



ADDRESSING THE LEARNING NEEDS OF CHILDREN AT-RISK (CAR) AND IT EFFECT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AS A BASIS FOR A LEARNING INTERVENTION PLAN

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the learning needs of Children-at-Risk (CAR) and their impact on academic performance, providing a foundation for a targeted Learning Intervention Plan (LIP) at Alibagu National High School, City of Ilagan, Isabela, Philippines. CAR students often face complex challenges, including poverty, family disruption, abuse, and community violence, which can impede cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and social development. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected from 15 CAR students and 12 teachers through validated surveys and interviews. Findings reveal that the students exhibit high learning needs across all domains, with the cognitive domain ranking highest. The study identifies significant differences in learning needs based on age and type of risk, while factors such as sex, grade level, parental status, and family income generally do not produce significant differences. Although teachers perceived that the learning needs of CAR were largely well addressed, students reported discrepancies in support, highlighting gaps in individualized attention, access to technology, and emotional support. Furthermore, academic performance was commendable, with most students achieving satisfactory to outstanding grades; however, addressing learning needs did not show a statistically significant correlation with academic outcomes. The study underscores the importance of holistic, student-centered educational strategies that incorporate social-emotional learning, individualized support, family engagement, and experiential teaching methods. Recommendations include strengthening school-family collaboration, enhancing teacher training, and implementing interventions that address psychosocial and cognitive development, ultimately promoting resilience and academic success among CAR learners.

Keywords: *Children-at-Risk, Learning Needs, Academic Performance, Social-Emotional Learning, Learning Intervention Plan*

INTRODUCTION

The situation of child abuse in the Philippines remains deeply concerning. According to the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), there were 18,756 reported cases of child violation in 2023, with 17,304 involving rape and acts of lasciviousness. Research consistently shows that children—particularly girls—are at high risk. A 2015 joint study by UNICEF and the Center for Women’s Resources revealed that 7 in 10 rape victims in the Philippines are children, and 1 in 5 respondents aged 13–17 reported experiencing sexual violence. Beyond physical abuse, online sexual exploitation has emerged as a major threat. The Philippines is among the countries with the highest number of cases of online child sexual abuse. In 2023 alone, authorities received 2,740,905 reports of suspected online child sexual exploitation, underscoring the scale of the crisis (UNICEF, 2022; Pressbooks, n.d.; Durlak et al., 2011).

In response to these challenges, the Philippine government has emphasized inclusive education as a protective and empowering tool. The Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 (Republic Act No. 9155) serves as the foundation for ensuring quality education for all Filipino children. While there is no law specifically titled “No Child Left Behind Policy,” the principles of this act align with the country’s commitment to Education for All (EFA) and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which focus on equitable access to quality education (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2025; Early Intervention Foundation [EIF], n.d.).

The Department of Education (DepEd) characterizes Children-at-Risk (CAR) as individuals below the age of eighteen who are susceptible to exploitation, abuse, or neglect, or who demonstrate tendencies toward delinquent behavior as a result of adverse family, social, or environmental conditions. Such vulnerabilities may manifest through truancy, substance abuse, or other risk factors that increase the likelihood of offending. In recognition of these concerns, DepEd Order No. 18, s. 2015 prescribes detailed protocols for the protection, management, and support of CAR. The directive underscores a preventive framework designed to mitigate the progression of at-risk youth into Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL), thereby aligning educational policy with broader child welfare and juvenile justice objectives (Department of Education, 2015; ChildHope Philippines, n.d.).

Education is seen not only as a right but also as a safeguard, offering children opportunities to break cycles of abuse, poverty, and vulnerability (Republic Act No. 9155, 2001; Chen & Zhang, 2023).

The educational system serves as a foundation for empowering young minds by equipping them with essential knowledge, skills, and confidence to shape their future. Quality education extends beyond academic achievement; it encompasses the unlocking of human potential, the promotion of healthier choices, the advancement of social

mobility, and the transformation of lives through equitable pathways to success (Durlak et al., 2011; Knoll et al., 2017).

Managing schools is often perceived as easier when students come from supportive, intact families that provide moral, emotional, mental, financial, and spiritual guidance. These children are more likely to thrive academically and socially (Fogel, 1993; Miller, 2023).

In contrast, children-at-risk face significant challenges both at home and in school. Their lives are often marked by instability, with struggles arising from multiple directions—family conflict, poverty, neglect, or abuse. For educators and communities, the pressing question becomes: How can we effectively support at-risk students so they can succeed despite these obstacles? (ExploreLearning, n.d.; TeachThought, n.d.)

Meeting the demand for quality education requires schools to recognize the diverse ways in which students learn. Engagement increases when learning is connected to students' lived experiences and personal interests. Deeper comprehension emerges through experiential activities, structured discussions, and collaborative learning. Furthermore, the application of acquired knowledge, combined with emotional security—feeling safe, supported, and valued—significantly enhances the educational experience (Durlak et al., 2011; Knoll et al., 2017).

In meeting these demands, the schools are expected to consider individual differences between the students. Recognizing these differences helps teachers tailor approaches to meet diverse student needs. Their learning styles, their pace, interests, background knowledge, attitudes, abilities, motivation and cultural influences and personal background. These differences mean teachers need flexible approaches to support diverse learners effectively (MasterTeacher, n.d.; Winton, 2015).

A typical student's daily routine begins at home, where they nurture relationships with their family, before heading to school to learn and interact with peers. After classes, they usually return home to continue family life. However, not all students have the privilege of living with their families. Due to difficult and often alarming circumstances, some children are placed in foster care under the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) (DSWD FO I, n.d.; Rehema Home, n.d.).

In the Province of Isabela, programs have been established to provide shelter and support for these learners. Such students are identified as Children-at-Risk (CAR). Through collaboration between the DSWD and the Department of Education, initiatives are implemented to ensure that CAR students are included in the educational system, in line with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy (ChildHope Philippines, n.d.; Attendance Works, n.d.).

In school, helping at-risk students succeed takes patience and understanding as long as there is collaborative effort from school, parents and partner industries. In the City of Ilagan, there are CAR who are enrolled in Alibagu National High School (ANHS). There are various innovations and programs that alleviate the CAR learners' situation

which led the school to an award as the Best Child Protection Program Implementer. Though, during interviews, most of the CAR experiences poverty, family issues and community violence. These challenges may possibly show behaviors like disengagement, low achievement, or high absenteeism. Often, they need extra support.

In as much as the teachers at the above-mentioned school want to extend extensive services, the learners-at-risk do not know how to handle and share their problems. They do not disclose themselves much which affects the teacher- learner relationship. In having such kind of attitude, their academic endeavor was also affected because of the distance they are showing to their teachers. The item analysis and school form 2 (monthly attendance) presented by the teachers show that most of the CAR gained a low score academically because of absenteeism.

The goal of the researcher, who happens to be the principal of ANHS was to determine the specific learning needs of CAR students, which will serve as the foundation in addressing the learning needs, for creating a targeted Learning Intervention Plan (LIP) to boost academic performance and outcomes. Having this kind of study will lead to more collaborative work between the CAR, the School, Department of Education, Department of Social Work, the Schools Division, and the Parent- Teacher Association.

Research Questions

The study sought to identify the learning needs of at-risk children and examined how these affect their academic performance, providing a basis for designing effective intervention plans.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the profile of the children at risk in terms of the following variables:
 - a. Age
 - b. Sex
 - c. Grade Level
 - d. Economic Status
 - e. Marital Status of Parents
2. What are the identified risks of the children at risk?
3. What are the learning needs of the children at risk in terms of:
 - a. Cognitive
 - b. Affective
 - c. Psychomotor
 - d. Social
4. Is there a significant difference in the learning needs of the children at risk when grouped according to their profile?
5. To what extent are the learning needs of the children at risks addressed as perceived by them and their teachers?
6. Is there a significant difference in the perception of the children at risk and the teachers of how the CAR's learning needs are addressed?

7. What is the Academic performance of the CAR?
8. Is there a significant relationship between how the learning needs of the CAR are addressed and their academic performance?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design, an approach particularly well-suited for investigations that aim to systematically portray the characteristics of a phenomenon under examination. As Singh (2023), emphasizes, descriptive research seeks to provide an accurate and detailed account of the subject matter, thereby enabling researchers to observe, record, and analyze its defining attributes. Within the broader framework of scientific inquiry, this design serves as a foundational tool for serves as a foundational tool for researchers aiming to observe, record, and analyze the intricate details of a particular topic. This method provides a rich and detailed account that aids in understanding, categorizing, and interpreting the subject matter. By offering a comprehensive depiction of the phenomenon, descriptive research facilitates deeper understanding, supports categorization, and enhances interpretation, ultimately contributing to the rigor and clarity of the study's findings. In this study the descriptive design was used to analyze the educational needs of CAR and how this impacts their academic performance.

Locale of the Study

The research was conducted at Alibagu National High School (ANHS), located in Barangay Alibagu, City of Ilagan, Isabela. Established eighteen years ago, the institution occupies a land area of more than two hectares. Over the years, ANHS has experienced a consistent increase in student enrollment, largely attributable to the government's provision of free secondary education in all public schools.

The school also serves as an educational hub for children-at-risk, many of whom are endorsed by foster care facilities. Partner agencies frequently recommend ANHS as the preferred institution for these minors, ensuring that they receive appropriate educational opportunities. Furthermore, the school's sustained success can be attributed to its strong partnerships with various local government units (LGUs) and feeder institutions, particularly the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO), including the Lingap Center and the Women and Children Protection Unit. These collaborations have significantly enhanced the school's capacity to deliver inclusive and community-oriented education.

Selection and Description of Respondents

The participant to this study consists of 27 individuals, encompassing two distinct groups. Specifically, 15 students enrolled in the CAR program at ANHS were included, alongside 12 teachers who provided responses to selected sections of the questionnaire.

The inclusion of both students and teachers was intentional, as it allowed the study to capture perspectives from learners directly engaged in the program as well as educators responsible for its implementation. This dual representation enriched the dataset by integrating both experiential and instructional viewpoints, thereby strengthening the validity of the findings.

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents

GRADE	TEACHERS	LEARNERS	TOTAL
7	4	4	4
8	3	4	4
9	3	5	5
10	2	2	2
TOTAL	12	15	27

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher ensured that the survey questionnaire underwent thorough review and validation by the panelists prior to its finalization. Before disseminating the instrument, formal authorization to conduct the study was sought through an official letter submitted to the Office of the Superintendent in the Schools Division Office of Ilagan and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). Upon receiving approval from both the Superintendent and the DSWD Center, the researcher proceeded with the data collection, facilitated by the teachers of ANHS and with the participation of the CAR. The survey was personally administered by the researcher, and the collected responses were systematically tallied, tabulated, and subjected to statistical analysis using appropriate tools to generate and substantiate the findings of the study.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data were subjected to rigorous statistical analysis employing a range of quantitative techniques.

Frequency and Percentage Count. The demographic profile and identified risks of the Children at Risk (CAR) were analyzed using frequency counts and percentage distributions to provide a descriptive overview.

Weighted mean. To analyze the responses of the CAR regarding their perceived learning needs, and the extent to which these needs were addressed, and their corresponding academic performance, the weighted mean was computed.

Independent samples t-test. This was utilized to determine significant differences between the learning needs of the CAR and their demographic profile, as well as to assess differences in the perceptions of the CAR and their teachers concerning how these learning needs were addressed.

Pearson's r correlation coefficient. This was applied to establish the degree of association between the extent to which the learning needs of the CAR were addressed and their academic performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the profile of the children at risk in terms of the following variables:
 - a. Age

Table 2
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Age

Age	Frequency	%
12	3	20.00
14	3	20.00
15	5	33.30
16	3	20.00
17	1	6.700
Total	15	100.00

Table 2 presents the frequency distribution of respondents according to age. Out of the 15 participants in the study, five respondents or 33.3% are 15 years old, three respondents or 20% are 16 years old, another three respondents are 14 years old, and 12 years old. One respondent is 17 years old.

Overall, more than 70 % are aged 15 years and below, indicating that the majority of participants are minors. According to the foster care guidelines of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), individuals aged 0 to below 18 years who fall under specific circumstances are eligible for foster care placement.

- b. Sex

Table 3
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	2	13.3
Female	13	86.7
Total	15	100.0

Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents by sex. Out of 15 participants, majority of respondents or 86.7% are female, and two or 13.3% are male. The data suggests that female children may be more susceptible to risks compared to their male counterparts. According to the UNESCO (2015) Situation Report, studies highlight that girls often face distinct vulnerabilities, such as higher exposure to certain forms of abuse

or exploitation. Additionally, societal expectations and gender norms can further influence the types and levels of risks encountered by female children.

Table 4
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Grade Level

Grade Level	Frequency	Percent
Grade 7	5	33.3
Grade 8	4	26.7
Grade 9	4	26.7
Grade 10	2	13.3
Total	15	100.0

The frequency and percentage distribution of respondents are presented in Table 4. Out of the total 15 respondents, five or 33.3% are in Grade 7; four or 26.7% are in Grade 8; another four are in Grade 9; and two or 13.3% are in Grade 10.

This indicates that more than 80% are in Grades 7 to Grade 9. Such distribution confirms that the CAR population is concentrated within grade levels intended for minors.

c. Economic Status

Table 5
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Economic Status

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percent
Above 6, 000	3	20.00
5, 001 -6,000	2	13.33
Below 5,000	10	66.67
Total	15	100.0

The monthly income of the respondents' parents is presented in Table 5. As shown, majority or 66.67% of the respondents reported a parental income below ₱5,000, two respondents or 13.33% reported an income between ₱5,001 and ₱6,000, and three respondents reported an income above ₱6,000. Although all respondents' families fall within the poverty threshold, the majority earn less than ₱5,000, which is significantly below the poverty line.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) (2025), the poverty threshold for a family of five is ₱12,030 per month, underscoring the severe economic disadvantage faced by most of the respondents' households.

d. Marital Status of Parents

Table 6
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Marital Status of Parents

Parents Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Separated	4	33.33
Single Parent	5	46.67
Unknown	6	20.00
Total	15	100.0

Table 6 presents the marital status of the respondents' parents. Six respondents, or 20% did not disclose their parents' marital status. Five respondents, representing 46.67% reported having single parents, while four respondents, or 33.33% indicated that their parents are separated. A significant portion of the respondents chose not to provide information about their parents, suggesting that many of them may have grown up without a clear familial identity.

According to UNICEF (2022), children in foster care often experience abandonment or separation issues, which can deeply affect their sense of identity and connection to family.

2. What are the identified risks of the children at risk?

Table 7
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Identified Risks of the Respondents

Identified Risk/s	Frequency	Percent
Deceased Parents	1	6.70
Molested	5	33.30
Poverty	7	46.70
Rape	2	13.30
Total	15	100.0

Table 7 reveals identified several risks affecting children. As shown in the table, seven or 46.7% of the respondents cited poverty as the primary risk, five respondents or 33.3% reported experiences of molestation, two respondents or 13.3% identified rape, and one respondent noted having a deceased parent. The most frequently identified risks were poverty and molestation.

The foster care units of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), namely LINGAP and the Women and Child Protection Center (WCPC) in Isabela, provide services to these respondents. Children who are placed under foster care include: Abandoned or surrendered children, Neglected or dependent children, Orphaned children, Victims of abuse — sexual, physical, or other forms of exploitation,

Children without adequate family care due to temporary or permanent inability of parents, Children awaiting adoption who must be prepared for family placement, Children needing long-term care but cannot be placed for domestic adoption, children with disrupted adoption, Children in socially difficult circumstances such as street children and those affected by armed conflict, or victims of child labor and trafficking (Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office I [DSWD FO I], n.d.).

3. What are the learning needs of the children at risk in terms of:

a. Cognitive Domain

Table 8
The Learning Needs of respondents in terms of Cognitive Domain

Cognitive	Students	
	Mean	Description
1. I receive good questions from teachers	4.93	Very much needed
2. I am allowed to think independently	4.87	Very much needed
3. I am taught with work products/output	4.73	Very much needed
4. I use learning resources	4.67	Very much needed
5. I get help from experts	4.60	Very much needed
6. I recognize question and answer sessions	4.60	Very much needed
7. I process new information	4.53	Very much needed
8. I learn problem solving activities	4.47	Very much needed
General Weighted Mean	4.68	Very much needed

Table 8 presents the respondents' learning needs in the cognitive domain. Overall, the items were rated as very much needed, with a general weighted mean of 4.68. The top three areas identified were: receiving well-formulated questions from teachers (mean = 4.93), being allowed to think independently (mean = 4.87), and being taught through work products or outputs (mean = 4.73).

These findings highlight the importance of instructional techniques and strategies that encourage deeper classroom learning. Specifically, teachers play a crucial role in framing questions that stimulate critical thinking, fostering independent thought, and guiding students toward output-based learning.

Follow-up interviews revealed that some respondents struggle to understand lessons due to difficulty concentrating. Additionally, several admitted feeling hesitant to ask questions because they fear drawing attention to themselves if they fail to grasp the material. This suggests a need for supportive classroom environments where students feel safe to engage, clarify misunderstandings, and actively participate in the learning process.

This is supported by the findings of McTavish et al. (2022) that children who experience severe childhood sexual abuse are significantly more likely to demonstrate poorer educational outcomes. These effects are further compounded by family socio-economic background (e.g., parental education), family functioning (e.g., shifts in parental dynamics), and individual characteristics (e.g., gender), all of which are recognized contributors to child maltreatment. Collectively, these factors can result in a range of emotional and cognitive difficulties, including impaired concentration, diminished self-esteem, and challenges in forming peer relationships.

Similarly, research has shown that up to 20% of classroom misbehavior can be attributed to fear of failure or expectations of academic inadequacy. In such cases, students may deliberately choose not to participate, engage in disruptive behavior, or divert attention through off-task activities as a means of self-protection. For these students, the consequences of misbehavior are often perceived as less distressing than the humiliation of being exposed as unable to succeed despite genuine effort (Master Teacher, n.d.)

b. Affective Domain

Table 9
The Learning Needs of the Respondents in Terms of Affective Domain

Affective	Students	
	Mean	Description
1. I attain my goals	4.87	Very much needed
2. I establish sense of belongingness	4.73	Very much needed
3. I have time for reflection and self assessment	4.53	Very much needed
4. I have develop self- confidence	4.33	Very much needed
5. I enhance self- control	4.27	Very much needed
6. I am open for feedabck from others	4.27	Very much needed
7. I understand motivation from others	4.20	Very much needed
8. I nurture positive attitudes	4.00	Much needed
Mean	4.40	Very much needed

Table 9 presents the learning needs of the respondents as perceived within the affective domain. The Children-at-Risk (CAR) group demonstrated a very high level of need in this domain, as reflected by an overall mean score of 4.40. Specifically, the top four affective learning needs identified were: Attaining goals (mean = 4.87), Establishing a sense of belonging (mean = 4.73), Having time for reflection and self-assessment (mean = 4.53), Developing self-confidence (mean = 4.33).

Meanwhile, the item nurturing positive attitudes was rated as “much needed.” The respondents also disclosed feelings of fear when interacting with others, which suggests that their trust in others is fragile and at risk. This highlights the importance of

strengthening affective learning interventions to foster confidence, belongingness, and positive social relationships among CAR learners.

Children who have experienced trauma often interpret the world in the harshest light. They may believe they are “bad kids,” assume that others are against them, or become so fearful of making mistakes that they avoid trying new activities altogether. These children need consistent reassurance that they are good, capable, and deserving of success (Miller, 2023).

Trauma can also affect their ability to focus, reason, and regulate behavior. Sometimes, they may act out simply to gain attention—even if it’s negative. Teachers can counter this by offering abundant positive attention instead. This means showing kindness and care “just because,” not only when students behave well or achieve something.

For children who have been abused or neglected, safety is the foundation for learning. They must feel secure before they can respond to teachers’ requests or engage meaningfully with peers. Creating this sense of safety may involve giving students extra space when needed—for example, allowing them to step away from group work and complete tasks independently.

One practical strategy is to establish a simple hand-sign system. This allows students to communicate their needs quietly and without disrupting the class. Teachers can adapt these signals to fit the unique requirements of their students, ensuring that each child has a safe, respectful way to express (Pressbooks, n.d.).

c. Psychomotor Domain

Table 10
The Learning Needs of the Respondents in terms of Psychomotor Domain

Psychomotor	Students	
	Mean	Description
1. I have enough sleep	4.87	Very needed much
2. I experienced child care	4.80	Very needed much
3. I have access to learning equipment and tools	4.73	Very needed much
4. I am provided with Good diet	4.60	Very needed much
5. I have comfortable school setting	4.47	Very needed much
6. I am provided with accessible/available transportation	4.20	Very needed much

7. I am engage in appropriate and timely class discussions	4.20	Very needed	much
General Weighted Mean	4.55	Very needed	much

Table 10 presents the learning needs of children-at-risk (CAR) as perceived by them within the Psychomotor Domain. The findings reveal that the psychomotor learning domain is highly needed across all items, with a general mean of 4.55. The most pressing needs identified include: Adequate sleep (mean = 4.87), Child care (mean = 4.80), Access to learning equipment and tools (mean = 4.73).

Children-at-risk report experiencing sleep deprivation, a lack of consistent care and supervision due to their status as minors, and insufficient access to essential learning materials. These unmet needs highlight the vulnerability of CAR in their developmental context.

The findings of this study is supported by research supports as cited by Javakhishvili & Widom (2021) that maltreated children are more likely to suffer from inadequate sleep conditions, particularly when removed from their families and placed in foster care. Maltreatment can also trigger hypervigilance, overactivation of neuroendocrine systems, or lead to the exhaustion of mental resources required for managing stress. These factors significantly hinder a child’s ability to achieve restorative sleep and, consequently, impair their psychomotor functioning.

Teachers should demonstrate genuine interest and concern for their students. For at-risk learners, feeling that a teacher truly cares about their well-being can foster a stronger sense of connection and trust. Educators can show this interest by engaging students in conversations about their lives outside of school, listening attentively, and offering consistent support when challenges arise. These small but meaningful actions help students feel valued, understood, and more motivated to succeed (Concordia University Irvine, n.d.).

d. **Social Domain**

Table 11
The Learning Needs of the Respondents in Terms of Social Domain

Social	Students	
	Mean	Description
1. I give and receive support from social environment	4.87	Very much needed
2. I experience external motivation	4.73	Very much needed
3. I interact with problem solving	4.60	Very much needed
4. I manage time and tasks	4.60	Very much needed
5. I make a difference in my learning	4.60	Very much needed
6. I am allowed to communicate with peers	4.40	Very much needed

7. I grow with friends	4.20	Very much needed
General Weighted Mean	4.57	Very much needed

Table 11 presents the respondents' perceived learning needs within the social domain. The overall mean score of 4.57 indicates that these needs are considered very much needed. Specifically, the items rated highest were the need to give and receive support from the social environment (mean = 4.87) and the need to experience external motivation (mean = 4.73). These results highlight the strong importance respondents place on social interaction and encouragement as essential components of their learning process.

Based on the interview, some of them shared, "We feel a little envious of the children who come to us with their parents while bringing gifts." Yet despite this, they expressed deep joy and a sense of belonging whenever they receive support from the people around them — whether from their foster home, school, or community. They especially feel valued when children from other places celebrate their birthdays at the Lingap Center, bringing gifts, school supplies, and spending the day with them through fun activities like parlor games.

Empirical research demonstrates that receiving a personal gift enhances children's happiness, security, and sense of connection. Studies consistently link gift-receiving moments with improved emotional regulation and heightened perceptions of being valued, particularly when gifts are provided by trusted adults. Psychologists argue that intentional, personalized gifts strengthen identity formation, allowing children to feel recognized as individuals rather than merely members of a collective. This process reinforces belonging and communicates that the child is known and remembered within the family context.

Children's behavioral self-regulation is strongly associated with academic achievement and the capacity to form positive peer relationships. Conversely, deficits in self-regulation during childhood are predictive of later involvement in criminal activity during adolescence and adulthood. Early intervention programs frequently target behavioral outcomes such as reducing antisocial behavior, preventing school-based aggression, and limiting affiliation with antisocial peers.

Social-emotional development encompasses children's awareness of their own emotional needs and those of others, alongside the cultivation of self-esteem and strategies for managing negative affect. This domain is closely linked to the formation of positive relationships and a reduced risk of depression and other adverse mental health outcomes. Evidence suggests that early interventions in social-emotional development yield outcomes such as increased pro-social behavior, improved self-esteem, and decreased incidence of clinically diagnosed mental health disorders.

When a child receives a personal gift, it's more than just a present—it's a message that says, "You matter." Research shows that gifts given with thought and care boost a child's happiness, help them feel secure, and strengthen their bond with the giver. When

the gift is personal, children feel seen as individuals, not just part of a group. This builds their sense of belonging and identity within the family (Rehema Home, n.d.).

Children who learn to manage their emotions and behavior (self-regulation) do better in school and build stronger friendships. On the other hand, kids who struggle with self-control are more likely to face challenges later in life, including risky behaviors during their teenage years. That’s why early support—like teaching coping skills and encouraging positive choices—can make a big difference.

Helping children understand their own feelings and the feelings of others is key to their social and emotional growth. This includes building self-esteem and learning how to handle tough emotions. Strong social-emotional skills protect children from depression and other mental health struggles. Early guidance in this area often leads to more kindness toward others, greater confidence, and fewer serious emotional problems down the road (Early Intervention Foundation [EIF], n.d.).

Table 12
Summary Table of the Learning Needs of the Children at Risk

Domain	Mean	Qualitative Description
Cognitive	4.68	Very much needed
Affective	4.40	Very much needed
Psychomotor	4.55	Very much needed
Social	4.57	Very much needed
TOTAL	4.55	Very much needed

Table 12 shows that the respondents expressed strong learning needs across all domains. The overall mean score of 4.55 indicates that every domain is highly valued, with the cognitive domain ranking the highest at 4.68. This suggests that the respondents place great importance on education and continue to aspire for learning opportunities despite life challenges.

One respondent shared, “I want to learn and finish my education. I want to be a lawyer someday to help children like me.” Such testimonies highlight the enduring significance of schooling and the deep desire of learners to pursue their dreams.

Given these findings, teachers play a crucial role in meeting the educational demands of their students. They must provide support, encouragement, and reassurance while maintaining professional boundaries. Essential practices include: Creating safe environments: Offer a quiet and secure space for children to express themselves; Respecting privacy: Record the child’s exact words, ask limited open-ended questions, and safeguard confidentiality; Seeking guidance: Report any suspicion of abuse or neglect and consult appropriate authorities; Building trust: Show genuine interest, be approachable, and encourage open communication; Supporting emotional needs: Respect differences and provide understanding for students facing emotional struggles.

As Winton (2023) emphasized, teachers should demonstrate concern, foster trust, and encourage dialogue. By doing so, they not only address the academic needs of learners but also nurture their emotional resilience and personal growth.

4. Is there a significant difference in the learning needs of the children at risk based on their identified risks and profile?

Table 13
Results of the Test of Significant Difference in the Learning Needs of the Respondents When Grouped According to Their Identified Risks

Along	Probability	Decision	Remarks
Cognitive	.006	Ho is Rejected	Significant
Affective	.000	Ho is Rejected	Significant
Psychomotor	.024	Ho is Rejected	Significant
Social	.047	Ho is Rejected	Significant

Table 13 presents the results of the One-Way ANOVA F-test conducted at the 0.05 level of significance to examine differences in the learning needs of respondents when grouped according to their identified risks.

The analysis reveals that the probability values for the respondents' learning needs across risk groups were lower than the significance threshold. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences in the learning needs of children-at-risk (CAR) when classified according to their identified risks, specifically in the domains of cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and social development.

The data reveals that the emotional classroom climate—essentially the overall atmosphere or “vibe” of the classroom—plays a crucial role in shaping how students feel, learn, and interact with one another. It influences motivation, engagement, and the quality of peer relationships.

Students categorized as Children at Risk (CAR) with deceased parents primarily expressed unmet cognitive and social needs, while those living in poverty reported unmet cognitive, affective, and social needs.

Respondents who had lost a parent often struggled with focus and motivation, largely due to emotional distress and the absence of consistent support at home. Many reported feelings of isolation and difficulty maintaining relationships, as grief and altered family circumstances disrupted their social connections.

Meanwhile, respondents from households below the poverty line faced challenges such as limited access to educational resources (books, technology, tuition), which hindered their learning opportunities. They also experienced stress and insecurity, negatively impacting their emotional well-being. In addition, poverty restricted their ability

to engage in social interactions, making it harder to connect with peers and build supportive networks.

The death of a parent profoundly reshapes a child’s life, often triggering psychosocial and health-related mechanisms that can elevate the risk of cognitive impairment across the lifespan. Bereavement-related stress may lead to emotional and behavioral difficulties, including depression, social withdrawal, smoking, and excessive alcohol use. These behaviors, in turn, have well-documented consequences for brain health. For instance, smoking elevates white blood cell activity in the central nervous system, potentially causing neurological damage and impairing cognitive function. Heavy alcohol consumption can damage the brain’s white matter, increasing vulnerability to adverse neurological outcomes and accelerating cognitive decline. Reduced social engagement and depression are themselves recognized risk factors for cognitive impairment and dementia. Beyond mental health, the stress of parental loss also undermines physical health, raising the likelihood of chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes—both of which are strongly associated with cognitive decline. Taken together, these pathways illustrate how the death of a parent can initiate a cascade of psychosocial and biological processes that heighten the risk of lifelong cognitive impairment (Liu et al., 2021).

In addition, Chen and Zhang (2021) demonstrate that family poverty significantly hinders adolescent development. Children from economically disadvantaged households tend to exhibit weaker academic performance and lower levels of noncognitive skills. Our findings further reveal that these adverse effects are especially pronounced among children with urban hukou, boys, and those from one-child families. Moreover, the mechanisms underlying these outcomes operate through several channels, including parental educational expectations, parental investment in education, and the quality of the parent–child relationship.

4. Is there a significant difference in the learning needs of the respondents when grouped according to their profile?

a. Cognitive

Table 14
Result of the Test of Significant Difference in the Cognitive Learning Needs of the Respondents When Grouped According to their Profile

Profile	Probability	Decision	Remark
Age	.027	Ho is Rejected	Significant
Sex	.293	Ho is Accepted	Not Significant
Grade Level	.587	Ho is Accepted	Not Significant
Monthly Income	.377	Ho is Accepted	Not Significant
Parental Status	.850	Ho is Accepted	Not Significant

Table 14 presents the differences in the cognitive learning needs of children-at-risk (CAR) when grouped according to their profile, analyzed using a One-Way ANOVA F-test at the 0.05 level of significance. The results show that the probability values for sex, grade level, monthly income, and parental status were greater than the significance threshold. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating no significant difference in the cognitive learning needs of CAR based on these variables.

However, when grouped according to age, the probability value is less than the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected, revealing a significant difference in the cognitive learning needs of CAR by age. Specifically, children aged 17 years (mean = 5.00) and 12 years (mean = 4.96) demonstrated distinct learning needs compared to other age groups.

In summary, sex, grade level, monthly income, and parental status do not significantly influence the cognitive learning needs of CAR, whereas age does play a critical role.

A study concluded that relatively younger children within the same class groups tend to: (a) achieve significantly lower mean scores on cognitive and motor assessments, (b) exhibit higher rates of grade repetition, and (c) demonstrate reduced socialization capacity. Moreover, considering the evidence on the relative age effect in child development, several authors recommend implementing educational practices designed to mitigate these disadvantages (Urruticoechea et al., 2021).

b. Affective

Table 15
Significant Difference in the Affective Learning Needs of the Respondents when Grouped According to their Profile

Profile	Probability	Decision	Remark
Age	.094	Ho is Accepted	Not Significant
Sex	.149	Ho is Accepted	Not Significant
Grade Level	.119	Ho is Accepted	Not Significant
Monthly Income	.727	Ho is Accepted	Not Significant
Parental Status	.289	Ho is Accepted	Not Significant

Table 15 presents the analysis of the learning needs of Children-at-Risk (CAR) in the affective domain when grouped according to their profile, using a One-Way ANOVA F-test at the 0.05 level of significance.

The probability values obtained for age, sex, grade level, monthly income, and parental status are all greater than the significance threshold. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the affective learning needs of CAR when classified by these profile variables. The findings suggest that age, sex, grade level, monthly income, and parental status do not exert a significant influence on the affective learning needs of children-at-risk. This suggests that these needs remain

relatively consistent across diverse demographics. Consequently, universal approaches to emotional support may be more effective than subgroup-specific interventions. The consistency observed underscores the potential value of implementing whole-group or school-wide affective programs, rather than tailoring strategies to particular demographic categories (Durlak et al., 2011).

c. Psychomotor

Table 16
Significant Difference in the Psychomotor Learning Needs of the Respondents
When Grouped According to Their Profile

Profile	Probability	Decision	Remark
Age	.003	Ho is Rejected	Significant
Sex	.223	Ho is Accepted	Not Significant
Grade Level	.583	Ho is Accepted	Not Significant
Monthly Income	.207	Ho is Accepted	Not Significant
Parental Status	.461	Ho is Accepted	Not Significant

Table 16 presents the results of the One-Way ANOVA F-test at the 0.05 level of significance, examining differences in the respondents' learning needs along the psychomotor domain when grouped according to their profile variables. The probability values for cognitive learning needs, when grouped by sex, grade level, monthly income, and parental status, were greater than the significance level. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating no significant differences across these variables. However, when grouped according to age, the probability value was less than the significance threshold. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, showing a significant difference in the psychomotor learning needs of respondents based on age.

Results indicate that the variables of sex, grade level, monthly income, and parental status do not significantly influence the learning needs of children-at-risk within the affective domain. However, age emerged as a notable factor, particularly among those who are 12 years old (mean score = 4.96). Appleton (2024) explains that twelve-year-olds occupy a pivotal developmental stage characterized by profound emotional and social transitions. As they enter early adolescence, they begin forming their identities and grappling with heightened self-awareness. Peer relationships and social dynamics exert a strong influence on their emotional experiences, while they simultaneously learn to regulate their emotions amidst these changes.

Given these developmental challenges, addressing the affective needs of 12-year-olds requires intentional support strategies. These may include fostering a sense of belonging, teaching emotional regulation skills, and encouraging positive peer interactions. By focusing on these areas, educators and caregivers can help children navigate this transitional phase more effectively, promoting resilience and healthy emotional growth.

d. Social

Table 17
Significant Difference in Social Learning Needs of the Respondents When Grouped According to their Profile

Profile	Probability	Decision	Remark
Age	.012	Ho is Rejected	There is significant Difference
Sex	.329	Ho is Accepted	There is No Significant Difference
Grade Level	.635	Ho is Accepted	There is No Significant Difference
Monthly Income	.321	Ho is Accepted	There is No Significant Difference
Parental Status	.566	Ho is Accepted	There is No Significant Difference

Table 17 presents the differences in the social learning needs of the respondents when grouped according to their profile, using a One-Way ANOVA F-test at the 0.05 level of significance. The results show that the probability values for social learning needs, when grouped according to sex, grade level, monthly income, and parental status, are greater than the level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that there is no significant difference in the social learning needs of children-at-risk (CAR) across these profile variables.

However, when grouped according to age, the probability value is less than the level of significance. In this case, the null hypothesis was rejected, suggesting that there is a significant difference in the social learning needs of CAR based on their age profile.

Results from the study of Knoll et al., (2017) revealed that the variables of sex, grade level, monthly income, and parental status did not significantly influence the learning needs of children-at-risk in the social domain. However, age was found to be a significant factor, particularly among those aged 17 . Adolescence is a developmental stage characterized by a shift away from family-centered interactions toward increased engagement with peers. Time spent with same-sex peers rises steadily from childhood into adolescence, peaking around mid-adolescence (approximately age 14). During this period, peer perceptions become increasingly influential in shaping adolescents' evaluation of their social and personal worth, more so than in younger children aged 10–12.

Peer influence also plays a critical role in adolescent decision-making. For instance, early and mid-adolescents are more likely to engage in risky behaviors when accompanied by peers compared to when they are alone. Scholars propose that this heightened susceptibility to peer influence stems from adolescents' hypersensitivity to peer rejection and their strong desire for social approval. Consequently, many of their

decisions are guided by the pursuit of acceptance and the avoidance of exclusion within their social groups (Knoll et al., 2017).

The previous study suggested that the social-influence effect among young adolescents stems primarily from their desire to be accepted by their peer group, rather than from a greater trust in teenagers' ratings compared to those of adults. Other research has shown that adolescents' actual risk-taking behavior is strongly shaped by their perceptions of peers' risk-taking. For instance, one study demonstrated that perceived peer cannabis use predicted both the onset and extent of cannabis consumption among young to mid-adolescents (ages 10–15). Moreover, mid-adolescents (around age 16) often misjudge the level of risk-taking among their peers, and such misperceptions have been linked to increases in their own risk behavior. This tendency may arise because adolescents overestimate peer risk-taking, influenced by the widespread stereotype that adolescents, as a group, are more prone to risky behavior than other age groups.

5. To what extent do the learning needs of the children at risks addressed as perceived by them and their teachers?

Table 18
How Learning Needs of Respondents are Addressed As Perceived by Them

STUDENTS	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. My teachers give realistic learnings	4.27	Very well addressed
2. The lesson was at my own level and pace.	3.60	Well addressed
3. There are collaborative projects that require teamwork and communication.	3.33	Moderately Addressed
4. My areas of struggle were identified and seek targeted help	4.40	Very well addressed
5. There is peer connection who share similar interests with me	4.47	Very well addressed
6. There is help from tutors or mentors	3.60	Well addressed
7. Goals were broken into smaller, achievable steps	4.47	Very well addressed
8. There is discovering different learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) that fits me	4.67	Very well addressed
9. I find my most productive study environment	4.47	Very well addressed
10. I use online resources especially if I cannot attend school	2.87	Moderately Addressed
11. I view challenges as opportunities to learn	4.40	Very well addressed
12. I practice relaxation techniques (deep breathing, exercise)	4.27	Very well addressed
13. I journal thoughts and feelings	4.27	Very well addressed
14. I identify with trusted adults (teachers, counselors, family members)	4.47	Very well addressed
15. I join a study group or club to connect with peers	4.60	Very well addressed
16. I communicate needs and concerns with teachers	3.20	

		Moderately Addressed
17. I ask for help when needed	4.60	Very well addressed
18. I speak up about challenges or barriers	3.33	Moderately Addressed
19. I take breaks and prioritize self-care	4.53	Very well addressed
20. I seek help when feeling overwhelmed	4.47	Very well addressed
WAM	4.11	Well addressed

Table 18 presents how learners perceive their learning needs are being addressed. The overall weighted average mean was 4.11, interpreted as Well Addressed. Several items, however, received higher ratings like: Discovering different learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) gained the highest mean of 4.67, rated Strongly Agree, Taking breaks and prioritizing self-care followed with a mean of 4.53, Joining a study group or club and asking for help when needed both received a mean of 4.60. Items such as peer connection with similar interests, breaking goals into smaller steps, finding a productive study environment, and seeking help from trusted adults were rated at 4.47.

A mean of 4.40 was given to identifying areas of struggle and seeking targeted help and viewing challenges as opportunities to learn. Items such as realistic lessons from teachers, practicing relaxation techniques, and journaling thoughts and feelings received a mean of 4.27. Meanwhile, items that were rated Well Addressed with a mean of 3.60 were lessons delivered at my own level and pace and help from mentors. Finally, the following items were moderately addressed to include: Collaborative projects requiring teamwork (mean 3.33), Communicating needs and concerns with teachers (mean 3.20). Using online resources when unable to attend school (mean 2.87).

Based on the table, respondents perceived that online resources especially when unavailable together with collaborative projects requiring teamwork, communication, and teacher support, are moderately addressed. This suggests that many respondents lack sufficient access to technology at home, which negatively impacts their cognitive development.

In terms of the affective domain, some respondents disclosed that they are still in the process of healing, making self-disclosure to teachers and classmates difficult. When asked how they manage online resources, they explained that they often borrow devices from foster parents or request printed materials. However, this is not always possible, as they feel uncomfortable expressing academic concerns. As one respondent shared: *“Nahihiya kami kapag humihiram ng gadget kasi alam naman namin na personal things nila ‘yun.”*

Regarding collaborative work, which teachers often use to enhance social learning, respondents admitted that they tend to be shy and hesitant to share ideas due to fear of rejection. One student explained: *“Marami rin akong alam sa mga groupworks lalo na sa Math, kaya lang nauunahan ako ng kaba baka hindi ako pakinggan. Kaya ang ginagawa ko ay inilalagay ko sa papel ang gusto kong mangyari o sagot sa mga group works, at bahala na sila kung isasali nila o hindi ang sagot ko.”*

These issues highlight the need for proper intervention. Schools, teachers, and partner industries must continue to develop strategies to address these gaps and strengthen the academic, affective, psychomotor, and social learning needs of children at risk.

One effective approach is to engage them more deeply at school by pairing them with smaller groups and ensuring they collaborate with tech-savvy peers. Guardians can also be encouraged to take advantage of community resources that provide connectivity or technology support. Most importantly, project-based learning can empower these students to address the challenge themselves. For example, they might write grant proposals, reach out to local businesses for donations, or develop innovative solutions that showcase their problem-solving skills (TeachThought, n.d.).

Children-at-risk face unique challenges both at home and in school. With pressures coming from multiple directions, supporting them demands patience, empathy, and consistency. Because large group lessons can feel overwhelming, small-group instruction with scaffolded lessons is often more effective in meeting their individual needs. Even then, reteaching and targeted intervention strategies may be necessary to reinforce learning. Despite the obstacles, there are always meaningful ways to help at-risk students succeed—through personalized support, structured guidance, and opportunities that build confidence and resilience(ExploreLearning, n.d.).

Table 19
How Learning Needs of Learners Are Addressed As Perceived by Their Teachers

TEACHERS	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. I find ways to present information when concepts are difficult to grasp.	4.50	Very well Addressed
2. I break down lessons into digestible chunks.	4.33	Very well Addressed
3. I extend realistic lessons.	4.08	Well Addressed
4. I encourage peer tutorial to build trust and friendship	4.50	Very well Addressed
5. I apply collaborative works to establish social relationships	4.25	Very well Addressed
6. I orient instructions for individual work and assignments	4.58	Very well Addressed
7. I motivate them to boost self-esteem	4.58	Very well Addressed
8. I encourage them to find something about school that interests them	3.67	Well addressed

9. I motivate them to join a club or any organization	3.92	Well addressed
10. I give opportunities for letting them make choices	4.58	Very well Addressed
11. I let them have voices and be heard.	3.25	Moderately addressed
12. I help create the classroom rules and consequences with the students	3.42	Well addressed
13. I provide choices in how they demonstrate their learning (e.g., a written report, a presentation, or a video).	4.17	Well addressed
14. I consider students to have a say in the classroom set-up.	4.33	Very well Addressed
15. I make sure students know and understand the rules at school	4.17	Well addressed
16. I show an approachable image	4.42	Very well Addressed
17. I give interest and concern by giving time and attention	4.67	Very well Addressed
18. I use a check-in/check-out system	4.67	Very well Addressed
20. I help caregivers/ partner industries find ways to support them at home	4.83	Very well Addressed
WAM	4.28	Very well Addressed

Table 19 presents how teachers perceive the extent to which the learning needs of respondents are addressed. The table yielded an overall mean of 4.28, qualitatively described as Very Well Addressed.

The item helping caregivers find ways to support CAR at home obtains the highest mean score of 4.83, followed by showing interest and concern by giving time and attention and using a check-in/check-out system, both were Very well Addressed with a mean of 4.67. Similarly, the items orienting instructions for individual work and assignments, motivating learners to boost self-esteem, and providing opportunities to make choices receive a mean of 4.58 or Very well Addressed.

Other strategies such as finding ways to present information when concepts are difficult to grasp and encouraging peer tutorials to build trust and friendship were Very well Addressed with a mean of 4.50. The item showing an approachable image followed with a mean of 4.42, while breaking down lessons into digestible chunks and considering students' input in classroom set-up both were Very well Addressed . Applying collaborative work to establish social relationships was also Very well Addressed with a mean of 4.25.

On the other hand, several items were well addressed like: providing choices in how students demonstrate learning (e.g., written report, presentation, or video) and ensuring students understand school rules. Extending realistic lessons received a mean of 4.08, motivating students to join clubs or organizations scored 3.92, encouraging them to find something about school that interests them scored 3.67, and helping create classroom rules and consequences with students scored 3.42. The only item that was moderately addressed was allowing students to have voices and be heard, which obtained a mean of 3.25.

This suggests that the teachers believed they are able to strongly address the learning needs of the respondents, particularly by guiding caregivers in finding effective ways to support them at home. However, they felt they only moderately addressed the need for student voice and self-expression. During the interviews, the teachers explained that they regularly hold conferences with guardians and organize support groups for the respondents. What concerns them, however, is how the children will disclose their thoughts and emotions. The teachers expressed a genuine desire to help, but admitted uncertainty about how to properly respond in ways that would not risk aggravating the respondents' childhood trauma.

In a Parent-teacher Conferences, it was emphasized that parent-teacher conferences are a vital part of a child's education, particularly in the elementary years. These meetings give parents and guardians the chance to connect with teachers and discuss a child's academic progress, social growth, and overall performance. Whether held as traditional conferences or student-led sessions, they also provide an ideal opportunity to highlight the importance of consistent school attendance—starting as early as pre-kindergarten.

Regular attendance helps children build friendships, engage with caring adults, participate in hands-on learning, and stay on track academically. During conferences, teachers can use this one-on-one time to update families on their child's attendance record, share what students are currently learning, and ensure caregivers are aware of school programs or activities that encourage strong attendance habits. Since most teachers already meet with families once or twice a year, weaving attendance into these conversations is a simple way to reinforce its value without adding extra responsibilities (Attendance Works, n.d.).

In response to the need for teachers to amplify student voices on issues of attendance and engagement, one article outlined three powerful strategies.

First, synthesize insights from peer-to-peer focus groups. These groups bring together a small number of students in a moderated setting to share their perspectives. By analyzing their collective responses, educators can uncover patterns and themes that highlight what students truly experience and value.

Second, conduct student empathy interviews. These interviews allow young people to articulate the challenges they face, reveal root causes of attendance barriers, and inspire student-centered solutions. Educators, school leaders, and supportive adults

can design—or guide students in designing—interview protocols that surface meaningful insights about how schools can become more welcoming and supportive.

Third, implement project-based learning experiences. Through PBL, students actively design, develop, and construct hands-on solutions to real problems. This approach not only engages them deeply but also empowers them to take ownership of their learning while addressing issues that matter to their community.

6. Is there a significant difference in the perception of the children at risk and the teachers in how their learning needs are addressed?

Table 20
Result of the Test of Significant Difference in the Perception of the Children at Risk and the Teachers on How Learning Needs are Addressed

	t-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Student vs Teachers	-2.348	0.027	Reject Ho	Significant

The t-test result ($t = -2.348$) with a p-value of 0.027 indicates a statistically significant difference between students' and teachers' perceptions of how students' learning needs are addressed. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 threshold, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that students and teachers hold significantly different views regarding the support provided for learning needs.

The negative t-value suggests that the mean perception score of students is lower than that of teachers. In other words, teachers may believe that adequate support and interventions are in place, while students may feel that their learning needs are not fully met. This divergence highlights the importance of considering both perspectives when evaluating the effectiveness of educational support systems.

According to Hattie (2009), teachers and students often approach learning from different angles. While teachers may prioritize curriculum delivery, students tend to focus on understanding and relevance. This mismatch can be compounded by information gaps—teachers don't always know what's working (or not) for each learner. To bridge this divide, schools should establish regular check-ins where teachers actively ask students about their learning needs and progress. Creating structured feedback loops allows students to share what helps or hinders their learning, enabling teachers to adjust accordingly. Finally, adopting personalized approaches—tailoring support to individual student needs—can make learning more effective and meaningful for everyone involved.

7. What is the Academic performance of the CAR?

Table 21
Academic Performances of the Respondents

Rating	Description	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
90 – 100	Outstanding	0	7	7	46.67
85 – 89	Very Satisfactory	1	5	6	40.00
80 – 84	Satisfactory	1	1	2	13.33
75 – 79	Fairly Satisfactory	0	0	0	0
Below 75	Did Not Meet Expectation	0	0	0	0
Total		2	13	15	100

Table 21 presents the academic performance of the respondents. Findings reveal that 7 (46.67%) female respondents achieved an Outstanding performance with grades ranging from 90–80; 6 (40.00%) attained a Very Satisfactory rating; while 2 (13.33%) obtained a Satisfactory rating.

Overall, nearly half of the respondents received academic awards, while the rest successfully passed their subjects. This indicates that the respondents demonstrate commendable academic achievement. It further implies that despite experiencing poverty and traumatic circumstances, they continue to persevere and exert effort to complete their education.

In contrast, a 2024 article published by ChildHope Philippines (n.d.) highlighted that many families in the Philippines continue to struggle with meeting basic needs. This economic hardship often compels children to prioritize work over education. For students from low-income households, the pressure to contribute financially can lead them to leave school prematurely, taking on jobs that interfere with their studies and limit their academic growth.

Factors such as parental separation, divorce, or an unstable home environment can profoundly undermine a child's ability to concentrate on their studies. One critical yet often overlooked contributor to school dropouts is mental health. Conditions like anxiety, depression, and other psychological disorders can severely disrupt a student's academic performance and attendance. When struggling with these challenges, students may find it difficult to participate fully in school activities, which often leads to chronic absenteeism and, ultimately, a greater risk of dropping out (ChildHope Philippines n.d).

8. Is there a significant relationship between how the learning needs of the CAR are addressed and their academic performance?

Table 21
Result of the Test of Significant Relationship Between How the Learning Needs Are Addressed and the CAR's Academic Performance

	Pearson r	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Learning needs of the CAR are addressed and their academic performance	0.021	0.942	Accept Ho	Not Significant

The computed Pearson correlation coefficient ($r=0.021$) indicates an extremely weak positive relationship between addressing the learning needs of the CAR and students' academic performance. Since this value is very close to zero, it suggests that there is virtually no linear association between the two variables. Moreover, the p-value ($p=0.942$) is far greater than the 0.05 threshold for statistical significance, meaning the result is not statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted. This finding implies that addressing the learning needs identified among respondents does not have a meaningful impact on students' academic performance based on the data collected. In other words, efforts to address these learning needs did not produce significant improvements in the academic outcomes measured in this study.

Improvements in addressing students' learning needs may not always lead directly to higher academic performance. Outcomes can be influenced by factors such as student motivation, personality traits, learning styles, and prior knowledge. External conditions, including the foster home environment, also play a role. In addition, assessment methods may fail to accurately capture true learning or progress, and even well-designed support strategies might not be implemented consistently or effectively.

Kamara and Dadhabai (2022) evaluated both the overall improvement and the performance of individual students. They emphasized that student assessment must be conducted in a highly technical manner, incorporating additional measures to enhance teaching, learning, and the effective dissemination of information among relevant participants. The study sought to identify the key assessment factors influencing students' academic achievement, particularly in relation to summative assessment, formative assessment, and the assessment strategies employed by lecturers.

Findings revealed that summative assessment is the most important assessment that can influence students' academic achievement, followed by formative assessment while assessment strategies from lecturers influenced students negatively. It was suggested that more emphasis must be placed on assessment, seating accommodation and semester syllabus coverage by lecturers. It was concluded that summative assessment is the main assessment that can be applied to determine students' academic achievement. The study un-factored the utilization of accumulated student evaluation

outcomes towards achieving judgments on teacher, students and schools' performance along with education organizations (Kamara and Dadhabai, 2022).

Conclusions

Children at risk (CAR) present multifaceted learning needs across cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and social domains. To address these complexities, educators emphasize student-centered approaches, actively listen to learners' voices, and adapt teaching strategies to accommodate diverse needs. While many CAR students demonstrate academic strengths, effective support requires holistic methods that integrate their interconnected developmental areas.

Findings reveal a gap between teachers' and students' perspectives on how learning needs should be addressed, underscoring the importance of stronger communication and collaboration. To better support at-risk learners, educators can: Prioritize student feedback by regularly soliciting learners' perspectives on their experiences and needs; Diversify teaching methods to cater to varied learning styles through multiple instructional approaches and activities; Foster social-emotional learning by cultivating empathy, inclusivity, and supportive classroom environments.

By integrating these practices, educators can create more responsive and effective learning environments that empower at-risk students to thrive academically and personally.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following are recommended:

Department of Education Officials should undertake necessary revisions of existing policies to better address the instructional needs of students at risk. Greater emphasis must be placed on ensuring that this group of learners receives appropriate and targeted support.

The National Government Unit, particularly the DSWD, must strictly monitor the implementation of programs and activities, with special attention to how students manage self-disclosure. In addition, foster parents should undergo re-orientation, enhanced training, and regular seminars to effectively identify and address the concerns and issues of at-risk students under their care.

Foster Parents should undergo re-orientation, additional training, and regular seminars to effectively identify and address the concerns and issues of at-risk students under their care.

School Mental Health Advocates should broaden their approaches to better meet the learning needs of at-risk students. They must also provide more workshops designed to help these learners process hidden emotions and develop healthier coping strategies. The results of these initiatives will serve as valuable tools for teachers, enabling them to

innovate and create strategies that directly address the learning needs of at-risk children while assisting them in overcoming their learning gaps.

Children at risk should be encouraged to build self-confidence and express their voices. Participation in self-disclosure workshops will help them strengthen their abilities, enhance resilience, and work on improving areas of weakness.

Parents and foster parents should actively engage in school partnerships by attending conferences and participating in collaborative efforts to design appropriate interventions that support student success.

The researcher should continue pursuing the implementation of an action plan aimed at addressing students' learning needs, while also working closely with teachers to improve the assessment of academic performance.

Future researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies focusing on at-risk students, particularly examining aspects such as personality traits and classroom behavior, to provide deeper insights into effective educational strategies

Compliance with Ethical Standards

This study adhered to established ethical principles to ensure the protection, dignity, and rights of all participants. Prior to data collection, formal approval was obtained from the Office of the Superintendent, the Department of Education (DepEd), and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office I, ensuring alignment with institutional and governmental guidelines for research involving children-at-risk (CAR) and foster care populations (Department of Education, 2015; DSWD FO I, n.d.). Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all students, teachers, and legal guardians. Participants were fully briefed on the purpose of the study, their right to withdraw at any time, and the confidentiality of their responses. Personal identifiers were anonymized, and data were securely stored to prevent unauthorized access.

The study maintained sensitivity toward the vulnerable nature of CAR participants. Researchers employed non-invasive, age-appropriate instruments and conducted interviews in a supportive, private environment to minimize distress or discomfort. Care was taken to avoid exposing participants to topics that could trigger trauma. Teachers, social workers, and foster parents were engaged as mediators and support personnel during data collection. Furthermore, all findings are reported objectively, without exaggeration or misrepresentation, and recommendations focus on improving educational and psychosocial outcomes while respecting the participants' welfare. Any potential conflicts of interest were disclosed, and the research team committed to professional integrity throughout the study.

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