructured activities stated diverse reasons to prefer unplanned activities. Firstly, these teachers emphasized that they have limited time because of the rotation program, so children want to play freely during this limited outdoor time so it is hard to conduct structured outdoor activities and let children play freely according to these teachers. Secondly, it is highlighted that children feel more free and independent and teachers want to support their emotions. A similar finding was concluded in the study conducted by Goodling (2016) that teachers do not follow any kind of plan during outdoor time based on interview sessions with teachers and

document analysis. In the current study also parallelism between the outdoor practices and the subject of the lesson plan mostly could not be observed. So this contradicts the statements of some teachers on following the subject of outdoor lesson plans during outdoor time practices. Kos and Jerman (2013) state that outdoor time should be planned and be parallel with the curriculum since it has pedagogical value through supporting the development and learning process of children.

Besides outdoor practices, teachers stated that they use the outdoor environment generally for supporting physical development purposes such as getting rid of the surplus energy and taking some fresh air. In another study, a similar finding was concluded about the usage of outdoor environment that was considered in order to get rid of the surplus energy, providing the chance to run and take some fresh air in terms of not only physical but also the mental health of young children from the viewpoints of teachers and parents (Yalçın, 2015). Fjortoft (2004) conducted a study so as to examine the effects of outdoor practices on motor development and affordances of the outdoor environment through experimental study design and participation of children who were 5 to 7 years old. The findings of the study demonstrated that the outdoor environment has crucial benefits on balance and coordination skills, and also it encourages children to be more physically active and create play via using landscape structures. In a study conducted by Ata (2016), also it was concluded that teachers consider the outdoor environment as an open area that enables children to feel free, learn by doing and take some fresh air.

In parallel with the interview findings, it was also observed that children in all age groups generally use for free play purposes so children create games using natural materials and the environment's component such as a hose during this process. Yalçın (2015) found that teachers mostly conduct free play and nature-related practices during outdoor time. A similar finding was concluded in a study conducted by Tepebağ (2017). Based on the results of this study, teachers mostly conduct free play and movement activities in the outdoor environment even if they think that all plans in the MEB program could be conducted in the outdoor environment. In the same study, it was observed that teachers mostly prefer to use an outdoor environment for free play purposes while at least using the outdoor environment for other activities such as math, drama, science, music, art, and language activities. So this finding demonstrates that development and learning processes mostly take place in an indoor environment compared to the outdoor environment in terms of teachers' points of view.

In the framework of communication about outdoor time practices, parents stated that they generally know practices related to play. According to the parents mostly playing freely is conducted during outdoor time sessions. On the other hand, it was stated that academic activities such as repeating concepts, circle time and number writing are implemented during outdoor time according to findings resulted from interviews of teachers. Also, it rarely was observed that activities such as reading books and drawing were implemented by some teachers even though the mostly free play was implemented during outdoor time. This result is consistent with the study conducted by Burçak (2018) that teachers prefer mostly free play as outdoor practices compared to less preferred activities that are math, drama, and music. Furthermore, outdoor plans do not include parent involvement parts according to document analysis findings. In parallel with this, just one parent stated that they have information about outdoor activities via weekly plans. This situation demonstrated that parents do not have enough information about the activities that are implemented during outdoor time. From the point of outdoor environment areas, teachers do not state usage of the botanic and back garden during interviews but it was observed that teachers tried to use all areas of the outdoor environment, including the back garden and botanic area.

According to the interview findings, the majority of parents emphasized that children need to have outdoor time every day. Even though parents consider it as the necessity of taking fresh air during the winter season, many parents do not want long winter outdoor time as in summer. In other words, the parents said that children need to have outdoor time every day. For their ideal outdoor time, one to two hours were stated for summer and fifteen to thirty minutes were stated for winter. In terms of outdoor time duration, most of the teachers stated that they use the outdoor environment 3 times a week with 35-40 minutes during summer and spring seasons while mostly stating that they do not use the outdoor environment during winter seasons. Teachers generally stated that they cannot conduct outdoor time in winter because parents do not want it. In parallel with interview data, fewer outdoor practices were observed during the winter season. Moreover, document analysis demonstrated that more outdoor plans were placed during summer and spring seasons. So it could be concluded that the allocated time and frequency for outdoor practices decrease in the winter season.

Generally, teachers do not consider the frequency and duration of outdoor time as sufficient so they believe outdoor time's frequency and duration must be increased. In parallel with the current study's results related to bad weather conditions, Burçak (2018) and Ata (2016) also emphasized that teachers consider bad weather conditions as one of the major barriers

for use of the outdoor environment. Because of these reasons, parents want less or no outdoor time during winter for their children. As an explanation of the ideal time in winter, parents stated weather conditions and the risk of children's getting sick. In terms of cultural context, these findings could be associated with the over-protective attitude of parents. Because of increasing over-protective parenting, outdoor play opportunities are limited (Brussoni, Olsen, Pike, & Sleet, 2012; Clement, 2004; Valentine & McKendrick, 1997). Also, these findings are parallel with the findings of a study that was conducted in order to explore teachers' and parents' beliefs and teachers' outdoor play practices. It was concluded that outdoor play should be practiced in good weather conditions according to parents' point of view. Also, it was found that parents have concerns about the health of children because of the cold weather (Yalçın, 2015). In parallel with this finding, Huz, and Cevher-Kalburan, (2017) concluded similar findings that parental concern related to outdoor time causes the formation of strain for teachers during the outdoor time and this strain directs teachers to conduct activities at indoor environments instead of the outside environment. Based on those findings, teachers stated that the duration of the outdoor time is restricted because of parental concerns regarding bad weather conditions and the risk of getting sick.

Outdoor time barriers were one of the significant findings of the current study. The main barrier could be considered as parental concerns that were generally emphasized by the teachers during the interview sessions and also observed as the effects on outdoor practices. Through the findings of the current study, it was demonstrated that parents' views take a significant place in the teachers' views and practices. In the current study, the concerns regarding getting sick were indicated by the parents through different statements. Some of the parents stated that teachers need to check the clothes of children regularly and be careful about such proper outdoor clothes as a hat and wool scarf during outdoor time. These protocols are not easy for teachers in crowded groups in terms of parents' views. According to those parents, it is hard to control lots of children during outdoor time compared to controlling a child. So, this concern demonstrates insecurity toward teachers on meeting the needs of their children and toward children on meeting and expressing their own needs. Instead of providing solutions such as providing more suitable outdoor wear for children and teaching about self-care skills, those parents preferred to restrict their children's outdoor time. In a study conducted by Kos and Jerman (2013), it is indicated that some parents create obstacles through bringing their children without proper outdoor clothes even if these children are near to be sick, and also those parents ask teachers not to let their children have outdoor time for the day.

Related to this concern, some of the teachers stated that they shorten the outdoor time during the winter seasons. Another protocol was followed by some teachers to reduce parents' concerns regarding being sick: if a parent does not want his/her child to go outside for the day, one of the teachers stays with him/her inside while other children are spending time outdoors. On the other hand, some teachers in the current study emphasized that they do not divide groups for the outdoor time during winter seasons because the social-emotional development of children could be affected negatively. Moreover, observations are parallel with the statements related to outdoor time and frequency. The researcher observed fewer outdoor time sessions for 24 months, 24-36 months, and 60-72 months because these groups get used to the outdoor environment less compared to 36-48 age groups. Also, it was observed that the young age groups had less outdoor time compared to older groups. Furthermore, teachers' interview sessions were parallel with findings of observation sessions and parents' interview sessions on the duration and frequency of outdoor time during the winter season. Like parents, also teachers stated that they have less outdoor time during the winter seasons. For instance, most of the groups use the outdoor environment more than twice a week during the summer season but the groups use the outdoor environment only one time during the week or they do not use the outdoor environment during the winter seasons.

Related to the safety concern, risk-taking was emphasized by the teachers and the parents in the current study. Some of the teachers believe that children should learn to take more risks during the outdoor time but parental concerns regarding safety limit them to encourage children for risk-taking activities. To illustrate, one of the teachers stated that she believes benefits of climbing up the slide but she is afraid of any kind of accidents during this activity because she is concerned about complaints of parents on teachers' responsibilities related to ensuring the safety of children. In parallel with this statement, some teachers explained that they control the outdoor environment to eliminate any risky situation before going outdoors. To illustrate, they remove stones and control the garden gate whether it is closed or not because the gate is directly opening to the street. On the other hand, these teachers did not do the protocols that they explained during the observation sessions, so it could be concluded that the practices and the statements on safety differ from each other. Furthermore, it was concluded that there is not an outdoor activity plan related to risk management based on document analysis results. In the study conducted by Goodling (2016), it was observed that process of children's outdoor play was interrupted by teachers who were much concerned related to supervise children about safety. It was also indicated that childhood is not shaped by children because of inadequate outdoor experiences resulted

from safety concerns related to outdoor play materials, strict outdoor rules, and overprotective approaches in terms of teachers' view.

Even if some of the parents positively stated the significance of risk-taking through the outdoor environment materials such as climbing ropes and climbing walls, some parents of the 24 months age group did not consider risk-taking as an appropriate acquisition for the developmental level of their children. Furthermore, the teachers of 24 months and 24-36 months age groups stated that they prefer having less outdoor time because they believe younger children can fall or get sick easily. Because of these reasons, it could be stated that some of the teachers have the same concerns with parents and it affects outdoor time duration and their practices. These findings are similar to the findings of a study that was conducted by Little (2015) who pointed out negative parental attitudes toward taking risks during the play by demonstrating parental concern regarding safety and wellbeing.

Frost, Wortham, and Reifel (2012) highlighted that culture significantly affects children's play. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the effects of parenting styles in different cultures. Diverse studies demonstrate cultural differences in parenting style (Van Campen & Russel, 2010; Jambunathan, Burts & Pierce, 2000; Jung Yeh, Pal Singh & Singh, 2010). Overprotective parenting is considered as a common parenting style in Turkish culture (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2012; Palut, 2010; Yavuzer, 1993). Cevher-Kalburan and Ivrendi (2016) examined the relationship between parenting styles and parents' view within practices related to risky play. The study was conducted with 890 Turkish parents of children who are between the ages of 4 to 6 years old. Researchers found that the benefits of risky play and its practices are affected negatively because of overprotective parenting style. In another study that was conducted by Erbay and Saltali (2012), it was aimed to investigate Turkish mothers' views on play and the place of play process of their 6-year-old children. The sample was composed of 88 mothers living in Konya. The findings of this study revealed that indoor play practices are more engaged in comparison to outdoor play, and mothers are pleased with this situation since they have concerns about children's wellbeing and safety during outdoor play.

Besides studies that found negative attitudes and barriers for risky play, diverse studies are demonstrating a positive attitude and effective outdoor practices. Little, Sandseter and Wyver (2012) indicated that Norwegian early childhood teachers are more flexible about allowing children to experience risky play through translating their belief, which is risky play supports motor development skills as well as problem-solving, self-esteem, and

confidence, into effective teaching practices. Even though teachers experience some barriers to conduct teaching practices, they consider that these barriers are less significant since they believe that they have the power to prepare and manage risky play for children. Fjortoft and Sageie (2000) highlight that there is a crucial emphasis on not only physical activity but also outdoor play in Norwegian pedagogy. When these studies are examined, it could be concluded that effective transformation of theories into practices is crucial to provide chances for taking risks during outdoor play and it could be supported through forming positive attitude toward taking risks, more self-confident teachers to conduct risky play practices and restructuring early childhood programs as more focused on outdoor play. Little (2013) highlights that children need to experience risk and autonomy in a safe environment so as to be self-sufficient adults. If teachers prevent risky situations, children cannot learn to deal with problems and they cannot develop confidence (Bento & Dias, 2017).

In terms of hygiene concerns, some of the teachers emphasized that parents do not want their children's shoes to get dirty. Associated with this aspect, some parents also stated that they prefer grass surfaces in the outdoor environment because of getting dirty. Besides, it was stated that some groups wear galoshes on their outdoor shoes before going outside if the surface is muddy. This practice was started by some teachers and parents during interviews. Also, it is observed during the observation sessions. Teachers, however, emphasized that they do not want to make children wear galoshes during the outdoor time because galoshes limit physical activities like running and jumping. On the other hand, those teachers stated that they feel compulsory to make children wear galoshes on outdoor shoes because they experienced negative reactions of parents about muddy shoes of children, and parents complained to the administrator about the teachers who do not pay enough attention to the hygiene of their children. Based on the observations and interview data collected both from parents and teachers, it could be concluded that participants have hygiene concern related to outdoor time and this concern affect outdoor practices of teachers, so being clean and neat is significant for parents. This concern could be associated with Turkish culture that attaches importance to be clean and neat. Cleanliness is significantly emphasized in Turkish culture to support the physical and social-emotional health of the individuals (Çelik& Yüce, 2019; AFS, 2010).

During the observation sessions, it was observed that teachers restricted the usage of outdoor areas that have a muddy surface, so they changed the plans of outdoor time depending on the muddy surface. This concern also affects skills such as learning by doing

because teachers do not want to implement activities on the soil if the surface is muddy or they take the active role instead of children during outdoor practices. For instance, a teacher preferred to use a shovel by herself to dig the soil so as to search a worm. Therefore, hands-on learning chances are restricted by the teacher. Additionally, it was observed that teachers did not conduct activities related to making mud even if the monthly plans stated such activities related to making mud. So, it could be stated that there is an inconsistency between outdoor plans and teachers' outdoor practices. In terms of the concern regarding being sick, parental concerns were stated in the interviews by most teachers of young age groups that are 24 months and 24-36 months. These statements are parallel with the statements of parents in interviews, especially on the questions of ideal outdoor time based on seasons.

In the current study, the rotation plan was also described as another outdoor time barrier. Some of the teachers stated that current outdoor time is not enough for them because of the rotation program. This demonstrated that the time allocated for indoor and outdoor activities is not equal, so the rotation program should be revised in order to balance outdoor time. As well as the rotation program, there are also fewer outdoor activity plans compared to indoor activities in monthly plans according to document analysis of outdoor time. This finding was supported by the observation and the interview findings. In parallel with this finding, teachers of the oldest age group, which is 60-72 months, emphasized that they cannot spend enough outdoor time because of conducting indoor activities in the plan. Also, less outdoor time sessions of this group were observed compared to other age groups. Furthermore, academic development was described as another parental concern by the teachers. Some of the teachers stated that parents want more indoor activities such as doing worksheets because they are anxious about the academic development of children so the teachers shorten the duration and frequency of outdoor time so as to conduct more academic-based indoor activities.

Some teachers emphasized that they try to reduce the effects of barriers during the interviews. To illustrate, teachers of 48-60 age groups stated that they talk with the concerned parents about the benefits of outdoor time. Thus, teachers support the development of a positive attitude about having daily outdoor time. These teachers try to arrange daily outdoor time in their program through negotiating with parents who are concerned about bad weather conditions, the risk of getting sick, and safety. Furthermore, some of the teachers follow the availability of the outdoor environment in the rotation program to have more outdoor time as they stated in interview sessions. Based on the

observation data, these teachers try to benefit more from outdoor time by arranging more outdoor time according to the availability of the outdoor environment in the rotation program. On the other hand, some teachers emphasized that their outdoor practices are affected because of barriers like parental concerns, rotation program, and daily plans so they conduct more indoor activities or limit outdoor activities to a great degree at some point despite all benefits of outdoor time. In parallel with this point, these teachers stated that they re-arrange their outdoor practices to maintain a positive relationship with parents. Making children wear galoshes, not using muddy areas, not having outdoor time during winter seasons, and forbidding climbing up to slide are some observation examples that could be given to demonstrate consistency between the interview data and the observation data. Therefore, it could be concluded that teachers ignore the benefits of outdoor practices through restricting some outdoor activities.

In the current study, the teachers mostly consider their responsibility as providing security and it was observed that the teachers mostly use verbal warnings compared to physical intervention to ensure the safety of children during outdoor time. This finding is similar to the finding of a study which was conducted by Kalpogianni (2019) who examined early childhood teachers' outdoor practices and their views regarding outdoor play. Within the participation of 662 early childhood teachers, the study was used survey design. The researcher found that teachers mostly focus on providing security during the outdoor play through controlling risky situations to ensure the safety of children. The current study's findings also indicated that teachers mostly consider their roles as co-player through the agency of involvement during the playing and learning process of children in outdoor time based on interviews. On the other hand, it was observed that teachers mostly took the director/redirector role by deciding and directing children for outdoor activities during the outdoor time, so teachers demonstrated director/redirector role even if they consider themselves as co-player. Therefore, it could be concluded that there is an inconsistency related to the teacher's role between what it is stated and done based on analysis on interview and observation data. Diverse studies demonstrate that teachers' views and practices related to teachers' roles during play differ from each other (Ihmeideh, & Al-Qaryouti, 2015; Erşan, 2011; McClintic & Petty, 2015; Ernst, 2014; Gühan, 2019; Lam, 2018).

For ideal outdoor environments, parents and teachers stated some outdoor environments aspects as same while stating some of the aspects as different. For instance, both parents and teachers described their ideal outdoor environment that has a wide area, grass surface,

lots of various natural materials, and animals. Similar findings were stated that teachers described their ideal outdoor environment as an area that has an open space for moving freely, different materials so as to support play, a zoo part, and natural elements based on findings of a study conducted by Yalçın (2015). Frost and Norquist (2007) describe ideal outdoor environments as a combination of natural habitat, garden, and playground. Furthermore, the outdoor environment includes diverse areas like water, sand, multipurpose lawn, and also it has components that are plants, permanent play structures, loose materials, and animals (Moore, 2014). In a qualitative study conducted by Waters and Maynard (2010), researchers aimed to investigate teachers' and children's views on the ideal outdoor environment. Based on the findings of the study, researchers described an ideal outdoor environment that has physical layout such as grassy areas, diverse surfaces, and plants besides loose materials that are highly significant to support creativity skills through manipulation.

On the other hand, some components of ideal environments were stated differently by the teachers and the parents. To illustrate, the parents described components such as water areas, lots of wooden playground toys, lots of animals while the teachers stated components like risk-taking areas, winter garden area that provides chances to play in bad weather conditions, and gardening clothes (boots and trousers) for their ideal outdoor environment. A similar finding related to winter area in the outdoor environment was stated in the study conducted by Huz and Cevher-Kalburan, (2017) as teachers' statement that a covered area must be placed in the outdoor environment in order to conduct outdoor activities in bad weather conditions such as too many sunny days in summer or too cold days in winter besides placing more natural components in the outdoor environment.

Moreover, both parents and teachers stated that there should be animals in the ideal environment and the actual environment for the diverse benefits of children's development and learning processes. The participants explained the reason for keeping animals in the outdoor environment through reasons like learning about animals, observing them, and interacting with them. Furthermore, most of the parents stated that developments of emotions like mercy, love, and kindness are supported via interaction with animals during outdoor time. On the other hand, some of the parents started their concerns related to the health condition of children who have animal allergies. As animals, generally, cats and dogs were stated by the parent participants. Bailie (2012) emphasized that interacting with animals and caring for them in the outdoor environment enable children for overcoming fears and supporting confidence related to newly developed skills. To illustrate, animals

can help a child who has got separation anxiety for the first day of preschool. Owning pets are common practices in European schools and diverse international studies demonstrated many benefits of school pets on the social anxiety of young children (McCullough, Ruehrdanz, Garthe, Hellman& O'Haire, 2019; Dancer, 2012; Grove&Henderson. 2018). As another example given by Bailie (2012), the child begins to develop an emotional connection with preschool as well as building confidence through the agency of caring animals in the outdoor environment of the preschool.

As well as ideal outdoor environments, the teachers and the parents stated diverse changes they want for the actual outdoor environment that is currently used in the school's outdoor area. Not only parents but also teachers described alterations as wider botanic areas, more grass surface, more playground toys, and materials for climbing activities for the actual outdoor environment. As different aspects, the parents emphasized component like more usage of the botanic area through more planting activities, individual botanic areas for each child, wider sandbox, pools, more vegetables and fruits in the botanic area while teachers stated components such as the winter garden area, the child made area, mud pool, musical instruments, and painted garden walls. The reason for the changes could be related to the design of the school building. The outdoor environment is not adequate because the building was not originally designed as a school. Diverse studies concluded that especially outdoor environments of early childhood education institutions are not adequate in terms of physical layout in Turkey. (Gönen & Saranlı, 2014; Yılmaz & Bulut, 2002; Sisman, Özyavuz& Erdinç 2010; Bal, 2005; Olgan, & Kahriman-Öztürk, 2011).

## **5.2. Implications**

The current study was conducted so as to understand parents' and teacher's views, also examine **the** teacher's outdoor practices. Thus, it is expected to deliver benefits for early childhood educators, kindergarten administrators, and teacher educators about the significance of outdoor education. The findings of the current qualitative study described diverse views via using sources that are observation sessions, interview sessions, and document analysis. The study's findings might offer some practices for people who work in early childhood education areas like teachers, program developers, administrators, and policymakers. The study's findings contribute to literature since the studies related to outdoor time have not been conducted adequately, especially by focusing on different views and using different data collection tools like observation, interview, and document analysis.

As one of the major conclusions of the current study, early childhood teachers are significant in order to provide more quality of outdoor time to meet the learning and developmental needs of children. Therefore, teachers should be fully aware of outdoor time's benefits on children and how they developed qualitative outdoor time for children. Also, it was observed that free play was preferred mostly as outdoor activity by teachers. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to know and implement diverse outdoor activities during outdoor time and evaluate outdoor time. Due to these reasons, outdoor education could be added in the undergraduate early childhood education curriculum for pre-service early childhood teachers. Outdoor parts of undergraduate play courses need to be more detailed. The practicum part, which focuses on learning by doing, should be taken into consideration as well as the theoretical part of the outdoor topic in play courses. In order to learn by doing, outdoor topics in this course could be given in outdoor environments like forests and botanic gardens for at least two or three weeks. Moreover, the learning process could be supported through field trips to schools that focused on outdoor education.

Besides pre-service teachers, training and seminars could be arranged for the participation of in-service teachers. These training and seminars need to involve practices to provide effective learning of theoretical parts. School administrators have a significant role in terms of supporting the outdoor time process and creating a positive view of outdoor time inasmuch as they are interacting with teachers, parents, and program developers. Bailie (2012) states that the role of school administrators is significant because they form the structure of preschool. As one of the roles of school administrators, in-service teachers' participation in pieces of training or seminars related to outdoor education should be encouraged by school administrators. In-service seminars could be effective for early childhood teachers in order to develop awareness about topics such as the significance of outdoor activities, preparation, and practices of activities in preschools' outdoor environments.

In terms of the view of the researcher who is also a teacher in the school setting, an ideal school outdoor environment needs to involve different surfaces like grassy surfaces and muddy surfaces that support the sensory development of young children. Besides different surfaces, water area, risk-taking area, and sandbox should be in the environment to support developmental skills as well as encouraging children for unstructured play. Outdoor materials should be plain and natural. It is significant to focus on open-ended materials to support the creativity of children. Having a botanic garden and owning a school pet deliver benefits like learning significant social-emotional skills such as responsibility and

cooperation. Moreover, a winter garden area should not be in the outdoor environment because children also need to experience winter conditions within the supervision of educators. Rather than having the winter garden area, educators and parents should focus on the idea that there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes. Additionally, providing garden clothes like boots and overall is significant for children to play in cold weather conditions and also for parents to reduce their concerns related to safety and the risk of getting sick.

Furthermore, it was observed that some of the teachers share outdoor plans before outdoor time but teachers also should pay attention to involve children during the decision-making process during planning outdoor time in order to ensure child-centered learning during outdoor time. To illustrate, planning could be done at the beginning of the day through a practice like a morning circle that teachers and children gather together in a circle to conduct diverse practices like talking about the day, sharing the idea, and so on. Through morning circle teachers could plan outdoor time while considering the needs and interests of children during talking with them. Educators have to prepare suitable outdoor environments as their responsibility that is defending the rights of children to make them benefit from outdoor (Acar, 2014; Nedovic & Morrisey, 2013). This responsibility needs to be shared among teachers, school administrators, program developers, and even professionals who design school buildings and school outdoor environments since the inadequate design of an outdoor environment could be a barrier for a teacher to conduct outdoor practices. Furthermore, it is significant to regularly spend time in the outdoor environment from early ages and arranging schools' outdoor environments for this purpose, so children could grow as individuals who have awareness related to the environment. Therefore, there could be more protected areas in the outdoor environment of schools for usage in bad weather conditions (Huz & Cevher-Kalburan, 2017).

The number of outdoor and indoor activities must be balanced in the monthly plans of schools since both groups of participants were stated that children need outdoor time for effective learning and healthy development processes. Program developers could pay close attention to prepare developmentally appropriate outdoor plans for children in all age groups. Therefore, program developers need to work closely with teachers if the curriculum is only planned by program developers since teachers' work with children directly and observe them, so their views are highly significant while planning outdoor practices. Huz and Cevher-Kalburan (2017) emphasize that preparing more outdoor education activities for early childhood education curriculums assists children to spend qualitative time in the

outdoor environment of preschools. Early childhood teachers should prepare and conduct diverse outdoor plans providing chances for children to explore and learn instead of using an outdoor environment just for play purposes, so the teachers should allocate the same amount of time for the preparation of outdoor activities compared to indoor activities (Tepebağ, 2017). In order to prepare effective outdoor activity plans, teachers need to have a rich portfolio of outdoor learning activities. That's why teachers need to be lifelong learners who love to follow researches and novel education approaches in the outdoor education area. Many diverse organizations are established to support professional development in the outdoor education area. To illustrate, forest schools and outdoor education cooperations share their outdoor practices via technological channels like blogs, social media accounts, and videos, and so on. Also, teachers could participate in outdoor education seminars, training, and projects arranged by these organizations. The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats (TEMA), International Play Association Turkey (IPA-Turkey), Başka Bir Okul Mümkün Association (BBOM), and Nature Conservation Center (DKM) could be given as examples for cooperations that outdoor education is one of the main areas focusing on. To illustrate, TEMA aims to support the ecological literacy of children in the early years through conducting an outdoor education program that is Minik TEMA ("Minik TemaEğitim Programı", n.d.). Furthermore, IPA Turkey arranges "Outdoor Classroom Day" which is a campaign raising awareness about outdoor education and outdoor play through conducting lessons and playing in outdoor environments for this day ("Outdoor Classroom Day", n.d.). The school, where the current study is conducted, implements neither the Minik Tema education program nor Outdoor Classroom Day.

Additionally, Tepebağ (2017) suggests that school administrators must consider the benefits of outdoor education before forming the structure of preschool and they must provide sources and opportunities for early childhood teachers, so teachers can conduct outdoor time activities efficiently. As well as program developers, also school administrators might arrange rotation programs in a way that outdoor time could be placed every day because the ideal frequency of outdoor time was stated as every day by most of the participants in the current study. School administrators should allocate budget for kindergarten's outdoor environment, arrange school's outdoor environment according to the developmental needs of children through considering the viewpoints of early childhood teachers and also learning centers should be formed in an outdoor environment like learning centers in it. Furthermore, volunteer community organizations could support schools that have an inadequate budget. The school could work with governmental or non-governmental

organizations, and also parents in the school could form a volunteer community to support the school about the formation of an effective outdoor environment for the healthy development and learning process of children. Scrapstore (2020) could be given as an example that was formed as an environmental and community charity. This charity helps early years' settings to advocate and support the development of play opportunities through diverse training programs and diverting reusable waste.

The current study demonstrated that parents are significant factors affecting outdoor time in terms of duration and practices. Especially, it was concluded that teachers restricted their outdoor practices because of parental concerns on the safety, hygiene, and health of children. If parents have a negative attitude toward outdoor time, this attitude affects outdoor practices distinctly. Because of these reasons, it could be concluded that cooperation with parents is highly crucial. Among parents, teachers, and school administrators more productive engagement and communication are necessities. In this way, more support could be gathered so as to provide and promote outdoor opportunities for the healthy development process of children (Jayasuriya, Williams, Edwards, & Tandon, 2016). Therefore, strong cooperation with parents needs to be provided. In order to provide this cooperation, diverse practices could be done. Firstly, it is significant to convince parents about the benefits of outdoor time on the development and learning process of children. Hence, seminars related to the developmental benefits of outdoor time could be arranged for parents. For these seminars, it is important to involve practices enabling parents to experience outdoor time besides theoretical parts. During practicum parts, the school's outdoor practices could be conducted with parents. Furthermore, international examples in the outdoor education area could be given while informing parents about the significance of outdoor time. For this purpose, forest schools in European countries like Finland and Germany could be given as examples to emphasize the success of children.

Secondly, it was concluded that there are no parent involvement activities in outdoor plans. Hence, parent involvement parts could be added in outdoor plans for supporting learning and development processes, and also creating positive experiences for children. Another way to provide cooperation with parents could be forming necessary outdoor protocols. It was concluded that the usage of the outdoor environment decreases in bad weather conditions. These protocols could be formed to inform parents about the necessary outdoor time clothes like boots, umbrellas, winter overalls, and so on. Providing proper outdoor wear such as a waterproof jacket and rubber boots for children could be used in order to

overcome outdoor time-related concerns of parents inasmuch as the health and safety of children are assured (Bento, & Dias, 2017). Moreover, the motto that “there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes” could be emphasized through outdoor time protocols. Lastly, teachers need to pay attention to the effective documentation of outdoor time. Effective documentation could be beneficial to demonstrate the significance of outdoor time to parents. Also, it could be used as information reports related to conducted outdoor practices, detailed outdoor learning experiences, and assessment of the developmental level of children, so parents could be more in the process of children’s development and learning. Parents’ negative reactions related to safety, hygiene, and sickness, will progressively decrease if educators explain the significance of outdoor play and encourage parents to involve in outdoor activities (Bento, & Dias, 2017).

## **5.2. Limitations and Recommendations for Further Studies**

In this current study, there were some limitations. Conducting this study with a small sample size could be considered as a limitation for the study. The study was conducted with 35 participants and 12 teachers to reach more rich and descriptive data through in-depth interviews. On the other hand, if researchers would want to generalize findings, this research could be conducted with more participants. As well as reaching more participants to expand the sample of the research, also quantitative methods like correlational research and survey research might be used through the agency of using related scales so different statistical findings might be included in future studies with the help of this way. To illustrate the effects of parental attitude on outdoor practices could be researched through correlational research. Furthermore, survey research could be beneficial to examine teachers’ views regarding the assessment of an outdoor education program that was conducted in the school. Apart from participants, the data was conducted through various sources that are observations, interviews, and document analysis.

The homogeneity of the participants was another limitation of the current study. Teachers and most of the parent participants were female because there were no male teachers in the research setting and the researcher could reach just a few male parents and participants. Because of this reason, concerns on issues like safety and hygiene might be emphasized by participants in the study. Thus, the participation of male parents and teachers might bring a different perspective. For instance, fathers as male participants could bring different perspectives related to safety and hygiene during outdoor time compared to mothers in the study. Furthermore, school administrators could be involved in future studies inasmuch as

schools' outdoor time policies are also affected by decisions of the school administrator and school administrators could be seen as the negotiator between teachers and parents about adjusting outdoor time policies.

The usage of videotapes and journals for a broader perspective could provide more data in order to enrich findings. Even observation data were collected during two seasons as winter and spring, the data collections process could be extended such as observing outdoor time sessions during one year involving not only winter and spring but also summer and autumn. Furthermore, the research was conducted in one school as a research setting. For future researches, more than one research setting in different socio-economic status areas could be used in order to see aspects affecting outdoor time by involving diverse cultures. For instance, public schools might be added to the sample as well as private schools. Another recommendation could be given as a comparison of teachers' views and parents' views for further studies in order to examine the effects of diverse views on outdoor time practices.

## REFERENCES

Acar H (2014). Learning environments for children in outdoor spaces. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 141, 846–853. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.05.147>

AFS. (2010). Handbook for Host Families of Turkish Participants. Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56167d1de4b0141a0f9a9378/t/5810d4cce58c62cb750d5e37/1477498061576/HandbookforFamiliesHostingTurkishParticipants.pdf>

Aktaş-Arnas, Y., & Sarıbaş, Ş. (2020). An investigation of pre-school children's and their parents' outdoor play experiences. *Pegem Journal of Education & Instruction*, 10 (2), 373-397. <https://doi.org/10.14527/pegegog.2020.013>

Alat, Z., Akgümüş, Ö., & Cavalı, D. (2012). Okul öncesi eğitimde açık hava etkinliklerine yönelik öğretmen görüş ve uygulamaları. *Mersin Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 8 (3), 47-62. <https://doi.org/10.17860/efd.49967>

Ancheita, M.M.G. (2005). *The Impact of the Learning Environment*. (Master thesis). Florida University, Retrieved from [https://ufdcimages.uflib.ufl.edu/UF/E0/01/13/87/00001/garcia\\_m.pdf](https://ufdcimages.uflib.ufl.edu/UF/E0/01/13/87/00001/garcia_m.pdf)

Ata, S. (2016). *Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin dış mekânda oyun uygulamaları ve çocukların dış mekânda oyun oynamalarına ilişkin görüşlerinin incelenmesi* (Unpublished master thesis), Hacettepe University, Ankara.

Auer, M. R. (2008). Sensory Perception, Rationalism and Outdoor Environmental Education. *International Research In Geographical & Environmental Education*, 17(1), 6-12. doi:10.2167/irgee225.0

Bailie, P.E. (2012). *Connecting Children to Nature: A multiple Case Study of Nature Center Preschools*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Nebraska

Baker, L. M. (2006). Observation: A Complex Research Method. *Library Trends*, 55(1), 171–189. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lib.2006.0045>

Bal, A., (2005). *Zonguldak Kenti Yeşil Alan Sistemindeki Çocuk Oyun Alanlarının Durumunun Peyzaj Mimarlığı İlkeleri Açısından İrdelenmesi*. (Unpublished master thesis), Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University, Ankara.Zonguldak.

Başbay, A. M. (2012). *Ankara ili sınırları içindeki özel ve resmi anasınıfları ve anaokulu bahçelerinin kullanım yönünden incelenmesi* (Master thesis). Hacettepe University. Ankara

Beasley, K. D. (2015). *Children's Garden Design: Young Children's Perspectives on the Affordances of Outdoor Spaces*. (Master thesis). Curtin University. Australia. Retrieved from [https://espace.curtin.edu.au/bitstream/handle/20.500.11937/599/241886\\_Beasley2016.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=](https://espace.curtin.edu.au/bitstream/handle/20.500.11937/599/241886_Beasley2016.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=)

Bento, G., & Dias, G. (2017). The importance of outdoor play for young children's healthy development. *Porto Biomedical Journal*, 2(5), 157–160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pbj.2017.03.003>

Berry, M., & Hodgson, C. (2011). *Adventure education: An introduction*. New York: Routledge.

Berger, E. H., & Riojas-Cortez, M. (2015). *Parents as partners in education: Families and schools working together* (9th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Bilton, H. (2010). *Outdoor Learning in Early Years: Management and Innovation*. New York: Routledge

Bilton, H. (2014). “What is Outside? The Early Years Foundation Stage in England: Outdoor Facilities, Organisation and Staff Attitudes.” *American Journal of Educational Research* 2 (10): 942–949.

Bostan Sarıoğlu, A., & Küçüközer, H. (2018). *Investigation of Preservice Science Teachers' Opinions Regarded to Outdoor School Learning Environments*. Retrieved from

<http://search.ebscohost.com.library.metu.edu.tr/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=ir00559a&AN=tuda.article.299912&site=eds-live&authtype=ip,uid>

Bowker, R., & Tearle, P. (2007). Gardening as a learning environment: A study of children's perceptions and understanding of school gardens as part of an international project. *Learning Environments Research, 10*(2), 83-100. doi:10.1007/s10984-007-9025-0

Bredenkamp, S., & Copple, C. (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. [electronic resource] : experiments by nature and design. Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology, 22*, 723-742.

Brown, M., & Heaton, S. (2015). Ko Ahau Te Awa Ko Te Awa Ko Ahau – I Am the River, and the River is me. *Experiencing the Outdoors, 49*-60. doi:10.1007/978-94-6209-944-9\_5

Brussoni, M., Olsen, L. L., Pike, I., & Sleet, D. A. (2012). Risky play and children's safety: Balancing priorities for optimal child development. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 9*(9), 3134-3148.

Burçak, F., (2018). *Determination of pre-school's outdoor environment quality with teacher's perceptions and use of outdoors in pre-schools*. (Unpublished master thesis), Hacettepe University, Ankara.

Bjørgen, K. (2016). Physical activity in light of affordances in outdoor environments: qualitative observation studies of 3–5 years olds in kindergarten. *SpringerPlus, 5*(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40064-016-2565-y>

Clements, R. (2004). An investigation of the status of outdoor play. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 5*(1), 68-80.

Cohen, D., & Crabtree, B. (2006). *Qualitative Research Guidelines Project*. Retrieved from <http://www.qualres.org/>

Copeland, K.A., Kendeigh, C.K., Saelens, B.E., Kalkwarf, J.H. & Sherman, N.S (2012). Physical activity in child-care centers: Do teachers hold the key to the playground? *Health Education Research*, 27 (1), 81–100. <https://doi.org/10.1093/her/cyr038>

Copple, C. & Bredekamp, S. (2009). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8*. Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions>.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (2nd Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage)

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research : planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Pearson.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Çelik, A. (2012). Okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında açık alan kullanımı: Kocaeli örneği. *Atatürk Üniversitesi Ziraat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 43(1), 79-88.

Çelik, E. Y., & Yüce, Z. (2019). Investigation of the Awareness and Habits of Secondary School Students about Cleanliness and Hygiene from Various Variables. *International Education Studies*, 12(4), 173–184.

Çetken, H. S. (2018). *An investigation of preschooler's play preferences regarding the design of outdoor play areas*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Middle East Technical University. Ankara.

Çetken, H. S., & Sevimli-Çelik, S. (2018). Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Dış Mekân Oyunlarına Karşı Bakış Açılarının İncelenmesi. *Kuramsal Eğitimbilim Dergisi*, 11(2), 318–341. <https://doi.org/10.30831/akukeg.379662>

Dancer, A (2012). *Pets in the Classroom: The Difference They Can Make*. Retrieved from [https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1253&context=education\\_ET\\_D\\_masters](https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1253&context=education_ET_D_masters)

Davies, D. (2004). *Child development: a practitioner's guide (2nd ed.)*. Guilford Press.

Davies, M. (1997). The teacher's role in the outdoor play: Preschool teachers' beliefs and practices. *Journal of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education*, 1, 10-20. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED408059.pdf>

De Souza, D. (2012). Learning and human development in Waldorf pedagogy and curriculum. *Encounter*, 25(4), 50-62. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272511092\\_Learning\\_and\\_development\\_in\\_Waldorf\\_pedagogy\\_and\\_curriculum](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272511092_Learning_and_development_in_Waldorf_pedagogy_and_curriculum)

Doğan, S. A., & Boz, M. (2019). An Investigation of Pre-school Teachers' Views and Practices About Pre-school Outdoor Play. *İlköğretim Online*, 18(2), 681-697. <https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2019.562033>

Dowdell, K., Gray, T., & Malone, K. (2011). Nature and its Influence on Children's Outdoor Play. *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education*, 15(2), 24. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf03400925>

Downe-Wamboldt, B. (1992). Content analysis: Method, applications, and issues. *Health Care For Women International*, 13(3), 313-321. doi:10.1080/07399339209516006

Düzenli, T., Yılmaz, S., & Tarakçı-Eren, E. (2018). Çocuklara anaokulu bahçelerinin sağladığı olanaklara yönelik bir araştırma. *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 11(57), 900-907. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17719/jisr.2018.2500>

Erbay, F., & Saltali, N. D. (2012). The place of play in six-year-olds' daily life and mothers' play perception. *KEFAD*, 13(2), 249-264

Ernst, J. (2007). Factors associated with K-12 teachers' use of environment-based education, *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 38(3), 15–32, doi:10.3200/JOEE.38.3.15-32

Ernst, J. (2014). Early Childhood Educators' Use of Natural Outdoor Settings as Learning Environments: An Exploratory Study of Beliefs, Practices, and Barriers. *Environmental Education Research* 20 (6): 735–752.

Ernst, J. (2018). Exploring Young Children's and Parents' Preferences for Outdoor Play Settings and Affinity toward Nature. *International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education*, 5(2), 30–45.

Eroğlu, B.S., (2018). *An evaluation of the forest school program in a state preschool in İstanbul*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Boğaziçi University, İstanbul.

Erşan, S. (2011). *Okul Öncesi Eğitim Kurumlarında Görev Yapan Öğretmenlerin İlgi Köşelerinde Serbest Oyun Etkinlikleri ile İlgili Görüş ve Uygulamalarının İncelenmesi*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Gazi University, Ankara

Etikan, I., Musa, A.S., Alkassim, S.R. (2016). Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1. doi:10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11

Falcini, U. (2014). 'Affordance Theory' - a valuable research tool in evaluating children's outdoor play environments. Retrieved from [http://www.academia.edu/9391491/\\_Affordance\\_Theory\\_a\\_valuable\\_research\\_tool\\_in\\_evaluating\\_children\\_s\\_out-door\\_play\\_environments](http://www.academia.edu/9391491/_Affordance_Theory_a_valuable_research_tool_in_evaluating_children_s_out-door_play_environments)

Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2016). *How to design and evaluate research in education*. Singapore: McGraw-Hill Education.

Franzoni, A.L.,& Assar,S. (2009). Student learning styles adaptation method based on teaching strategies and electronic media. *Educational Technology&Society*, 12(4), 15

Frost, J. L., & Norquist, T. (2007). The importance of play. *Recreation Management*, 8(5). Retrieved from <http://www.recmanagement-digital.com/recmanagement/200705/?pg=78>

Frost, J. (2010). A History of Children's Play and Play Environments. New York: Routledge, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203868652>

Frost, J. L., & Keyburn, D. (2012). Integrating schoolyards for play, work, and learning: Rediscovering nature. *Playground Magazine*, 13(3), 8-11.

Fjørtoft, I. (2004). Landscape as playscape: The effects of natural environments on children's play and motor development. *Children, Youth and Environments*, 14(2), 21-44.

Gibbs, R.G. (2007). *Analyzing qualitative data*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Goodling, B., (2016). *Exploring the Outdoors: A Multiple Case Study Examining Teacher Beliefs and Practices in Preschool Outdoor Play*. (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). Liberty University. Virginia. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/1300>

Gönen, M. & Saranlı, A., G. (2014). Okul öncesinde Kapalı ve Açık Hareket Alanlarının Yeterliliğinin Değerlendirilmesi: Başkent Ankara örneği. *Eğitim ve Öğretim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 3 (3), 409-419. Retrieved from <https://arastirmax.com/tr/system/files/dergiler/20625/makaleler/3/3/arastirmax-okul-oncesinde-kapali-acik-hareket-alaninin-yeterlilikinin-degerlendirilmesi-baskent-ankara-ornegi.pdf>

Graves, S. B., Gargiulo, R. M., Sluder, L. C., & Holmes, P. (1996). *Young children: An introduction to early childhood education*. St. Paul, MN: West.

Grove, C., Henderson, L., (2018). *Therapy dogs can help reduce student stress, anxiety and improve school attendance*. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/therapy-dogs-can-help-reduce-student-stress-anxiety-and-improve-school-attendance-93073>

Gülhan, M. (2019). *Play in early childhood education: An examination of teacher roles during free playtime*. (Unpublished master thesis). Middle East Technical University. Ankara.

Hammond, M. (2010). What is an affordance and can it help us understand the use of ICT in education? *Education and Information Technologies*, 15(3), 205–217. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-009-9106-z>

Härkönen, U. (2007). The *Bronfenbrenner ecological systems theory of human development*, Scientific Articles of V International Conference, pp. 1-17. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/3d4f/99b537bdd5b18745fdef084dc34b71978ffd.pdf>

Hartle, L. (1994). Outdoor play: A window on social-cognitive development. *Dimensions of early childhood*, 23, 27-3. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ499977>.

Heath, G. (2015). Re-Imagining the Outdoor Experience. *Experiencing the Outdoors*, 73-81. doi:10.1007/978-94-6209-944-9\_7

Heritage Council. (n.d.). Children and the Outdoors. Retrieved from [https://www.heritagencouncil.ie/content/files/children\\_%20outdoors\\_commissioned\\_report\\_26mb.pdf](https://www.heritagencouncil.ie/content/files/children_%20outdoors_commissioned_report_26mb.pdf)

Helen, M.(2012). *Influence of school playground safety on the participation of preschool children in outdoor activities in central division, naivasha district*, (Unpublished master thesis). University of Nairobi. Kenya

Herrington, S. (2008). *Perspectives from the ground: early childhood educators' perceptions of outdoor play spaces at child care centers*. Retrieved from [http://www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/18\\_2/18\\_2\\_03\\_PerspectivesFromGround.pdf](http://www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/18_2/18_2_03_PerspectivesFromGround.pdf).

Humberstone, B. (2015). Embodiment, Nature and Wellbeing. *Experiencing the Outdoors*, 61-72. doi:10.1007/978-94-6209-944-9\_6

Hunter, J., Syversen, K. B., Graves, C., & Bodensteiner, A. (2020). Balancing Outdoor Learning and Play: Adult Perspectives of Teacher Roles and Practice in an Outdoor Classroom. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 7(2), 34.

Huz, Ç., & Cevher-Kalburan, N. (2017). Eko-Okul Olan ve Olmayan Anaokullarının Bahçe Özellikleri ile Öğretmenlerin Bahçe Özellikleri ve Kullanımına İlişkin Görüşleri. *Ilkogretim Online*, 16(4), 1600–1620. <https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2017.342979>

Ihmeideh, F. M., & Al-Qaryouti, I. A. (2015). Exploring kindergarten teachers' views and roles regarding children's outdoor play environments in Oman. *Early Years*, 36(1), 81–96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2015.1077783>

Jambunathan, S., Burts, D. C., & Pierce, S. (2000). Comparisons of parenting attitudes among five ethnic groups in the United States. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 31(4), 395–406. <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcfs.31.4.395>

Jayasuriya, A., Williams, M., Edwards, T., & Tandon, P. (2016). Parents' Perceptions of Preschool Activities: Exploring Outdoor Play. *Early Education & Development*, 27(7), 1004–1017. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2016.1156989>

Johnson, E. S. (2008). Ecological Systems and Complexity Theory: Toward an Alternative Model of Accountability in Education. *Complicity. An International Journal of Complexity & Education*, 5(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.29173/cmplct8777>

Jung Yeh, C., Pal Singh, Y., & Singh, A. (2010). *Cross Cultural Differences in Parenting* Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274696963\\_Cross\\_Cultural\\_Differences\\_in\\_Parenting](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274696963_Cross_Cultural_Differences_in_Parenting)

Kaçan O.M, Halmatov, O., & Kartaltepe, M. (2017) Okul öncesi eğitim kurumları bahçelerinin incelenmesi. *Journal of Early Childhood Studies* 1(1).60-70. doi: 10.24130/eccd-jecs.196720171112

Kağıtçıbaşı, C. (2012). *Family, self and human development across cultures: theory and application*. Istanbul: Koc University Publishing

Kalburan, N. C. (2014). Denizli ilinde bulunan resmi ve özel anaokulu bahçelerinin karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenmesi. *Pamukkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 18, 99-113. Retrieved from <http://static.dergipark.org.tr/article-download/b621/c2b1/5256/imp-JA43CB77VF-0.pdf>

Kapelari, S. (2015). *Garden Learning: A Study on European Botanic Gardens' Collaborative Learning Processes*. London: Ubiquity Press.

Kernan, M. (2010). Outdoor affordances in early childhood education and care settings: Adults' and Children's Perspectives. *Children Youth and Environments*, 20(1), 152-177. doi: 10.7721/chlyoutenvi.20.1.0152

Kernan, M., & Devine, D. (2010). Being Confined within? Constructions of the Good Childhood and Outdoor Play in Early Childhood Education and Care Settings in Ireland. *Children & Society*, 24(5), 371-385. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1099-0860.2009.00249.x>

Kılıç, Z. (2013). *Anasının devam eden çocukların okul bahçesinde görmek istedikleri ortam özelliklerinin belirlenmesi*. (Unpublished master thesis). Ankara University, Ankara.

Kos, M., & Jerman, J. (2013). Provisions for outdoor play and learning in Slovene preschools. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 13(3), 189-205. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14729679.2013.769888>

Krippendorff, K. (2003). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Sage Publications. London

Lam, P. C. (2018). *Bridging Beliefs and Practices: A Study of Hong Kong Kindergarten Teachers' Perceptions of "Learning Through Play" and the Implementation of "Play" in Their Practices*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Northeastern University. Boston

Little, H. (2010). Relationship between parents' beliefs and their responses to children's risk-taking behaviour during outdoor play. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 8(3), 315-330. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X10368587>

Little, H. (2013). Mothers' beliefs about risk and risk-taking in children's outdoor play. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 15(1), 24-39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14729679.2013.842178>

Little, H. (2015). Mothers' beliefs about risk and risk-taking in children's outdoor play. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 15(1), 24–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14729679.2013.842178>

Loughran, S.B. (2008). The Importance of Teacher/Parent Partnerships: Preparing Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning*, 5(8). <https://doi.org/10.19030/tlc.v5i8.1239>

Longman. (2011). *Dictionary of Contemporary English*. England: Pearson Education Limited

Mart,M.& Bilton,H. (2014). A Comparision of the Perception of English and Turkish Early Years/Kindergarten Teachers to Outdoor Learning. *The Black Sea Journal of Social Science*, 6(10).pp.289-308

Mart, M., Alisinanoglu, F.& Kesicioğlu, O. S. (2015). An investigation of preschool teachers' use of school gardens in Turkey. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 8(38), 748-744.

Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler, Caroline Dean, Maja Sbahi Biehl & Anna Mellman (2018): Parents' beliefs about young children's play and nature experiences in Danish and US contexts, *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 19(1), 43-55, doi:10.1080/14729679.2018.1507829

Mcclintic, S., & Petty, K. (2015). Exploring Early Childhood Teachers' Beliefs and Practices About Preschool Outdoor Play: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 36(1), 24-43. doi:10.1080/10901027.2014.997844

McCullough, A., Ruehrdanz, A., Garthe, R., Hellman, C., & O'Haire, M., (2019) *Measuring the Social, Behavioral, and Academic Effects of Classroom Pets on Third and Fourth-Grade Students*. Retrieved from <https://www.apa-hai.org/human-animal-interaction/ahead-of-publication-abstracts/measuring-the-social-behavioral-and-academic-effects-of-classroom-pets-on-third-and-fourth-grade-students/>

McFarland, L., & Laird, S.G. (2018). Parents' and Early Childhood Educators' Attitudes and Practices in Relation to Children's Outdoor Risky Play. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 46(2), 159. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-017-0856-8>

Michek, S., Nováková, Z., & Menclová, L. (2015). Advantages and Disadvantages of Forest Kindergarten in Czech Republic. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 171, 738-744. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.186

Minik Tema. (n.d.). *Minik Tema Eğitim Programı*. Retrieved from <https://www.e-tema.org/program1.asp>

Mirrahimi, S., Tawil, N., Abdullah, N., Surat, M., & Usman, I. (2011). Developing Conducive Sustainable Outdoor Learning: The Impact of Natural environment on Learning, Social and Emotional Intelligence. *Procedia Engineering*, 20, 389-396. doi:10.1016/j.proeng.2011.11.181

MoNE. (2013). 36-72 Aylık çocuklar için okul öncesi eğitim programı (Early childhood education programme for 36-72 months old children). Ankara: Ministry of National Education.

Moore, R.C. (2014). *Nature play& learning places: Creating and managing places where children engage with nature*. Natural Learning Initiative and National Wildlife Federation. Retrieved from [https://natureplayandlearningplaces.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Nature-Play-and-Learning-Places\\_Executive-Summary\\_v.01.pdf](https://natureplayandlearningplaces.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Nature-Play-and-Learning-Places_Executive-Summary_v.01.pdf)

Morgan, S. C., Hamil ton, S. L., Bentley, M. L., & Myrie, S. (2009). Environmental Education in Botanic Gardens: Exploring Brooklyn Botanic Gardens Project Green Reach. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 40(4), 35-52. doi:10.3200/joe.40.4.35-52

Morrison, G. S. (2015). *Early Childhood Education Today*. Pearson Education Canada.

Nedovic, S., & Morrissey, A. (2013). Calm active and focused: Children's responses to an organic outdoor learning environment. *Learning Environments Research*, 16(2), 281-295. doi:10.1007/s10984-013-9127-9

Neuman, W. L. (2014). *Understanding research*. New York, NY: Pearson.

Okoruwa, T. (2017). *Outdoor Play For Children: Provision And Teachers' Perception*. Nigeria: Abeokuta. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/36651330/OUTDOOR\\_PLAY\\_FOR\\_CHILDREN\\_PROVISION\\_AND\\_TEACHERS\\_PERCEPTION](https://www.academia.edu/36651330/OUTDOOR_PLAY_FOR_CHILDREN_PROVISION_AND_TEACHERS_PERCEPTION)

Oksal, A. (2005). Perception of play in Turkish culture. *Paidéia (Ribeirão Preto)*, 15(30), 69–77. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-863X2005000100009>

Olgan, R., & Kahriman-Öztürk, D. (2011). An Investigation in the Playgrounds of Public and Private Preschools in Ankara. *Education & Science*, 36(161), 85–97.

Öztürk, A. (2009). Okulda Eğitimle Bütünleştirilmiş Mekân Dışı Eğitim. *Milli Eğitim*, 181, 131-145.

Palut, B. (2010). A Review on Parenting in The Mediterranean Countries. *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 35(2), 242-247.

Palmer, A (2016).A pleasant way of teaching the little ones to recognize flowers: instructional nature plays in early 20th century Britain. *Children's Literature in Education*. 48(4). 341-3544. DOI: 10.1007/s10583-016-9283-5

Parsons K. J. & Traunter J. (2019). *Muddy knees and muddy needs: parents perceptions of outdoor learning*. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337547318\\_Muddy\\_knees\\_and\\_muddy\\_needs\\_parents\\_perceptions\\_of\\_outdoor\\_learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337547318_Muddy_knees_and_muddy_needs_parents_perceptions_of_outdoor_learning)

Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Services Research*, 34(5), 1189-1208.

Phillips,H. (2017). *A Comparison of indoor and outdoor education in non-formal environmental education*. (Unpublished master thesis). Florida Gulf Coast University.

Ratcliffe, M. M. , Merrigan, K. A., Rogers, B. L., & Goldberg, J. P. (2009). The Effects of School Garden Experiences on Middle School-Aged Students' Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors Associated With Vegetable Consumption. *Health Promotion Practice*, 12(1), 36-43. doi:10.1177/1524839909349182

Renick, S. E. (2009). *Exploring Early Childhood Teacher's Beliefs and Practices About Preschool Outdoor Play: A Case Study* (master's thesis). Texas Woman's University.

Robertson, M. (2015). An Early Morning Walk. *Experiencing the Outdoors*, 1-12. doi:10.1007/978-94-6209-944-9\_1

Roulston, K. (2010). *Reflective interviewing: A guide to theory and practice*. London: SAGE Publications.

Rutgers. (2013). *Learning Through the Garden*. Retrieved from <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/fs1211/>

Sandseter, E.B.H., Cordovil, R., Hagen, T.L., & Lopes, F. (2020). Barriers for outdoor play in early childhood education and care (ECEC) institutions: Perception of risk in children's play among European parents and ECEC practitioners, *Child Care in Practice*, 26(2), 111-129.

Schilling, T., McOmber, K., Mabe, K., Beasley, B., Funkhouser, S., & Martinez, L. (2006). Promoting language development through movement. *Teaching Elementary Physical Education*, 17(6), 39-42.

Scrapstore, (2020). Who we are. Retrieved from <https://www.wiltshirescrapstore.org.uk/people/?v=ebe021079e5a>

Shahsavari, M., (2012). Evaluation of Jean-Jacques Rousseau View About the Foundations of Education, *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, 6 (7). 321-324, ISSN 1991-8178

Skinner, E. A., Chi, U., & As, T. L. (2014). *The Role of Motivation and Engagement in Garden-based Education for Science Learning in At-Risk Middle School Students: A Self-determination Theory Perspective*. Retrieved from <http://learning->

[gardens.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2018/01/Skinner-et-al\\_Chapter\\_Motivation-Engagement-Research.pdf](http://gardens.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2018/01/Skinner-et-al_Chapter_Motivation-Engagement-Research.pdf)

Sobel, D. (2016). *Nature preschools and forest kindergartens: The handbook for outdoor learning*. St Paul: Redleaf Press.

Speedlin, C. (2010). *Educators' attitudes toward outdoor classrooms and the cognitive benefits in children*. *environmental studies*. (undergraduate student theses). Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/envstudtheses/41>.

Sisman, E. E., Özyavuz, L. E. and M., & Erdinç, L. (2010). The Evaluation of the Playgrounds in Respect of Child Safety: Tekirdağ (Çocuk Güvenliği Açısından Çocuk Oyun Alanlarının Değerlendirilmesi). *Tekirdağ Ziraat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 7(2), 141-150

Şışman, E., & Gültürk, P. (2011). İlköğretim Okul Bahçelerinin Peyzaj Planlama ve Tasarım İlkeleri Açısından İncelenmesi: Tekirdağ Örneği. *Tekirdağ Ziraat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 8(3), 53-60. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/178400>

Tandon, P. S., Zhou, C., & Christakis, D. A. (2012). Frequency of parent supervised outdoor play of US preschool-aged children. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 166(8), 707-712. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273354232\\_Frequency\\_of\\_Parent-Supervised\\_Outdoor\\_Play\\_of\\_US\\_Preschool-Aged\\_Children](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273354232_Frequency_of_Parent-Supervised_Outdoor_Play_of_US_Preschool-Aged_Children)

Tarman, B., & Tarman, I. (2011). Teachers' involvement in children's play and social interaction. *Elementary Education Online*, 10(1), 325-337. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/1284202/Teachers\\_Involvement\\_in\\_Childrens\\_Play\\_and\\_Social\\_Interaction](https://www.academia.edu/1284202/Teachers_Involvement_in_Childrens_Play_and_Social_Interaction)

Tepebağ, D., (2017). *Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Okul Bahçesini Eğitsel Amaçlı Kullanımına Yönelik Görüşlerinin İncelenmesi*. (Unpublished master's thesis), Çukurova University, Adana.

Türkkahraman, M. (2012). The role of education in societal development. *Journal of Educational and Instructional Studies in the World*, 2(4), 38-41. Retrieved from <http://www.wjeis.org/FileUpload/ds217232/File/04.turkkahraman.pdf>

Undiyaundeye, F. (2014). Outdoor Play Environment in Early Childhood for Children. *European Journal of Social Sciences, Education and Research*, 1(1), 14-17. Retrieved from [http://journals.euser.org/files/articles/ejser\\_may\\_aug\\_14/florenceu.pdf](http://journals.euser.org/files/articles/ejser_may_aug_14/florenceu.pdf)

UNICEF. (2012). *Early Childhood Care and Education*. Retrieved from [https://www.unicef.org/End\\_Decade\\_Note\\_-\\_Education\\_for\\_All\\_new.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/End_Decade_Note_-_Education_for_All_new.pdf)

Ürey, M. & Çepni, S. (2015). Fen Temelli ve Disiplinlerarası Okul Bahçesi Programının Bazı Fen ve Teknoloji Dersi Kazanımları Üzerine Etkisinin Farklı Değişkenler Açısından Değerlendirilmesi. *Hacettepe University Journal of Education*. 30(2) 166-184. DOI: 10.19171/uuefd.37602

Van Campen, K. S., & Russell, S. T. (2010). Cultural differences in parenting practices: What Asian American families can teach us. *Research Link*, 2(1). Retrieved from [http://mcclellandinstitute.arizona.edu/sites/mcclellandinstitute.arizona.edu/files/ReseArchLink\\_2.1\\_Russell\\_AsianFam.pdf](http://mcclellandinstitute.arizona.edu/sites/mcclellandinstitute.arizona.edu/files/ReseArchLink_2.1_Russell_AsianFam.pdf)

Vandermaas-Peeler, M., Dean, C., Biehl, M. S., & Mellman, A. (2019). Parents' beliefs about young children's play and nature experiences in Danish and US contexts. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 19(1), 43-55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14729679.2018.1507829>

Vandenbroeck, M., Lenaerts, K. & Beblav ý. (2018). *Benefits of early childhood education and care and the conditions for obtaining them*. Retrieved from [http://eenee.org/dms/EENE/Analytical\\_Reports/EENE\\_AR32.pdf](http://eenee.org/dms/EENE/Analytical_Reports/EENE_AR32.pdf)

Valentine, G. & McKendrick, J. (1997). Children's outdoor play: Exploring parental concerns about children's safety and the changing nature of childhood. *Geoforum* 28(2), 219-235.

Waller, T., Sandseter, E. H., Wyver, S., Arlemalm-Hagser, E., & Maynard, T. (2010). The dynamics of early childhood spaces: opportunities for outdoor play? *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 18(4), 437-443.

Waters, J., & Maynard, T. (2010). What's so interesting outside? A study of child-initiated interaction with teachers in the natural outdoor environment. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 18(4), 473-483

Wattchow, B., & Higgins, P. (2013). Through Outdoor Education: A Sense of Place on Scotland's River Spey. *The Socio-ecological Educator*, 173-187. doi:10.1007/978-94-007-7167-3\_10

Wellhousen, K. (2002). *Outdoor play every day: Innovative concepts for early childhood*. Albany, NY: Delmar.

Wiseman, N., Harris, N., & Downes, N. (2019). Preschool children's preferences for sedentary activity relates to parent's restrictive rules around active outdoor play. *BMC Public Health*, 19(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7235-x>

Wood L. and Martin, K. (2010). *What makes a good play area for children? Centre for the Built Environment and Health*, The University of Western Australia. Retrieved June 03, 2020, from [https://www.web.uwa.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/1857467/What-makes-a-good-play-area-literature-summaryfeb2011.pdf](https://www.web.uwa.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1857467/What-makes-a-good-play-area-literature-summaryfeb2011.pdf)

Yalçın, F. (2015). *A cross-cultural study on outdoor play: parent and teacher perspective*. (Unpublished master's thesis). Middle East Technical University. Ankara.

Yavuzer, H. (1993). Ana-baba ve çocuk [Parents and child]. Istanbul: Remzi Publishing

Yıldırım, A. & Şimşek, H. (2006). *Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri*. Ankara: Seçkin Yayınevi

Yılmaz, S. & Bulut, Z. (2002). *Kentsel mekanlarda Oyun Alanları Planlama ve Tasarlama İlkeleri*. Retrieved from <http://e-dergi.atauni.edu.tr/index.php/zfd/article/viewFile/4989/4807>

Zask A., Van,E., Beurden, L., Barnett, L.O., Brooks & Dietrich. U.C., (2001). *Active school playgrounds-myth or reality? Results of the “move it groove it” Project*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11676580>.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: HUMAN SUBJECT ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



DUMLUKPINAR BULVARI 06800  
ÇANKAYA/ANKARA/TURKEY  
T: +90 312 210 22 91  
F: +90 312 210 79 59  
metu.edu.tr  
www.metu.edu.tr

Sayı: 28620816 / 61

20 Şubat 2019

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

— İlgic: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Serap Sevimli ÇELİK

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız *Melike KANDEMİR*'ın "Bir Diş Mekan Öğrenme Ortamı Olarak Okul bahçesi: Okul Öncesi Öğretmen ve Veli Görüşlerinin ve Uygulamalarının İncelenmesi" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve 052-ODTÜ-2019 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

— Saygılarımla bilgilerinize sunarız,

Prof. Dr. Tülin GENÇÖZ

Başkan

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL

Üye

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR

Üye

Prof. Dr. Yaşar KÖNDAKÇI (4.)

Üye

Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK

Üye

Doç. Dr. Pınar KAYGAN

Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ali Emre TURGUT

Üye

## APPENDIX B: VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION FORM FOR TEACHERS

### GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

Bu çalışma, ODTÜ Okul Öncesi Eğitimi Bölümü Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Melike Kandemir tarafından Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Serap Sevimli Çelik danışmanlığındaki yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Bu form sizin araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

**Bu Çalışmanın Amacı Nedir?** Çalışmanın amacı, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin ve velilerinin okul öncesi dönemindeki okul bahçesinin kullanımına yönelik görüşlerini ve okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin okul bahçesindeki uygulamalarını incelemektir.

**Bize Nasıl Yardımcı Olmanızı İsteyeceğiz?** Çalışmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz, sizden çalışmanın amacına yönelik olarak hazırlanan sorulardan oluşan bireysel görüşme uygulamasına katılımınız istenecektir. Ayrıca çalışmayı yürüten uygulayıcı sizinle birlikte belirlenmiş bir çizelge doğrultusunda öğretmeni olduğunuz sınıfın bahçe saatlerine gözlem amacıyla katılacaktır. Yapılan görüşmeler için daha sonra içerik analizi ile değerlendirilmek üzere cevaplarınızın ses kaydı alınacaktır. **Sizden Topladığımız Bilgileri Nasıl Kullanacağız?** Çalışmaya katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Çalışmada sizden kimlik veya kurum belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız tamamıyla gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacı tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Elde edilecek bilgiler sadece bilimsel amaçla ve araştırmacının yüksek lisans tezi için kullanılacak, isminiz ve kimlik bilgileriniz, hiçbir şekilde kimseyle paylaşılmayacaktır.

**Katılımınızla ilgili bilmeniz gerekenler:** Çalışma, genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular veya uygulamalar içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz çalışmayı yarında bırakıp çıkmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda çalışmayı uygulayan kişiye çalışmadan çıkmak istedığınızı söylemek yeterli olacaktır.

**Bu çalışmaya ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz** çalışmayı yürüten Okul Öncesi Eğitimi bölümü yüksek lisans öğrencisi ile (e-posta: [melike.kandemir@metu.edu.tr](mailto:melike.kandemir@metu.edu.tr)) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz. Bu çalışmaya katılımınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz.

***Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.***

(Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

İsim Soyad

Tarih

İmza

---/---/---

## APPENDIX C: VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION FORM FOR PARENTS

### GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

Bu çalışma, ODTÜ Okul Öncesi Eğitimi Bölümü Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Melike Kandemir tarafından Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Serap Sevimli Çelik danışmanlığında yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Bu form sizin araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

**Bu Çalışmanın Amacı Nedir?** Çalışmanın amacı, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin ve velilerinin okul öncesi dönemindeki okul bahçesinin kullanımına yönelik görüşlerini ve okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin okul bahçesindeki uygulamalarını incelemektir.

**Bize Nasıl Yardımcı Olmanızı İsteyeceğiz?** Çalışmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz, sizden çalışmaının amacına yönelik olarak hazırlanan sorulardan oluşan bireysel görüşme uygulamasına katılmanız istenecektir. Daha sonra içerik analizi ile değerlendirilmek üzere cevaplarınızın ses kaydı alınacaktır.

**Sizden Topladığımız Bilgileri Nasıl Kullanacağız?** Çalışmaya katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Çalışmada sizden kimlik veya kurum belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız tamamıyla gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacı tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Elde edilecek bilgiler sadece bilimsel amaçla ve araştırmacının yüksek lisans tezi için kullanılacak, sizin ve kimlik bilgileriniz, hiçbir şekilde kimsenin paylaşılmayacaktır.

**Katılımınızla ilgili bilmeniz gerekenler:** Çalışma, genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular veya uygulamalar içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz çalışmayı yanında bırakıp çıkmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda çalışmayı uygulayan kişiye çalışmadan çıkmak istediginizi söylemek yeterli olacaktır.

**Bu çalışmaya ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz** çalışmayı yürüten Okul Öncesi Eğitimi bölümünden yüksek lisans öğrencisi ile (e-posta: [melike.kandemir@metu.edu.tr](mailto:melike.kandemir@metu.edu.tr)) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz. Bu çalışmaya katılımınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz.

***Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.***

(Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

İsim Soyad

Tarih

İmza

---/---/---

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR TEACHERS

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Demografik Bilgi Formu:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>1. Cinsiyetiniz:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Kadın<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Erkek</p> <p><b>2. Yaşıınız:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 20-30 yaş<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 yaş<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 yaş<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> 50 yaş ve üzeri</p> <p><b>3. Mezun olduğunuz eğitim düzeyi:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lise<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Ön lisans<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Lisans<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Yüksek Lisans<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Doktora<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> Diğer:</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p><b>4. Meslekteki yılınız:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 yıl<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 yıl<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> 2-5 yıl<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 yıl<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> 10 yıldan fazla</p> <p><b>5. Grubunuzun yaşı aralığı:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 yaş<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 yaş<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 yaş<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> 4-5 yaş<br/> <input type="checkbox"/> 5-6 yaş</p> <p><b>6. Grubunuzdaki çocuk sayısı:</b></p> |
| <b>Görüşme Soruları:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>1.</b> Dış mekânda öğrenme ve oyun ile ilgili herhangi bir seminer ya da eğitime katıldınız mı? Eğer evet ise kısaca bahseder misiniz?</p> <p>a. Üniversitede bu konu ile ilgili veya bu konuya değinen bir ders ya da eğitim aldınız mı?</p> <p><b>2.</b> Dış mekânda öğrenme ve oyun ile ilgili düşünceleriniz nelerdir?</p> <p><b>3.</b> Okulunuzun bahçesini hangi sıklıkla kullanıyorsunuz?</p> <p>a. Bahçe de geçirdiğiniz süreyi yeterli buluyor musunuz? Nedenleriyle açıklar misiniz?</p> <p>b. Bahçeyi kullanma sıklığınız ve bahçe süreniz ile ilgili ailelerin yaklaşımları nelerdir?</p> <p>c. Dış mekâni kullanma sıklığınız ve orada geçirdiğiniz süre mevsim şartlarına göre değişiyor mu? Nedenleriyle açıklar misiniz?</p> <p>d. Dışarıda olduğunuz zamanlarda genelde ne tür etkinlikler</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

yapıyorsunuz? Bir gününüzdeki bahçe zamanınızı anlatır misiniz?

4. Okulunuzun bahçesini hangi amaçlarla kullanıyorsunuz?
5. Okulunuzun bahçesini kullanırken nelere dikkat edersiniz?
  - a. Bahçe etkinlikleri uygulama öncesi ve uygulama sırasında dikkat ettikleriniz nelerdir?
  - b. Okul bahçesinde kullandığınız öğrenme materyalleri (kitap, resim materyalleri, kukla, blok, vb.) var mı? Eğer varsa/yoksa kullanma/kullanmama amaçlarınız anlatır misiniz?
  - c. Bahçe zamanında okul bahçenizin en çok hangi bölümünü kullanıyorsunuz? (kum havuzu, açık alan, ekim alanı, bahçe oyun ekipmanlarının olduğu alan) Nedenleriyle açıklar misiniz?
  - d. Sizce bahçe vaktinde öğretmenin rolü (lider, gözlemci, oyun arkadaşı, vb.) nedir? Siz bahçe saatinde kendi rolünü nasıl tanımlarsınız?
  - e. Sizce bahçe saatinde öğretmenin ne gibi sorumlulukları vardır? Siz bahçe saatinde kendi sorumluluklarınızı nasıl tanımlarsınız?
  - f. Okul bahçesini kullanırken karşılaşığınız problemler var mıdır? Varsa nelerdir?
6. Sizce çocuklar için ideal bir okul bahçesi nasıl olmalıdır?
  - a. Sizce okul bahçesinde mutlaka olması gereken materyaller nelerdir? Bu materyallerin neden bulunması gerektiğini düşünüyorsunuz?
  - b. Okulunuzun bahçenizi değiştirmek isteseniz neleri değiştirmek isterdiniz?
7. Sizce okul bahçesinde uygulanan etkinlıkların çocukların gelişim sürecine ne gibi etkileri vardır?
8. Sizce okul bahçesinde uygulanan etkinlıkların çocukların öğrenme sürecine ne gibi etkileri vardır?
9. Bahçede uygulamalarınızda öğrencilerinize dair gözlemleriniz nelerdir?

## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PARENTS

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Demografik Bilgi Formu:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 1. Cinsiyetiniz:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Kadın<br><input type="checkbox"/> Erkek<br>2. Yaşınız:<br><input type="checkbox"/> 20-30 yaş<br><input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 yaş<br><input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 yaş<br><input type="checkbox"/> 50 yaş ve üzeri<br>3. Mezun olduğunuz eğitim düzeyi:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Lise<br><input type="checkbox"/> Önlisans<br><input type="checkbox"/> Lisans<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yüksek Lisans<br><input type="checkbox"/> Doktora<br><input type="checkbox"/> Diğer:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 4. Mesleğiniz:<br>5. Çalışma durumunuz:<br>6. Çocuğunuz kaç yaşında? Gün/Ay/Yıl olarak belirtiniz.<br>7. Kaç çocuğu var? Bu çocuk kaçinci çocukunuzdur?<br>8. Çocuğunuz kaç yıldır okul öncesi eğitimi alıyor? |
| <b>Görüşme Soruları:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 1. Dış mekânda öğrenme ve oyun ile ilgili neler düşünüyorsunuz?<br>2. Çocuğunuz için dış mekân olanağı var mı? Varsa neresidir?<br>3. Çocuğunuz okul saatleri dışında ne kadar süre dış mekânda/bahçede vakit geçiriyor? Hafta içi? Hafta sonu?<br>4. Çocuğunuzun bahçe ortamında geçirdiği zaman ile ilgili gözlemlerinizi nelerdir?<br>5. Çocuğunuzun okulundaki bahçe etkinlikleri hakkında neler biliyorsunuz?<br>6. Sizce çocuklar ne kadar sıklıkla okul bahçesine çıkartılmalıdır? Çocukların okul bahçesinde geçirdikleri süre mevsim şartlarına göre değişimeli midir? Nedenleriyle açıklar misiniz?<br>7. Sizce çocuklar için ideal bir okul bahçesi nasıl olmalıdır?<br>8. Çocuğunuzun okulu bahçesinde neleri değiştirmek isterdiniz?<br>9. Sizce okul bahçesinde uygulanan etkinliklerin çocukların gelişim sürecine ne gibi etkileri vardır?<br>10. Sizce okul bahçesinde uygulanan etkinliklerin çocukların öğrenme sürecine ne gibi etkileri vardır? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

## APPENDIX F: OBSERVATION FORM

|                                         |                    |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Observed Teachers:</b>               | <b>Season:</b>     |
| <b>The number of children:</b>          | <b>Weather:</b>    |
|                                         | <b>Time:</b>       |
| <b>Used Areas:</b>                      | <b>Activities:</b> |
| <b>Materials:</b>                       |                    |
| <b>Preparation Before Outdoor Time:</b> |                    |
| <b>Interaction and communication:</b>   |                    |

## APPENDIX G: OUTDOOR PRACTICES PHOTOS



### Photo 1

Children are collecting sticks and putting on sandbox's side.



### Photo 2

Children are discussing and ordering sticks from smallest to longest.



### Photo 3

Children are playing with sand and sand-play materials.



### Photo 4

Girl in blue skirt is digging sand with a shovel and she is putting her legs. She is trying to understand how deep she digs by saying sentences like "look my feet fit here" while talking with her

friends.



**Photo 5**

Children are digging the soil to plant bean seed. They are working with a real hoe so the teacher lets them dig with one hoe within turns in the botanic area while observing them in terms of safety.



**Photo 6**

Children are exploring plants in the garden while the teacher is leading them. The teacher is showing a flower and talking about flowers' features.



**Photo 7.1**

Children are exploring flowers during free time



**Photo 8**

Children are exploring flowers during free time



**Photo 9.1**

Two children collecting natural materials to make a kind of circle stack.



**Photo 9.2**

One of them is watering the stack.



**Photo 9.3**

A third child came and he is asking what they are doing.



**Photo 9.4**

The child is explaining with these sentences; "It is a transportation place. We put also water. If you want to go to another place you should put your hand like this (he is demonstrating in photo).

**Photo 10**

After outdoor time, the teacher let kids bring ice in the school's bathroom. She is saying to them "we will put ice in the sink to observe melting". Children also are watering ice while observing.

**Photo 11**

The teacher is allowing children to stand on a closed sandbox. Children are exploring and playing with ice and water on the box.

**Photo 12**

Children are exploring snow in the playground. The teacher is asking them to compare their footprint on snow.

**Photo 13**

Children are exploring ice during free time. They are putting water on ice.

**Photo 14**

Children are having outdoor time but the surface is muddy so the teacher asked them to wear galosh before going for an outdoor time to prevent shoes from getting dirty.

**Photo 15**

The teacher and children are looking for a worm in soil but just the teacher is digging to soil and said children to stay on the green carpet to prevent shoes from getting dirty.

**Photo 16.1**

The teacher is digging soil with a hoe to find and show a worm to children

**Photo 16.2**

The teacher is holding a worm to show children but she is not allowing children to touch the worm.



**Photo 17.1**

A child is exploring ice and water in the swing.



**Photo 17.2**

The child is observing water's movement in the swing while pushing the swing.



**Photo 18**

Children are playing with water by mixing water with sticks that they found on a closed sandbox.



**Photo 19.1**

Children are throwing dried walnuts that they collected from under the walnut tree, on closed sandbox after the teacher-directed them for the activity.

**Photo 19.2**

With children, the teacher is counting walnuts on a closed sandbox.

**Photo 20**

The teacher is showing and talking about sea animals on the school's wall, with children.

**Photo 21**

The teacher dug the soil to find potatoes. Children are looking for potatoes while the teacher is talking about their sizes. She is explaining which one is big and which one is small.

**Photo 22**

Children are playing with the school wall's stones that they found on the surface. They are picking and sharing stones.



**Photo23**

A child is touching snow on the slide after the teacher showed it.



**Photo 24**

During free time, children are touching an iced part on the surface. They are touching with hands and a hoe. They are talking about breaking the ice. The teacher is observing them a warning about being careful with hoe's usage.



**Photo 25**

The teacher is comparing green leaves and dried leaves by holding dried leaves next to others. She is asking children to say differences between dried leaves and green leaves.



**Photo 26**

A child is digging the soil to plant a tree in his free play. He is holding a branch that he found as the tree. The teacher is asking him what he is doing. He is saying that I am planting a strawberry

tree. The teacher is asking how strawberries grow in the group.



**Photo 27**

Children are mixing sand and water to make mud during sand play. Also, they are bringing leaves that they found for mud.



**Photo 28.1**

A child is trying to break the ice on the swing with the toy she brought from her home during free play.



**Photo 28.2**

The child is playing with water and her doll inside the swing during free play.

## APPENDIX H: TURKISH SUMMARY/ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

### GİRİŞ

#### Problem Durumu ve Çalışmanın Önemi

Okulun dış mekân ortamı çocukların gelişimsel ihtiyaçlarını karşılayan, onların daha özgür hissetmelerine olanak sağlayarak ilgi ve ihtiyaçları paralelinde çalışmalarına imkân sağlayan ve eğitim günü içerisinde etkinlik yapmak üzere uygun olan alanlardır (Bilton, 2010). Copple & Bredekamp (2009), çocukların içi öğrenme mekânlarında geçirilen zaman kadar okulların dış mekânlarında da vakit geçirilmesinin önemli olduğunu böylece gelişim ve öğrenme süreçlerinin daha verimli bir şekilde gerçekleşeceğini ifade etmektedirler. Dolayısıyla, okulların dış mekân ortamlarının gelişimsel olarak uygun materyaller içermesi ve uygun çeşitli etkinlikler yapılması gerekmektedir. Bu noktada öğretmenlerin bakış açısı dış mekân ortamlarını hazırlayan ve açık hava uygulamalarını yönlendiren kişiler olarak önemlidir. Öğretmen ve veli işbirliğinin sağlanmamış çocuklar için daha verimli eğitim süreci sağlar dolayısıyla hem öğretmenlerin hem de velilerin bakış açılarını incelemek dış mekâna ilişkin konularda önemli yer tutmaktadır (Yalçın, 2015).

Erken çocukluk eğitiminde dış mekân ve dış mekânın kullanımıyla ilgili Türkiye'de yürütülen değişik çalışmalar vardır. Bu çalışmalar dış mekân ile ilişkili olarak dış mekânda oyun, dış mekân ortamının kullanılması, dış mekân ortamının materyalleri, farklı okul dış mekân ortamlarının karşılaştırılması gibi farklı konulara odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışmalarдан bazıları okul dış mekan ortamlarının özellikleri ve kullanımına ilişkin yürütülmüştür (Alat, Akgümüş & Cavalı, 2012; Başbay, 2012; Burçak, 2018; Huz & Kalburan, 2017; Kaçan, Halmatov & Kartaltepe, 2017; Kılıç, 2013) bazı çalışmalar ise okul dış mekan ortamının yapısal özellikler ve materyallerini incelemek amacıyla yürütülmüştür (Düzenli, Yılmaz & Eren, 2018; Çelik, 2012; Gönen & Saranlı, 2014; Kalburan, 2014). Ayrıca çocukların dış mekân oyun süreçlerini incelemek amacıyla yürütülmüş çalışmalarda bulunmaktadır (Ata, 2016; Çetken, 2018; Yalçın, 2015).

Okul öncesi eğitimi alanında dış mekân odaklı çalışmalar Türkiye'de giderek yaygınlaşmaktadır. Diğer yandan ülkemizde yapılan bu çalışmalar veri toplanan çalışma grupları ve veri toplama araçları açısından incelendiğinde, genellikle okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin oluşturduğu aynı çalışma grubu ve görüşme formu ya da konuya ilişkin bir ölçme aracı yanı bir veri toplama aracı ile çalışmaların yürütüldüğü görülmektedir. Ayrıca bu

çalışmalar yapılacak olan çalışmalar için toplanacak olan verinin farklı kaynaklar kullanılarak çeşitlendirilmesini, üçgenleme metodundan yararlanılmasını, farklı çalışma gruplarının dâhil edilerek daha geniş bakış açılarına ulaşılmasını ve böylece çalışmanın konusunun daha detaylı araştırılacağını önermektedirler (Burçak, 2018; Tepebağ, 2017; Yalçın, 2015; Alat, Akgümüş & Cavalı, 2012; Kalburan, 2014; Ata, 2016; Çetken, 2018). Bu önermelere ek olarak bu çalışma ile okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin ve velilerin açık hava zamanının gelişim ve öğrenme süreçlerine olumlu katkılarma ilişkin farkındalık kazandırabilir. Bunun yanında öğretmenler uyguladıkları açık hava zamanlarında ve okulun dış mekânının kullanımında karşılaşılan sorunların çözümleri hakkında bilgi alabilirler. Dolayısıyla bu mevcut çalışmaya açık hava zamanına ilişkin öğretmenlerin bakış açısından yanı sıra velilerin bakış açısını da incelemek üzere dâhil edilmektedir. Kullanılan üçgenleme metodu ve iki farklı çalışma grubunun dâhil edilmesiyle, araştırmayı daha bütünlmiş, geniş ve detaylı bakış açısına ulaşarak erken çocukluk eğitiminde dış mekân konularına ilişkin katkıda bulunması beklenmektedir. Son olarak COVID-19 pandemisi ile erken çocukluk eğitimi alanında dış mekânların önemi daha fazla vurgulanmaya başlanmıştır. Sosyal mesafenin getirdiği zorunluluklar eğitimcilerin dış mekânda eğitim ve oyun hakkında farkındalık kazanmalarını gerektirmektedir. Bu durumda açık hava zamanı uygulamalarına ilişkin yapılan çalışmalar önem teşkil etmektedirler.

## **Araştırma Soruları**

Araştırma amaçlarına parallel olarak aşağıda belirtilen araştırma soruları sürece yön vermiştir;

1. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin açık hava zamanına ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir?
2. Velilerin açık hava zamanına ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir?
3. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin açık hava zamanındaki uygulamaları nelerdir?

## **Terimlerin Tanımları**

Çalışmada odaklanılan önemli terimlerin tanımları aşağıda verilmiştir;

*Erken Çocukluk Eğitimi:* 0-8 yaş arası çocukların eğitim, büyümeye ve gelişme süreçleri içeren alan (Morrison, 2015). Çalışmada iki ve altı yaş arası çocukların eğitim sürecine odaklanılmıştır.

*Dış Mekân Eğitimi:* Doğal ortamlarda gerçekleşen, işbirliği becerilerini destekleyen, doğa ile ilgili bütünlştirilmiş bilgilerin öğrenilmesine yardımcı olan öğrenme yaklaşımı (Mirrahimi,

Tawil, Abdullah, Surat & Usman, 2011). Bu çalışmada dış mekân terimi anaokullarında yer alan botanik bahçesi ve/veya oyun alanı gibi kış ımları ifade etmek amacıyla kullanılmıştır.

*Deneyimsel Öğrenme:* Deneyimlerin elde edilmesi ve dönüştürülmesi ile ortaya çıkan öğrenme sürecidir (Kolb&Kolb,2011)

*Dış Mekân Oyunu:* Dış mekânda gerçekleştirilen yapılandırılmış veya yapılandırılmamış oyun aktiviteleri (Frost & Keyburn, 2012)

*Açık Hava Zamanı:* Bu çalışmada açık hava zamanı terimi anaokullarının dış mekânlarında çocukların ve öğretmenler tarafından geçirilen süreyi ifade etmek amacıyla kullanılmıştır.

*Açık Hava Uygulamaları:* Bu çalışmada açık hava zamanı uygulamaları okulun açık hava zamanında oyun ve öğrenme amaçlı yapılan uygulamaları ifade etmek amacıyla kullanılmıştır.

*Veli:* Çocuğa bakım sağlayan ve çocuk ile biyolojik bağlantısı bulunan ya da bulunmayan kişi (Berger & Riojas-Cortez, 2015).

*Görüş:* “Bir şeyi anlama ya da düşünme yolu” (Longman, 2011, p.1953)

## YÖNTEM

### Araştırma Yöntemi

Bu araştırmmanın amaçları öğretmenlerin ve velilerin anaokullarında gerçekleştirilen açık hava zamanına ilişkin görüşlerini incelemek ve açık hava zamanının da yapılan uygulamaları ortaya koymaktır. Öğretmenlerin ve velilerin görüşlerine ve açık hava uygulamalarına ilişkin daha derin bilgiye sahip olmak ve daha geniş bir bakış açısı ulaşmak nedenleriyle nitel araştırma yöntemlerinin araştırmmanın yapısına daha uygun olacağı düşünülmüştür. Veri toplama sürecinde yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme, gözlem ve doküman analizi kullanılarak verinin zenginleştirilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Veri toplama araçları ilk olarak ilgili literatür gözden geçirilerek oluşturulmuş ve daha sonra erken çocukluk eğitimi alanında uzmanların görüşleri alınarak düzenlenmiştir.

Araştırmacının çalışma sürecinde bahsi geçen özel anaokulunda öğretmen olarak çalışması dolayısıyla örneklemeye erişilebilirlik ve araştırmaya ayrılmazı gerekilen süre düşünülerek kolaylıkla bulunabilen örneklemeye kullanılmıştır. Ankara'nın Çankaya ilçesinde bulunan özel anaokulunda görev yapan 12 öğretmen ve çocukların bu okulda öğrenim gören 35 veli çalışmaya gönüllü olarak katılmıştır. 3 veli dışında katılımcıların hepsinin cinsiyeti kadındır. Katılımcılar ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerin yanı sıra öğretmenler ve grupları açık hava zamanlarında toplamda 15 kez gözlemlenmiştir ve ayrıca gözlem süreçlerinin başlangıç ve bitiş tarihleri arasındaki (Şubat ve Haziran arası) aylık etkinlik planlarından okulun dış mekânını öğrenme alanı olarak kullanan planlar doküman analizi ile incelenmiştir. Öğretmenler (Teachers) T1, T2 ve T3 olarak, veliler (Parents) is P1,P2 ve P3 olarak kodlanmıştır.

### **Okul Ortamı ve Katılımcılar**

Çalışmanın verilerinin toplandığı ortam Ankara, Çankaya da bulunan ve dört yıl önce açılan özel bir anaokuludur. Gözlemlerin yapıldığı alan anaokulunda yer alan ve üç kısımdan oluşan dış mekândır. Oyun alanı olarak adlandırılan ve okulun ön tarafında yer alan kısımda iki salıncak ve bir kaydırak yer almaktadır. Ekme ve yetiştirme etkinliklerinin yapıldığı ve okulun yan tarafında yer alan kışım botanik bahçesi olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Okulun arka tarafında yer alan ve arka bahçe olarak adlandırılan kısımda ise kum havuzu ve ahşap piknik masası bulunmaktadır.

Okulda tam günlük eğitim akışı uygulanmakta olup, okul tarafından oluşturulan 24-72 aylık çocuklara yönelik müfredat uygulanmaktadır. Okulun genelinde toplamda 19 eleman çalışmakta olup, elemanlardan 14 tanesi okul öncesi öğretmenidir. Öğretmenlere ek olarak bir müdür, bir memur ve üç hizmet elemanı bulunmaktadır. Öğretmenler partnerli olarak çalışmakta olup, 2 öğretmen bir yaşı grubundan sorumludur. Okulda toplamda 7 farklı yaş grubu bulunmaktadır. Bu grupların dizilimi şu şekildedir; 24 ay (n=1), 24-36 ay (n=1), 36-48 ay (n=2), 48-60 ay (n=2) ve 60-72 ay (n=1). Yaş gruplarındaki sınıf mevcutları 7 çocuk ile 15 çocuk arasında değişmektedir. 36-48 ay yaş gruplarından bir tanesi araştırmacının öğretmen olarak görev yaptığı yaşı grubu olduğu için ve öğretmenlerden bir tanesi araştırmacının partner öğretmeni olduğu için çalışmadan çıkarılmıştır. Sonuç olarak çalışmaya 12 öğretmen gönüllü olarak katılmış ve araştırmacı 6 farklı yaşı grubunun okulun dış mekânında gerçekleştirdikleri açık hava uygulamaları gözlemlenmiştir.

## **Veri Toplama Araçları ve Süreci**

### *Görüşme Soruları*

Bu araştırmada kullanılan görüşme formu katılımcıların açık hava zamanına ilişkin görüşlerini inceleme amacıyla tasarlanmıştır. Araştırmaya katılan iki farklı katılımcı grubu olduğu için, görüşme formları grplara uygun olacak şekilde iki farklı şekilde hazırlanmıştır. İlk olarak alanla ilişkili literatürün incelenmesiyle tasarlanan daha sonra uzman görüşleriyle düzeltlenen yarı-yapilandırılmış görüşme formları iki kısımdan oluşmaktadır. Görüşme formunun ilk kısmında yer alan cinsiyet, yaş, eğitim düzeyi katılımcıların demografik bilgilerini öğrenmek amacıyla her iki formda da yer almaktadır.

Öğretmenler için ayrıca deneyim yılı, mezun oldukları alan, yaş gruplarındaki çocuk sayısı, dış mekân ile ilgili eğitim geçmişi soruları ve veliler için çocukların yaşı, çocukların kardeşi sayısı, kaç yıldır anaokuluna devam ettiği soruları demografik bilgilerin olduğu ilk kısmında sorulmuştur. İkinci kısmada açık hava zamanına yönelik görüşlerini öğrenmek amacıyla açık hava zamanının gelişim ve öğrenme süreçlerine etkileri, ideal dış mekân ortamı, okulun dış mekan ortamında yapmak istedikleri değişiklikler, açık hava zamanının sıklığı ve süresi, ideal olarak düşündükleri açık hava zamanının sıklığı ve süresi, açık hava zamanında dikkat edilen unsurlar, açık hava uygulamalarına yönelik açık uçlu sorular katılımcılara sorulmuştur.

### *Gözlem Formu*

Açık hava zamanında yapılan uygulamaları incelemek amacıyla oluşturulan gözlem formu alanla ilgili literatür incelenerek ve uzman görüşü alınarak oluşturulmuştur. Gözlem formu üç kısımdan oluşmaktadır. İlk bölüm gözlem alanı hakkında genel bilgiler edinmek amacıyla oluşturulmuş ve gözlemlenen öğretmenler, gözlemlenen çocuk sayısı, tarih ve gözlem süresi maddeleri yer almaktadır. Yapılan literatür taramasına, araştırma sorularına ve araştırma amaçlarına paralel olarak, formun ikinci kısmın da yapılan açık hava uygulamaları, uygulamalar sırasında kullanılan materyaller ve kullanılan dış mekân kısmı maddelerine yer verilmiştir. Formun son kısmında, uygulamalar sırasında çocuklar arasında ya da öğretmen ve çocuklar arasında geçen konuşmalar kaydedilmiştir. Gözlem formunun altında ayrıca araştırmacının gözlem ile ilgili yorumlarını yazdığı bir bölüm bulunmaktadır. Gözlem sırasında yazılan notlar, gözlem sonrasında en kısa sürede detaylandırılmıştır. Ayrıca araştırmacı gözlem verisini zenginleştirmek ve güçlendirmek amacıyla bazı gözlemlerde yapılan uygulamaların fotoğraflarını çekmiştir. Daha geçerli ve güvenilir gözlem verisi

toplamak amacıyla araştırmacı gözlemler sırasında katılımcı olmayan gözlemci rolünü üstlenmiştir.

#### *Döküman Analizi*

Bu nitel çalışmada toplanan veriyi çesitlendirmek ve zenginleştirmek amacıyla doküman analizi yöntemi kullanılan nitel veri toplama araçlarından birisidir. Araştırmacı gözlem yapılan sürenin (Şubat ile Haziran arası) aylık planlarını inceleyerek, planlarda okulun dış mekânını öğrenme ortamı olarak kullanılması yazılan planları incelemek üzere seçmiştir. Açık hava etkinlik planları literatür incelemesine göre önceden oluşturulmuş aylara göre dağılım, materyaller, etkinlik türleri ve odaklanılan konular olmak üzere dört kategoriye göre analizi yapılmıştır.

#### **Veri Analizi**

Görüşme sorularından, gözlemlerden ve doküman analizinden elde edilen veriler bu çalışmada kullanılmıştır. Toplanan verilerin, Creswell'in (2007) veri analizi aşamalarına göre analizi yapılmıştır. Veri analiz sürecinin ilk aşaması olarak ses kayıtlarının transkripsiyonu yapılmış ve gözlem formlarındaki veriler ile doküman analizi verileri bilgisayara geçirilerek, veriler düzenlenmiş ve organize edilmiştir. Düzenlenen veri araştırmacı tarafından birden fazla okunmuş ve sonra içerik analizi metodu kullanılarak ilk olarak kodlar daha sonra kategoriler ile temalar oluşturulmuştur. Geçerlilik e güvenilirliği desteklemek amacıyla veri analizi sürecinde Miles ve Huberman'ın (1994) kodlayıcılar arası güvenilirlik kullanılarak güvenilirlik katsayı hesaplanmıştır.

### **BULGULAR VE TARTIŞMA**

Bu çalışma ile elde edilen bulgular okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin ve velilerin okulda gerçekleştirilen açık hava zamanının çocukların gelişim ve öğrenme süreçleri üzerinde olumlu katkıları olduğunu düşündüğünü göstermektedir. Öğretmenlerin ve velilerin açık hava zamanına ilişkin olumlu bakış açılarına rağmen, açık hava zamanının detayları ile ilgili farklı bakış açılarına sahip oldukları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Öğretmenler okulun dış mekân ortamını çoğulukla çocukların enerji atmasını sağlamak, fiziksel gelişimlerini desteklemek ve temiz hava almalarını sağlamak amacıyla kullandıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Benzer sonuçlara Ata (2016) tarafından yapılan çalışmada

ulaşılmıştır. Bu çalışmada öğretmenler okullarda açık hava zamanında çocukların daha özgür hissétiklerini, temiz hava aldıklarını ve yaparak yaşarak öğrendiklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Tepebağ (2017) tarafından yürütülen bir çalışmada ise öğretmenler çocukların tüm gelişim alanlarını desteklemek, öğrenme sürecini kolaylaştırmak konusunda açık hava etkinliklerinin önemli olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Yürüttelen bu çalışmada ayrıca öğretmenlere göre açık hava zamanın da uygulama olarak çocuklar en çok serbest oyun oynamaktadır. Yapılan gözlemlerde de açık hava zamanında çoğunlukla çocukların serbest oyun oynadıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Burçak (2018) yaptığı çalışmada öğretmenlerin açık hava zamanında genellikle serbest oyun tercih ettilerini ve serbest oyuna kıyasla daha az matematik, müzik ve drama gibi etkinlikleri dış mekânda uyguladıklarına ulaşmıştır. Serbest oyun dışında yapılan uygulamaların ise yaş gruplarının gelişimsel özelliklerine göre değiştiği gözlemlenmiştir. 60-72 ay grubu bir yaprağı inceleyip yapraktan yola çıkarak öğretmenin yönlendirmesi ile yaprak ve ağaç çeşitleri üzerine beyin firtinası yaparken 24 ay grubu daha çok çiçek ve kar gibi materyallere dokunma ve koklama gibi duyu becerilerini geliştirecek uygulamalar yürütmektedirler. Bunun yanı sıra yapılan etkinlikler öğretmenlerin dış mekân eğitim geçmişlerine bağlı olarak da değişmektedir. Görüşmeler sırasında dış mekân eğitimi aldığı ifade eden öğretmenlerin uygulamalar sırasında daha fazla ve çeşitli duş mekân uygulamaları yürüttükleri gözlemlenmiştir.

Öğretmenler ile yapılan görüşmeler de çoğu öğretmen açık hava zamanı boyunca rollerinin oyun arkadaşı olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir fakat açık hava uygulamalarında genel olarak öğretmenlerin lider rolünü üstlendikleri gözlemlenmiştir. Alanda yapılan bir çok çalışma öğretmenlerin görüşmelerde dile getirdikleri rolleri ile pratikte rollerine ilişkin yapılan gözlemlerin tutarlı olmadığını ortaya koymuştur (Ihmeideh,& Al-Qaryouti, 2015; Erşan,2011; McClintic & Petty, 2015; Ernst, 2014; Gülhan,2019; Lam,2018). Ayrıca öğretmenler açık hava zamanında öğretmenlerin sorumluluklarını çoğunlukla güvenliği sağlamak olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Bu sonuç ile paralel olarak, araştırmacı öğretmenlerin açık hava zamanı uygulamalarında yaş gruplarının güvenliğini fiziksel müdahalelerden ziyade sözel uyarınlarla sağladıklarını gözlemlemiştir. Yalçın (2015) dış mekânda oyun hakkında yürüttüğü çalışmada öğretmenler dış mekân sürecinde kendi rollerini rehber ve oyun arkadaşı olarak tanımlamışlardır. Yapılan görüşmeler sırasında öğretmenler genel olarak okulun dış mekân ortamında çoğunlukla ön tarafta yer alan oyun alanının açık hava zamanında kullanıldığını ifade etselerde gözlemler sırasında dış mekân ortamının her alanının kullanıldığı gözlemlenmiştir.

Açık hava zamanına ilişkin genel görüşler incelediğinde velilerin çocukların gelişim süreçlerine daha çok odaklanırken öğretmenler etkili öğrenme sürecini vurgulamışlardır. Çocukların gelişim süreçlerine ek olarak açık hava zamanının yeme ve uyku alışkanlıklarını üzerindeki pozitif etkisi veliler tarafından görüşmelerde ifade edilmiştir. Ayrıca çocukların okula ilişkin aidiyet duygusunun gelişmesinde okulun dış mekânının önemli derecede etkili olduğu bazı veliler tarafından ifade edilmiştir. Velililerin çocukları ile geçirdikleri açık hava zamanına ilişkin yaptıkları gözlem genellikle çocukların sosyalleşmesi yönünde olduğu sonucuna yapılan görüşmelerle ulaşılmıştır. Çocukların öğrenme süreçleri açısından ise hem veliler hem de öğretmenler yaparak ve yaşarak öğrenmenin açık hava zamanı ile daha çok sağlandığını vurgulamışlardır. Öğretmenlerden farklı olarak ayrıca veliler çocukların çim biçme ve bitki sulama gibi bahçe ile ilgili işleri yaparak, sorumluluk bilinçlerinin daha çok geliştiğini ifade etmişlerdir.

İdeal bir dış mekân ortamında bulunması gereken unsurlardan en çok geniş alan, çimen yüzey, çeşitli doğal materyaller ve hayvanlar hem öğretmenler hem de veliler tarafından yapılan görüşmelerde ifade edilmiştir. Ayrıca veliler tarafından en çok su alanları ve ahşap oyun alanı materyalleri ideal dış mekân ortamı için söyleyenlerken öğretmenler en çok riskli oyun alanları, kış bahçesi ve dış mekâna özel tulum gibi kıyafetleri ideal dış mekân ortamları için vurgulamışlardır. İdeal dış mekân ortamının yanı sıra velilere ve öğretmenlere okulun dış mekan ortamında neleri değiştirmek istedikleri sorulmuştur. Botanik bahçesinin genişletilmesi, yüzeyim çimlendirilmesi ve oyun alanına daha çok materyal konulması veliler ve öğretmenler tarafından ortak olarak en çok ifade edilen unsurlardandır. Farklı cevaplar olarak ise veliler tarafından en çok botanik bahçesinin daha aktif kullanılması, kum havuzunun genişletilmesi ve su alanı eklenmesi unsurları ifade edilirken öğretmenler tarafından kış bahçesi yapılması, çocukların oluşturmuş olduğu alanlar, çamur havuzu ve müzik aletleri en çok belirtilen mevcut dış mekân ortamındaki yapılması istenilen değişiklikler arasındadır.

Öğretmenler tarafından veli görüşlerinin açık hava zamanı uygulamalarını, sıklığı ve süresini negatif olarak etkilediği belirtilmiştir. Huz, & Cevher-Kalburan (2017) tarafından yürütülen dış mekân kullanımına ilişkin bir çalışmada ise benzer sonuca ulaşarak veli endişelerinin öğretmenlerin açık hava uygulamalarını olumsuz bir şekilde etkilediğini ve iç mekânda daha fazla etkinlik uygulamaya yönlendirdiğine ulaşılmıştır. Velilerin hijyen endişesi açısından, öğretmenler çocukların ayakkabılarının kirlenmemesini isteyen velilerin olduğunu dile getirmiştirlerdir. Buna paralel olarak, bazı veliler görüşmeler sırasında çocukların ayakkabılarının kirlenmemesi açısından dış mekân yüzeyini çimen yüzey olmasını

istediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Görüşmelerin yanı sıra, araştırmacı aynı zamanda eğer dış mekânın yüzeyi çamurluysa, bazen çocukların dışarıya çıkmadan önce öğretmenlerinin yönlendirmesiyle galoş giyerek dışarıya çıktıklarını ve açık hava zamanı süresince galoş ile etkinlik yaptıklarını ya da oyun oynadıklarını gözlemlemiştir. Ayakkabıların çamur olmasını engellemek için bazen açık hava zamanında dış mekânın galoş giyerek kullanıldığını görüşmeler sırasında ifade eden veli ve öğretmenler olmuştur. Öğretmenler dış mekânda galoş giyemenin çocukların fiziksel becerilerini kısıtladığını düşünellerde kendilerini zorunlu hissettiklerini çünkü ayakkabıların çamur olması ile ilgili okulun idaresine veliler tarafından öğretmenlerin hijyen açısından çocukların yeteri kadar ilgilenmediği yönünde şikayetler yapıldığı dile getirilmiştir.

Velilerin hijyen açısından endişesi dış mekanı galoş giyerek kullanmasını yanısıra, açık hava zamanında dış mekan kısımlarının da kullanılmasını kısıtlamaktadır. Yapılan gözlemler sırasında dış mekan yüzeyinin çok çamurlu olduğu için grup öğretmenlerinin dışarıya çıkmadan önce hazırladıkları planı değiştirerek ve çamurlu alanların kullanılmasını engelleyerek, çocukların çamura basmayacağı şekilde dış mekanda sadece halı veya taş yüzeyleri kullandıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Hijyen ile ilgili olan endişenin aynı zamanda öğretmenlerin açık hava zamanı uygulamalarını da olumsuz şekilde etkilediği araştırmacı tarafından veri toplarken gözlemlenmiştir. Uygulamalar sırasında çamur ve toprak ile ilgili etkinliklerde genelde öğretmenin çocukların yerine daha aktif bir rol üstlenerek etkinlikleri yürüttükleri ve dolayısıyla çamur ve toprak ile yapılan etkinliklerde çocukların aktif olmasını kısıtlayarak onların yaparak ve yaşarak öğrenmelerini olumsuz yönde etkiledikleri gözlemlenmiştir. Bu gözlemlere ek olarak, ayrıca öğretmenlerin açık hava etkinlik planlarında yer alan çamur yapımı ile ilgili planları uygulamadıkları gözlemlenmiştir.

Velilerin çocukların hasta olmasıyla ilgili endişe genel olarak 24 ay ve 24-36 ay yaş gruplarının öğretmenleri tarafından ifade edilmiştir. Bu ifadeler veli görüşmelerinde verilen ifadeler ile paraleldir, özellikle velilerin mevsimlere göre ideal açık hava zamanı ile ilgili olan ifadeleri ile. Velilerin çoğu kış mevsiminde de çocukların için temiz hava almanın önemini ifade etseler de, görüşmeler sonunda velilerin ifadeleri analiz edildiğinde yaz mevsimine kıyasla kış mevsiminde çocukların daha az ve daha kısa sürelerle açık hava zamanı yapmaları istenildiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Veliler kış mevsiminde daha az ve kısa sürelerle açık hava zamanı yapılması isteklerinin nedenleri olarak kötü hava koşullarını ve çocukların hasta olma risklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Burçak (2018) ve Ata (2016) tarafından dış mekânlarda ilgili yapılan çalışmalarda da benzer sonuçlara ulaşılmıştır. Bu çalışmaların

sonuçlarına göre öğretmenler kötü hava koşullarını dış mekân kullanımını engelleyen unsurlardan biri olarak görmektedirler.

Açık hava zamanının daha az sıklıkla ve daha kısa süreyle yapılması isteğinin başka bir nedeni olarak veliler tarafından öğretmenlerin dış mekânda gruptaki tüm çocukların ilgilenebilmesinin, özellikle kiyafetlerini ve terleyip terlemediğini kontrol etme de öğretmenin zorlanabileceğini ifade etmişlerdir. Bu bakış açısı öğretmene ve öğretmenin yeterliliklerine güvensizliği göstermekle birlikte çocukların öz bakım becerilerini geliştirmelerini kısıtlamaktadır. Kos & Jerman (2013) tarafından açık hava zamanına ilişkin yapılan başka bir çalışmada ise velilerin dış mekânda oyuna karşı olumsuz bakış açıları sergileyerek çocukların dış mekâna uygun olmayan kiyafetlerle okula getiren velilerin olduğuna ulaşmışlardır. Küçük yaşı öğretmenlerinden bazıları velilerin çocukların hasta olması endişelerine ilişkin olarak açık hava zamanı uygulamalarında grubu ikiye böldüklerini, ailesi dışarıya çıkışmasını istemediği çocuklar ile bir öğretmenin içinde dururken diğer öğretmenin açık hava uygulamalarını gerçekleştirdiğini dile getirmiştir. Bu uygulamayı yapmayan öğretmenlerden biri ise velilerden böyle bir uygulama yapılması için istek geldiğini fakat açık hava zamanında gruptan ayrılarak içinde kalan çocuğun sosyal ve duygusal gelişiminin bu uygulama nedeniyle olumsuz etkileneceğini düşündüğü için, yaş grubunda böyle bir uygulamayı yapmadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin çoğu uyguladıkları açık hava zamanının yeterli olmadığını ve daha çok artırılması gerektiğini söylemişlerdir.

Çocukların güvenliğine ilişkin endişe bu nitel çalışmada hem veliler hem de öğretmenler tarafından söylemiştir. Katılımcılar ile yapılan görüşmeler de riskli oyun açık hava zamanında ilişkin ifade edilen konuydu. Öğretmenler açık hava zamanında çocukların riskli oyun için motive etmek isteseler de velilerin riskli oyunlarındaki endişelerinin onları bir ölçüde kısıtladıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Öğretmenlerin ifadelerine göre bu durum onların açık hava uygulamalarını etkilemektedir. Velilerin olumsuz bakış açılarından dolayı öğretmenlerin açık hava zamanının sıklığını azalttığı, süresini kısalttığı ve açık hava uygulamalarını çocuklar açısından daha çok kısıtlayacak şekilde değiştirdikleri ve sonuç olarak açık hava uygulamalarına kiyasla daha çok aktiviteleri iç mekânlarda yapmayı tercih ettikleri sonuçlarına toplanan veriler ile ulaşılmıştır. Goodling (2016) tarafından yapılan çalışma da benzer olarak öğretmenlerin çocukların oyun süreçlerine güvenlik endişelerinden kaynaklı müdahale ettiklerine ulaşmıştır ve Gülbahar (2019) tarafından yürütülen çalışmada öğretmenler velilerin oyun sürecinde güvenlik ile endişelerini dile getirmiştir. Velilerin açısından ise riskli oyun'un küçük yaşı grupları için uygun olmadığı en küçük yaşı gruplarının velileri tarafından ifade edilse de bazı veliler öğretmenlerin gözetiminde tırmalanma

materyalleri gibi materyalleri kullanarak riskli oyun oynanmasına olumlu baktıklarını ifade etmişlerdir.

Bu nitel çalışma ile öğretmenler açık hava zamanının çocukların gelişim ve öğrenme süreçleri üzerindeki faydalarnı dile getirseler de, yaş grupları ile birlikte uyguladıkları açık hava zamanlarının velilerin çeşitli endişeleri ve geri dönütleri ile olumsuz olarak etkilendiği ortaya çıkmıştır. Olumsuz hava koşulları, veli endişeleri ve güvenlik gibi engellerin yanı sıra okulun uygulamakta olduğu rotasyon planı olarak adlandırılan ve hangi grubun haftada kaç kere ve hangi sürelerle okulun dış mekânını kullanacağını gösteren plan öğretmenler tarafından dış mekâni kullanma açısından ifade edilen başka bir engel olarak ifade edilmiş. Bahsedilen rotasyon planına göre yaş grupları için hafta da iki kere 45 dakikalık sürelerle okulun dış mekânını kullanmak için rotasyonda yer ayrılmıştır. Bu sıklık ve süre öğretmenlerin ifadeleriyle yeterli olmayıp, daha çok artırılması gereklidir ve ayrıca bazı öğretmenler rotasyon planında yazmaya bile okulun dış mekânı uygun olursa yaş grupları ile açık hava zamanı yaptıklarını dile getirmişlerdir.

Yapılan doküman analizine göre aylık planlarda açık hava etkinlikleri iç mekânında yapılan etkinliklere göre daha az bulunmaktadır. Ayrıca incelenen aylık planlarda küçük yaş gruplarının (24 ay ve 24-36 ay) planlarında diğer yaş gruplarına kıyasla en çok açık hava etkinlik planı olduğuna, 60-72 ay grubunun aylık planlarında ise diğer yaş gruplarına kıyasla en az açık hava etkinlik planına yer verildiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu sonuç 60-72 yaş öğretmenlerinin iç mekân etkinliklerinin yoğunluğu ile ilgili ifadeleri ile paralellik göstermektedir. Bu grubun öğretmenlerine göre aylık planlarda yer alan iç mekân etkinliklerinin açık hava etkinliklerine göre daha fazla olması okulun dış mekânını kullanma açısından engellerden biridir. Yapılan gözlemlerde ise en az 60-72 yaş grubu açık hava zamanında gözlenebilmştir. Aynı zamanda açık hava etkinlik planları ile yapılan açık hava uygulamalarının gözlemleri karşılaştırıldığında planları uygulayan öğretmenlerin genel olarak bitki ve hayvan gibi dış mekânın doğal parçalarının incelenmesiyle ilgili planları yaş grupları ile uyguladıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Öğretmenler tarafından yönlendirilen açık hava uygulamaları genel olarak doğa inceleme odaklı olup yaş gruplarında çocukların kendi aralarında doğal materyalleri kullanarak oyun kurguladıkları araştırmacı tarafından gözlemlenmiştir. Çetken (2018) tarafından yapılan başka bir çalışmada ise çocukların dış mekân oyun sürecinde eğer ortamda doğal materyaller varsa çocukların bu materyalleri kullanarak gözlem yaptıkları ve oyun kurdukları gözlemlenmiştir. Yapılan gözlemlerde ayrıca öğretmenlerin genel olarak aylık planlardaki açık hava etkinliklerini takip ederek açık hava zamanın da uygulamak yerine açık hava zamanına çıktııkları zaman o an çocukların ve

ortamın uygunluğu göre olan ve daha önceden planlamadıkları etkinlikleri uyguladıkları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

## **SINIRLILIKLAR VE ÖNERİLER**

Çalışma da öğretmenlerin açık hava uygulamaları olarak çoğunlukla serbest oyun tercih ettikleri gözlenmiştir dolayısıyla okul öncesi öğretmenleri için verilen hizmet içi eğitim seminerlerinde dış mekân eğitimine ilişkin konuların yer olması öğretmenlerin açık hava zamanı uygulamalarını geliştirecektir. Bu önerİYE paralel olarak okul öncesi öğretmenliği lisans programlarına da dış mekânda eğitim ile ilgili ders eklenmesine okul öncesi öğretmen adaylarının konuya ilişkin farkındalıklarını destekleyebilir. Dış mekân ortamının fiziksel özelliklerinin etkili açık hava uygulamalarını sürdürmek için önemli olduğu bu çalışmanın sonuçları ile ortaya koyulmuştur dolayısıyla okul idarecilerinin bütçe ayırarak okulların dış mekânlarının çocukların gelişim alanlarına uygun olacak şekilde yapılandırmaları önem teşkil etmektedir. Velilerin bakış açılarının önemli derecede açık hava uygulamalarını etkilediği bu yürütülen nitel çalışma ile ulaşılan başka bir sonuctur. Bu noktada velilerin olumsuz bakış açılarını olumluya çevirmek ve öğretmenle açık hava uygulamalarına ilişkin işbirliklerini desteklemek amacıyla dış mekân eğitimi hakkında veli eğitim seminerlerinin düzenlenmesi katkıda bulunacaktır. Çalışma da iç mekân etkinliklerinin yoğunluğunun açık hava zamanını olumsuz olarak etkilediği sonucuna varılmıştır. Dolayısıyla hazırlanan aylık planlarda iç mekân ve açık hava etkinliklerinin çocukların gelişim özelliklerine ve ihtiyaçlarına göre dengeli bir şekilde hazırlanması gerekmektedir.

Yapılacak olan başka çalışmalar için örneklem içerisinde daha fazla erkek katılımcıların olması ya da öğretmen ve velilerin dışında okul idarecileri ile de çalışılarak yapılacak olan çalışmalar farklı bakış açıları getirebilir. Erkek katılımcıların çalışmaya dâhil edilmesi ile açık hava uygulamalarına ilişkin endişelerin cinsiyete göre incelemesi yapılabilir. Paralel olarak daha fazla katılımcı ile yürütülen nicel ya da karma metot çalışmalarla daha genelleyici sonuçlara ulaşılabilir. Daha farklı video ve fotoğraf gibi veri kaynakları da kullanılarak yapılan çalışmalarda toplanan veri zenginleştirilebilir. Bu çalışmada gözlemler iki mevsim için sürdürülmüştür. Yapılacak olan çalışmalarda bir yıl boyunca açık hava uygulamalarının gözlemlerinin sürdürülmesi ya da velilerin ve öğretmenlerin görüşlerinin karşılaşılması amacıyla çalışmanın yürütülmesi farklı sonuçlar sağlayabilir. Ayrıca farklı sosyal-kültürel yapıdaki bölgelerde yer alan özel ve devlet anaokullarının dış mekânlarına ilişkin çalışmalar yapılarak uygulamaların ve bakış açılarının farklılıklarını incelenebilir.

## APPENDIX I: THESIS PERMISSION FORM/ TEZ İZİN FORMU

### ENSTİTÜ / INSTITUTE

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Social Sciences

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Applied Mathematics

Enformatik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Informatics

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Marine Sciences

### YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : KANDEMİR  
Adı / Name : MELİKE  
Bölümü / Department : Eğitim Bilimleri, Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim / Early Childhood Education

**TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS** (İngilizce / English): Outdoor Time Practices in Early Childhood Education: Parent and Teacher Views/ Erken Çocukluk Eğitimi'nde Açık Hava Zamanı Uygulamaları: Öğretmen Ve Veli Görüşleri

**TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE:** Yüksek Lisans / Master  Doktora / PhD

1. **Tezin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılacaktır.** / Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide.
2. **Tez iki yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of two years. \*
3. **Tez altı ay süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work for period of six months. \*

\* Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu kararının basılı kopyası tezle birlikte kütüphaneye teslim edilecektir. / A copy of the decision of the Institute Administrative Committee will be delivered to the library together with the printed thesis.

Yazarın imzası / Signature .....

Tarih / Date .....

(Kütüphaneye teslim ettiğiniz tarih. Elle doldurulacaktır.)  
(Library submission date. Please fill out by hand.)

Tezin son sayfasıdır. / This is the last page of the thesis/dissertation.