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Implementation Practices of Every Child A Reader Program: A Proposed Enhancement Plan

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the implementation practices of the Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP) in Lopez Jaena District, Division of Misamis Occidental, during School Year 2025–2026. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 120 teachers and school heads through a validated questionnaire. Results revealed a moderate overall level of implementation ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.78$). Assessment and monitoring obtained the highest mean (3.26), followed by instructional strategies and interventions (3.22) and program planning and organization (3.10). Reading materials (2.73) and stakeholder involvement (2.63) were comparatively weaker. Challenges were experienced to a great extent ($M = 3.05$), particularly difficulty in addressing diverse reading levels (3.61) and limited appropriate reading materials (3.56). Position ($p = .390$) and teaching experience ($p = .274$) were not significantly related to implementation, while relevant training was significant ($p = .018$). A comprehensive enhancement plan was therefore proposed focusing on teacher capacity-building, resources, assessment and monitoring, stakeholder engagement, workload management, and program sustainability.

Keywords: assessment, challenges, ECARP, implementation, literacy, monitoring, planning, strategies, training

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Introduction

Reading is a foundational skill that enables learners to access knowledge across the curriculum. Yet many children continue to struggle with basic literacy. UNESCO (2021) and the World Bank (2022) describe this problem through the concept of learning poverty, while PISA 2022 results continue to show serious reading difficulties among Filipino learners (OECD, 2023). These conditions reinforce the need for systematic school-based reading intervention.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education implements the Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP) to support grade-level reading proficiency through diagnostic assessment, targeted intervention, and continuous monitoring (Department of Education [DepEd], 2022). Teachers deliver direct reading instruction and remediation, while school heads provide planning, supervision, monitoring, and resource support. Thus, program effectiveness depends on the interaction of classroom practice and instructional leadership.

Local literature emphasizes that implementation quality is influenced by teachers' understanding of reading programs, leadership support, professional preparation, and available resources (Bautista & Ocampo, 2021; Cultura et al., 2025). Differentiated instruction, repeated reading, guided oral reading, contextualized materials, and data-informed intervention are frequently identified as practical strategies for addressing mixed reading levels (Diron & Baldonado, 2025; Pereyra, 2025).

The study is anchored on Constructivist Learning Theory, Instructional Leadership Theory, Program Implementation Theory, and Sociocultural Theory. Constructivism emphasizes scaffolded and meaningful learning (Bruner, 1966); instructional leadership highlights school heads' influence on teaching and program sustainability (Hallinger, 2011); implementation theory explains how real-world conditions affect program fidelity (Fixsen et al., 2005); and sociocultural theory recognizes the influence of interaction, family, and community support on learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

In Lopez Jaena District, the study was prompted by continuing reading gaps and the need to determine how ECARP is implemented across schools. It examined respondents' profiles, five dimensions of implementation, implementation challenges, and the relationship between professional profile and implementation. The findings were used as the basis for an enhancement plan and a district-level Reading Development Plan.

Methods

The study used a descriptive-correlational research design in Lopez Jaena District, Division of Misamis Occidental, during School Year 2025–2026. The respondents were 120 teachers and school heads directly involved in ECARP. A researcher-developed structured questionnaire, validated by experts and subjected to reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha, measured respondent profile, extent of implementation, and challenges. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, and chi-square test of independence. Ethical procedures included permission, informed participation, confidentiality, and appropriate handling of research data.

Results and Discussions

The Profile of the Respondents

Position	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Teacher I–III	96	80.0%
Master Teacher I–III	20	16.7%
Head Teacher I–V	4	3.3%
Total	120	100%
Years of Teaching	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1–5 years	35	29.2%
6–10 years	30	25.0%
11–15 years	25	20.8%
16–20 years	15	12.5%
21 years and above	15	12.5%
Total	120	100%

Trainings Attended	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Early Grade Reading Program (EGRP) Training	28	23.3%
Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP)	22	18.3%
Phil-IRI Administration and Interpretation	30	25.0%
Reading Intervention / Remediation Workshops	18	15.0%
Literacy/Reading Strategies Seminar (Division/Regional)	12	10.0%
No Relevant Training Attended	10	8.3%
Total	120	100%

Most respondents were Teacher I–III (80.0%), while Master Teachers comprised 16.7% and Head Teachers 3.3%. More than half (54.2%) had one to ten years of teaching experience. Training participation was varied: Phil-IRI Administration and Interpretation accounted for 25.0%, EGRP training 23.3%, ECARP training 18.3%, reading intervention/remediation workshops 15.0%, literacy or reading strategies seminars 10.0%, while 8.3% reported no relevant training. These results show that implementation is largely classroom-driven and that professional preparation is uneven across implementers.

The concentration of implementation among classroom teachers underscores their central role in translating reading policy into daily practice. At the same time, instructional leadership remains important because school heads influence supervision, technical assistance, scheduling, and resource allocation (Hallinger, 2011; Bautista & Ocampo, 2021). The variation in training is especially important because later analysis shows that training, unlike position and teaching experience, is significantly associated with ECARP implementation.

Extent of ECARP Implementation *Program Planning and Organization*

Statements	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
1. Clear goals and objectives for the reading program are established and communicated.	3.21	0.68	Agree
2. A structured plan for implementing reading activities is developed at the beginning of the school year.	3.18	0.72	Agree
3. Roles and responsibilities of teachers and coordinators are clearly defined.	3.05	0.75	Agree
4. Time is properly allocated for reading interventions in the class schedule.	2.94	0.81	Agree
5. The program is regularly reviewed and improved based on feedback and results.	3.10	0.77	Agree
Overall Mean	3.10	0.75	Agree

Program planning and organization obtained an overall mean of 3.10 (SD = 0.75), interpreted as Agree and indicating moderate implementation. Clear goals and objectives received the highest mean (3.21), followed by structured planning at the beginning of the school year (3.18). The lowest mean was recorded for proper allocation of time for reading interventions (2.94).

The pattern indicates that schools generally establish plans, roles, and program directions, but translating these plans into protected intervention time remains more difficult. Program Implementation Theory explains that policy design alone does not guarantee implementation; schedules, workload, resources, and local operating conditions determine whether planned activities can be carried out consistently (Fixsen et al., 2005). This finding also supports local reports that reading intervention competes with curriculum coverage and other school responsibilities (Tolentin, 2023; Apostol, 2024).

Instructional Strategies and Interventions

Statements	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
Teachers use varied reading strategies to address different learner needs.	3.32	0.65	Agree
Remedial reading sessions are conducted for struggling readers.	3.45	0.70	Agree
Differentiated instruction is applied in teaching reading.	3.08	0.78	Agree
Interactive and engaging reading activities are implemented in class.	3.36	0.69	Agree
Teachers receive support or training on effective reading strategies.	2.87	0.83	Agree
Overall Mean	3.22	0.73	Agree

Instructional strategies and interventions obtained an overall mean of 3.22 (SD = 0.73). Remedial reading sessions received the highest mean (3.45), followed by interactive and engaging reading activities (3.36) and the use of varied strategies (3.32). Support or training on effective reading strategies received the lowest mean (2.87).

The results indicate that teachers are actively using classroom-based strategies to respond to reading difficulties. This is consistent with literature emphasizing differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, scaffolded tasks, guided reading, repeated practice, and contextualized intervention for learners at different proficiency levels (Diron & Baldonado, 2025; Ferrer, 2025; Pereyra, 2025). However, the comparatively lower rating for teacher support and training suggests that implementation depends partly on teachers' individual capacity and available professional development.

Assessment and Monitoring of Learners' Reading Progress

Statements	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
Learners' reading levels are regularly assessed using appropriate tools.	3.41	0.66	Agree
Teachers maintain records of learners' reading progress.	3.36	0.71	Agree
Assessment results are used to improve instruction and interventions.	3.18	0.79	Agree
Progress of struggling readers is closely monitored.	3.27	0.74	Agree
Feedback on reading performance is regularly provided to learners.	3.09	0.82	Agree
Overall Mean	3.26	0.74	Agree

Assessment and monitoring emerged as the strongest implementation dimension, with an overall mean of 3.26 (SD = 0.74). Regular assessment of reading levels obtained 3.41, record keeping 3.36, and close monitoring of struggling readers 3.27. The use of results to improve instruction obtained 3.18, while regular feedback to learners received 3.09.

This suggests that schools have established assessment routines and use reading data as a major component of ECARP. Phil-IRI and related measures can guide grouping, identify priority skills, and determine the intensity of intervention when teachers are able to interpret and apply the results (Casingal, 2022; DepEd, 2025). The lower score for feedback, however, indicates an area where assessment can be made more instructionally meaningful.

Availability and Utilization of Reading Materials

Statements	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
Sufficient reading materials are available for learners at different levels.	2.41	0.92	Disagree
Teachers effectively use available reading materials during instruction.	3.28	0.69	Agree
Learners are encouraged to use books and other reading resources regularly.	3.06	0.75	Agree
The school provides updated and relevant reading materials.	2.33	0.95	Disagree
Supplementary materials (e.g., digital or printed) are utilized to support reading development.	2.58	0.83	Agree
Overall Mean	2.73	0.83	Agree

Reading materials obtained an overall mean of 2.73 (SD = 0.83), one of the two weakest dimensions. Respondents disagreed that sufficient materials were available for learners at different levels (2.41) and that schools provided updated and relevant materials (2.33). In contrast, teachers' effective use of available materials obtained 3.28.

The results distinguish teacher utilization from material availability. Teachers appear able to maximize existing resources, but the supply and updating of level-appropriate materials remain inadequate. Literature on reading intervention similarly identifies access to leveled books, printed resources, and contextualized materials as a major condition for sustained remediation (Apostol, 2024; Cultura et al., 2025). Without adequate resources, teachers may be required to improvise or personally reproduce materials, adding to workload.

Stakeholder Involvement and Support

Statements	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
Parents are actively involved in supporting their children's reading at home.	2.38	0.91	Disagree
The school collaborates with stakeholders to support reading programs.	2.74	0.84	Agree
Community members participate in reading-related activities.	2.29	0.93	Disagree
School administrators provide support for program implementation.	3.12	0.71	Agree
Stakeholders are informed about the goals and progress of the reading program.	2.61	0.86	Agree
Overall Mean	2.63	0.85	Agree

Stakeholder involvement and support obtained the lowest overall mean, 2.63 (SD = 0.85). Administrative support was relatively stronger (3.12), but parental involvement in home reading was rated 2.38 and community participation 2.29, both interpreted as Disagree. Collaboration with stakeholders and communication of program goals were present but not consistently strong.

This finding shows that ECARP implementation is still concentrated within the school. Sociocultural Theory emphasizes that literacy develops through interaction within the learner's social environment (Vygotsky, 1978). Philippine research likewise points to the value of home literacy practices and community participation (Dizon & David, 2020). Strengthening parent orientation, home reading routines, and community-based reading activities can therefore extend intervention beyond school hours.

Overall Extent of ECARP Implementation

Indicators	Overall Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
Program Planning and Organization	3.10	0.75	Agree
Instructional Strategies and Interventions	3.22	0.73	Agree
Assessment and Monitoring of Learners' Reading Progress	3.26	0.74	Agree
Availability and Utilization of Reading Materials	2.73	0.83	Agree
Stakeholder Involvement and Support	2.63	0.85	Agree
Grand Mean	2.99	0.78	Agree

Across the five dimensions, ECARP obtained a grand mean of 2.99 (SD = 0.78), interpreted as Agree and indicating moderate implementation. Assessment and monitoring ranked highest (3.26), followed by instructional strategies and interventions (3.22) and program planning and organization (3.10). Availability and utilization of reading materials (2.73) and stakeholder involvement and support (2.63) were lower.

The results reveal an uneven implementation pattern: school-controlled pedagogical and monitoring processes are stronger than components that depend heavily on material resources and external participation. The near-threshold grand mean suggests that the program is functioning, but not yet at an optimized level. This supports the view that successful literacy programs require coherence among instruction, leadership, resources, and community support rather than strength in only one component (Cultura et al., 2025; DepEd, 2023).

The findings also indicate that the district already has important implementation foundations. Teachers are conducting interventions and assessments, and schools have basic planning structures. Enhancement efforts should therefore focus on closing the weaker gaps rather than replacing existing practices. Resource provision, stakeholder engagement, and sustained professional development are the most evident leverage points.

Challenges Encountered in ECARP Implementation

Statements	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
Lack of sufficient time to implement reading interventions.	3.28	0.81	Great Extent
Inadequate training on effective reading strategies.	2.67	0.88	Great Extent
Limited availability of appropriate reading materials.	3.56	0.73	Very Great Extent
Large class size affecting individualized reading instruction.	3.42	0.78	Great Extent
Difficulty in addressing diverse reading levels of learners.	3.61	0.70	Very Great Extent
Insufficient support from school administration.	2.25	0.92	Less Extent
Lack of parental involvement in supporting reading at home.	3.47	0.76	Great Extent
Inadequate monitoring tools for tracking learners' progress.	2.38	0.90	Less Extent
Learners' lack of interest or motivation in reading activities.	3.33	0.82	Great Extent

Teachers experienced implementation challenges to a great extent. The most serious difficulty was addressing diverse reading levels (M = 3.61, SD = 0.70), followed by limited availability of appropriate reading materials (M = 3.56, SD = 0.73). Large class size (3.42), lack of parental involvement (3.47), and learner motivation (3.33) were also substantial concerns.

The highest-ranked challenge reflects the instructional complexity of mixed-ability classrooms. Learners at frustration, instructional, and independent levels require different pacing, texts, scaffolds, and feedback. Differentiated instruction can address this diversity, but it also requires teacher expertise, preparation time, and sufficient materials (Diron & Baldonado, 2025; Ferrer, 2025).

The strong rating for limited reading materials reinforces the earlier implementation results. Resource scarcity affects both the range and appropriateness of intervention. Similarly, large class sizes can make individualized diagnosis and follow-up difficult, while limited parental support reduces reinforcement outside school. These barriers demonstrate that reading recovery is shaped by structural and social conditions, not only by teachers' willingness to implement the program.

The remaining indicators show that heavy workload (M = 3.44), lack of funding (3.39), limited time (3.28), limited supplementary or digital resources (3.07), and difficulty sustaining interventions over time (2.94) also constrain implementation. In contrast, insufficient administrative support (2.25), inadequate monitoring tools (2.38), and difficulty conducting regular reading assessments (2.46) were rated to a lesser extent.

These results suggest that the district's strongest operational structures are assessment and administrative support, while time, workload, funding, resources, and learner diversity remain persistent pressures. The overall challenge mean of 3.05 (SD = 0.82) indicates that these constraints are not isolated. They interact: limited materials increase teacher preparation, heavy workload reduces intervention time, and large classes make differentiation more demanding.

Implementation research stresses that fidelity is affected by the conditions under which programs are delivered (Fixsen et al., 2005). In reading programs, capacity-building and leadership support are important, but they must be accompanied by workable schedules, appropriate resources, and mechanisms for family and community participation (Bautista & Ocampo, 2021; Cultura et al., 2025).

Relationship Between Respondents' Profile and ECARP Implementation

Profile Variables	χ^2 Value	df	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Position	4.12	4	0.390	Fail to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Years of Teaching Experience	9.87	8	0.274	Fail to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Relevant Trainings Attended	18.45	8	0.018	Reject Ho	Significant
Overall Result					Partially Significant

Chi-square analysis showed no significant relationship between position and implementation ($\chi^2 = 4.12$, df = 4, p = .390) and no significant relationship between years of teaching experience and implementation ($\chi^2 = 9.87$, df = 8, p = .274). Relevant trainings attended, however, had a significant relationship with implementation ($\chi^2 = 18.45$, df = 8, p = .018). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected only for training.

The result indicates that implementation differences are more closely associated with relevant professional development than with designation or length of service. Experience alone may not guarantee specialized competence in reading diagnosis, differentiation, intervention design, and use of assessment data. Training can provide teachers with updated and structured approaches that directly support ECARP tasks. This finding is consistent with studies emphasizing professional development as an implementation support for literacy programs (Tolentin, 2023; Cultura et al., 2025).

Proposed Enhancement Plan

Key Area	Identified Issues	Objectives	Proposed Activities/Strategies	Persons Involved	Time Frame	Expected Outcomes
1. Teacher Capacity Building	Inadequate training; difficulty addressing diverse reading	To enhance teachers' competence in delivering differentiated	- Conduct regular sessions on reading strategies - Organize LAC	School Head, Reading Coordinators, Teachers	Quarterly	Improved instructional practices; increased teacher confidence

	levels	ed and effective reading instruction	workshops on differentiated instruction and remediation - Training on assessment tools and intervention design			and effectiveness
2. Instructional Support and Intervention	Difficulty in managing diverse learners; limited time for interventions	To strengthen delivery of targeted reading interventions	- Develop structured reading intervention schedules - Implement pull-out or small-group reading sessions - Use peer tutoring and reading buddies	Teachers, Reading Coordinators	Whole school year	More responsive and individualized reading instruction
3. Learning Resources Enhancement	Lack of sufficient and updated reading materials; limited digital resources	To ensure availability of adequate and appropriate reading materials	- Inventory and procurement of leveled reading materials - Development of localized and contextualized materials - Utilize digital platforms and open educational resources	School Head, Teachers, LGU, Partners	Semi-annual	Increased access to quality reading materials; improved learner engagement
4. Assessment and Monitoring System	Limited use of assessment data; inadequate monitoring tools	To strengthen data-driven instruction and monitoring	- Standardize use of reading assessment tools (e.g., Phil-IRI) - Develop tracking system for learners' progress - Conduct regular data review and feedback sessions	Teachers, School Head	Quarterly	Improved use of assessment data; timely interventions for struggling readers
5. Stakeholder Engagement	Low parental and community involvement	To increase participation of parents and community in reading programs	- Conduct parent orientation on reading support strategies - Launch community-based reading programs (e.g., reading camps, Brigada Pagbasa) - Establish	School Head, Teachers, Parents, Community Leaders	Quarterly	Stronger home-school partnerships; improved learner motivation

			partnerships with LGUs and NGOs			
6. Time and Workload Management	Heavy workload; insufficient time for interventions	To optimize time allocation for reading instruction	- Integrate reading across subject areas - Allocate dedicated reading time in class schedules - Provide administrative support to reduce teacher workload	School Head, Teachers	Whole school year	More consistent implementation of reading activities
7. Program Management and Sustainability	Challenges in sustaining interventions; limited funding	To ensure continuity and sustainability of the program	- Include reading program in School Improvement Plan (SIP) - Allocate budget for reading resources and training - Monitor and evaluate program implementation regularly	School Head, Stakeholders	Annual	Sustained and institutionalized reading program

The enhancement plan responds directly to the empirical gaps. Its seven areas are teacher capacity-building, instructional support and intervention, learning resources enhancement, assessment and monitoring, stakeholder engagement, time and workload management, and program management and sustainability. The plan prioritizes regular LAC sessions and workshops, structured intervention schedules, contextualized and digital materials, standardized progress tracking, parent and community participation, protected reading time, and inclusion of reading priorities in the School Improvement Plan.

Conclusions

The study concludes that ECARP in Lopez Jaena District is implemented at a moderate level. Essential planning, instructional, and assessment structures are already present, with assessment and monitoring emerging as the strongest dimension. However, the program has not yet reached optimal implementation because reading materials and stakeholder involvement remain comparatively weak. Teachers encounter challenges to a great extent, particularly in addressing diverse reading levels and obtaining appropriate reading materials. Large classes, workload, funding, time, learner motivation, and parental involvement further affect implementation. These findings show that ECARP effectiveness depends on both instructional quality and the organizational conditions that support teachers. Professional training is the respondent characteristic significantly related to implementation, while position and years of teaching experience are not. This indicates that targeted capacity-building is a critical strategy for strengthening implementation. The proposed enhancement plan therefore appropriately focuses on teacher development, resources, monitoring, stakeholder engagement, workload management, and sustainability.

Recommendations

Teachers should participate in sustained professional development on differentiated reading instruction, assessment, remediation, and data-driven intervention. School heads should strengthen instructional supervision, protect time for reading intervention, support collaborative planning, and ensure equitable access to materials. District and division administrators should prioritize resource allocation, institutionalize a district-level Reading Development Plan, and provide regular training opportunities. Parents and community partners should be engaged through orientations, home reading activities, reading camps, Brigada Pagbasa, and partnerships with local government and other organizations. Future researchers may examine ECARP across

additional districts, include learners and parents as respondents, and use longitudinal or mixed-method designs to connect implementation conditions with measured reading outcomes.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares that they have no conflicts of interest

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