



Espiral. Cuadernos del Profesorado
Vol. 18, Issue 38
September 2025
ISSN 1988-7701

How to reference this article:

Baena-Extremera, A., Hueso López, C., Sánchez-fuentes, J. A., Isidori, E. & Ortiz-Camacho, M. (2025). Development of Emotional Intelligence in Primary Education through Physical Education: a systematic review. *Espiral Cuadernos del Profesorado*, 18(38), 30-48. <https://doi.org/10.25115/ecp.v18i38.10114>

Published on-line: 25 of September of 2025

Development of Emotional Intelligence in Primary Education through Physical Education: a systematic review

Desarrollo de la inteligencia emocional en Educación Primaria a través de la Educación Física: una revisión sistemática

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Abstract

Background: Scientific evidence has shown that emotions play an essential role in the development of behavior, decision making and socialization of our students. Moreover, their work in educational centers has been consolidated in a prescriptive way in the curricular regulations, being mandatory. Therefore, the aim of this systematic review is to identify and analyze the most effective teaching strategies for the development of emotional intelligence in the Primary Education stage, through Physical Education. This work addresses how to work and promote emotional competences from an early age, highlighting that the use of these competences helps the wellbeing of primary school students, as well as their academic success, among others. **Method:** Articles published from 2017 to December 2024 collected in the Web of Science and Scopus were selected, which after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria were reduced to a total of 10 articles. The Cochrane Risk of Bias in Nonrandomized Studies (ROBINS-I) collaboration tool was used with the aim of assessing the risk of bias of nonrandomized investigations of interventions and quasi-experimental and experimental studies. **Results and discussion:** The results show the most effective didactic strategies for emotional development through Physical Education and its implication both in the educational and socio-personal aspects of the students. In addition, the importance of continuous training for teachers and the incorporation of work plans on emotional intelligence are highlighted, as well as recommendations for teachers and educational administrations.

Keywords: Emotional education; strategy; intelligence; emotion; physical education.

Resumen

Antecedentes: La evidencia científica ha demostrado que las emociones desempeñan un papel esencial en el desarrollo de la conducta, la toma de decisiones y la socialización de nuestros alumnos/as. Además, su trabajo desde los centros educativos se ha consolidado de forma prescriptiva en la normativa curricular, siendo de obligado cumplimiento. Por ello, el objetivo de esta revisión sistemática es identificar y analizar las estrategias de enseñanza más eficaces para el desarrollo de la inteligencia emocional en la etapa de Educación Primaria, a través de la Educación Física. Con este trabajo se aborda el cómo trabajar y fomentar las competencias emocionales desde edades tempranas, destacando con ello que el uso de éstas, ayudan al bienestar de los alumnos/as de educación primaria, así como al éxito a nivel académico, entre otros. **Método:** Se seleccionaron los artículos publicados desde 2017 hasta diciembre de 2024 recogidos en la *Web of Science* y *Scopus*, que tras aplicar los criterios de inclusión y exclusión quedaron reducidos en un total de 10 artículos. Se usó la herramienta de la colaboración *Cochrane Risk of Bias in Non randomized Studies* (ROBINS-I) con la finalidad de evaluar el riesgo de sesgo de investigaciones no aleatorizadas de intervenciones y estudios cuasi-experimentales y experimentales. **Resultados y discusión:** Los resultados muestran las estrategias didácticas más efectivas para el desarrollo emocional a través de la Educación Física y su implicación tanto en el ámbito educativo como sociopersonal del alumnado. Además, se destaca la importancia de la formación continua por parte del profesorado y la incorporación de planes de trabajo sobre la inteligencia emocional, así como las recomendaciones para profesores y administraciones educativas.

Palabras clave: Educación emocional; estrategia; inteligencia; emociones, Educación Física.

Received: September 18, 2024

Accepted: March 17, 2025

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Introduction

Your child is ADHD!

Your child is very impulsive, so he/she won't pass, because he/she gets into a lot of trouble!

Your child does not study, does not pay attention, is not interested in anything!

Your child does not associate with anyone!

Your child is a troublemaker, always arguing with others!

Your child assaulted a classmate!

Your child disrespected a teacher!

...

These and countless other phrases are common in schools and tutorials throughout Spain. Many of these statements, and most importantly, many of these students, could improve in their personal and academic life thanks to an adequate emotional education (EE). Perhaps the problem is not them, the problem is that they have not been taught.

Traditionally, as highlighted by Ferreyra (2018), education in educational institutions has long focused on the mere transmission of knowledge and development of learning, excluding the socioemotional sphere of the student body. However, after numerous legislative and educational reforms, currently the primary education stage in Spain has evolved to focus on the development of competencies, which encompass the acquisition of skills at the personal, intellectual, social and emotional levels (Arias et al., 2022). Specifically, the competence dimension referring to emotions is recognized in the legislative sphere, being established in Royal Decree 157/2022, of March 1, establishing the organization and minimum teachings of Primary Education, in the area referring to Physical Education, the block of basic knowledge D. Emotional self-regulation and social interaction in motor situations. In this way, the aim is to train new generations that are capable of facing their future and adapting to the changing situations of today's society. And for this, Bisquerra and Chao (2021) point out that EE and emotional intelligence (EI) have a great role in the educational and social campus.

Throughout life, emotions play an essential role in the development of behavior, decision making and socialization of the human being with the environment. . As highlighted by Cañabate et al. (2020) and Cabello-Sanz et al. (2024), emotions constitute an integral component of the human being that influences both physical and mental health, as well as being a key element in the development of behavior, learning and social interaction.

In this regard, numerous authors (Cabello-Sanz & Muñoz-Parreño, 2023, among others), consider that EE constitutes a continuous and permanent educational process whose purpose is the development of emotional skills that allow human beings to coexist in society, in addition to improving their personal and social well-being. Authors such as Bisquerra and Chao (2021), conceive EE as the development of competencies (included in Bisquerra's pentagonal model) related to emotional awareness, regulation and autonomy; socioemotional competencies and competencies for well-being socio-personal. One of the aims of the EE is to achieve emotionally intelligent students. The progressive social demand makes it essential that students in this case possess the ability to know, interpret, express and manage their emotions in the most appropriate way in various contexts. In other words, they must be emotionally intelligent and competent, and not emotionally illiterate.

In the educational field, numerous studies such as that of Zoghلامي et al. (2023), propose the

motor component and the area of Physical Education as a whole as a broad tool of great utility in the development of these emotional competencies. In fact, in the curriculum corresponding to the primary education stage established by the national and regional legislative framework of Andalusia, block is included as a block of basic knowledge for the area of Physical Education *D. Emotional self-regulation and social interaction in motor situations*. This block includes aspects such as emotional management, the development of social skills, the concept of sportsmanship, as well as the identification and rejection of behaviors contrary to coexistence.

Therefore, it is essential to train properly qualified teachers for the transmission and development of EE and EI in their students, instilling attitudes and values in the different areas of knowledge, teaching them to channel frustrations and negative feelings, as well as to know and regulate their own emotions.

For all of the above, the development of EI in the educational setting requires an approach that combines various tools and methodologies adapted to the needs of students. In this case, it is essential to differentiate three key concepts that guide the implementation of interventions in the educational context: strategies, projects and methodological proposals.

- **Strategies:** these are one-off approaches or specific actions designed to achieve specific objectives within EI development (e.g., practical activities focused on emotional regulation during Physical Education sessions).

- **Projects:** these are broader, long-term, structured interventions that include multiple strategies and are organized under a defined framework with larger-scale objectives (such as educational programs that integrate EI into the annual curriculum).

- **Methodological proposals:** we understand this as the set of tools, pedagogical approaches and resources used by teachers to implement strategies and projects in the classroom, adapting them to the characteristics and needs of the students.

Having clarified these concepts, before beginning to analyze the different strategies with which to develop EI through this systematic review, it is necessary to be clear about some fundamental terms related to the subject. In the case of the term "intelligence", Méndez (2014), highlights in his study authors among which Gardner (1993) stands out, who does not propose a single type of intelligence, but the existence of "the different intelligences". This author provided a global definition, conceiving intelligence as the human capacity that allows solving problems or creating products of validity in a given cultural context or community.

Regarding intelligence, Rivero (2020) considers that EI is a term used to explain human behavior and conduct based on emotions. In the study of this concept, Goleman (1995) is one of the most outstanding authors for his book "*Emotional Intelligence*". In this book he defines this term as the ability of the human being to understand and manage emotions both in himself and towards others, highlighting empathy, mental dexterity or self-knowledge as key elements to build a positive relationship between the individual and his environment.

According to the study by Girón (2016), four models are distinguished in which the great importance of EI in the educational environment is evident:

- 1) Gardner's model of multiple intelligences (1993), who distinguishes eight types of intelligence, the most relevant for the development of EI being both interpersonal intelligence (ability to understand others and establish social relationships) and intrapersonal intelligence (ability to know, explain and discriminate one's own feelings in order to direct actions and achieve goals in life).
- 2) Salovey and Mayer (1997), who propose four phases in EI:
 - regulation of emotions,
 - understanding and recognition of emotions,
 - emotional facilitation of thought,
 - perception, valuation and emotional expression,

- 3) Goleman's model (1998), which is based on emotional competencies such as self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills and relationship control.
- 4) Bar-On's model (2000), like Gardner's model, although in this case it focuses on the need to create a space for the social sphere, highlighting intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships, the management of emotional situations and stress.

As summarized by Zhou et al. (2024), EI encompasses the knowledge, management and correct expression of emotions. Therefore, as Gómez-Marí (2020) agrees, it is not only possible to educate the aspects that constitute the intellectual component, but also the emotions. Bisquerra (2006), considers that the education of emotions should be an educational, continuous and constant process that seeks to enhance the development of EI as a key element in the cognitive and integral development of a person. Moreover, there are various strategies and methodologies, most of which are unknown to teachers and, therefore, are not applied in schools.

Regarding the study of strategies and methodologies for EE and EI, Mira-Galvañ and Gilar-Cobi (2021), highlight a considerable increase in research on programs for the improvement of socioemotional skills in schools, reflecting a positive relationship between different elements such as academic performance, perception skills, understanding and regulation of emotions, the reduction of disruptive behaviors, as well as greater psychological well-being. However, numerous authors (e.g. Muñoz-Oliver et al., 2022) point out the scarce volume of specific literature dealing with orientation and training of pedagogical strategies with which to train teachers trained in the design, implementation and evaluation of learning environments based on emotions. These authors criticize the absence of a didactic orientation that serves as a model for the efficient promotion of EE, despite the fact that educational legislation both at national level (*Royal Decree 157/2022, of March 1*) and at regional level (*Decree 101/2023, of May 9, establishing the organization and curriculum of the Primary Education stage in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia*) includes the implementation of didactic methodologies of emotional development in students as part of the educational curricula. Hence, there is currently a gap between what we should teach in schools, and what teachers master after their initial and ongoing training. This lack of knowledge about EE and EI to address the basic knowledge of the curriculum makes us unable to address them effectively, with the damage that this, acutely and chronically, are assuming in our students.

Taking into account all of the above, the need arises to investigate the didactic strategies and methodologies with which to achieve the development of EI in our students in order to make them known to teachers. For this reason, according to the considerations of Sánchez-Martín et al. (2023), the PICO question of this research would be: are the strategies and intervention proposals to improve EI carried out in primary school students through Physical Education equally effective? Therefore, the main objective of this systematic review is to investigate and compare the different strategies and intervention proposals that have been implemented for the development of EI in primary school classrooms through Physical Education, highlighting those of greater effectiveness and involvement in learning, understanding and regulation of emotions, both their own and those of others. As specific aims, the following were established:

- 1) Analyze the implications of EE in the development of students at both personal and social levels.
- 2) To investigate the different intervention strategies and projects that have been implemented for the development of EI in elementary classrooms through Physical Education.
- 3) To compare and contrast the results of the methodological proposals of emotional development investigated, highlighting those of greater effectiveness and involvement in the learning, understanding and regulation of emotions, both their own and those of others.

Method

Study Design

The present study consists of a systematic review of experimental and research papers quasi-experimental, with the aim of carrying out an analysis both at a quantitative level (papers located by keywords) and at a qualitative level (through an analysis by contributions to the objects of study of the present review). In this way, the discussion of different studies will allow conclusions to be drawn on the state of the art of the selected topic.

The search limits were defined according to the quality standards of the PRISMA flowchart (see Figure 1). For the literature review, research articles published from 2017 to December 2024 on emotional development strategies with primary school students from the area of Physical Education were selected. The choice of the last 8 years for this literature review is justified by the need to access current and relevant information that can provide information and educational implementation strategies adjusted to the current socio-educational situation and in line with the latest legislative trends.

As a previous step to the analysis of the issue on which this literature review is based, an exhaustive search of information from scientific articles, research journals and various studies was carried out. In this way, the most relevant aspects to be dealt with and the availability of information of interest for the realization of a systematic review on this subject were identified, thus verifying the feasibility and relevance of this proposal as a final degree project.

The selection process was carried out by two independent reviewers. Discrepancies were resolved by consensus and, if necessary, with the intervention of a third reviewer. In addition, we used specialized software, in this case Covidence, to manage, review and ensure data traceability. The first step in conducting the research was to define the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the articles, in addition to selecting the databases. Regarding the inclusion criteria, we considered:

- Work carried out in Physical Education at the primary education stage.
- Works where descriptors such as: "emotional intelligence", "primary education" and "Physical Education" are included.

In addition to these keywords or descriptors, a series of exclusion criteria have been taken into account, giving priority to articles with categories other than those shown below:

- Duplicate items.
- Articles on emotional development strategies that are not applied in Physical Education classes.
- Articles written in a language other than English or Spanish.
- Articles in which EI work are not implemented in primary schools.
- Articles that are not experimental or studies quasi-experimental.

Once the criteria had been established, the databases to be used for the review were selected, in this case the platforms *Web of Science* and *SCOPUS*. The choice of these databases was mainly due to their prestige and the reliability of the works collected in them, which guarantees quality. In the case of *Web of Science*, it is worth mentioning the great usefulness of access to articles written in English that enrich the research work by providing new ideas and contrasting information from works written in Spanish.

Information Processing

After specifying the criteria and the databases, we proceeded with the start of the investigation, obtaining a total of 39682 results corresponding to the previously mentioned descriptors within the established interval of years (Table 1).

Table 1*Results after the first search*

Search	Web of Science	Scopus
IE	530	387
Emotional Intelligence	22157	15106
IE	13	15
Primary Education		
Emotional Intelligence	444	244
Primary Education		
IE	10	12
Physical Education		
Emotional Intelligence	475	289
Physical education		

After the first search, and given the excessive number of studies located, it was decided to apply the Boolean connector AND resulting in the following search string: "Emotional intelligence AND Primary Education AND Physical Education", "IE AND Primary Education", "IE AND Physical Education". The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2*Results after the second search*

Search	Web of Science	Scopus
"Emotional intelligence AND Primary Education AND Physical Education".	70	47
"IE AND Primary Education"	13	15
"IE AND Physical Education"	10	12

Subsequently, the first exclusion criteria were applied, obtaining a total of 53 articles, since many of these results deal with EI from a more clinical and health-related approach, and do not focus as much on the educational dimension. The following exclusion criteria were then applied, giving priority to those research and intervention articles EI of an experimental or nature quasi-experimental and discarding numerous theoretical literature review studies. Thus, a total of 10 articles were finally selected which are the ones that finally make up the bibliographic references of this work, together with the educational legislation, both at national and Andalusian regional level, and the manual corresponding to the PRISMA 2020 declaration.

Article Quality Evaluation Tool

In addition to applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria and the previously mentioned descriptors, the tool was used *Cochrane Risk of Bias in Non-randomized Studies* (ROBINS-I) to assess the risk of bias in non-randomized investigations of interventions and studies quasi-experimental and experimental. This tool covers a total of seven domains of bias: D1) confounding, D2) participant selection, D3) intervention misclassification, D4) deviation from planned interventions, D5) missing

data, D6) outcome measurement, D7) selective outcome reporting. Each domain is scored by one of the evaluators (C.H.L.), issuing a judgment on the risk of bias, which can be low, moderate, serious, critical or no information, finally providing an overall assessment of the risk of bias for the study as a whole. The results obtained are presented in a traffic light diagram (Figure 2).

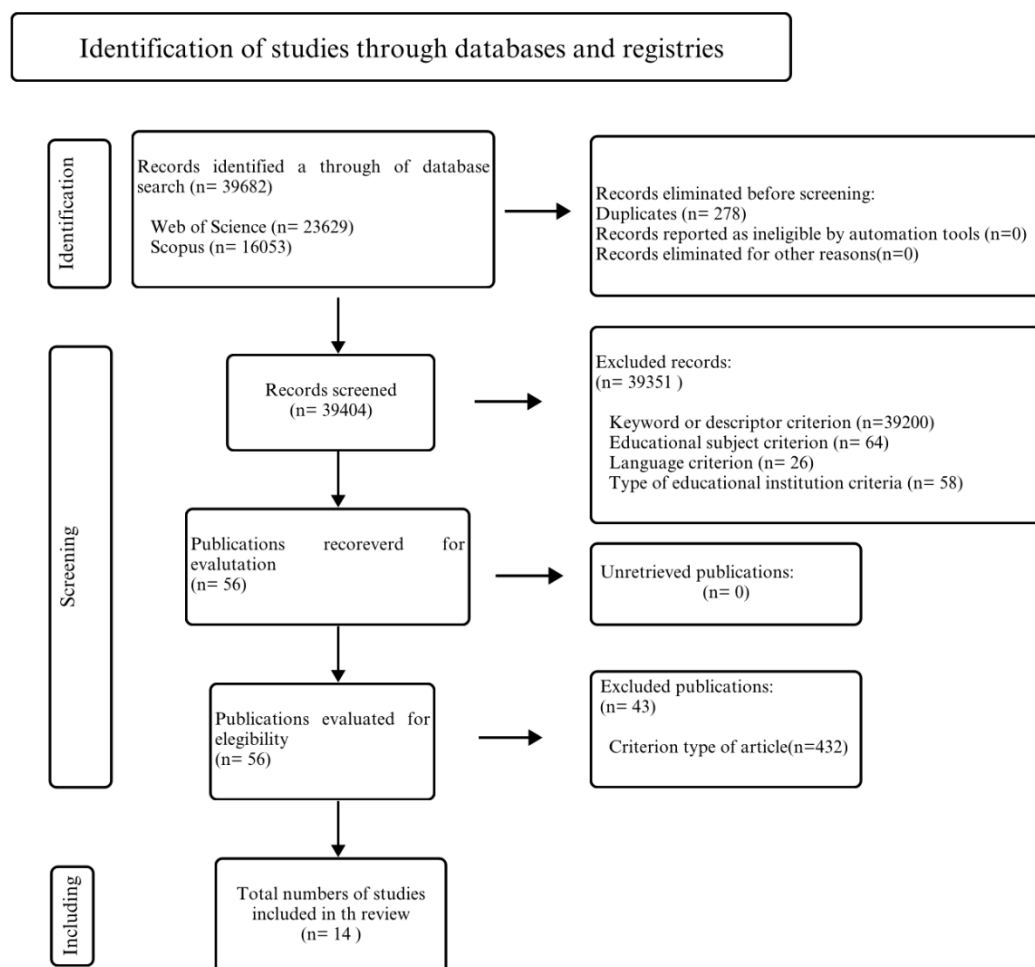
Results

Literature Search

The search results described above are summarized below using a flow chart established by the PRISMA statement (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Flow diagram. PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021)



Risk of Bias

Regarding the analysis of the risk of bias of the nonrandomized studies using the ROBINS-I tool, he indicated that the overall risk of bias for the selected articles was "moderate" (Figure 2).

Figure 2*ROBINS-I traffic light diagram of the risk of bias of the selected articles*

	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	Overall
Arias et al (2022)	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
Baena et al. (2021)	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	-
Cabello-Sanz et al. (2024)	-	-	+	+	-	+	+	-
Castillo et al. (2021)	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
Cañabate et al. (2020)	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
Dominguez and Castillo (2017)	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-
Filella-Guiu et al. (2014).	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-
Mira-Galvañ and Gilar-Cobi (2021)	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	-
Miralles et al. (2017).	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-
Zorrilla et al. (2019).	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-

Domains:

D1. Bias due to confusion.

D2. Participant selection bias.

D3: Bias in the classification of interventions.

D4: Bias due to deviations from planned interventions.

D5: Bias due to lack of data.

D6: Bias in outcome measurement.

D7: Bias in the selection of reported outcomes.

Judgment

Serious



Moderate



Under

Selected Articles

After selecting the articles based on the methodological quality criteria described above, a summary of the selected articles is shown below, specifying the key ideas extracted from each of them (Table 3):

Table 3*Summary of selected articles*

Author (year)	Research design	Participants	Methodology and research tools	Results
Arias et al. (2022)	Quasi-experimental	541 students in 5th and 6th grades of Primary Education	Variable assessed: emotional intelligence and academic motivation. Standardized questionnaires for data collection. Scale to measure the level of EI	The need to train new generations capable of adapting to changing situations, developing competencies at different levels, including the emotional level.
Baena et al. (2021)	Quasi-experimental	320 students in primary education and compulsory secondary education	Variable assessed: attention levels and stress levels. <i>Ad hoc</i> , questionnaires2 Attention Test, Childhood of Everyday Stressors (IIEC)Inventory	Utility of <i>mindfulness</i> in improving stress and attention levels in students.
Cabello-Sanz et al. (2024)	Quasi-experimental	66 primary school belonging to two ADHD associations pupils	Variable assessed: emotional competence Emotional Development Questionnaire for Adolescents (CDE-SEC) and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.	Positive influence of emotional competence on both physical and mental health, being key in the development of behavior, learning and social interaction.
Castillo et al. (2021)	Quasi-experimental	294 students in primary education	Variable assessed: emotional development through dramatization. EI Questionnaire	Dramatization as an element favoring the exploration and expression of emotions.
Cañabate et al. (2020)	Quasi-experimental	90 students in the 4th grade of Primary Education	Variable assessed: emotional self-regulation in physical education. Reduced version of the questionnaire <i>Trait-Meta Mood Scale</i> (TMMS).	Improved recognition and expression of emotions through practices introjective (yoga, tai chi, eutonia, active global stretching, Qi-gong and body expression in dance).
Dominguez and Castillo (2017)	Quasi-experimental	91 students of 5th and 6th grade of Primary Education.	Variable assessed: relationship between self-esteem and free-creative dance practice. Multimedia and Multilingual Self-Esteem Assessment Questionnaire	Dance as a favorable content in the learning and knowledge of emotions and feelings. Positive evolution in self-esteem and emotional stability.

Filella-Guiu et al. (2014).	Quasi-experimental	423 elementary school students	Variable assessed: emotional competence after implementation.	assessed: competence program	Increased self-esteem and ability to manage emotions in social situations through EE work.
			PASW statistical software Statistic 18 and test. Kol-mogorov Smirnov		
Mira-Galvañ and Gilar-Cobi (2021)	Quasi-experimental	86 Primary Education students	Variable assessed: relationship between the emotional climate of the classroom and the "Okapi" cooperative learning emotional education program.	assessed: the emotional climate of the classroom and the "Okapi" cooperative learning education program.	Positive relationship between academic performance, perception, understanding and regulation of emotions; reduction of disruptive behaviors and psychological well-being.
			Generalized Linear Model (GLM) and Box's M test		
Miralles et al. (2017).	Quasi-experimental	860 students in 5th and 6th grades of Primary Education	Variable assessed: intensity of emotions experienced in motor games in physical education.	assessed: intensity of emotions experienced in motor games in physical education.	Importance of the approach of the objective of the motor games. Relaxation motor activities as a tool that favors emotional expression. More innovative PE classes
			GES, <i>Scale Games and Emotions Scale</i> . Teachers' personal diaries and focus group work.		
Zorrilla et al. (2019).	Quasi-experimental	93 students from 6 to 8 years of Primary Education.	Variable assessed: efficacy of the emotional strategies implemented through the "Siente Jugando" program in the context of physical education.	assessed: efficacy of the emotional strategies implemented through the "Siente Jugando" program in the context of physical education.	Socioemotional training sessions through motor games favor the development of socioemotional competence: peaceful and cooperative conflict resolution.
			EIS Questionnaire (Garai-gordobil, 2005)		

• General Characteristics of the Studies

Table 4 shows the general characteristics of the studies included in this systematic review. The studies were mainly centered in different cities in Spain, with approximately 50% of the studies located in cities in the north of the country, with a total initial sample of 2864 subjects in primary education, and 123 students in infant education who were not taken into account. Of the known sample, 1092 subjects were male and 1021 were female, with a mean age of 8.9 years. The dropout rate of the students in the investigations was 7.15% on average in all the studies, being in most cases 0% and some reaching dropout levels of 35%. The studies are mainly centered on public schools and institutes as opposed to private or subsidized ones.

Table 4*General Characteristics of the Studies*

First author (ref)	City/ Country	Sample (start/end)	Abandonme nt %	Type of center	Gender	
					male	female
Arias et al. (2022)	Pontevedra/ Spain	541/-	0	Public	270	271
Baena et al. (2021)	Granada/ Spain	343/320	7%	Subsidized and Public	-	-
Cabello-Sanz et al. (2024)	Burgos and Basque Country/ Spain	66/-	0	2 ADHD associations	48	18
Castillo et al. (2021)	Huelva/ Spain	294/-	0	Public	141	153
Cañabate et al. (2020)	Girona/ Spain	90/-	0	4 centers	36	54
Dominguez and Castillo (2017)	Huelva/ Spain	91/-	0	1 public center	-	-
Filella-Guiu et al. (2014).	Lleida/ Spain	651/423	35%	8 public centers	217	206
Mira-Galvañ and Gilar-Cobi (2021)	Alicante/ Spain	86/-	0	2 public centers	-	-
Miralles et al. (2017).	Lleida/ Spain	860/606	29.5%	11 public centers	325	281
Zorrilla et al. (2019).	Castellón de la Plana/ Spain	93/-	0	Infant and Primary Public	55	38

• Implications of EE

Numerous studies have demonstrated the importance of working on EE during the teaching-learning process due to its numerous implications in the integral development of the human being. In this sense, Cepa et al. (2017), argues that EE constitutes an essential tool through which to provide students with knowledge and skills related to emotions, thus making people capable of evaluating their own and others' emotions, in addition to making timely decisions to function properly in society. On this, in the analysis carried out on the work of Sepúlveda et al. (2019), the authors add the improvement of different educational areas that are favored with the development of emotional competencies, such as interpersonal relationships, problem solving, decision making, creativity, the learning process and critical thinking, results that are of great interest.

In other words, EE and the improvement of EI entail an increase in well-being at both the personal and social levels. Therefore, these authors consider it essential to take into account the emotional dimension of education in order to achieve the integral development of learners, highlighting the importance of going beyond the simple transmission of knowledge. Thus, teaching is conceived from a practical perspective on life, whose main objective is the formation of autonomous, critical, reflective and emotionally competent citizens.

• Development Strategies and Results of the Methodological Proposals

Numerous studies such as the one developed by Zorrilla et al. (2019) and Valldecabres and López (2024), agree on the effectiveness of "Service-Learning" as a methodological strategy in the integral development of students, promoting learning based on the real needs of the environment with the aim of improving it, thus being an active and experiential methodology. Based on this, these authors

propose an intervention program called "Feel Playing", developed in a total of 16 sessions of 45 minutes (2 weekly sessions). This program consists of the implementation of socioemotional training sessions at school through motor play as a fundamental means for the development of socioemotional competence. These sessions are based on three thematic axes: emotional awareness, self-concept and socioemotional skills. In each session, a fixed structure is followed: presentation, cooperative, competitive and cooperative-competitive games, and the questioning of "How we feel" during and at the end each game of. In this question, the students are directed to some colored stickers that represent gestures of the emotions drawn and must place them on a template. To close the session, a final reflection on the emotions experienced is carried out. Likewise, a conflict resolution protocol is provided to the students to learn how to manage this type of situation during the sessions, discussing possible alternatives for resolution at the end of the class.

After this program, students showed a greater capacity for conflict resolution, highlighting the use of cooperative games as a strategy to reduce aggressive reactions among peers by fostering a feeling of cooperation, union and belonging to a group. Based on the results collected (Zorrilla et al., 2019, Table 1, p. 176), a significant increase in the variables is reflected. *Direct E. and Indirect E. Indirect*, and a decrease in the variable *aggressive E.* in the group posttest; the usefulness of this type of program in the social development and emotional management of the students is demonstrated, by providing them with resources and direct and indirect strategies with which to resolve different conflicts, reducing aggressive strategies in the school context.

Other studies advocate the field of corporal expression as a didactic strategy for the emotional development of students or as content in itself, making use of everyday situations close to their environment. Castillo et al. (2021), consider that dramatization work at school age contributes favorably to the exploration and expression of feelings. In their study, two 45-minute weekly sessions were carried out during a period of eight weeks, with a methodology focused on dramatization, for a period of eight weeks. Among the dramatization contents included in their intervention proposal are disinhibition and spontaneity; symbolic, expression, functional and improvisation games; different dramatic forms through exercises with puppets, marionettes, masks, shadow theater, collective and text creations; basic components of the dramatic scheme (characters, theme, space...); body expression (rhythm and body movement); exploration with material elements (music, lighting, costumes, objects and decoration); as well as the analysis of theatrical performances.

After the implementation of this proposal, considerable improvements in EI were obtained in the variables corresponding to emotional expressiveness, self-control, motivation and self-knowledge. Therefore, as can be seen in the results, there have been significant improvements in the different aspects of EI in the students. Thus, it can be seen that dramatization tasks contribute favorably to the exploration and expression of feelings, constituting a didactic strategy through which to work on EI in all its areas.

These results are closely related to the intervention developed by Domínguez and Castillo (2017), in which dance is proposed as a content of body expression favorable in the learning and knowledge of emotions and feelings. This proposal consists of a learning situation consisting of 13 sessions of dance and body expression, aimed at students in the third cycle of primary school, as this is a fundamental stage for the acquisition of skills and emotional resources useful in their development socio-personal during the next educational stage, secondary education. In this intervention we work on capacities basic physical (flexibility and resistance), motor skills (displacements, jumps, turns, balance and coordination), basic body expression (body control and awareness), spatiality (organization and spatial structuring, planes, straight and curved movements), time (rhythm, fast and slow movements, continuous/discontinuous), and energy (soft or strong intensity).

After its implementation, a positive evolution in the different dimensions of self-esteem, including emotional stability, was observed in the experimental group. Likewise, there is a significant increase in the levels of self-concept of emotional stability in the experimental group. Thus, this free-creative dance program is shown to be a very useful didactic tool to support the teaching work from the area of Physical Education in the improvement of positive self-esteem and the integral development of students, promoting greater awareness, understanding and management of their emotional states.

Other research currents (e.g. Cañabate et al., 2020), postulate the development of practices introjective in the classroom as an innovative educational approach, with which to provide students with opportunities for learning and experiencing emotions, contributing to their integral development. These authors propose an intervention in which are worked with six types of practices primary school introjective students: yoga, tai chi, eutonia, active global stretching, Qi-gong and body expression in dance; carried out in Physical Education sessions four days a week, with a total duration of six weeks. At the beginning and end of each session, the students had to follow a certain ritual: four minutes of silence to relax and create an appropriate classroom climate at the beginning of the class; and at the end of the session, a reflection on the development of the class, the experiences or emotions lived with their classmates. After the implementation of these introjection practices, a great impact was observed in the levels of emotional attention, greatly improving the recognition and expression of emotions.

Analyzing the data provided by Cañabate et al. (2020, p. 6), if the pretest and are compared posttest, the greatest differences are found in the dimension of emotional attention, that is, the perception of emotions. In the question *"I pay a lot of attention to what I feel"*, a positive difference of 26% is observed; in the question *"I allow my feelings to affect my thoughts"* with a 23.7% difference; and in the question *"I tend to be very aware of what I feel"*, with a 23% difference. Therefore, as verified by this intervention, the practices provide students with opportunities to express themselves and share with others how they feel. Thus, the application of practices introjective in a Physical Education class constitutes a didactic approach to stimulate self-awareness processes in elementary school students, favoring emotional self-control

Another proposal with an character introjective is the work dedicated to meditation and *mindfulness*, which aims to promote self-knowledge and self-control of emotions, based on the fact that this content improves stress and attention in students (Baena-Extremuera et al., 2021). In the case of research by Baena-Extremuera et al. (2021), this program was carried out over 6 weeks, following a book where the materials and audios (between 4 and 17 minutes) are provided to work in class every day, at the beginning of each session. Thanks to this program, the authors were able to reduce stress and improve attention in students, according to age, school and gender. In addition, the program *mindfulness* produced improvements in all the centers, showing differences between the control and experimental groups. This type of strategy is very useful, even more so, when everything is worked following the guidelines of a book already published, (*Breathe: Mindfulness for parents with teenage children* by Snel, 2015), which makes it affordable and achievable for all teachers.

On the other hand, there are specialists who have analyzed the effectiveness of certain methodological strategies for the emotional development of students that arise from the motor practices of Physical Education. In this sense, Miralles et al. (2017) among others, defend the importance of raising the objective of a collective motor game in the classroom. They propose an emotional awareness program consisting of two phases. The first one of training and introduction of the subject matter to the students during 5 sessions, and a second phase focused on the realization of games of different domains in a total of 4 sessions. After its implementation, these authors reached different conclusions, among them, that the goal of the game should be "winning" instead of focusing on "not losing", since in the latter case it has been proven that very negative emotions arise in primary school students. In fact, it has been observed that many teachers tend to set the objective of team motor games as "not to lose again" after losing for the first time, an aspect to be avoided in order to improve the coexistence among classmates and generate more positive than negative emotions. Likewise, and in relation to the practices previously mentioned, these authors have found that motor relaxation activities such as yoga or stretching constitute a tool that favors the expression of emotions. In this way, they advocate for more innovative Physical Education classes, avoiding focusing only on collective motor games.

For their part, Mujica et al. (2018), consider essential the type of teaching model used in class, giving it even more importance than the type of motor activity. As verified by these authors, those teachers who employ a multiple teaching style have a greater positive impact on the ability to manage emotions and increase physical fitness through the improvement of their emotions related to self-esteem, resilience and commitment. Therefore, the teacher's skills to teach and promote in their emotional skills from a multiple methodological approach is a fundamental element in this area of development. students

Discussion

The main purpose of this systematic review was to investigate and compare the best strategies for socioemotional development in primary school classrooms through Physical Education, contrasting the results obtained to highlight those of greater effectiveness. In order to respond to this general objective and its corresponding specific objectives, we have described those proposals that, after their application in real school contexts, have shown favorable results in the different components of EI and interpersonal relationships: conflict resolution, self-knowledge, emotional self-awareness, positive self-esteem and emotional stability. As teachers and as Physical Education specialists, the use of various strategies for the improvement of EI in primary education students through this subject, can be an effective means in improving our students in their happiness as human beings and in their academic and professional success as people (Filella-Guiu et al., 2014; Cabello Sanz & Muñoz Parreño, 2023) in all its aspects. By doing so, we could avoid losing many people, many students, and many teachers, both personally and socially.

In relation to the first specific objective, the review has shown that multiple intelligences programs that include socioemotional training for students can be complex to implement (Cabello Sanz & Muñoz Parreño, 2023). This is due to the need for coordination between different educational actors and the lack of resources and specialized training, especially when there is a great diversity of students in the classroom, such as students with ADHD (Cabello-Sanz et al., 2024). In addition, it should be noted that practices such as *mindfulness* and yoga can be difficult to implement due to the lack of specialized training among Physical Education teachers and the consideration that these practices are alien to the traditional curriculum of this area. In response to this problem, one option is to follow a document with already established programs, which have been contrasted both in their use and effectiveness (Baena-Extremera et al., 2021).

In relation to the second and third specific objective, after the in-depth analysis of the results obtained from reflective and critical thinking, as teachers we may be more inclined to adopt those strategies that make use of the dynamic and corporal environment of this field of knowledge in order to promote the emotional development of students. Specifically, we consider that of the strategies mentioned above, among those with the greatest potential and depth are, on the one hand, activities corporal expression (dance and dramatization), which are highly effective in promoting both physical and emotional self-knowledge, allowing the exploration and expression of emotions in a natural and real way.

On the other hand, stand motor games. Through this type of activities, self-regulation, stress control, frustration, resilience and anxiety can be worked on in a safe and trusting environment. They also contribute to the development of interpersonal skills, empathy and conflict management, identifying and responding to the emotions of peers with respect. Some studies have already shown the relationship, for example, between EI and resilience in Physical Education, in periods as difficult for students as the Covid-19 pandemic (Torres-Gázquez et al., 2023).

Also, are highlighted introjective and relaxation practices for their great usefulness in helping learners to recognize and express their emotions, reducing stress levels and promoting overall well-being. In this way, they contribute favorably to emotional self-awareness.

Outside the systematic review carried out and outside the scope of primary education (and therefore could be extrapolated to this stage and the following ones), is *Outdoor Learning, Adventure Education* or outdoor learning. Based on this methodology, Molyneux et al. (2023) propose outdoor learning as a context conducive to socioemotional learning in schoolchildren. In their study, focus groups on outdoor learning were organized, in which educators from different schools shared their experiences and conclusions after the implementation of this didactic strategy. As general results, benefits were perceived in the development of students in the social, emotional, physical and cognitive dimensions after the implementation of *Outdoor Learning*, developing the classes of different subjects in spaces outside the classroom, mainly outdoors in natural and quiet environments. The analysis of the benefits was carried out around eight items: self-knowledge, self-management, knowledge and care for

others, coexistence with peers, evaluation of one's own progress, analyzing personal interests, level of activity and experiencing personal well-being. The main conclusion of the educators after this intervention and analysis it was the great usefulness of outdoor learning as a means to provide learners with opportunities to learn, experience and practice social-emotional skills. The evidence and scientific literature has made more than clear the educational and emotional benefits that the natural environment and the practice of sports in this environment achieve in students (Granero-Gallegos & Baena-Extremera, 2007; Baena-Extremera & González-Melero, 2024). In order to carry out this multiple educational approach, we consider that they present certain practical challenges for its implementation by teachers, such as being well versed in models *Adventure Education* and *Outdoor* (Baena-Extremera, 2011; González-Rivas et al., 2023), an aspect that today is already known not to be the case (González-Melero et al., 2023).

In relation to bias, it should be noted that the selected studies show a bias in several indicators, such as the case of "identifying possible confounding factors" in each investigation. This confounding can occur when several variables can have an influence on the magnitude or probability of the intervention occurring, and also on the magnitude and/or probability of the outcome of the intervention. As observed in the ROBINS-I assessment, most of the articles did not correctly control for possible contaminating factors, resulting in a moderate bias. Another important bias found in this review is located in the "selection of participants", a very common bias in this type of quasi-experimental methodology. In these designs, this type of bias is understood as the systematic difference between the results obtained from a non-randomized study versus a randomized study without flaws in its execution. Due to the type of population, organization of the center, etc., this bias is quite common in this type of research. Finally, the last important bias would be in "outcome measurement," something that is of serious concern not only in this research, but in every intervention. This bias can occur when the evaluators are aware that the state of the intervention is not being adequate, or if different methods were used in the different groups to assess outcomes, or even if the measurement errors were related to the assigned group or to the effects of the intervention. Finally, it should be noted that as *overall*, a moderate bias is understood in all manuscripts, which leads to the understanding that the results shown in this investigation should be taken with caution and should be ratified in subsequent investigations.

Limitations

The first limitation of this research is related to the time range, since only research conducted between 2017 and 2024 has been analyzed. Another of the most important limitations is the lack of studies where the same interventions, projects, strategies, etc., can be compared and impactful conclusions can be obtained. Finally, another limitation of this research, is based on the heterogeneous sample of studies, including varied subjects and interventions, which makes it difficult to compare in a research of this type.

Conclusions

With respect to the first objective formulated, the research articles analyzed throughout this review point to the importance of EE as a differentiating element in the educational process, highlighting its effects on the integral development of students. Thus, we can conclude that EE and the development of EI not only provide students with skills to understand and regulate their own emotions but also contribute favorably to various aspects of the educational context such as interpersonal relationships, problem solving and the learning process as a whole, both academic and personal.

The second objective of this review focused on investigating the intervention strategies and projects that have been implemented in primary classrooms through Physical Education. In this sense, we can conclude by highlighting the importance of the area of Physical Education, this being a discipline that offers a unique and dynamic environment with which to promote the comprehensive development of emotional skills. This is due to the possibility that this subject has in combining corporal experience, immediate, contact with nature, intra and interpersonal work in their tasks, emotional well-being and overcoming challenges through personal and group effort, among others, something that few subjects

can do. On the other hand, we can conclude that intervention strategies and projects present diverse research biases, which suggests the need to improve intervention programs in these educational stages.

feedback

The third and last objective of this research was to compare and contrast the results of the methodological proposals found in order to highlight those of greater effectiveness and involvement in the emotional development of students. In this case, we can conclude that many stand out effective, such as the work of body expression contents, especially dramatization and dance, the implementation of practices proposals introjective such as *mindfulness* and the inclusion of relaxing motor practices such as yoga, etc. To this we must add other powerful such as the use of motor games, proposals or *Outdoor Learning*.

On the other hand, the importance of the methodological approach and the teaching style of the teacher in the emotional development of the students should be emphasized, being of great interest the multiple educational approach in the promotion of an environment conducive to the emotional growth of the learners. This type of didactic approach contemplates the diversity of emotional and learning needs of students and promotes their treatment in a personalized and comprehensive manner. By implementing different pedagogical methods, such as project-based learning, experiential learning and cooperative learning, etc., educators can adjust to the different ways of approaching information and emotionally relating to the contents. Moreover, it not only leads to greater motivation and engagement on the part of learners but also provides them with the possibility of exploring and reflecting on their emotions in a constructive and creative way. Therefore, the adoption of this multiple educational perspective constitutes a very useful element in the consolidation of educational environments that foster the emotional growth of learners.

The results obtained in this systematic review highlight the importance of integrating EI strategies in Physical Education and their practical implications for the emotional development of students. After analyzing the manuscripts, it is clear that emotions are an intrinsic part of the human being from an early age, and their understanding and control evolve over time. It is necessary to implement intervention programs in the classroom established prior to the primary education stage, that attend to the evolutionary stages of the students and subject to what is established in the ordinary curriculum, presenting a multicomponent character that includes the socioemotional training of the educational community (students, teachers and family members). In the case of negative emotions, these play an essential role in learning and socioemotional development, while positive emotions are closely related to personal well-being. At the political level, it is suggested that emotional competencies be incorporated into official curricula and that mandatory training programs be designed for teachers.

On the other hand, data extraction was performed by two independent reviewers, and there may have been some subjectivity in the interpretation of some of these criteria, which may have influenced the decisions made. To mitigate this risk, a predefined protocol was established, and, in case of discrepancies, the intervention of a third reviewer was used to ensure consensus. Although the protocol for this review was not registered in platforms such as PROSPERO, a rigorous internal process was designed and applied that included inclusion/exclusion criteria and bias assessment. Recognizing the importance of registration for transparency and replicability, it is recommended to adopt it in future research to strengthen validity and confidence in the results.

In summary, this study has shown that EE and EI in Physical Education can have a positive impact on the educational process, which not only favors the personal well-being of students, but also contributes significantly to their academic performance and their ability to function in society. The implementation of effective strategies and an appropriate pedagogical approach are fundamental elements to create an emotionally enriching educational climate that is suitable for the integral growth of students, with increases in self-awareness and emotional management. For all these reasons, it is necessary to influence teacher training and the implementation of a greater number of intervention proposals both in the area of Physical Education and in the primary school stage in general.

Contribution of each Author: Conceptualization, C.H.L. and J.A.S.F.; methodology, A.B.E. and M.M.O.C.; analysis, A.B.E. and M.M.O.C.; manuscript writing, C.H.L., J.A.S.F., A.B.E., and M.M.O.C.; writing, revising and editing, C.H.L., J.A.S.F., A.B.E. and M.M.O.C.

Funding: "This research did not receive any external funding".

Conflict of Interest: "The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest". If they have a conflict of interest, they should indicate it in this section.

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