

# Improving the quality of work performance of child care teachers using the four divine states of mind: A case study of Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province\*

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## Abstract

The research article has the following research objectives: 1) to study the application of the four divine states of mind, 2) to compare the application of the four divine states of mind, and 3) to study the recommendations for the application of the four divine states of mind. The sample group consisted of 127 child care teachers working in child development centers. The research instrument was a questionnaire. Data were analyzed using ready-made computer programs.

The research results found that: 1. The application of the four divine states found that the average value of the application level of the four divine states was at a high level. When considering each aspect, it was found that the aspect with the highest average value was loving-kindness, followed by equanimity and compassion, and the aspect with the lowest average value was mudita. 2. The application of the four divine states with different ages and working experiences did not differ in the aspects of loving-kindness, compassion, mudita, equanimity, and overall. The average values of the application of the four divine states with different positions in loving-kindness, compassion, equanimity, and overall did not differ. As for mudita, the differences were statistically significant at the .05 level. The sample group of civil servants had a higher average value than the mission employees at a statistically significant level at the .05 level. 3. The results of the study on the recommendations for the application of the four divine states found that: 1) In terms of loving-kindness, teachers who take care of children should be kind to students at all levels. 2) Kindness: Teachers who take care of children should help all students. 3) Mudita: Teachers who take care of children should praise and congratulate. 4) Upekkha: Teachers who take care of children should govern students in the classroom with fairness.

**Keywords:** Buddhism's Four Sublime States of Mind, Child Development Center

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## Introduction

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2 5 6 0 stipulates that education is an important tool for human development. Therefore, education must be organized in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution, focusing on reforming the administration and educational management system to be efficient and effective, which is stipulated in Chapter 5, Duties of the State, according to Article 54. In summary, the state must ensure that all children receive quality education for twelve years, from pre-school to the end of compulsory education, free of charge, and must provide care and development for young children before entering education in order to develop their bodies, minds, disciplines, emotions, society, and intelligence appropriate for their age by promoting and supporting local administrative organizations and the private sector to participate in the operation. The state has a duty to supervise, promote, and support the organization of such education to be of quality and meet international standards. All education must aim to develop learners to be good people, disciplined, proud of the nation, capable of specializing in their own abilities, and responsible towards their families, communities, society, and country. Chapter 1 6 , Reform of the Country, according to Article 258, on education, stipulates that there must be a mechanism and system for producing, screening, and developing teachers and lecturers to have the spirit of being a teacher, truly knowledgeable and capable, and receive fair compensation. Appropriate to the ability and efficiency in teaching, including having a mechanism to create a moral system in personnel management of teachers (Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, 2017)

At present, the government or government agencies have given great importance to the management of pre-school education or early childhood education. They have studied the promotion and development guidelines for education management, including studying and analyzing the problems of teachers who take care of children. It was found that most of the problems are about personnel, lack of readiness, personnel entering positions through patronage, cronyism, connections, relying on money, and lack of standard management systems. Problems with the performance of early childhood education teachers who lack morality, ethics, determination to work, and love for the profession because they did not graduate directly from early childhood education courses, including teachers' excessive workloads, resulting in no time to prepare for teaching and insufficient budget for media development, resulting in a lack of quality teaching equipment and a lack of training and development for teachers to understand new sciences, resulting in teachers lacking skills in career development and self-development. Problems with teachers' inappropriate behavior, not being a role model for children, not having love and patience in the profession, resulting in lack of care and attention for children, not being enthusiastic about self-improvement, resulting in a lack of knowledge, understanding and experience. Teachers do not give importance to and do not understand the nature of children, and lack good human relations with parents and the community. And problems with professional ethics, not adhering to the ethics of the teaching profession, thinking only of personal benefits. One important problem is the lack of morality for good behavior towards colleagues.

From the above principles and necessities, it reflects the phenomenon of problems in the work of early childhood caregivers, some of whom lack morality and ethics. Some caregivers lack responsibility, have little discipline in performing their

duties, and rarely participate in working with others in the organization, etc., which causes problems in the work of the organization and colleagues. The researcher, as someone involved in the child development center, namely as a caregiver of the child development center, believes that caregivers should apply the principles of the four divine states of mind, namely loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity, which are principles that should be adhered to in working together, to apply, which will result in good standard work practices to be applied in working together and further development of the work. From the reasons mentioned above, the researcher is interested in studying the application of the four divine states of mind for the work of caregivers in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province, as well as studying the problems, obstacles, and guidelines for applying the four divine states of mind for the work of caregivers in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province. The results from the research can be used as information to encourage teachers who take care of children to plan, set policies, improve or apply them to work together more effectively, resulting in effective results in the development of child development centers, providing maximum benefits to children and the public, as well as being a good example for teachers and other child caregivers.

## Objective

1. To study the application of the four divine states of mind for the work of teachers taking care of children in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province.
2. To compare the application of the four divine states of mind for the work of teachers taking care of children in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province, classified by age, work experience, and position.
3. To study the recommendations for the application of the four divine states of mind for the work of teachers taking care of children in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province.

## Literature review

The role of child care teachers in early childhood development is critically important as they lay the foundation for children's learning, socialization, and emotional development. In recent years, the integration of Buddhist principles, particularly the **Four Divine States of Mind** (Brahmavihāra 4), has been explored as a means to enhance the quality of work performance among educators, including child care teachers.

The **Four Divine States of Mind**, consisting of **loving-kindness (metta)**, **compassion (karuna)**, **sympathetic joy (mudita)**, and **equanimity (upekkha)**, are ethical and emotional guidelines derived from Buddhist philosophy, emphasizing benevolence and emotional resilience in interpersonal interactions (Harvey, 2013). These principles are not only central to personal moral development but also serve as a foundation for professional ethics, especially in educational contexts.

Studies have found that when these principles are applied in educational settings, they foster a nurturing and emotionally intelligent environment. For example, **Pikulkaew (2010)** observed that administrators in private higher education institutions in Bangkok who applied Brahmavihāra principles in their academic management created more compassionate and equitable workplaces, which in turn positively influenced staff morale and performance.

In the context of child care, the application of **metta (loving-kindness)** by teachers can foster a secure and affectionate environment for young learners. When teachers display **karuna (compassion)**, they are more attentive to the diverse needs of children, particularly those with emotional or developmental challenges (Siriporn, 2019). **Mudita (sympathetic joy)** supports a positive and collaborative learning culture, allowing teachers to take joy in the success and development of their students and colleagues, reducing workplace jealousy and competition (Niyom, 2021). Lastly, **upekkha (equanimity)** aids in maintaining emotional balance, enabling teachers to stay composed in stressful situations, such as dealing with difficult behaviors or administrative burdens (Chantavanich, 2016).

Additionally, a study by **Suksawang (2017)** showed that teachers who practiced mindfulness and applied Buddhist ethics in their daily routines reported lower burnout rates and improved job satisfaction. These findings align with **Wongprom's (2018)** research, which demonstrated that the integration of Buddhist moral teachings in professional development programs for early childhood educators enhanced interpersonal relationships and overall educational quality.

However, some scholars have noted that the successful application of Brahmavihāra requires institutional support. **Kamolthip and Prapaisit (2020)** emphasized the importance of organizational culture and leadership in fostering environments where ethical and spiritual principles can flourish. Without support, the burden of moral practice falls solely on individual teachers, which may limit long-term sustainability and impact.

In conclusion, existing literature suggests that the integration of the Four Divine States of Mind can significantly contribute to the improvement of work performance among child care teachers. It promotes emotional stability, enhances interpersonal relationships, and encourages compassionate professional practices. However, to fully realize its benefits, these principles should be incorporated into teacher training programs and supported by school leadership and policy.

## Methodology

### Population and sample

1. The research population consisted of 186 child care teachers working in child development centers in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province.

2. The research sample consisted of 127 child care teachers working in child development centers in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province, which were derived from the sample size calculation using the Yamane formula (Yamane, 1967, cited in Paisarn Worakham, 2012).

Then, the sample size in each unit was determined. The researcher calculated the proportion of the sample in each unit using the following formula (Yutthana Siriphan, 2004, cited in Panni Prabhawicha, 2011).

The research instrument used in this research was a questionnaire created by the researcher from studying documents and related research, which was divided into 3 parts: Part 1 was a questionnaire on characteristics The checklist of the personal factors of the respondents consisted of age, work experience, and position. Part 2 asked about the application of the four divine states of mind for the work of teachers taking care of children in the child development center in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province. It

was a rating scale questionnaire using the Likert scale method. The measurement level was divided into 5 levels by setting the level value (Bunchom Srisat, 2002).

To find the quality of the instruments used in this research, it was a questionnaire. The researcher had the following steps in creating the questionnaire:

1. Study and research information, academic textbooks, concepts, theories, and related research works, both documentary research and information from the internet.

2. Determine various issues according to the objectives, conceptual framework, and definitions of specific terms to be used in creating questions in the questionnaire.

3. Create a questionnaire that covers the objectives, conceptual framework, and definitions of specific terms of the research by using a rating scale questionnaire.

4. Present the completed questionnaire to the thesis advisor for revision and improvement. As suggested by the thesis advisor

5. Present the developed questionnaire to the experts for content validity examination by the three experts.

6. Take the questionnaire that has been assessed for content validity by the three experts, revise it, and test it (Try-out) with a population that is not the sample group but has similar characteristics to the sample group in this research, totaling 40 people. Then, the obtained data was used to find the reliability value using the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha formula, which resulted in a reliability value of 0.94, which is higher than the criteria of 0.60 - 1.00, and can be used for data collection.

7. Print the book for further research.

#### **Data collection The researcher collected data as follows:**

1. The researcher requested a letter from the Graduate School, Mahamakut Buddhist University, Roi Et Campus, to the mayor of the local administrative organization in Kaset Wisai District, asking for assistance in collecting data.

2. The researcher contacted to introduce the clarifier and explain the purpose of the research. Question details, answers in the questionnaire must be understood correctly and consistent.

3. The researcher collects the data by himself.

4. Collects the questionnaires, checks the number of questionnaires until 127 sets are complete, and checks the completeness of the questionnaires and arranges the data.

5. Take the obtained data to analyze and process the data further.

#### **Data analysis**

1. The researcher checks the data, which is a review of the collected data, to be complete, complete, and correct, and prepares the data from the questionnaires to make it easy to analyze the data and not confusing.

2. Take the data from the questionnaire, Part 1, which is personal factors, including age, work experience, and position, and analyze it by distributing the frequency (Frequency) and finding the percentage (Percentage).

3. Take the data from the questionnaire, Part 2, to analyze the level of application of the 4 Brahmavihārās, analyzed using the mean (Mean) and standard deviation (Standard Deviation) of the scores from the questionnaire responses of the child care teachers in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province.

4. Analyze and compare the application of the 4 Brahmavihārās to the work of child care teachers. Child Development Center in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province, classified by age, work experience, and different positions, using One Way ANOVA

with statistical significance set at .05 to analyze the differences of variables in each group. If there is a statistically significant difference at the .05 level, the researcher will compare the differences in each group by pair or post hoc procedures to identify which pairs have different means using the Bonferroni method.

5 . The data obtained from the questionnaire, Part 3 , Suggestions for the application of the 4 Brahmaviharas for the work of teachers taking care of children in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province, were analyzed for content, categorized into contents with similar meanings, summarized into common issues, and distributed by frequency, and presented with a description of the

#### **Statistics used in the research**

1. Statistics used to check the quality of the instrument

1.1 Content validity (IOC) calculated from the formula (Paisarn Worakham, 2012)

1 . 2 Reliability of the entire questionnaire Statistics used to examine the quality of the instrument were used to find the reliability or reliability of the questionnaire, each aspect and the entire version, using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Method.

## **Results**

1. Results of the Data Analysis on the Application Level of the Four Divine States of Mind in the Work Performance of Child Care Teachers in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province. The analysis of data regarding the level of application of the Four Divine States of Mind (Brahmavihāra 4) in the work performance of child care teachers in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province revealed that the overall average was at a high level. When considered by individual aspects, it was found that the aspect with the highest average was loving-kindness (metta), followed by equanimity (upekkha), compassion (karuna), and the lowest average was found in sympathetic joy (mudita).

These results may stem from the fact that child care teachers in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province are individuals with strong faith in Buddhism and hold the responsibility of nurturing, guiding, and providing experiences that promote the holistic development of young children. This includes fostering appropriate growth in physical, emotional, social, and cognitive domains according to each child's age and potential.

As such, the organization of learning activities and developmental approaches in child development centers must be conducted continuously and appropriately to ensure that young children receive education and development that align with their age group, local socio-cultural context, indigenous wisdom, and the early childhood education curriculum. This prepares them to enter higher levels of education. It is the duty of child care teachers to provide necessary support and organize readiness activities in various areas. Such practices demonstrate the application of the Four Divine States of Mind in their professional responsibilities.

2. Results of the Comparative Analysis on the Application of the Four Divine States of Mind in the Work Performance of Child Care Teachers in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province. The comparison of the application of the Four Divine States of Mind (Brahmavihāra 4) in the work performance of child care teachers in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province, revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the mean scores across the four aspects—loving-kindness (metta),

compassion (karuna), sympathetic joy (mudita), and equanimity (upekkha)—as well as the overall application level, among teachers of different ages and years of work experience.

Similarly, when comparing the application of the Four Divine States of Mind based on different job positions, no statistically significant differences were found in the aspects of metta, karuna, upakkha, or the overall score. However, there was a statistically significant difference at the .05 level in the aspect of mudita (sympathetic joy), with government officers scoring significantly higher than contract-based (mission-based) employees.

These findings may be explained by the nature of the responsibilities assigned to child care teachers in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province. According to the Department of Local Administration (2016), these teachers are responsible for developing and implementing annual educational action plans, three-year development plans, fiscal year operational plans, curriculum development or revision, instructional planning, preparation of teaching materials and innovations, provision of learning equipment, organizing both internal and external environments of child development centers, and conducting activities to enhance learner development.

Such responsibilities require a high level of dedication and professional engagement. The ability to carry out these duties effectively often necessitates the integration of the Four Divine States of Mind into daily work practices. These principles help foster empathy, emotional balance, and a positive outlook, all of which are critical in fulfilling the diverse and demanding roles of child care teachers.

3. The results of the study on the application of the four divine states of mind for the work of teachers taking care of children in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province, found that 1) in terms of loving-kindness, teachers taking care of children should be kind to students of all levels, all students, and all parents of students. 2) in terms of compassion, teachers taking care of children should help all students, especially students who are still unable to help themselves. 3) in terms of mudita, teachers taking care of children should praise, congratulate, or give awards to students who have done good deeds when appropriate. 4) in terms of equanimity, teachers taking care of children should govern students in the classroom with fairness, justice, and equality for all students. The results of the study may be due to teachers taking care of children in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province wanting preschool development centers, early childhood development centers, or child development centers to have standards and quality according to academic principles. In addition, students must also be taken care of and given special attention so that students can learn and develop appropriately according to their age.

## Discussion

1. The results of the data analysis on the application level of the four divine states of mind for the work of teachers taking care of children in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province, found that the average value of the application level of the four divine states of mind for the work of teachers taking care of children in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province, as a whole, was at a high level. When considering each aspect, it was found that the aspect with the highest average value was loving-kindness, followed by equanimity and compassion, and the aspect with the lowest average value was mudita. The results of the research may be due to the fact that teachers taking care of children in

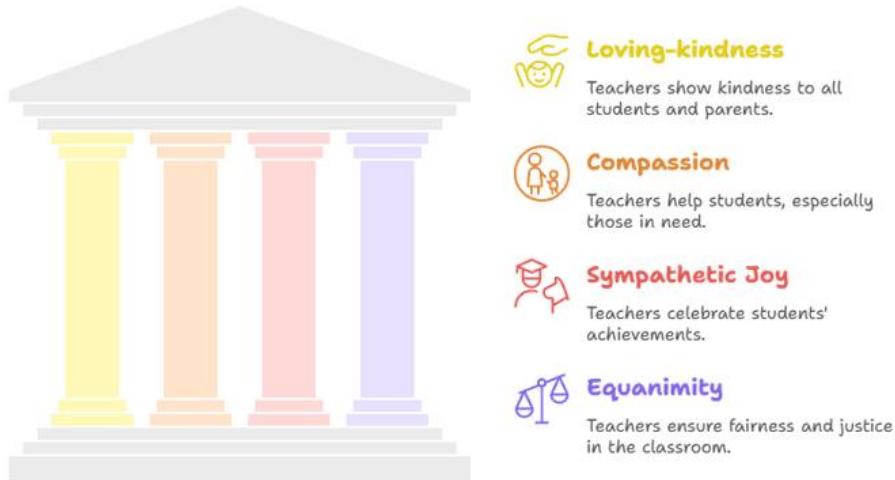
Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province are people who have faith in Buddhism and are personnel who must provide training, provide experiences, and promote development, learning, and learning for young children to develop in terms of physical, emotional, mental, social, and intellectual aspects appropriate for their age and potential. Therefore, the learning management period and learning management guidelines of the child development center must be continuous and appropriate so that young children receive education and development according to each age group, in line with the society, culture, local wisdom, and early childhood education curriculum, so that young children are ready to enter higher education. This is the duty of teachers taking care of children to provide assistance and organize activities to prepare them in various aspects. Such practice is the application of the four divine states of mind to the practice as Nongyao Phunamyo (2015: 16-18) stated that the application of the four divine states of mind is a noble virtue for adults, leaders or personnel, teachers, in the administration of members under their responsibility who are important persons in society in order to create benefits for the public and create unity, love for each other, and be fair and impartial to individuals. Therefore, the four divine states of mind are very important principles that can be applied to benefit daily life, especially in the practice of teachers, in accordance with the principles of mind and guidelines for practice that are tangible so that everyone is happy and progresses. This is consistent with the research of Natthawan Thitakom (2013: 90-100) who conducted research on the application of the four divine states of mind in the administration of The administrators of educational institutions in the Office of the Secondary Education Area 42, the research results found that the directors of educational institutions and teaching personnel in educational institutions in the Office of the Secondary Education Area 42, overall, were at a high level. When considering each aspect, it was found that the directors of educational institutions and teaching personnel in educational institutions in the Office of the Secondary Education Area 42 were at a high level in all aspects, classified by aspect as follows: the aspect of loving-kindness, overall, was at a high level, the aspect of compassion, overall, was at a high level, and the aspect of equanimity, overall, was at a high level, respectively.

2. The results of the comparison of the application of the four divine states of mind for the work of teachers taking care of children in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province, found that the average value of the application of the four divine states of mind for the work of teachers taking care of children in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province, with different ages and working experiences, in terms of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity, and overall, were not different. The average value of the application of the four divine states of mind for the work of teachers taking care of children in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province, with different positions, in terms of loving-kindness, compassion, equanimity, and overall, were not different. As for sympathetic joy, it was significantly different at the .05 level. The sample group who were civil servants had a higher average value than the mission staff at the .05 level. The results of the research may be due to teachers taking care of children in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province having to prepare an annual action plan for education, a three-year development plan, an annual action plan for the fiscal year, creating or improving the curriculum, educational institutions, plans for organizing experiences, and preparing innovative teaching media. Materials and equipment, external and internal environment of the child development center, or student development activities,

the above operations are the responsibility (Department of Local Administration, 2016). Such operations are the application of the four divine abodes in operations, therefore, the research results are as follows. Consistent with the research of Mayuwan Mattabattha (2016) who studied the use of the four divine abodes in personnel management of child development centers under local administrative organizations, Yang Talat District, Kalasin Province, overall at a high level. When considering each aspect, it was found that it was at a high level in all aspects, ranked from highest to lowest average as follows: loving-kindness, sympathetic joy, equanimity, and compassion, respectively. Personnel operating child development centers of different genders have different opinions on the use of the four divine abodes in personnel management of child development centers under local administrative organizations, Yang Talat District, Kalasin Province. Overall, when considering each aspect, it was found that male and female personnel operating child development centers There were opinions on the use of the four divine abodes in personnel management. In terms of mudita, there were significant differences at the .05 level. In terms of loving-kindness, compassion, and equanimity, there were no differences.

3. The results of the study on the application of the four divine states of mind for the work of teachers taking care of children in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province, found that 1) in terms of loving-kindness, teachers taking care of children should be kind to students of all levels, all students, and all parents of students. 2) in terms of compassion, teachers taking care of children should help all students, especially students who are still unable to take care of themselves. 3) in terms of mudita, teachers taking care of children should praise, congratulate, or give awards to students who have done good deeds when appropriate. 4) in terms of equanimity, teachers taking care of children should govern students in the classroom with fairness, justice, and equality for all students. The results of the study may be due to teachers taking care of children in Kaset Wisai District, Roi Et Province wanting preschool development centers, early childhood development centers, or child development centers to have standards and quality according to academic principles. In addition, students must also be taken care of and given special attention so that students can learn and develop appropriately according to their age, in line with the Department of Local Administration (2016), which states that child development centers are educational institutions that provide training and care. Organize experiences and promote learning development so that young children develop in physical, emotional, mental, social and intellectual aspects appropriate for their age and potential. Therefore, the learning management period and learning management guidelines of the Child Development Center must be carried out continuously and appropriately so that young children receive education and development in accordance with each age group, in line with society, culture, local wisdom and early childhood education curriculum so that young children are ready to enter higher education. Therefore, the recommendations for development are: Emphasis should be placed on encouraging people to practice the principles of Dhamma, making people in the community love and wish each other well. Emphasis should be placed on encouraging people to see the importance and be generous to others and the community, listen to and accept the opinions of others with reason, and importance should be placed on encouraging people to behave neutrally and indifferently to matters that are not beneficial to themselves and others, etc.

## New knowledge



**Figure 1** New knowledge, 2024

The image is a visual representation of the Four Divine States of Mind (Brahmavihāra 4), illustrated as four colored pillars supporting a classical-style building structure. Each pillar corresponds to one of the four virtues, with matching color and an icon:

1. Loving-kindness (Yellow Pillar)
  - Icon: Smiling face with a graduation cap
  - Description: "Teachers show kindness to all students and parents."
2. Compassion (Orange Pillar)
  - Icon: Person with child
  - Description: "Teachers help students, especially those in need."
3. Sympathetic Joy (Pink Pillar)
  - Icon: Graduating student throwing a cap
  - Description: "Teachers celebrate students' achievements."
4. Equanimity (Purple Pillar)
  - Icon: Scales of justice
  - Description: "Teachers ensure fairness and justice in the classroom."

The structure metaphorically conveys that these four principles form the ethical and emotional foundation of a teacher's professional practice, especially in early childhood education. The visual layout is clean and child-friendly, with soft pastel colors and simple illustrations, making the concept accessible and appealing.

## Recommendation

From the research results, the researcher has the following recommendations:

### 1. Recommendations for implementation

- 1) In terms of kindness, teachers who take care of children should be kind to students, colleagues, and parents of all students.

2) In terms of compassion, teachers who take care of children should help all students, give advice to colleagues, and parents of students willingly.

3) In terms of mudita, teachers who take care of children should be happy and willing to provide services to all colleagues and parents.

4) In terms of equanimity, teachers who take care of children should behave as good examples for students, parents, and colleagues.

## 2. Recommendations for research

1) Research should be conducted on the relationship between the application of the four divine states of mind for work and the effectiveness of the management of child development centers.

2) Research should be conducted on the application of the four divine states of mind for work that affects the success of the management of child development centers.

3) Participatory action research should be conducted on the application of the four divine states of mind in the management of child development centers.

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