

# Quality of Interactions Offered to Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers in Home-Based Childcares: An Exploratory Study.

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## INTRODUCTION

In early childhood education, high quality interactions promote children's development.

Interactions between educators and children are among the most influential processes for children's development and learning [2, 4, 9].

According to the *Teaching Through Interactions Framework*, high-quality interactions must be warm, meaningful, sensitive, and stimulating [10].

Age Group	Domain	Components
Infants	Responsive Caregiving (RC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relational Climate</li> <li>Teacher Sensitivity</li> <li>Facilitated Exploration</li> <li>Early Language Support</li> </ul>
	Emotional and Behavioral Support (EBS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive Climate</li> <li>Negative Climate</li> <li>Teacher Sensitivity</li> <li>Regard for Child Perspectives</li> <li>Behavior Guidance</li> </ul>
Preschoolers	Emotional Support (ES)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive Climate</li> <li>Negative Climate</li> <li>Teacher Sensitivity</li> <li>Regard for Child Perspectives</li> </ul>
	Classroom Organization (CO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behavior Management</li> <li>Productivity</li> <li>Instructional Learning Format</li> </ul>
Preschoolers	Instructional Support (IS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concept Development</li> <li>Quality of Feedback</li> <li>Language Modeling</li> </ul>
	Engaged Support for Learning (ESL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitation of Learning and Development</li> <li>Quality of Feedback</li> <li>Language Modeling</li> </ul>

Some studies indicate that the quality of interactions offered to 0–3-year-olds is lower than the one offered to 3-5 year-olds [10].

## RESEARCH AIM

Little is known about the nature of interactions in home-based childcares [1]. This presentation explores the variation in quality of interactions offered to infants, toddlers and preschoolers in home-based childcares.

## METHODS

From a larger research sample of 38 home-based childcares located in the Montreal metropolitan area (Quebec, Canada).

### Sample

- Selected all home-based childcares attended by 3 age group: infants, toddlers and preschoolers. (N = 10)

### Procedures

- Interactions in each childcare were videotaped for 3 hours during a single visit in the fall 2019 and were afterwards scored by research assistants.

### Instrument

- CLASS tool, versions **Infant** [6], **Toddler** [7] and **Pre-K** [8].
- Observers completed 6 observation cycles, alternating between versions of the tool as recommended by Teachstone [11] (observing : 15 to 20 minutes / scoring :10 minutes)

### Analysis plan

- Descriptive statistics of CLASS' domains for each HBC.
- T-Tests to compare a provider's scores across versions of the CLASS.
- Computation of a provider's quality of interactions mean score for the CLASS **Infant**, **Toddler** and **Pre-K**. T-Test to compare mean differences.



## RESULTS

Table 1. Domain Scores Across Versions of the CLASS (Paired Samples T-Test)

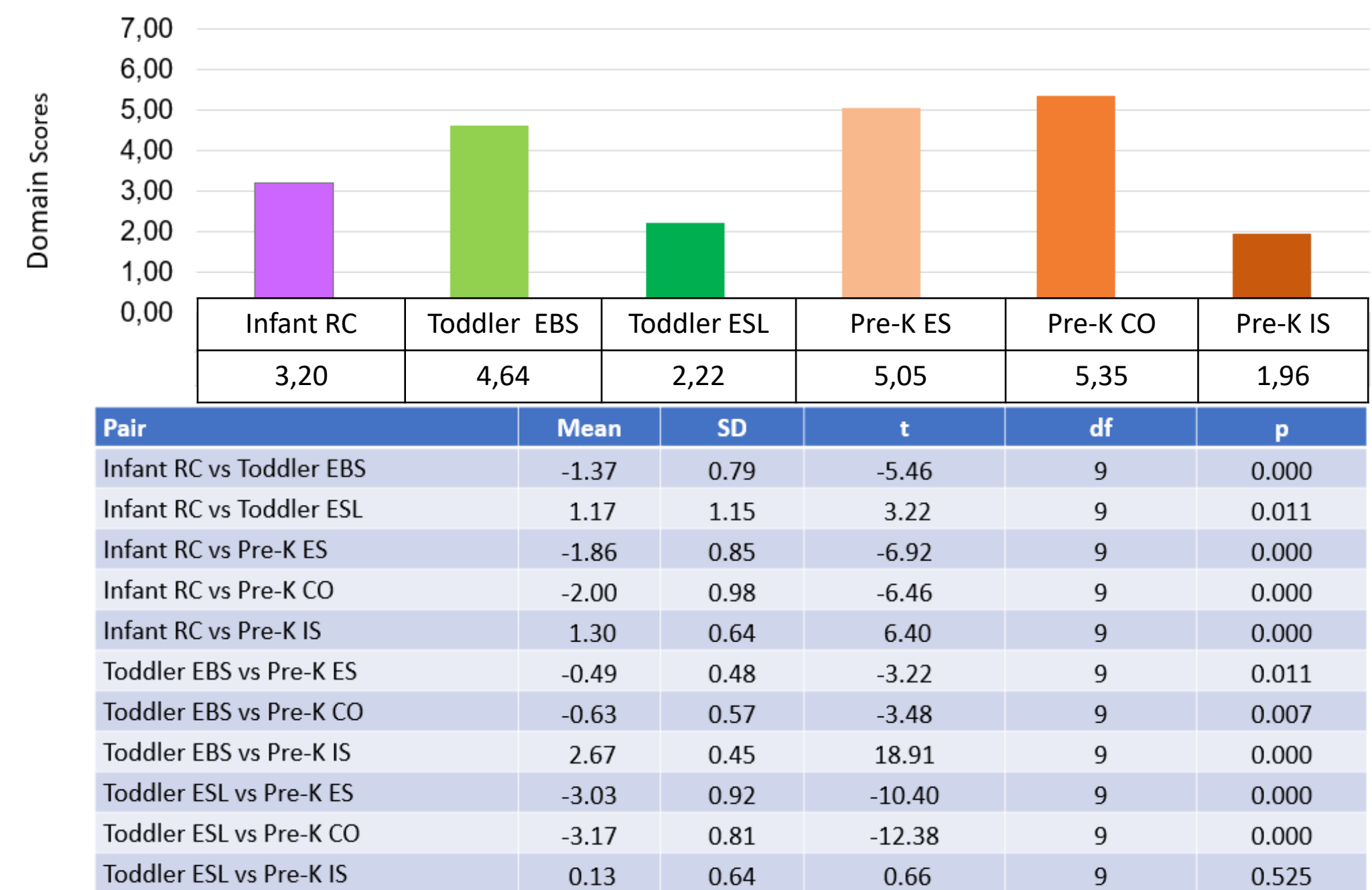
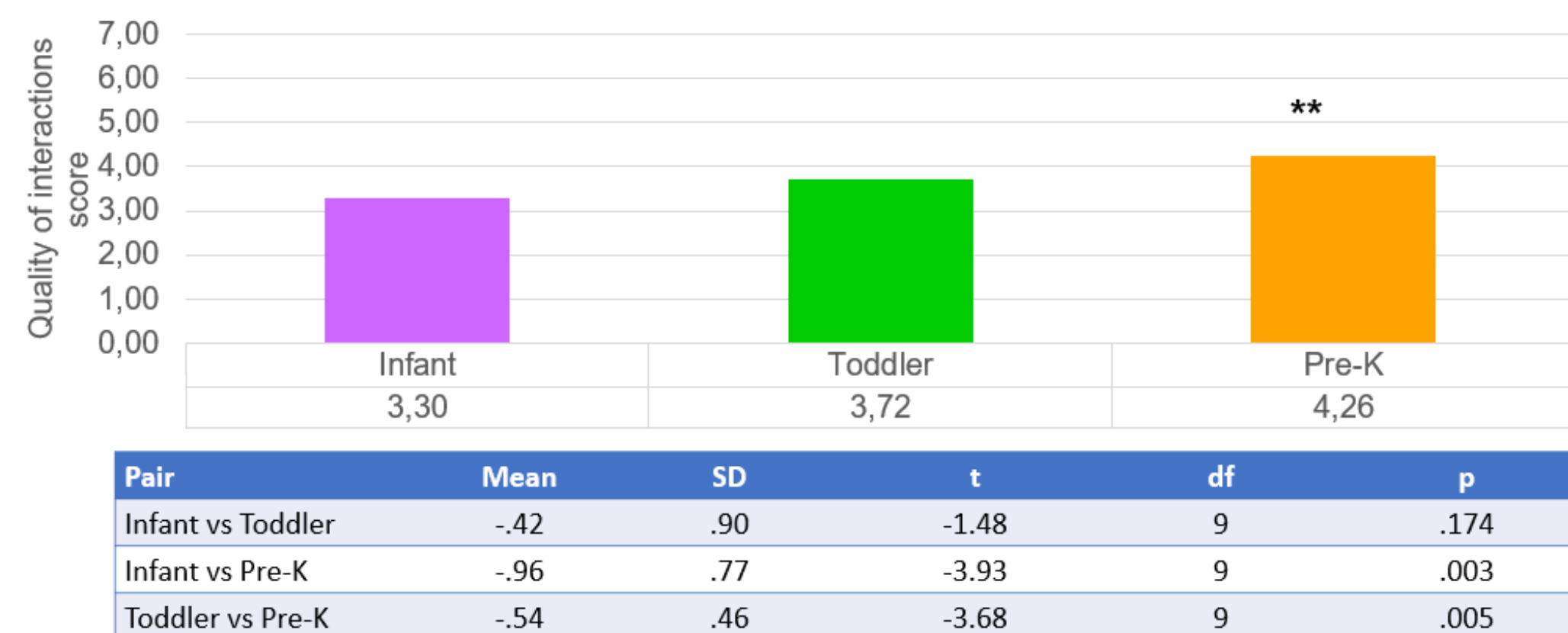


Table 2. Scores of Quality of Interactions Across Versions of the CLASS (Paired Samples T-Test)



## DISCUSSION

Quality of interactions offered to infants and toddlers was found to be lower than the one offered to preschoolers in HBC. Domains related to « emotional support » were of higher quality than those related to « educational support ».

### Implications for practice

- Initial and ongoing training of providers should address even more **interactions that support infant and toddler's development** including emotional attachment, social-emotional development frameworks, joint attention, and the role of teacher's own emotional regulation and toddler's self regulation [3].
- Educators tend to show higher levels of quality of interactions during play and lower level during routines [5]. Considering the importance of routines for infants and toddlers in home-based childcare, trainers should exemplify quality interactions throughout several **types of activity**: play, routines, transitions, outdoors, etc..
- The focus should also be on the **multiage context**, and how to support younger children while attending to older ones.
- In addition, dimensions related to educational support should be deepened in initial and ongoing training.

### Implications for research and policy

- More researches should be conducted to document the validity and reliability of the CLASS tool in the HBC context.
- For policies, research shows that higher qualifications are associated with higher quality for infants and toddlers [4].
- For monitoring system assessing quality in HBC, relying only on one version of the CLASS tool could end by hiding the quality levels offered to the youngest children. Therefore, **alternating** between the CLASS versions, as proposed by Teachstone, would offer a more nuanced portrait of quality.

