

Variation in Quality of Interactions Offered to Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers in Home-Based Childcares



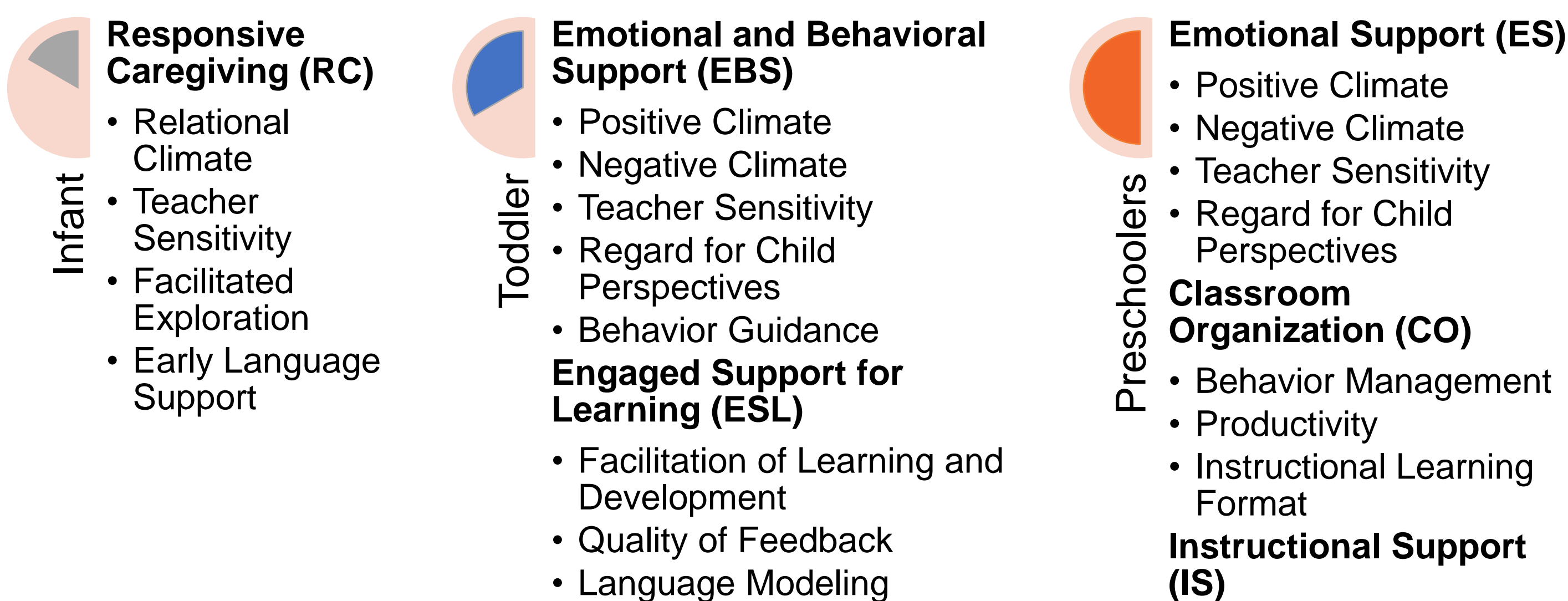
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INTRODUCTION

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].



Some studies indicate that the quality of interactions offered to 0–3-year-olds is lower than the one offered to groups of children aged 3-5 years [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 37 home-based childcares located in the Montreal metropolitan area (Quebec, Canada).

Sample

- The 10 home-based childcares attended by infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

Procedures

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

Instrument

- CLASS tool, versions Infant [6], Toddler [7] and Pre-K [8].
- Observers completed 6 observation cycles (observing 15 to 20 minutes, scoring 10 minutes), alternating between versions of the tool as recommended by Teachstone [12].

Analysis plan

- Descriptive statistics of CLASS' domains by childcare.
- 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. Descriptive Statistics

CLASS Domains Scores for the 10 Home-Based Childcares

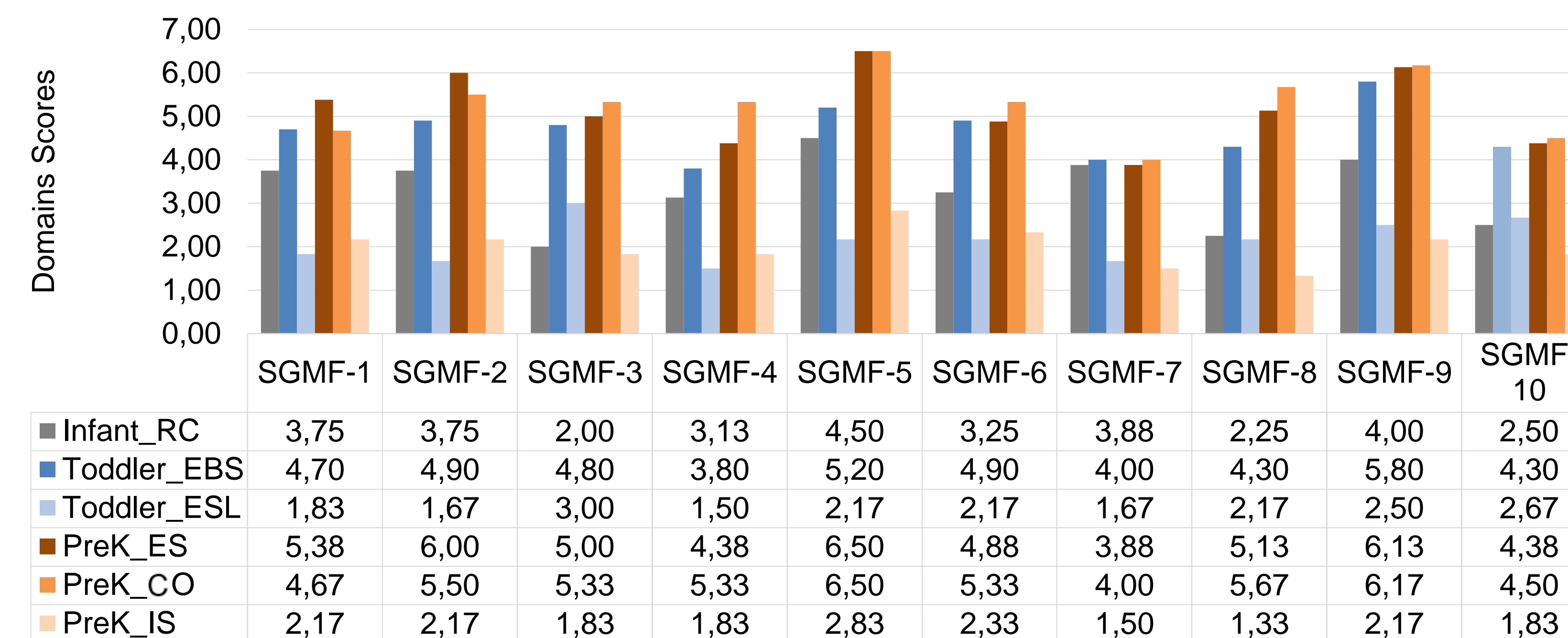
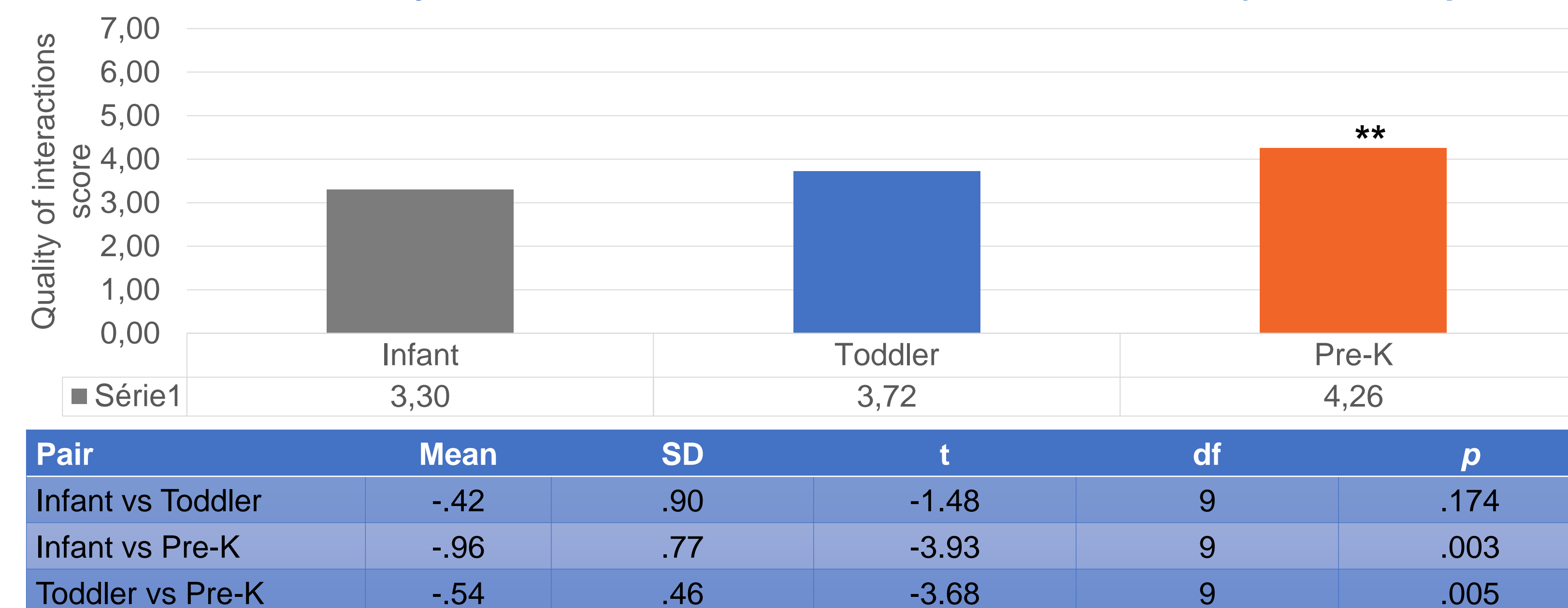


Table 2. Domains Scores Across Versions of the CLASS (Paired Samples T-Test)



Table 3. Scores of Quality of Interactions Across Versions of the CLASS (Paired Samples T-Test)



DISCUSSION

In home-based childcares, quality of interactions offered to infants and toddlers was found to be lower than the one offered to preschoolers. Also, domains related to « emotional support » were of higher quality than those related to « educational support ». Such results, found in previous researches [5], have implication for training, research and policy.

Training

- Initial and ongoing training of providers should address even more interactions that support infant and toddler' 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]. The focus should also be on the multiage context, and how to support younger children while attending to older ones. Higher qualifications are associated with higher process quality for infants and toddlers [4].
- In addition, dimensions related to educational support should be deepened in initial and ongoing training.

Research

- More researches should be conducted in home-based childcares, since the validity and reliability of the CLASS tool still need to be documented in this context.

Policy

- Many quality monitoring systems are starting to include home-based childcares and evaluate quality of interactions with the CLASS. In such context, Teachstone [12] recommend three options:
 - 1) Use the version corresponding to 50%+1 of children in the group;
 - 2) Choose the CLASS Toddler for the whole group;
 - 3) Alternate between the Infant, Toddler and Pre-K versions.
- Using a sole version as proposed in option 1 and 2 is the most pragmatic solution. However, based on our results, relying only on one version for the whole group could end by hiding the quality levels offered to the youngest children. Therefore, alternating as proposed in option 3 would offer a more nuanced portrait of quality.

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