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Emotion Coaching: An Academic Critique – Search Strategy and References

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Emotion Coaching: An Academic Critique – Search Strategy and References

This document outlines the search strategy and references underpinning the accompanying video critique on emotion coaching.

Systematic Search Strategy

Using the University of Southampton's DelphiS search platform, an initial scoping search was conducted, using the terms "emotion coaching" and "school*", to provide an outline of the breadth and type of literature available (Cherry et al., 2024). Results informed the following specific question: 'To what extent does the evidence base support the effectiveness of emotion coaching as a school-based intervention in improving children's social and emotional outcomes?' Table 1 shows the detailed specification of the review question considered under the PICO framework (Higgins et al., 2019).

Table 1

Search terms applied to PICO framework

PICO Term	Specification of the review question	Search terms with Boolean Operators
P = Population	School-based, capturing school-aged children in educational settings.	school* OR "whole school" OR "whole-school"
	Avoiding studies focused mainly on parents and within families	NOT TI (parent* OR mother* OR maternal)
I = Intervention	Use of emotion coaching as an intervention	"emotion coaching" OR ("emotion sociali*ation" AND model* AND respond* AND teach*)
C = Comparison	Not explicitly specified (implicit comparisons to usual school practice or other interventions)	
O = Outcome	Child and classroom related outcomes	behaviour OR emotion* OR regulation OR social* OR SEMH

A search was conducted on the 23rd of March 2026, using search terms derived from key elements of the research question: ("emotion coaching" OR ("emotion sociali*ation"

AND model* AND respond* AND teach*)) AND (school* OR "whole school" OR "whole-school") AND (behaviour OR emotion* OR regulation OR social* OR SEMH) NOT TI (parent* OR mother* OR maternal). Relevant databases searched were PsychINFO, Web of Science, ERIC, CINAHL, Scopus and Medline. Additional searches in international databases, including SCIELO and Global Index Medicus, yielded two records, but these were removed as duplicates. Grey literature was searched to identify all relevant evidence, as excluding it can threaten validity and result in publication bias (Connolly et al., 2018; Paez,2017). Forty-two records were found in ProQuest, of which one article was included in the final sample, while the others were excluded as duplicates, later publications, or during screening.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria are presented in Table 2. These did not include restrictions on publication date, nor specify study design or number of participants, due to the limited number of studies available.

Table 2

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

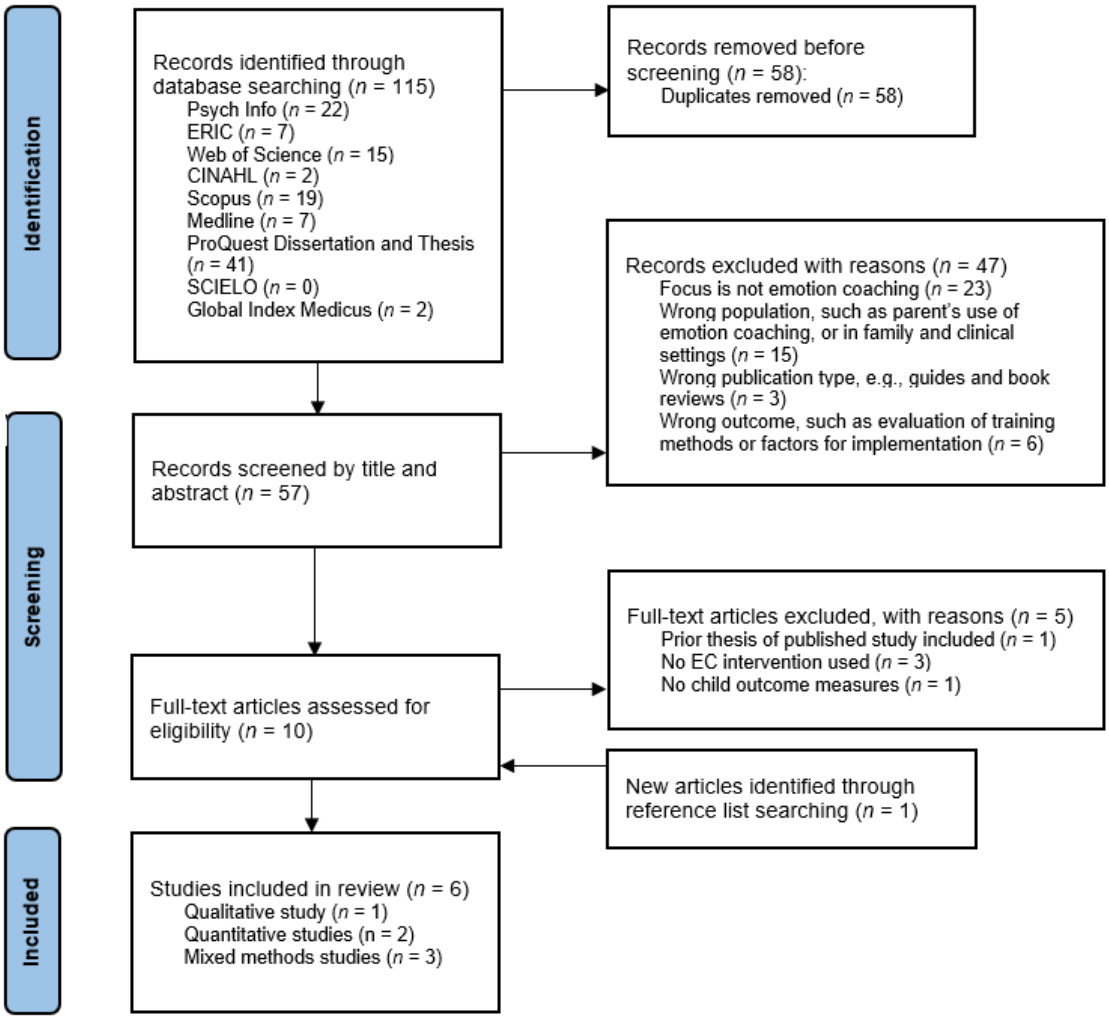
Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Studies conducted in schools and educational settings, including pre-schools, primary schools and secondary schools	Studies conducted outside educational settings, such as home and family contexts, youth justice settings, or clinical settings
	Studies focusing exclusively on post-school populations, such as higher education students
	Studies with parent only samples
Studies with a specific focus on emotion coaching as an intervention Studies that included emotion socialisation or relational practices where emotion coaching was a main feature of the intervention or whole school approach	Studies where emotion coaching is not the primary focus of the intervention or is only a minor component
Studies reporting child outcome measures, even if reported by school staff (e.g. behaviour, engagement, relationships, regulation, etc.)	Studies with no child outcome measures, including those focusing on teacher perceptions of implementation without assessing any effects on children or classrooms.

	Non-intervention studies, e.g., purely descriptive or observational studies
	Non-empirical literature, including reviews, theoretical/conceptual papers, opinion pieces, and practice guidance
	Duplicates, including earlier versions of the same work, i.e. thesis, or conference papers

A total of 115 records were identified across all database searches. 58 were removed as duplicates before screening. 57 were screened by title and abstract, with 47 excluded as per the exclusion criteria. Of the remaining 10 studies, 5 were excluded after their full text was assessed for eligibility. One new study was identified through reference list searching, leaving a total of 6 studies for review. The PRISMA (2020) flow diagram, showing this process, is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

PRISMA (2020) Flow Diagram



To support the synthesis of evidence and facilitate comparison, relevant data was extracted and presented in a data extraction table (Appendix A). Data extraction was completed before the quality assessment, as recommended by Cherry et al. (2024).

Finally, all included studies were quality assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT; Hong et al., 2018). Table 3 presents the scores for each study according to design; and the full appraisal table and explanation of the framework can be found in Appendix B.

Table 3

MMAT scores for included studies

	(Rose et al., 2015)	**(Gus et al., 2017)**	**(Rose et al., 2019)**	**(Bølstad et al., 2023)**	**(Kuru, 2023)**	**(Havighurst et al., 2024)**
Qualitative	4.5	4	4	-	5	-
Quantitative RCT	-	-	-	-	-	3.5
Quantitative non-randomized	2	-	2	3.5	-	-
Quantitative descriptive		4	-	-	-	-
Mixed methods	3.5	4	3.5	-	-	-
Average total	**3.33**	**4**	**3.17**	**-**	**-**	**-**
MMAT score = lowest component part	**2**	**4**	**2**	**3.5**	**5**	**3.5**

Therefore, it can be concluded that this review includes two relatively high-quality studies (Gus et al., 2017; Kuru, 2023), two with some limitations (Bølstad et al., 2023; Havighurst et al., 2024), and two that would be considered weak (Rose et al., 2015; 2019). However, the MMAT authors advise studies should not be excluded based on numerical scores and that qualitative judgements should be made (Hong et al., 2018).

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Appendices

Appendix A

Data Extraction Table

Author and year	Journal	Study Design	Geographical location and context	Sample Characteristics	Intervention / Conditions	Measures	Procedure summary	Results/ Findings	Suggested Implications
1. Rose et al. (2015)	*The European Journal of Social & Behavioural Sciences* *Multi-disciplinary, peer reviewed, open access journal*	Mixed Methods Pilot Study (incl. non-randomised, quasi-experimental Quant) No control	**UK** Rural, disadvantaged England Looks at community groups, but particularly education settings: secondary school, primary school, children's centres and youth centres Findings in this article focus on the school context. Secondary schools' of 1350 pupils	80% were school staff. Included 127 senior teachers, teachers, teaching assistants support staff. Children's service staff, early years practitioners, youth workers, youth mentors and some parents. Case studies for 6 children: four 13-year-old boys and two 15-year-old girls identified as at risk of exclusion.	EC training Including exploration of adults' meta emotion philosophy and perceptions of their own and children's emotions and behaviours. Cited in Rose et al., 2019 as the same AAS framework they implemented.	Including self-reported measures of adult meta-emotion philosophy, self-regulation, relational practice; and children's self-regulation and pro-social behaviour Pre-training and one academic year post-training Emotion Coaching Questionnaire Part 1: 60 items with a 5-point Likert scale response (n = 56) Part 2: refined to 41-items (n = 59) Exit questionnaire Measuring impact at one time point (n = 127) Benefits and challenges of EC Pre- and post-training behaviour indices, e.g., call outs, exclusions, consequences and regards (with one secondary school of 1350 pupils) **Qualitative** Free text responses in exit questionnaire Focus group discussions Including effectiveness of EC's impact on emotional and behavioural self-regulation Behavioural tracking of 6 case study secondary school students.	2 Parts over two years. Training phase 2 session workshops Participants trained in emotion coaching techniques Action research phase Including 4 network/booster meetings to share experiences and explore challenges Trained all staff in settings. Case studies of students.	Pupil behaviour In children improved pro-social behaviours. And social and emotional competencies. EC questionnaire: statistically significant increase in scores Exit Questionnaire Quantitative data: statistically significant increase in positive responses. Professional practice = 88% positive Adult self-regulation = 72% positive Behavioural impact on child = 92% positive Decreases in emotion dismissing Exit Questionnaire Qualitative data: Three themes: Professional practice – effective communication, less emotion dismissing, helps to deescalate. Adult self-regulation – less stress, positive wellbeing, calmer. Behavioural impact on child – self-awareness of emotions, regulation, behaviour, relationships. Pupil behaviour indices: Call-outs – mean decrease of 124 (large effect) Exclusions – mean decrease of 8.82 (large effect) Consequences – mean decrease of 158 (large effect) Rewards – mean decrease of 2022 (large effect) Case study children: Headteacher "Real improvement" Calmer, teachers help Overall reduces emotion dismissing, increase adult self-regulation, enhanced social relationships, reduction in disruptive behaviour and better regulation for children. Promotes social and emotional competencies in young people.	Support for relational models, reducing the need for both rewards and sanctions Can be successfully applied to all age groups (0 – 16) Challenges of time and competing demands to apply EC **Future research should include:** - RCTs - larger samples, cross-cultural and socio-economic representatives. - direct observations of EC. - Moderating role of age/development al stage.
2. Gus et al.	*The Open Family*	Mixed Methods	**UK**	Headteacher as gatekeeper.	EC – not from researchers - Already	Interviews with Headteacher.	Lead researcher interacted only with headteacher, who	Wellbeing of pupils, staff and families improved as well as children's ability to regulate emotions,	Improved children's ability to use speech to

Author and year	Journal	Study Design	Geographical location and context	Sample Characteristics	Intervention / Conditions	Measures	Procedure summary	Results/ Findings	Suggested Implications
(2017)	*Studies Journal* *Peer-reviewed internationa l journal*	Case study (incl. descriptive Quant) And Qualitative interviews Compared to national data	Independent day special school, age 5 – 11 For children experiencing SEMH issues with 35 on role All with EHCP 'No exclusion policy' 25% of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds	10 pupils tracked over 2 years. 9 staff completed exit questionnaire. Staff, pupils and parents. Gives an account of dropout, e.g. move away and deteriorating medical condition	implemented relational and EC as a whole school approach following an Attachment and Trauma training course. Training had been delivered by SLT and included ongoing support Approach cascaded to families through group training and communications.	Routine statutory school tracking data: behaviour an academic progress, restraints, staff absences. Friedman's Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) framework – is anyone better off? Staff used exit tool -Emotion Coaching Exit Questionnaire (ECEQ; Rose et al., 2015) – 24 items + semi-structured responses. Pupil structured reflection, supported by HT Family feedback: semi-structured telephone interviews, written school feedback	acted as gatekeeper and collected all data Quant before and after EC Two semi-structured interviews at one-year intervals with headteacher: 1, implementation of EC 2, used within families School data collected at 3 time points over one year. Themes identified in exit questionnaire	relationships, and the development of a shared emotional language and trust. Statistically significant decrease in physical restraints between T1 and T2 and maintained between T2 and T3. Statistically better than expected progress in reading and maths but not writing. "Pupil academic progress matched or was greater than that expected by national standards following the introduction of Emotion Coaching" p.100 Staff absenteeism decreased by 24% Staff felt that they had improved ability to support pupils, better unity with staff and self-efficacy. They also felt pupils were better able to regulate, communicate and accept praise. They also had improved emotional literacy, more trust in adults, and positive changes in school environment. Staff felt EC developed positive relationships and mutual trust. Pupil voice from 6 pupils: improved mood, teachers understood, better regulation and learning progress. Promoted trust and positive relationships between school and families – no blame language reduced feelings of blame and encouraged better communication and access to support Improved family life. Parents reported taking ore positive view of their child. Less shouting, better regulation of emotions noticed in children. Able to live "normal lives"	identify and describe emotions. Suggests can improve staff wellbeing and reduce stress and can contribute to tackling burnout. The ongoing support and training are an important feature. Parent groups and training can be beneficial **Future research should:** - challenges were not addressed. - EC in other types of provision - longitudinal studies - critical factors needed to implement EC
3. Rose et al. (2019)	*Pastoral Care in Education* *Peer reviewed* *Impact Factor (2024): 1.1* *5-Year Impact Factor: 1.3*	Mixed Methods (incl. Non-randomised Quant)	**UK** 40 schools from 2 Local Authorities	107 teachers and support staff 94 pupils age 5 - 16	The Attachment Aware Schools (AAS) project – including EC as universal and targeted support. Promotes attachment, relational approaches *including EC*	Part 1 – pupil outcomes from academic (reading, writing, and maths) and behavioural (SDQ) indices. Exclusions, sanctions and difficulties recorded pre- and post- intervention Part 2 – practitioner outcomes from post-intervention Exit Questionnaire. Online record of incidents with practitioner commentary	Over one year Measures taken at the end of terms 1–2 (Time 1) and after the intervention at the end of terms 3–5 (Time 2). Training phase Series of workshops on ASS model and strategies including whole school EC. Targeted interventions = Nurture and Theraplay	Pupil outcomes: Significant improvements in reading, writing and maths. Attainment gap closed Significant decrease in sanctions, exclusions, and overall difficulties. 67% of practitioners agreed training impacted behaviour, 32% maybe, and 0.78% disagreed. Qualitative comments: Practitioners said pupils improved self-regulation and behaviour, there was more learning and independent problem solving, were calmer and understood emotions.	"The utilisation of Emotion Coaching as an attachment-based strategy was the main, universal strategy adopted by all participating schools and appears to have been particularly effective" p.177 Proposes the ASS as a replicable and sustainable training programme that supports all pupils and

Author and year	Journal	Study Design	Geographical location and context	Sample Characteristics	Intervention / Conditions	Measures	Procedure summary	Results/ Findings	Suggested Implications
							Action research phase Setting based network and booster meetings	Practitioner outcomes: Adult self-regulation and, self-control, confidence in talking to children re emotions. 72% agreed training had a positive impact on practice, 25% maybe, and 2% disagreed. 74% agreed training had a positive impact on self-regulation, 22% maybe, and 4% disagreed. Increase in self-control, confidence in discussing emotional wellbeing. Qualitative comments: enables whole school, consistent approach, deescalates before crisis, staff help and support emotional wellbeing, trusting relationships, and less physical intervention. Felt they could manage challenge, and were more patient and calmer	particularly more vulnerable groups. Can be used as a whole school 'pupil-central' behaviour management approach. Relatively low-cost support for practitioner and pupil progress and wellbeing Findings can influence national policy and professional practice Warning about overwhelm of range of SEL policies and interventions, leading to unsustainability **Future research should:** - include controls - multiple contexts - more cross cultural and socio-economic representations - pupil voice
4. Bølstad et al. (2023)	*Mental Health & Prevention* *Peer reviewed* *Impact Factor: 2.4* *CiteScore: 2.8*	Pilot study Quasi-experimental with non-randomised control and pre- and post-measures Not random allocation (based on responses)	**Norway** 2 Primary schools From a low-to-middle socioeconomic district in Oslo	74 teachers (of children aged 6 to 10/grades 1 - 4) 54 teachers and school staff from 2 primary schools No significant differences between schools at baseline.	Tuning into Kids in School (TIK-S; Havighurst & Harley, 2007) (Australian programme) Based on emotion socialisation practices, and draws on attachment, emotion awareness, regulation and neurobiological theories. ES recognises Gottman's 5 steps of EC as a 'core component	Teacher questionnaires – EC and emotion dismissing Teachers completed the Coping with Children's Negative Emotion Scale (CCNES; Fabes, Eisenberg & Bernzweig, 1990) – self report questionnaire (translated) Classroom observations using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System K3 (CLASS; Pianta et al., 2008) – using the emotional support domain (includes 4 subscales of positive climate, negative climate, teacher sensitivity and regard for student perspectives)	Pre-post questionnaires and observations Group training Consisted of three parts: 1. seminar on ES and EC for all school staff 2. 2-hour group session for leaders 3. 6 x 1.5-hour group sessions for facilitators in schools. Delivery included exercises, handouts, roleplays and discussions 91% of core components were delivered.	"TIK-S contributed to improved skills in teacher's emotion socialisation and improved classroom climate" "Over 80% of the teachers reported that they believed emotion socialization would be helpful in school" p.4 87% believed the sessions were useful Significant decrease in teacher-reported emotion dismissing and distracting Non-significant increases in EC and empathy Increased positive classroom climate in intervention, but not control Distraction was highly correlated with dismissing, with strong effect.	The TIK-S programme / the right training teachers can become less emotionally dismissive and have positive impact on the classroom **Future research should:** - explore which elements of EC improved classroom climate - larger samples - larger effectiveness trial

Author and year	Journal	Study Design	Geographical location and context	Sample Characteristics	Intervention / Conditions	Measures	Procedure summary	Results/ Findings	Suggested Implications
					of ES and reduction of emotion dismissing Intervention and Waitlist control		Offered TIK-S supervision. Baseline data collected in August 2021 and post assessment data in Jan/Feb 2022	Facilitators reported high fidelity and good acceptability	
5. Kuru (2023)	*Journal of Education and Learning* *Multi-disciplinary, peer-reviewed, open-access international journal* *CiteScore: 0.8*	Qualitative case study of programme implementation Interviews and focus groups	**Turkey** Private preschool/kindergarten for ages 3-6.	34 female teachers, administrators and other staff members of private kindergarten Aged 31 - 40	Emotion-Friendly Kindergarten Transformation Program (EFKTP) Main focus on communication approach of EC Includes 8 phases over 32 weeks: *1. Awareness-Needs Identification-Information* *2. Education* *3. Starting Mentoring Processes* *4. Transformation in Communication* *5. Transformation in Environments* *6. In-Class and In-Home Educational Activities* *7. Application-Monitoring* *8. Process evaluation*	Focus group interview form: Measuring programmes overall impact. Semi-structured interview form – re effects of EFKTP on themselves, students and institution,	4 Focus groups with each group Semi-structured interviews with each participant – online, lasting 30 mins Included reliability analysis procedure Used descriptive and content analysis.	Enhances emotional repertoire, behaviour control, self-efficacy perception. Main themes, subthemes and codes Increases children's emotional repertoire and ability to recognise and express emotions "Their emotional repertory improved", "They began to recognize their feelings", "Their awareness of emotions increased", "Their ability to control their behaviours has increased", "Their undesirable behaviours in the classroom/home have decreased", "They began to notice each other's/others' feelings", "Their curiosity to learn increased" and "Their environmental awareness has increased". P.116 All said it had personal positive effects Guided their communication and reduced conflict situations Teachers established strong bonds with students	The programme enhances children's emotional repertoire and behavioural control Benefits of weekly and monthly mentoring sessions Suggests parental involvement is fundamental Training should make teachers should be made aware of their role in emotional development **Future research should:** - include long term effects studied
6. Havighurst et al. (2024)	*Early Education and Development* *Multi-disciplinary professional journal*	Randomised Control Trial (RCT)	**Norway** Pre-school 49 Norwegian Kindergarten (age 1 – 5) Intervention delivered through COVID lockdowns	548 = 48 leaders and 500 Early Childhood Workers (ECW) 786 parents (81% mothers) Suggests participants are representative of	Tuning into Kids for Kindergarten Teachers (TIK-KT) Including the 5 steps of EC (Australian programme) Derived from TIK, an evidence-	The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta et al., 2008) – tool measuring teacher strategies using three domains: *emotional support*, classroom organization, and instructional support. = independent ratings ECW and parent questionnaires:	3-hour briefing on project SLT received two-day TIK-KT training and how to conduct CLASS observations – 2 days Baseline observations made in other kindergartens, blind to	ECWs reported significant decrease in dismissing and increase in EC Intervention ECWs reported being less emotionally dismissive or distracting children from their emotions, as well as being more emotionally supportive, encouraging emotional expression, acknowledging emotions, and using emotion-focused responses. = small effect sizes No difference between conditions for problem-focused reactions	Support for building skills/this ES intervention improving the emotional quality of the kindergarten environment. Self-reported changes (similar to those found by Rose et al., 2015)

Author and year	Journal	Study Design	Geographical location and context	Sample Characteristics	Intervention / Conditions	Measures	Procedure summary	Results/ Findings	Suggested Implications
	Impact Factor (2024): 2.2 5-Year Impact Factor: 3			the Norwegian population.	based parenting programme Emotion coaching appropriate to age Aims to improve children's emotional competence, behaviour, and social functioning. Including 5 steps of emotion coaching and parent meta-emotions. Emphasis on staying close to children. Intervention and 12-month waitlist control	*Coping with Toddlers Negative Emotion Scale – Teacher Version (CTNES-T)* 12 hypothetical scenarios – measure consistent Gottman's EC Included 9 subscales of: distress reactions, granting the wish, problem-focused reactions, emotion-focused reactions, expressive encouragement, punitive reactions, minimising reactions, distraction and acknowledge feelings. Results from the CTNES EFA revealed minimising reactions and punitive reactions forming an emotion dismissive subscale. And emotion-focused reactions, expressive encouragement and the new subscale of acknowledging the child's feelings, formed an emotion coaching subscale. Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale Short Form (DERS-SF; Kaufman et al., 2015) – for ECW's own emotional awareness and regulation ECW and Parent report – 9 item measure using a 7-point Likert scale Parent report – Brief Problem Monitor (BPM) – monitoring child behaviours. 18 items 0 (not true) – 2 (very true) Measures of child emotions, functioning, classroom quality.	condition. 10% had second observer for interrater reliability ECWs competed baseline questionnaires 21% of parents invited completed questionnaires ECWs received one day training in ES skills and then supervision on EC - including roleplays on their own examples TIK-KT intervention delivered Leaders trained and delivered supervision – training from Havighurst Fortnightly supervision attended, including reviewing EC skills Leaders had a half-day booster to address challenges. (Covid lockdown for 6-8 weeks) 10 month follow up, 100% of leaders, 68% of ECWs, etc. Controls received intervention	Observations significantly increased positive climate, regard for student/child perspective, behaviour guidance (small effect), and teacher sensitivity (medium effect) TIK places emphasis on staying close to children when emotions occur and this was observed in the intervention group. No significant differences in negative climate, but these had low level baseline No change in parent reported child behaviour – baselines were low	Distraction might be the same as dismissing – discourage distraction, except in cases of high distress where the child might be removed from the trigger. Importance of Supervision: Suggests teachers need these opportunities to discuss and explore their interactions with children. **Future research should:** - Evaluate this intervention in other countries. - Use measures more sensitive to child functioning. - include longer follow ups.

Appendix B

Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT; Hong et al., 2018)

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	(Rose et al., 2015)		(Gus et al., 2017)		(Rose et al., 2019)		(Bølstad et al., 2023)		(Kuru, 2023)		(Havighurst et al., 2024)	
		Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments
Screening questions (for all types)	S1. Are there clear research questions?	Yes	*What is the effectiveness of using emotion coaching in professional practice within community settings?*	Yes	The overarching research question is, *how were pupils, staff, and family well-being affected as a result of the introduction of Emotion Coaching and can it be viewed as describing (how was well-being affected) a social process (Emotion Coaching) in a school (the subject)?*	In part	Like many applied education intervention studies, it is framed around an aim rather than clear research questions – however it could be reasonably inferred as, *what is the impact of the Attachment Aware Schools (AAS) intervention on pupil outcomes and practitioner practice?*	Yes	*Is TIK-S an acceptable and useful programme for teachers?* *Does TIK-S lead to improvements in staff emotion socialisation and observed emotional support in the classroom?*	Yes	Clear and explicit research questions: *1) What are the stakeholders' opinions about the work carried out during the EFKTP implementation processes?* *2) How do stakeholders evaluate the impact of the EFKTP application?*	Yes	Did the intervention lead to: *(1) improved early childcare worker's ES (increased emotion coaching; decreased emotion dismissiveness and emotion regulation difficulties);* *(2) improved emotional support in kindergarten classrooms;* *(3) improved child behavioral functioning.*
	S2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	Yes				Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
	Further appraisal may not be feasible or appropriate when the answer is 'No' or 'Can't tell' to one or both screening questions.												

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	(Rose et al., 2015)		(Gus et al., 2017)		(Rose et al., 2019)		(Bølstad et al., 2023)		(Kuru, 2023)		(Havighurst et al., 2024)	
		Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments
1. Qualitative	1.1. Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?	Yes	Free text response in questionnaire and focus group discussions on the topic	Yes	Free text response in questionnaire, interviews with staff, students and parents.	Yes	Yes, it gathers participant responses to their experience of the intervention			Yes	Explores perspectives and experiences		
	1.2. Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?	Yes		Yes	Quite a few different sources and data are integrated.	In part	Uses exit questionnaire. Lists it as being limited but adding insight to the study			Yes	Focus groups and interviews match the research question – including multiple stakeholder perspectives		
	1.3. Are the findings adequately derived from the data?	No	Themes mirror the areas used in the quantitative data, feels like data is shaped into these not derived from it	Yes		In part	They appear to be, but transparency is limited			Yes	Content and descriptive analysis identify themes and organise responses Qualitative findings seem particularly rigorous and transparent		
	1.4. Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?	Yes	Data seems to support conclusions	In part	The data relies on subjective accounts and may over focus on the positive effects – a limitation acknowledged by the authors	Yes				Yes	Interpretation is based on the data, using quotes to illustrate themes, etc.		
	1.5. Is there coherence	Yes		In part	Data sources, collection	Yes	Themes explore changes in			Yes	The study's main aims are reflected		

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	(Rose et al., 2015)		(Gus et al., 2017)		(Rose et al., 2019)		(Bølstad et al., 2023)		(Kuru, 2023)		(Havighurst et al., 2024)	
		Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments
	between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation?				methods, and interpretation are generally coherent. However, there is limited detail on how qualitative data was analysed and themes derived.		practice and school culture				in methods, analysis and interpretation		
2. Quantitative randomized controlled trials	2.1. Is randomization appropriately performed?											Yes	Study uses a cluster randomized controlled design.
	2.2. Are the groups comparable at baseline?											Yes	The groups were comparable at baseline as they were statistically assessed and no significant differences found.
	2.3. Are there complete outcome data?											No	Outcome data is missing. The study is transparent in reporting this and in some patterns of attrition.
	2.4. Are outcome assessors blinded to the intervention provided?											Yes	Assessors went to other schools and were not told the intervention status.

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		Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments
	2.5 Did the participants adhere to the assigned intervention ?											In part	The intervention was delivered and effects were measured, however fidelity was compromised by COVID restrictions which reduced attendance to supervision.
3. Quantitative non-randomized	3.1. Are the participants representative of the target population?	No	Does not describe how settings were recruited, final sample is not representative of the whole population, skewed towards schools rather than other community settings			No	Relatively small sample of schools took part as a purposive/convenience sample	No	Participants are not representative of the target population as only two schools were included – As a pilot study it was not designed for broad generalisation.				
	3.2. Are measurements appropriate regarding both the outcome and intervention (or exposure)?	Yes	There is justification for measures which have face validity			Yes	Mainly school based indices for academic and behavioural outcomes	Yes	Uses validated measures with relevant psychological constructs				
	3.3. Are there	No	The study may not have			No	The study may not have	Yes	The study explicitly				

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	(Rose et al., 2015)		(Gus et al., 2017)		(Rose et al., 2019)		(Bølstad et al., 2023)		(Kuru, 2023)		(Havighurst et al., 2024)	
		Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments
	complete outcome data?		complete outcome data, as it is not explicit that all participants provided outcome measures at all time points. Missing data is not fully detailed				complete outcome data, as it is not explicit that all participants provided outcome measures at all time points. Missing data is not fully detailed		acknowledges the missing data and reports the statistical methods that were used to correct this				
	3.4. Are the confounders accounted for in the design and analysis?	No	Confounders are not accounted for, but this is acknowledged in the study and is beyond the scope of this pilot study			No	No, as a real-world intervention this would be difficult to do	In part	Confounders are considered and acknowledged as a limitation of the pilot study design. Pre- and post- measures and baseline controls reduce bias.				
	3.5. During the study period, is the intervention administered (or exposure occurred) as intended?	Yes	The authors report on how the intervention is implemented, including limitations.			Yes	The authors report on how the intervention is implemented, including limitations.	Yes	The authors report on the extent to which the intervention was delivered, acknowledging minor limitations such as how individual teachers engaged.				
4. Quantitative descriptive	4.1. Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the			Yes	Uses a purposive sample appropriate to exploring the real-world, whole school context.								

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	(Rose et al., 2015)		(Gus et al., 2017)		(Rose et al., 2019)		(Bølstad et al., 2023)		(Kuru, 2023)		(Havighurst et al., 2024)	
		Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments
	research question?												
	4.2. Is the sample representative of the target population?			No	The sample is context specific with some unique features as acknowledged by the authors.								
	4.3. Are the measurements appropriate?			Yes	Relevant quant measures of school functioning, with high ecological validity								
	4.4. Is the risk of nonresponse bias low?			Yes	Nonresponse is likely to be low due to high engagement with whole school intervention and headteacher as gatekeeper.								
	4.5. Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?			Yes	Descriptive statistics and trends over time are analysed.								
5. Mixed methods	5.1. Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the	Yes	Suitable for pilot studies	Yes	Yes, this is addressed directly and supported in the cited literature.	Yes	Both arms of the study contribute to the research question.						

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	(Rose et al., 2015)		(Gus et al., 2017)		(Rose et al., 2019)		(Bølstad et al., 2023)		(Kuru, 2023)		(Havighurst et al., 2024)	
		Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments
	research question?												
	5.2. Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?	Yes	For example, some measures have quant and qual components. Qual components add insights to the quant findings.	Yes	Talks about how Qual and Quant enhanced triangulation of the data	Yes	"Illustrative quotes are presented in this paper as a means to triangulate the quantitative data and provide a more distinct indicator of the participants' voice."						
	5.3. Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?	Yes	The results of both arms of the study help to build a stronger understanding	In part	Interpretations are consistent across arms of the study and help to build the positive picture, but this lacks depth and rigor.	Yes	The authors refer to how they triangulate. However, this could be done more deeply.						
	5.4. Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?	No	Focuses on consistent and positive findings, there is not much in-depth discussion of unexpected, contradictory or negative results.	In part	The data is mainly interpreted as positive without mention of challenges or inconsistencies. The weaker writing improvements are also simplistically explained.	No	Focuses on consistent and positive findings, there is not much in-depth discussion of unexpected, contradictory or negative results. For example, participants who did not find the						

Category of study designs	Methodological quality criteria	(Rose et al., 2015)		(Gus et al., 2017)		(Rose et al., 2019)		(Bølstad et al., 2023)		(Kuru, 2023)		(Havighurst et al., 2024)	
		Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments	Met ?	Comments
							intervention useful.						
	5.5. Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?	In part	The Qualitative is stronger than the Quantitative. However, this doesn't necessarily mean the study is poor quality, because the appraisal tool may not suit real-world intervention research.	Yes	Both parts score 4/5	In part	The Qualitative is stronger than the Quantitative. However, this doesn't necessarily mean the study is poor quality, because the appraisal tool may not suit real-world intervention research.						
Total Score		2 (Average = 3.33)	For Mixed Methods: The average score across the 3 categories of design was 3.33. However, as the quality of a study according to the MMAT, is only as strong as it's weakest component the final rating is 2/5	4 (Average = 4)	All three categories of the mixed-methods design were rated 4/5; therefore, the overall MMAT quality rating is also 4/5	2 (Average = 3.17)	For Mixed Methods: The average score across the 3 categories of design was 3.17. However, as the quality of a study according to the MMAT, is only as strong as it's weakest component the final rating is 2/5	3.5		5		3.5	

Quality Appraisal and Explanation of Chosen Framework

(211 words)

Quality refers to the degree a study minimises bias and error in its design, conduct and analysis (Khan et al., 2003). Critical appraisal is an essential way of determining this quality as research is checked against set criteria. The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT; Hong et al., 2018) was chosen as it has been tested for interrater reliability (Hong et al., 2018) and includes an explanation for its content development (Crowe & Sheppard, 2011).

Four categories of design from the MMAT applied to the studies in this review: one study was assessed as a *Qualitative* study (Kuru, 2023); one study was assessed as *Non-randomised Quantitative* study (Bølstad et al., 2023); one study was assessed as a *Randomised Control Trial* study (Havighurst et al., 2024); and three studies as *Mixed Methods* studies – including two *Qualitative* and *Non-randomised Quantitative* studies (Rose et al., 2015; 2019) and one *Qualitative* and *Quantitative Descriptive* study (Gus et al., 2017).

The MMAT was the only critical appraisal tool found by Crowe and Sheppard (2011) to include mixed method studies and is recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2024) and the Cochrane Group (Noyes et al., 2018). Therefore, the MMAT is an appropriate appraisal tool to accommodate the varying designs across the final studies.