



# AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES OF CHILD PROTECTION IN THE DIVISION OF OZAMIZ CITY: BASIS FOR CHILD PROTECTION DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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**CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY**

We/I hereby attest to the originality of this research paper and have cited properly all the references used. We/I further commit that the final research study emanating from the approved proposal shall be original content. We/I also declare that the intellectual content of this BERF study is a product of our/my work.

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**APPROVAL SHEET**

In fulfilment of the requirements for the Basic Education Research Fund, this study entitled, "Awareness, Knowledge and Practices of Child Protection in the Division of Ozamiz City: Basis for Child Protection Development Plan" prepared and submitted by **Anthony P. Marollano** and **Arlene C. Via**, is hereby recommended for acceptance and approval.

  
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**PANEL OF EXAMINERS**

Approved in fulfilment of the requirements for Basic Education Research Agenda by the following Schools Division Research Committee (SDRC):

  
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## **Child Protection Policy Awareness, Knowledge and Practices of the Schools and Learning Centers in the Division of Ozamiz City**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Child protection policy plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the rights and well-being of children, yet the effectiveness of this policy largely depends on the awareness, knowledge, and practices of the individuals and institutions tasked with their implementation. Awareness encompasses understanding the core principles of child protection, the legal framework, and the importance of child rights. Knowledge about child protection policies involves a deeper comprehension of the specific guidelines, procedures, and legal obligations outlined in such policies. Child protection policy practices involve applying awareness and knowledge in real-world situations. It includes responding to cases of abuse, implementing preventive measures, and creating a supportive and protective environment for children. By increasing awareness, enhancing knowledge, and implementing effective practices, schools can foster environments where learners can grow and thrive in safety, ensuring that child protection policy is not just a set of rules but a tangible shield against harm, abuse, and neglect.

**Keywords:** *child abuse prevention, supportive environment, children's rights, school safety.*

### **I. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE**

A safe and motivating environment is key to facilitating student's learning. The Department of Education's mission is to "protect and promote the right of every Filipino to quality, equitable, culture-based and complete basic education where students learn in a child-friendly, gender-sensitive and motivating environment." (Department of Education., 2013)

The 1987 Philippine Constitution mandates that all educational institutions shall instill nationalism and patriotism, promote love of humanity, respect the rights of others, value the role of national heroes in the historical advancement of the country, teach the duties and rights of

every citizen, strengthen spiritual and ethical values, promote personal character and moral discipline, reinforce creative and critical thinking, broaden scientific and technological knowledge, and promote vocational efficiency.

Further, the CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child) aims to protect children from mental or physical violence, abuse and injury, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment and exploitation, and sexual abuse.

In collaboration with its partners and stakeholders, the Department of Education took measures to ensure that all schools are conducive to children's education. One is the Child Protection Policy stipulated in DO 40, s 2012. DepEd Order provides special protection to children severely endangered or threatened by events that affect their normal life development and circumstances beyond their control and assists the concerned agencies in their rehabilitation. It also aims to ensure such protection from all types of abuse and exploitation and care as is necessary for the child's well-being, taking into account the primary rights and duties of parents, legal guardians, or other individuals who are legally responsible and exercise custody over the child. DepEd recognizes the participatory rights of the child in the formulation and implementation of policies and all proceedings affecting them, whether they be victims or aggressors, either directly or through a representative.

Countless stories (reported and unreported) of children being bullied, abused and maltreated inside or outside the school premises. Child maltreatment in all its forms has significant negative impacts on children's development, current and future educational performance and emotional well-being (Foster et al. 2017). On one hand, these result in high absenteeism, teenage pregnancy, dropouts, and poor academic performance. Conversely, Children will learn better and be more productive in a school environment free from threats to their young lives (Henrich et al., 2004). As such, schools must promote child protection inside their premises effectively.

The Division of Ozamiz City has long been advocating the Child Protection Policy. Numerous advocacies on this have been initiated and implemented with other external

stakeholders. Despite training, workshop seminars, and capacity building, several child abuse cases (both reported and unreported) were still in the division.

The discussion above necessitates the researchers to look into the schools implementing the Child Protection Policy. Specifically, the team will report how far the school cascaded the CPC to the teaching and non-teaching personnel and the students. The team will also look into the schools' CPC practices, and lastly, the team will document the common violations of Child Protection in the Division of Ozamiz City. The findings will help craft this Division's comprehensive Child Protection Development Plan.

## **II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Last May 14, 2012, the Philippines' Department of Education issued Order No. 40, s. 2012, entitled DepEd Child Protection Policy. The order mandates concerned individuals the policy and guidelines on protecting school children against abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other forms of abuse. This policy aims to safeguard the welfare of school children from all forms of violence. (Department of Education, 2012).

The 30-page document contains 26 sections, which particularly present a detailed discussion of the policy, with initial reference to the 1987 Constitution; "The State shall defend the right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development." With this comes one of the main thrusts of the Philippines' Education Department in partnership with all stakeholders: an assurance that schools are conducive to children's learning.

Numerous research on implementing Child Protection has been conducted, showing interesting results. Munger and Markstrom (2019) found that school professionals lack knowledge of domestic violence ( for example, child abuse). A research paper concluded that students and practitioners must cross the complex relationship between family support and child

protection. Every child is born with innate basic rights stipulated by laws. However, adults disregard these basic rights of children and continue to abuse children (Mustikasari & Rostyaningsih, 2020). Another study on child protection also showed the reduced absenteeism of students relative to the timing of child protection involvement in school (Armfield et al., 2020).

Local research shows contrasting results and views on the implementation and perception of all stakeholders about the Child Protection Policy. Segundo and Guia (2019) showed the results of their findings that implementing the Child Protection Policy was moderately implemented among public high schools. The research conducted by Estremera opposed it. It revealed that all child protection committee members in public schools are aware of identifying child abuse cases (Estremera, 2018). It was seconded by the study of Bayucca (2020). The researcher emphasized that teachers were aware of the child protection program of the Department of Education.

In the study conducted by Castino (2023) entitled Child Protection Policy and Behavioral Management Practices at a Public Elementary School in Rizal, Philippines, he noted that there is a significant difference between the respondents in the implementation of child protection policy and their behavioral management practices and that there is a positive correlation between the behavioral management practices of the respondents when grouped according to their profile.

The Division of Ozamiz City has long advocated for a Child Protection Policy. The Social Mobilization and Networking as its Focal, the unit has already implemented numerous capacity-building workshops - seminars for the Schools Child Protection Committee. We also tapped our external partner – Gitib, Inc., to provide resources and financial support for training on Positive Discipline in Everyday Teaching and Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting. It is to raise awareness of the importance of Positive Discipline in schools and homes. However, bullying cases, physical and sexual abuse, retention and dropout rates due to teenage pregnancy continue to exist in this division.



Hence, this project would like to discover if the Child Protection Policy has been successfully cascaded and implemented in schools and what are the behavior responses of the teachers and the school in terms of Child Protection violations.

### **III. Research Questions**

The project aims to report the implementation of the Child Protection Policy for the <sup>first</sup> half of School Year 2022 – 2023. It shall answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of implementation of the school's practices on the Child Protection Policy?
2. What is the level of awareness of teachers about the Child Protection Policy?
3. What violations of Child Protection Policy commonly occur in the school?

### **IV. Scope and Limitation**

The study covered implementing the Child Protection Policy in all 58 public schools in the Division of Ozamiz City. Specifically, this study answered the questions as to the functionality of Child Protection Policy in schools, the level of awareness of both school heads and teachers of the existence of Child Protection Policy in schools, the most common cases of Child Protection violations in schools, and the school's practices in handling Child Protection violation cases.

The study was conducted among the school heads and select teachers within the SY 2022-2023 Division of Ozamiz City. Random Sampling protocols were employed in the selection of teacher respondents. All school heads of the 58 public schools and select teachers were included.

### **V. Research Methods**



**Research Design.** The study employed a quantitative research design with the survey as the primary data-gathering tool. Survey questions were adapted from the questionnaire formulated by Asio, Bayucca and Jiminez (2020) in their research entitled "Child Protection Awareness of Teachers and Responsiveness of School: Their Relationship and Implication." However, some of the questions were modified/altered only to answer the research questions desired by the team for a better appreciation of data analysis.

**Setting.** The study was conducted in the Schools Division of Ozamiz City. The schools division is a medium-sized division composed of 48 elementary schools, 10 secondary schools, 14 integrated schools and 46 community-based learning centers and school-based learning centers. For SY 2022-2023, the school division has a total enrolment of 38,810 learners. It also has 1 212 teachers in the formal schools and 24 ALS teachers.

**Participants.** All 58 school heads and select teachers were invited to answer the survey. They answered the survey questions (Appendix A), distributed randomly.

**Data Collection, Sources and Interpretation of Data.** The team used a checklist questionnaire, which was composed of 3 parts. The first part dealt with school heads and teachers' awareness of the Child Protection Policy. The second part dealt with discovering cases against Child Protection, and lastly, the last set of questions dealt with the school's practices in implementing the Child Protection Policy. Responses from the 58 school heads and select teachers were collected and interpreted. The statistics for this study included a weighted mean. The study also used a Five-point Likert scale to measure awareness, school responsiveness, and practices.

**Ethical Considerations.** This study considered the issues of authority to conduct research, the safety and well-being of the participants, research integrity and originality, and data confidentiality. Consent Forms signifying voluntary participation of the school heads and teachers were requested from each participant. Further, confidentiality and anonymity were

observed in the study by not mentioning the names and participant identities in any part of the paper.

## VI. RESULTS, INTERPRETATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. What is the level of implementation of schools' practices on Child Protection Policy?

<b>Schools Practices</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Adjectival Interpretation</b>
1. Adopts a functional child protection policy	4.20	Highly Implemented
2) Ensure all pupils, school personnel, parents, guardians, custodians, and visitors are made aware of child protection policy.	4.00	Implemented
3) Organizes and convenes the Child Protection Committee for the school regularly.	3.50	Implemented
4) Conducts disciplinary proceedings in cases of offenses committed by pupils	4.20	Highly Implemented
5) Conducts the appropriate training and capability-building activities on child protection measures and protocols.	3.00	Moderately Implemented
6) Conduct information-dissemination activities and in-service training for teachers on protecting children in school from abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying or peer abuse, and other related cases.	3.50	Implemented
7) Ensures that the school adopts a Student Code of Conduct to be followed by every pupil while on school grounds when traveling to and from school or during a school-sponsored activity and lunch period, whether on or off-campus.	3.90	Implemented
8) Coordinates with the Department of Social Welfare and Development or the appropriate government agencies or non-government organizations on a Child Protection Hotline for reporting abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, and other similar acts and counseling.	4.20	Highly Implemented
9) Practices positive and non-violent discipline as may be required under the circumstances, provided that in no case shall corporal punishment be inflicted upon them	4.40	Highly Implemented

10) Initiates information dissemination programs and organizes activities to protect children from abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, bullying, or peer abuse.	4.00	Implemented
11) Uses training modules that include positive and non-violent discipline in classroom management, anger and stress management, and gender sensitivity	3.60	Implemented
12) Employs means which enhance the skills and pedagogy in integrating and teaching children's rights in the classroom.	3.90	Implemented
13) Files incidents of bullying and reports immediately to the School Head.	4.60	Highly Implemented
14) Implements a system for identifying students who may be suffering from significant harm based on any physical, emotional, or behavioral signs	3.70	Implemented
15) Coordinates closely with the Women and Child Protection Desks of the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Local Social Welfare and Development Office (LSWDO), other government agencies, and non-governmental organizations	4.00	Implemented

The data shows that the school has a strong commitment to child protection. Most child protection practices are either implemented or highly implemented, indicating a comprehensive approach to ensuring the safety and well-being of students. Notably, practices related to discipline, reporting bullying incidents, and coordinating with external agencies are highly implemented.

## 2. What is the level of awareness of teachers about the Child Protection Policy?

Statement	Average	Adjectival Interpretation
1) There is a DepEd Order on Protecting Children in School from Abuse, Violence, Exploitation, Discrimination, Bullying, and other forms of abuse.	4.5	Very Aware
2) I have read and understood DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012	3.8	Aware

3) According to the 1987 Constitution, the State shall defend children's rights from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect treatment, maltreatment and exploitation, including sexual abuse.	4.4	Very Aware
4) The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) protects children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment and exploitation, and sexual abuse.	4.5	Very Aware
5) This DepEd Order ensures that all schools are conducive to children's education.	4.5	Very Aware
6) Teachers and learning facilitators, especially in learning centers, are their substitute parents and are expected to discharge their functions and duties with this in mind.	4.4	Very Aware
7) This policy aims to provide special protection to children who are gravely threatened or endangered by circumstances that affect their normal development and over which they have control and to assist the concerned agencies in their rehabilitation	4.3	Very Aware
8) DepEd aims to ensure such special protection from all forms of abuse, exploitation, and care necessary for the child's well-being.	4.4	Very Aware
9) This DepEd Order has a zero-tolerance policy for any act of child abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, bullying, and other forms of abuse	4.4	Very Aware
10) There are different forms of bullying	4.8	Very Aware
11) Bullying is committed when a student commits an act or a series of acts directed towards another or several students in a school setting, which results in physical and mental abuse, harassment, intimidation, or humiliation	4.6	Very Aware

12) Corporal punishment is a penalty imposed for an alleged or actual offense carried out for discipline or training by a teacher, school administrator, an adult, or any other child who has been given or has assumed authority for punishment or discipline.	4.2	Very Aware
13) Positive and Non-violent discipline of children is a way of thinking and a holistic, constructive, and proactive approach to teaching that helps children develop appropriate thinking and behavior in the short and long term and fosters discipline	4.4	Very Aware
14) This DepEd Order aims to prevent violence against children in schools and make these available to all schools.	4.5	Very Aware
15) Violence against children committed in schools is an act or series of acts committed by school administrators academic and non-academic personnel against a child.	4.3	Very Aware

From the table, the respondents generally exhibit a high awareness and understanding of various child protection policies and principles. It bodes well for creating a safe and protective environment for children in educational settings. However, efforts should continue to educate and raise awareness among all stakeholders, ensuring that this knowledge translates into effective policies and practices to safeguard children from harm.

### **3. What are the most common Child Protection Policy cases that happened in schools?**

**Figure 1**

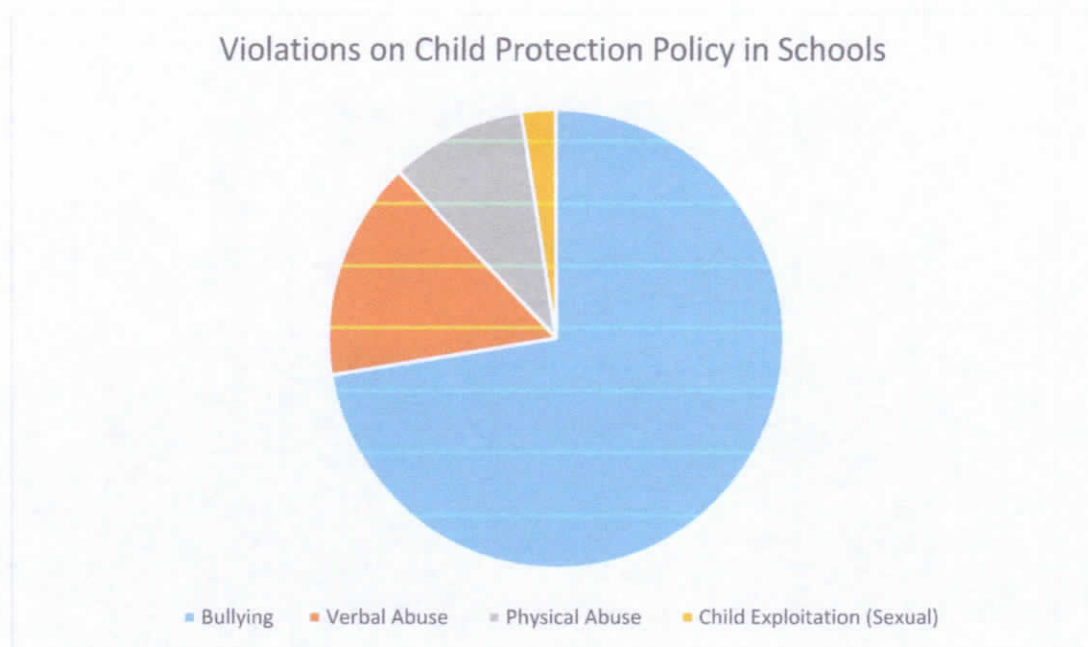


Figure 1 shows the percentage of cases of violations of child protection policy in school. Bullying case leads the way with 70%, followed by verbal abuse with 15%, physical abuse with 13% and 2% child exploitation, particularly sexual abuse.

**Recommendations:** (On the level of implementation of schools' practices on Protection Policy)

- 1. Continuous Improvement:** While many practices are well implemented, there's always room for improvement. Schools should continuously review and update their child protection policies and practices to align with evolving best practices and legal requirements.
- 2. Regular Training:** Continue to provide regular training and capacity-building activities on child protection measures, protocols, and positive discipline for school personnel. Activate PDET (Positive Discipline in Everyday Teaching) division core group to capacitate train school heads and teachers on PDET, partnering with GITIB, Inc. on capacity building on Positive Discipline Techniques for Classroom Management; tap World Vision Inc. for workshop -seminar on Preventing Bullying and Cyberbullying in Schools.

**3. Monitoring and Reporting:** Maintain a robust system for monitoring and reporting incidents related to bullying and signs of harm in students. Introduce (Project SIMs) Student Incident Monitoring System (SIMs) to ensure the safety and well-being of students; detect and address incidents of child protection cases, particularly bullying, harm, or signs of distress and foster a culture of reporting and accountability within the school system are among its objectives. The following are the components of the system. a. Incident identification, b. Incident Reporting. c. Data Collection and Analysis, d. Response and Intervention, e. Prevention and Education f. Regular Reporting to Authorities.

**4. Community Engagement:** Engage the school community, including parents and guardians, in child protection efforts to ensure everyone is aware and actively involved. Include discussions on the Child Protection Policy in the yearly division-wide Paaralan sa Tahanan implementation before the start of the school year.

#### **Recommendations ( On the level of awareness of Child Protection Policy in School)**

- 1. Continuous Education:** While awareness levels are generally high, it's essential to continue educating stakeholders about child protection policies and practices to maintain and improve understanding.
- 2. Promote CRC and Constitutional Rights:** Emphasize the importance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and constitutional rights, ensuring these principles are upheld in school environments.
- 3. Training on Corporal Punishment:** Provide more information and training on the harmful effects of corporal punishment and the importance of positive discipline.
- 4. Promote a Safe School Environment:** Encourage a culture of respect, non-violence, and tolerance within the school to prevent violence against children. Develop training matrix on



character education building programs such as but not limited to teaching values like empathy, respect and responsibility through introducing character education curricula. Organize character-building workshops and events through the school's teen centers.

**Summary:**

The school has implemented many child protection practices, strongly focusing on positive and non-violent discipline, reporting bullying incidents, and coordinating with external agencies. These practices contribute to creating a safe and supportive environment for students. The school should continue improving and updating its child protection policies and practices while involving the entire community in these efforts.

On the other hand, the findings indicate a high level of awareness and understanding of child protection policies and principles among respondents. This awareness should be translated into effective implementation to create a safe and nurturing school environment for children. Continuous education and training can further strengthen child protection efforts.

**VII. Dissemination and Advocacy Plans**

The study findings shall be used in crafting the Division Child Protection Development Plan. Such findings shall be shared and utilized through the following mechanisms.

**District or Division Learning Action Cells.** Learning Action Cells are conducted during mid-year and year-end. The proponent of the study will present the findings to the group of teachers and school administrators at the District or Division level should there be an opportunity. The presentation will inspire other schools to implement the best or most effective initiatives and circumvent the study's gray areas.

**Inputs in improving the implementation of Child Protection Policy in Schools.** The significant outputs of the study shall be reported formally to the school head for possible enhancement of the Implementation of the Child Protection Policy.

Child Protection Capacity Building. The study shall also be presented to the Child Protection Policy Committee, giving them an idea of some best practices of schools and areas to be improved in implementing CPP.

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