

**PARENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS' EARLY LITERACY
BEHAVIORS WITHIN VARIOUS PRE-SCHOOL MODELS**

by

Barbara Simon

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Department of Language, Learning, & Leadership
State University of New York at Fredonia
Fredonia, New York

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Department of Language, Learning and Leadership

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS/PROJECT CAPSTONE WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled **Parent and Teacher Perceptions of Students' Early Literacy Behaviors Within Various Pre-School Models**, by **Barbara Simon**, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, Literacy: Birth through Grade 12, is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.



Anna M. Thibodeau, Ph.D.
Master's Capstone Advisor
EDU 690-THIBODEAU
Department of Language, Learning & Leadership

July 30, 2018
Date



Kate Mahoney, Ph.D.
Department Chair
Department of Language, Learning & Leadership

8-27-18
Date



Dean Christine Givner, Ph.D.
College of Education
State University of New York at Fredonia

9-4-18
Date

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ABSTRACT

Parents have many options when it comes to choosing a pre-K program for their child (full day, half day, or part time). Educators are also faced with questions from parents about which types of program are best or they find themselves with students who have varying degrees of knowledge. The goal of this research was to examine the perceptions of parents and teachers when it comes to the pre-K programs and the literacy development that they see within their child from these various pre-K programs. The major questions driving this research are What are parents' perceptions of their child's Pre-K program? How do they feel the program affects their child's literacy development? What are teachers' perceptions of the various pre-K programs? How do they feel the different program options impact students' learning of literacy? The participants completed a survey and the data was analyzed quantitatively through Google Forms and qualitatively using descriptive coding and pattern coding (Saldana, 2016). The main findings from the data were that parents found the curriculum and various activities that the children do throughout the day to be important, parents of full day children saw more literacy growth within their child, all teachers regardless of the program that they taught believed that full day would be the most beneficial, and that all children from various programs showed literacy growth.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

List of Research Terms with Definitions.....	8
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	7
Statement of the Problem.....	7
Background.....	7
Definition of Terms.....	8
Rationale.....	9
Significance and Implications.....	9
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	11
Introduction.....	11
Theoretical Framework	
Emergent Literacy Theory.....	11
Literature Review	
History of Pre-K.....	13
Effects of Pre-K.....	18
Research in Emergent Literacy.....	21
Parents' Perceptions of Pre-K.....	24
Teachers' Perceptions of Pre-K.....	26
Gap in the Research.....	27
Research Questions.....	27
Conclusion.....	28
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	29
Introduction.....	29
Research Design and Rationale.....	29
Participants.....	30
Instrumentation.....	30
Data Collection.....	31
Data Analysis.....	32
Conclusion.....	33
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	34
Introduction.....	34
Theme One: Parents' Perceptions of Pre-K Program.....	34
Theme Two: Parents Perception of Literacy Development.....	36
Theme Three: Teachers' Perceptions of Pre-K Programs.....	37

Theme Four: Teachers' Perception of Literacy Development.....	38
Summary.....	38
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	40
Introduction.....	40
Significance	41
Limitations.....	41
Implications.....	42
Conclusions.....	42
REFERENCES.....	44
APPENDICES.....	51
Appendix A: Survey and Interview Questions	51
Appendix B: Coded Data.....	56

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. List of Research Terms with Definitions

Chapter One: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Parents are now faced with the decision of choosing Preschool (pre-K) programs that may have an effect on their child's development of early literacy skills. Many states are moving towards universal pre-K as a way to service families and children who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Gomez-Velez & Urban, 2013), and, as a result, more parents have access to a variety of different pre-K programs. Some programs from which parents are able to choose are full day pre-K, half day pre-K, and part time pre-K, for which the child only attends the program on a certain day or certain days of the week. With these different options parents and teachers often have different perceptions about what will best benefit the student and the kind of work done, which, in turn, could create tension between the two groups. An initial way to address the problem of differing parent and teacher perceptions of different types of pre-K programs is to ask the following questions: What are parents' perceptions of their child's Pre-K program? How do they feel the program affects their child's literacy development? What are teachers' perceptions of the various pre-K programs? How do they feel the different program options impact students' learning of literacy? To address these questions of perceptions, empirical research using appropriate participants and data collection will be conducted.

Background

In my current position as a Teacher Assistant in pre-K I have often wondered why parents choose to put their children in different pre-K settings and how they perceive the different types of pre-K and the effect on their child's early literacy development. In the current school where I work there are three different types of pre-K options available from which parents

can choose. There is a full day option, a half day option, and a part time, per diem, option for which parents choose the day or days that their child comes into school. I am also curious as to how the teachers perceive these types of pre-K situations and if they believe there is a difference in the literacy acquisition between the students who are receiving these varying types of pre-K.

Definition of Terms

List of Research Terms with Definitions	
Emergent Literacy	A child's ability to acquire knowledge about literacy (language, reading, and writing) before any formal education is introduced (Clay, 1966)
Full day pre-K	A program that is usually six hours in duration, five days a week that service children 3-5 years of age
Half day pre-K	A program that is usually four hours in duration, five days a week that service children 3-5 years of age
Literacy	The ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context (International Literacy Association, 2018)
Part time pre-K	A program that is full day, however children do not attend every day. Parents choose the day that children attend and it services children 3-5 years of age
Perceptions	A way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something; a mental impression (Best Masters in Psychology, 2017)
Universal pre-K	Universal pre-K or UPK is a state funded program for all children regardless of socioeconomic status and parent income (Gordon & Browne, 2014)

Research Questions

1. What are parents' perceptions of their child's Pre-K program?
2. How do they feel the program affects their child's literacy development?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of the various pre-K programs?
4. How do they feel the different program options impact students' learning of literacy?

Rationale for the Research Study

This problem is worth studying because pre-K is an important foundation in early learning. Certain skills are developed through pre-K and it is fundamental to give children an early start in their educational journey. Each pre-K program provides different opportunities for children to learn different types of skills. This research will help explore the different types of experiences and the benefits and drawbacks that each one of these programs can provide.

Significance and Implications

Parents are faced with the tough decision of choosing which type of pre-K program to enroll their children in. With so many different options and opportunities parents need to be aware of how to support their child in the best way possible when it comes to growth in pre-K and the potential benefits of each program. This research may help parents understand from parents who currently have children enrolled in various pre-K programs as well as from the teachers who teach these programs. This research is also important for teachers because parents may approach them and inquire about the program and the benefits that it will have on their child. This research will be a resource to help teachers explain the benefits of the program to the parents. By completing this research, the hope is to better understand parent and teacher perceptions' about

the programs that they enroll their children in or teach. This research is also looking to see what types of literacy growth, if any, each program provides. By collecting data, we may see different types of benefits from the various programs in the study.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Introduction

A search of literature was conducted using the leading educational databases. This search found many studies that appear to be pertinent to the research questions:

1. What are parents' perceptions of their child's Pre-K program?
2. How do they feel the program affects their child's literacy development?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of the various pre-K programs?
4. How do they feel the different program options impact students' learning of literacy?

Within this review of the literature, this researcher identified five main themes across the research. These themes included the history of pre-K, effects of pre-K, emergent literacy, parent perception, and teacher perception.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Emergent Literacy Theory

Children begin to develop literacy skills very early in life. A child begins learning literacy skills long before they can read and write; it begins at birth and continues to develop and grow throughout their entire lives (Tracy & Morrow, 2017). This study will be grounded in Emergent Literacy Theory which helps to explain both early literacy development and early literacy growth, two elements of high quality pre-K programs. According to Marie Clay (1966), emergent literacy is a child's ability to acquire knowledge about literacy (language, reading, and writing) before any formal education is introduced and that literacy begins early in life and is ongoing. Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute,

and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context (International Literacy Association, 2018). The term emergent literacy refers to the functional level of performance and not on chronological age of the child; meaning that a child can become a conventional reader (reading at about a third grade level) before they actually reach the third grade. Furthermore, a child's functional level of performance can remain in the emergent literacy phase long after they reach third grade and in some cases, will stay in the emergent literacy phase indefinitely. A child's literacy development is related to all areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and all of these areas are interrelated (Tracy & Morrow, 2017). Therefore, children who are proficient in listening and speaking are more likely to prosper in reading and writing. In addition, children who struggle in the area of listening and speaking may struggle more to become proficient in reading and writing and in fact may be at risk for reading difficulty (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011). According to Gipe (2014), "A child's early experience with books and language provide the foundations for later success in literacy learning"(p.142). Morrow (2009) states that during the time that emergent literacies are developing, children are gaining an awareness of the relationship between spoken and written language. With this gradual increase of awareness children begin to attempt early reading and writing. Emergent Literacy Theorists state that children's early experiences, for example, being read to and talked to, are all part of their early literacy development (Tracy & Morrow, 2017). In addition, Teale (1982) states that children's involvement in literacy results in activities facilitated by literate adults; meaning that children who come from a literacy- rich home environment tend to accelerate and have stronger literacy skills than children who come from homes where literacy is not emphasized. A literacy- rich home is described as a home

where a large number of books are available for both child and adult use, parents are avid readers, parents read using different platforms (such as books, magazines, and online sources), reading is associated with pleasure, parents take their children to libraries and bookstores, children have access to writing materials, and the climate of the home emphasizes literacy (Morrow, 2005). Morrow (2005) also states that “the quality of the at-home literacy environment correlates most closely with children’s early literacy ability (Tracy & Morrow, 2017, p.95). Children need to acquire certain understandings while in the emergent literacy phase; these understandings are referred to as “concepts about print” and include skills such as: words, not pictures, are read; a book is read from front to back; sentences begin with capital letters; a book has a title, an author, and sometimes an illustrator (Gunning, 2010). Emergent literacy theory outlines what children need to learn early in life to be successful with literacy later in life (Tracy & Morrow, 2017).

Literature Review

History of Pre-K

Pre-K in the United States has gone through many changes throughout the years. In the Elementary and Secondary Education Act 1965 (ESEA), President Johnson’s “WAR on Poverty” funded the initial Head Start Program, which was an early intervention half day pre-K program for low-income families. President Johnson’s hope was to provide intervention and attention to economically disadvantaged children before they were enrolled in public school to encourage equal opportunities between socio-economic classes (USDOE, 2018). In the 1960s, only ten percent of the nations three and four year olds were enrolled in a classroom setting (K12 Academics, 2018). This suggested that 90% of the population that was eligible to attend the

program did not (Barnett, 2008). With children not attending a pre-K program, potential skills and experiences were not being provided. K12 Academics states that in the year 2005 “sixty-nine percent, or over 800,000, four year-old children nationwide participated in some type of state pre-K program” (2018, p.1). Barnett (2008) explains that the growth in attendance was caused by the “achievement gap”, which is the significant academic difference between students who attend pre-K and those who do not (Barnett, Hustedt, Robin, & Schulman, 2004).

Pre-K varies from state to state due to the fact that there are no federal mandates that require children of pre-K age (2-4) to be in school. Each state has opportunity to allocate the amount of money that they want on pre-K education. Barnett stated that "the growing inequality between states that have moved ahead and invested in quality preschool programs and states that have done nothing is really stark" (NPR, 2017). Outside of the United States, countries that have a more developed economic system provide public preschool for all 4-year old children, while this is not the case for the United States (Mongeau, 2018).

Current pre-K programs have developed from these federal government programs and legislations: HEAD START, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Universal Pre-K (UPK), Preschool for All Initiative, Pyramid Equity Project (USDOE, 2018). Each of these legislations has become developed as the importance of early schooling has become more prevalent.

Head Start. Head Start was first introduced in 1965 for the purpose of providing children from low income families with comprehensive health, nutrition, and education services. Head Start has four components to their program: education, health, parent involvement, and social services (National Head Start Association, 2018). Head Start looks to help children develop

intellectually, socially, and emotionally. They also provide health services such as immunizations, dental, medical, and nutritional services. The Head Start program focuses on the whole child and their well being, this includes educating their parents through classes and workshops on the topic of child development. Services are included to provide outreach to families to determine which services are needed for the child and family (National Head Start Association, 2018).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA, 1975, is a law that makes free and appropriate education available to students with disabilities. IDEA “governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities” (IDEA, 2018). This law specifically targets early childhood education through IDEA Part B and IDEA Part C. IDEA Part B states that from the ages of 3 to 21 students are eligible to receive special education and related services. IDEA Part C states that infants and toddlers, birth through age two, with disabilities and their families receive early intervention services. This law ensures that preschool students are receiving appropriate accommodations to be successful within their educational settings (IDEA, 2018).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) & Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). NCLB, 2005, reshaped American school culture by creating accountability measures and attempting to bring all children to grade level in math and reading by 2014. One of the factors of NCLB is making sure that high quality teachers are in the classroom teaching children (Gordon & Browne, 2014). NCLB “shined a light on where students were making progress and where they needed additional support, regardless of race, income, zip code, disability, home language, or background”

(USDOE, 2018). In addition, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 builds on ESEA and NCLB to create equal opportunities for children. One of the key components of this act is to sustain and expand investments in increasing access to high-quality preschool (USDOE, 2018).

Preschool for All Initiative. In more recent years, the Preschool for All Initiative was launched by the Obama Administration. In 2013, President Obama proposed a “federal-state partnership that would provide high-quality preschool for all 4-year-olds from low- and moderate-income families” (USDOE, 2016). With the introduction of this initiative, from 2009 to 2015, enrollment of 4-year olds in state preschools increased by 48,000 children (USDOE, 2016); for example, in 2015, New York City launched their Preschool for All programs, which guaranteed every four year old would have access to free, full day, high quality pre-K. On the first day of enrollment, 21,938 families applied which was a growth from the 6,500 the year before (Congressional Documents and Publications, 2015). In 2016, 43 states, plus the District of Columbia and Guam, provide publicly funded preschool (NPR, 2017).

Pyramid Equity Project (PEP). In 2017, PEP was introduced to “develop, demonstrate and disseminate an effective approach for the promotion of social competence in young children and the prevention of suspension, expulsion, and discipline disparities in early learning programs” (USDOE, 2017). Which means that effective teaching practices will be implemented to promote social and emotional skills in all children, in order to counteract challenging behaviors for children who are at risk for these behaviors, and provide instruction that is individualized for the children who demonstrate such challenging behaviors (USDOE, 2017).

Universal Pre-K. Universal pre-K or UPK is a state funded program for all children regardless of socioeconomic status and parent income. Many states are making the effort to

provide UPK to address the gap that exists between the demand for high quality child care and the government's ability to fund it (Gordon & Browne, 2014). The overarching effort for UPK is to provide high quality pre-K education for one or two years before Kindergarten begins. In 1995, Georgia established the first UPK program followed by New York and Oklahoma in the following years. The jump towards UPK programs has grown further (Gormley, 2005). In 2003, UPK was considered as the next step in providing equal access to quality early education for all children 5 and under. UPK programs that target all children have shown positive effects on children's test scores specifically in reading for children who come from low socioeconomic status (SES), while the programs that specifically target low SES children do not (Mongeau, 2018). UPK varies from state to state and even district to district. Depending on the specific goals for the program, some might follow a more traditional nursery school model (full day), while others are not full-day care programs (Gordon & Browne, 2014). Recently, Governor Mark Dayton called for Universal pre-K in Minnesota. He effectively called for all day pre-K but more recently has proposed half day pre-K instead because of funding amount and allocation. Governor Dayton asserts the claim that having a universal pre-K will close the achievement gap and provide “40,000 four-year olds” with pre-K (Mead, 2015). There is continued debates on whether UPK programs are worth the funding. “Program quality, costs, and an unstable workforce continue to be the primary issues that negatively affect child care throughout our country” (Gordon & Browne, 2014, p. 470).

Currently, in the United States, Georgia, Illinois, Florida, Oklahoma, West Virginia, and New York are the only states with legislation underway or which already have UPK for all four year olds in the state, and Preschool For All in Illinois is the only universal preschool program

that serves three year olds as well (K12 Academics, 2018). Pre-K is being advocated for by large organizations because of the many effects that it has for children.

Effects of Pre-K

There are many researchers across the literature on pre-Kindergarten programs who have examined the impact of these programs. In general, these researchers have found that when children start behind, they typically stay behind, meaning that when students are not educated early on, we are limiting their potential and contribution to society (NAEYC, 2017). The National Institute for Early Education Research (2015) also stated that children who start school before entering Kindergarten are more likely to have success academically and socially as they progress through their educational career. However, schools with high-quality teachers produce the best academic and social outcomes for children (Mongeau, 2018)

To begin, Howes et al. (2007) found that children made gains from participation in state-funded pre-K programs. They argued that many different family structures, economic, racial, and ethnic groups equally benefited from pre-K participation. In addition, many studies done by the National Institute for Early Education Research of state pre-K programs found positive gains in children's math, language, and literacy learning (Barnett, 2010). Other recent studies have found that pre-K has a positive impact on literacy, social, and academic skills (Cunningham, 2010; Barnett, Carolan, Fitzgerald, & Squires, 2012; Weiland & Yoshikawa, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2018). It was also found that children who participate in pre-K programs are more successful in school, college, careers, and are less likely to be involved in criminal behavior (Highscope, 2018; Maxwell, 2018). Conversely, in a longitudinal study done by Huang, Invernizzi, and Drake (2011), children were followed from the beginning of

Kindergarten to the end of first grade. The authors found that students who attended pre-K were less likely to repeat Kindergarten; however, they found that over time the effects of pre-K began to decrease. Similar research done by Barnett (2008), Bierman, Nix, Heinrich, Domitrovich, Geist, Welsh, and Gills (2014) has concluded that long-term effects of pre-K seem to fade as a child grows older. From the research, we see that pre-K has an impact on children, however, since there are different types of pre-K programs there are different benefits from each.

Benefits of full day pre-K. In 2016 President Obama proposed additional funds to build on and improve the quality of Head Start. The additional funds would ensure all Head Start children are served in full- day, full-year programs, which, research shows, have larger impacts on learning (USDOE, 2018). Full day programs have been defined as programs that are usually six hours in duration, five days a week (Brannon, 2005). These programs benefit children who age from 3 to 5 years old. The children who participate in a longer day have shown more progress in literacy and math than children who are in half day school programs (Fernandes, 2014).

Researchers have found that in full day pre-K programs children have additional experiences that those in half day programs are not exposed to, such as cooking, hands-on activities, field trips, and more parent collaboration opportunities (Zhao, Modarresi, & Shihching, 2009). In a study conducted by Bruchinal et al. (2008) it was observed that children from families whose parents had limited education, thrived socially in high quality full day pre-K programs compared to their half day counterparts. Full day programs decreased the achievement gap between socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged students (Robin et al, 2006).

Additionally, Hispanic children who were enrolled in full day pre-K experienced a “dramatic increase in test scores” (Gormley & Phillips, 2005, p. 73), while children enrolled in half-day pre-K experienced no such growth. African American children also experienced a growth of 18% on their overall test scores. Both Hispanic and African American students showed improvement in cognitive, language, and motor skills, which showed that non-majority students have a positive link to full day pre-K (Gormley & Phillips, 2005). Furthermore, the National Institute for Early Education Research conducted trials where students were randomly placed into full day or half day pre-K settings. Students who were placed in the full day program and experienced high-quality teaching improved in vocabulary and math skills by 11 to 12 standard points (Peckman, 2007; Fernandes, 2014). This increase in vocabulary is an important stepping stone in the learning of literacy. In an earlier study, Vlietstra (1981) found that observers of a full day classroom saw a higher level of motor activity within the full day children compared to the half day children. Children also showed increased participation, and increased time on task when participating in activities that were directed by the teacher.

Although full day pre-K shows great benefits for students of all status, it should be noted that it is important for the program to be of high quality. If the full day program is not high quality, it will make little difference, “You can’t just increase the length of day and automatically you’ll get the results you want ... Teachers need to be prepared to use the full day” (Fernandes, 2014). Teacher recruitment and retention is also lower for full day programs which leads to fewer qualified teachers being present in the full day pre-K setting (Morrissey et al. 2007).

Benefits of half day pre-K. Half day programs are described as usually four hours long for five days a week (Brannon, 2005). These programs benefit children who age from 3 to 5

years old. Despite the shortened length of the day, students in half day programs are still receiving essential school readiness experiences (Brannon, 2005). In addition, students who are enrolled in half day programs are engaged in real-life experiences within the communities more often because they spend more time with their families compared to their full day counterpart (Brannon, 2005). In a study done by Gormley and Phillips (2005), the researchers found that white students enrolled in a half day pre-K program increased in language test scores, while Hispanic and African American students seemed to prosper more from full day pre-K. In addition, the National Institute for Early Education Research also showed that children enrolled in half day pre-K programs improved in vocabulary and math skills but with a smaller growth than the students who attended full day pre-k (Peckman, 2007). Contrary to the above research, Early et al. (2010), discussed the importance of children's play on their learning and found that less unstructured playtime can actually stunt a child's growth and children in half day programs do not receive as much of this time. A child's play helps them to discover, problem solve, think critically, and understand consequences (Early et al., 2010).

Research in Emergent Literacy

Emergent literacy is the beginning of a child's literacy development. This development occurs before a child begins to read and write. It begins at birth when a child is listening and speaking. This is a time period when children should begin experiencing read alouds, vocabulary exposure, and pretend reading. These early literacy practices lead to further development of literacy skills down the road. "The term 'Emergent literacy' refers to a period in a child's life between birth and his or her ability to read and write at a conventional (approximately third grade) level" (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Much research has been conducted in the early literacy

practices of children and how these develop as children approach school age. This research will be reviewed in the following sections.

Early literacy practices. Many studies have been done regarding the importance of pre-K children's early literacy practices and the development of early literacy skills. These early literacy skills have been linked with achievement in both reading in Kindergarten and reading in primary grades (Molfese et al., 2016). Early literacy practices begin even before schooling and even before birth. Babies, in the last three months of prenatal development are able to hear intonation patterns in their mother's voice (Hetherington, Parke, & Locke, 2002). One of the first things that you can do for a child is to provide a rich language environment (Morrow, 2015). Even from birth, children are active participants in conversations; they look at you while you talk and react with arm movements, smiles, or coos. Surrounding children with the sounds of language is extremely important. This can be in the form of talking, chants, nursery rhymes, or songs (Morrow, 2015). Children, before they can speak and even after, find ways to get a person's attention. They do so by the use of "joint attention" (Vukelich, Christie, Enz, & Roskos, 2016). Joint attention refers to the shared attention of two individuals when one person alerts another to an object by gazing at, pointing, or verbal/ nonverbal indicators. This is one way that children find ways to communicate their wants and needs (Vukelich et al., 2016).

After verbal language has started to increase, parents and teachers can encourage students to use longer utterances when speaking. When first developing language, children will use one word utterances when requesting an item, such as "water", instead the parent or teacher can model "I want water" to help the child expand and extend their language (Morrow, 2015). Children will often overgeneralize language as they are learning new vocabulary, for example, a

child will learn to associate the word “dog” with a dog. Later, they may see a cat and say “dog”. Parents can help the child learn the difference between the two by labeling the cat as a cat and pointing out the differences. Educators should correct overgeneralizations such as this in a positive and subtle manner (Morrow, 2015; Vukelich et al., 2016). Even with modeling, a child may not be developmentally ready to use the correct rules for speech (Ramscar & Gitcho, 2007).

When in the pre-K age (3-5), children learn language best when they have the opportunities to use the language. A typically developing pre-K student can make requests, demands, ask for help, seek out information about the world, and have a detailed conversation (Vukelich et al., 2016). Ways to build and incorporate new language is through the use of dramatic play, experiments, art, and music (Morrow, 2015). This is because literacy learning is a social activity as well as a cognitive one (Gipe, 2014).

Children are also beginning to develop writing skills prior to the start of pre-K, as well as while they are progressing through the pre-K program. Children who are in pre-K are typically in the emergent writing stage (ages 2-5). This stage begins before the children are conventional readers. At the beginning of this stage, children typically use large scribbling motions to represent pictures, letters, and numbers. Next, children move to using scribbles separate from their picture to label their pictures. Finally, children use letters to represent some sounds in the words to describe their picture (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2016). Children's emerging knowledge is revealed by their attempts at spelling (Gipe, 2014). Emergent writing is largely pretend and the child's background does not affect their development of writing. Writing develops spontaneously when writing is encouraged, modeled and incorporated into play (Bear

et al., 2016). During this early stage in writing development children are learning to hold a pencil, make marks on the paper, and that print is distinct from drawing (Bear et al., 2016).

Additionally, children begin the process of reading as they enter pre-K. Emergent readers are described as children who are using the action of pretend reading and are beginning to understand the nature and meaning of print. Beginning to understand the concepts about print falls under this category, which includes such things as: words, not pictures, are read; a book is read from front to back; sentences begin with capital letters; a book has a title, an author, and sometimes an illustrator (Gunning, 2010). After the emergent literacy phase, students move into the early readers stage which is when children learn strategies for word recognition and comprehension. Children who were found to be proficient in alphabetic knowledge, identifying both upper and lowercase letters, and having the knowledge and recognition of beginning and ending sounds, prior to entering Kindergarten showed stronger skills at the end of Kindergarten and entering into First grade (Molfese et al., 2016). Some early literacy practices that facilitate the acquisition of these skills are book reading activities where a teacher reads to a group of children, large or small, alphabetic activities where the children learn the names of letters and the corresponding sounds those letters make, phonological activities, such as rhyming, segmenting, and blending words, and working on the concepts of print, where a child is learning different aspects of a book such as the cover, the direction of the print, and differentiating between words and pictures (Molfese et al., 2016).

Parents' Perceptions of Pre-K

Parents play an important role in the process of choosing their child's pre-K program. They know every aspect of the child and use their knowledge to make decisions to benefit their

child. These parents also get the opportunity to see the growth and development in their child. Previous research has found that parents who sent their children to pre-K believed that the foundation of early learning begins in pre-K, that pre-K contributes to a child's social and emotional development, that reading, writing, and math skills were a benefit of attending pre-K, and that pre-K provides some form of exposure to literacy skills which is needed for the development of academic readiness. (Sahin, Sak, & Sahin, 2013; Manigo & Allison, 2016). It was also noted that parents believe that parental involvement is essential for their child to be successful in Kindergarten and that the following factors influenced their decision to send their child to a pre-K program: social skills, money, time, and parent knowledge of readiness skills. (Manigo & Allison, 2016). It was also found that parents thought that "school-related behaviors" (Hatcher, Nuner, & Paulsel, 2012, p.5) such as paying attention, understanding and following school routines, working in a large group setting, listening to and following directions from teachers, and keeping their attention and working on an assigned task were important factors that children need to have before their introduction into Kindergarten (Hatcher et al., 2012). Parents also specifically targeted literacy skills that they believed were essential for their children to have prior to Kindergarten. Those skills include: recognizing letters, letter/sound association, recognition of sight words and names, and being able to write their own name (Hatcher et al., 2012). In an earlier study Keen (2005) found that parents' beliefs about their child's academic achievement was related to the level of education that that parents received as well as their socio-economic status. What's missing from the existing research is the perceptions that parents have of the different types of pre-K programs that are available to them and their reasons for selecting a specific program.

Teachers' Perceptions of Pre-K

Teachers' perceptions are just as important as parents perception when it comes to the value of pre-K. Teachers give insider information about how children learn as well as understanding what is developmentally appropriate for children. As well as have their own ideas of what is important before entering Kindergarten. Teachers have expressed the importance of a child's ability to problem solve, have school related skills, such as, paying attention, learning and following school routines, working in a large group, listening to and following directions from a teacher, and working on assignments that are given to them (Hatcher et al., 2012). Academically, teachers believed that literacy skills were important to have prior to Kindergarten, this including being able to write their name. Teachers want programs to teach their children how to be successful in later grades, such as on state tests, as well as, in later life (Brown & Gasko, 2011).

Teachers also get to see how children behave in the classroom and throughout the school. Cheryl Morelan, a principal, stated that she does not believe that 4-year old children can focus for 8 hours. She stated "I think that kids get tired, being in school all day might be hard for them" (Fernandes, 2014). Morelan stated that she has seen students who have attended full day pre-K be "less ready" for Kindergarten than students who have attended half day pre-K. This opinion came from the fact that she saw students who were unable to sit and listen to a story for an extended period of time and were not as able to follow directions given by the teacher (Fernandes, 2014). Similarly, In a study by Vlietstra (1981) teachers of children from full and half day programs observed that full day children were less likely to get along with their peers and more aggressive while half day students were better able to get along with peers, less aggressive, and were more tolerant of frustration.

Gap in the Research

Among the current and past studies about full and half day pre-K, there is a gap in research when it comes to examining parent and teacher perceptions of part time pre-k. In addition, many of the studies done about parent perception deals with parents whose children are enrolled in a pre-K program and those who are not enrolled in any type of program. This research will examine the perceptions parents have of full-day, half-day, and part-time programs and if they perceive any differences between the types of programs. This information is important to the education field because, with all of the different choices in pre-K programs, it is important to know how parents feel about the pre-K program options so that educators may support them in making the best academic choice for their child. It will also be beneficial to know the reason why parents are choosing the current program that their child is enrolled in and if they are seeing academic growth within their child. This research will also show teachers' perceptions. This will be beneficial because there will be research on what teachers' think about the various types of programs as well as what they see in their professional field everyday. With this research, teachers' will also be able to assist parents in making a more informed decision from an insiders perspective about how each program impacts children's' development of early literacy concepts. The research will also show the difference between parents and teachers perceptions on the programs, literacy growth within the child, and personal belief of which program is most beneficial.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are parents' perceptions of their child's Pre-K program?

2. How do they feel the program affects their child's literacy development?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of the various pre-K programs?
4. How do they feel the different program options impact students' learning of literacy?

Conclusion

In conclusion, this literature review suggests that there has been an expansion of pre-K programs in the United States in the last few years as well as educational growth in students who have attended two types of pre-K programs, full and half day pre-K. Depending on the program that the student is enrolled in, the type and amount of growth may change. Parents view pre-K differently from one another, some choosing to send their child to full day, some to half day, and some not at all. However, parents who sent their children to pre-K programs often saw growth within their child. This review focused on five main themes of the surveyed research. These themes included the history of pre-K, effects of pre-K, emergent literacy, parent perception, and teacher perception.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

In order to answer the research questions: What are parents' perceptions of their child's Pre-K program? How do they feel the program affects their child's literacy development? What are teachers' perceptions of the various pre-K programs? How do they feel the different program options impact students' learning of literacy? an explanatory mixed method research design was developed using semi structured interviews to explain and expand upon earlier opinion data collected from parents and teachers of three to five year old children from a city and its local suburban communities in western New York from online surveys that were administered.

Research Design and Rationale

The objectives of this research is to gain information about how parents and teachers perceive various pre-K programs and how they perceive their children gaining literacy knowledge. To acquire this knowledge, an online survey was given to parents and teachers. The online survey was chosen because of the reduced time that it takes to distribute to each participant, easy access for participants, and its increased accuracy of responses. After, it was intended that a individual 45 minute semi structured interview be conducted with parents and teachers to examine their perceptions of various Pre-K programs and how they thought each program is impacting their child/student's emergent literacy skills and to gain some reliability within the study. A semi structured interview was chosen because it allowed for open-ended answers that allowed for probing and follow-up questions. However, in meeting with the IRB committee at the participating institution, it was decided that the interview was too much and needed to be eliminated from the study. Upon dissemination, the results of this research will help

parents make a more informed decision regarding their child's Pre-Kindergarten program and help teachers understand the gaps in the child's education.

Participants

For this research, convenience sampling was used to gain participant. After speaking with the IRB board for the school and the Director of the Day Care program, permission was given to enter the classroom and give permission slips to parents and teachers to participate in the study. The participants consist of five parents and three teachers. Seven of the participants were female and one was male. Seven of the participants were White and one was African American.

To keep the anonymity of the participants, a number system was used in order to identify the participants in substitution of pseudonyms.

Instrumentation

The questions used in the surveys were developed by the principal investigator for the purpose of understanding how the parents and teachers felt their child was developing in the different types of programs. Each survey has 13 questions, nine questions are evaluated using the Likert scale, while the other four questions are open ended. Prior to implementation of the survey and interview questions, each question was reviewed for appropriateness by a university faculty member with expertise in the field and by the human subjects board and IRB at the implementation sight. To see the full survey questions refer to Appendix A. The surveys covered the topics such as:

- Child's program
- Literacy materials available to the child
- Satisfaction with the child's program

- Literacy growth seen within the child
- Benefits of the program
- If given any choice which program would parent/teacher choose for the child

This range of questions was used in order to gain as much understanding of the parents and teachers perceptions of the child's current pre-K program and literacy growth that the child is acquiring in that current program. The questions were based on the following research questions:

1. What are parents' perceptions of their child's Pre-K program?
2. How do they feel the program affects their child's literacy development?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of the various pre-K programs?
4. How do they feel the different program options impact students' learning of literacy?

Data Collection

The first step in collecting data for this research project was obtaining permission from the target school, the IRB committee within that school, and the connected day care program. Once permission was obtained, informed letters were sent home with students in the various pre-K programs and given to the teachers in the accompanying classroom. The researcher provided information for the participants if they had any questions about the research. In the following weeks, classrooms were visited to obtain the returned permission slips, permission slips returned from parents and teachers became the participants in the study. The participants then received an e-mail with the URL for the online survey. After the completion of the survey,

the participants were informed that the research was completed and were thanked for their participation.

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of both qualitative and quantitative data and techniques, as the surveys distributed to the participants have both multiple choice responses as well as open-ended responses. The survey website that was used, Google Forms, processed the data qualitatively for frequency and percentage of each selected responses on every question. The survey responses were then entered into a Google document by questions according to the frequency of the response. After, each open-ended response was read and re-read to assign a one to two word code that represented the data.

Qualitative analysis was then utilized for the participants' written responses to the surveys. During the first cycle of coding, simple descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2016) was used to describe the data collected from the participants' responses. Some samples of codes created during the first cycle of data includes: staff, curriculum, interaction, placement, routine communication, availability, and location. Each written response was coded and a list of descriptive codes was written in a separate document (Appendix B). When the first round of descriptive coding was completed, a second cycle of pattern coding was conducted (Saldaña, 2016). To pattern code, the descriptive codes were used to group and sort the data according to the code that they received. Finally, the coded material was coded to obtain larger themes among the groups in order to find similarities. After both cycles of coding was completed, major themes emerged. These themes became the findings of the research and will be described in chapter four.

Conclusion

In order to uncover parent and teacher perceptions of various pre-K programs, a qualitative study was conducted with eight participants using a survey with both selected-response questions and open-ended questions. In order to protect the identity of the participants, a numbered system was utilized in lieu of the participants name or a pseudonym. A data analysis was then conducted using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The program Google Forms processed the data from the survey qualitatively for frequencies and percentages from the selected responses and displayed data according to each question. Next, a qualitative analysis was conducted through the use of two cycles of coding, simple descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2016) to describe the data collected from the participants and pattern coding (Saldaña, 2016). Which took the descriptive codes and organized the units for analysis between each descriptive code. The codes were then grouped and sorted according to the code they received. From the coded data finding emerged that will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Four: Results

In the previous chapters, this researcher has discussed methods taken to obtain data and results related to parent and teacher perceptions about various pre-K programs. First, a thorough review of literature was conducted in conjunction with the development of tools needed to conduct the research. A survey was conducted and data was collected from eight participants. The online source used for the surveys was Google Forms, this forum processed the data quantitatively for frequencies and percentages of selected responses and data was displayed according to each question.

Next, qualitative analysis was conducted for the participants' open ended responses in the survey. The first cycle of coding, simple descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2016) was used to describe the data collected from the participants'. After the first cycle of coding was complete, a second cycle which consisted of pattern coding (Saldaña, 2016) was conducted. Each group of descriptive coded data was coded to find larger themes within the data. Those themes became the findings that will be described below.

Upon data analysis, this researcher was able to develop four findings. First, there are similarities and differences between parents' perceptions of pre-K programs. Second, parents see different types of growth within their child through these programs. Third, teachers' of various pre-K programs perceive these programs differently from one another. Finally, teachers' perceive the child's literacy growth differently than their parents.

Finding One: Parents' Perceptions of Pre-K Program

During this research, the participants were split in to two different groups based on the pre-K program their child was currently enrolled in, full day or part time. These two groups of

parents had different opinions about the programs as a whole. There were five parents total who participated during this research, two in the part time group and three in the full day group. One hundred percent of the parents whose children are enrolled in a part time program stated that they were mostly happy with the overall program. One of three parents whose child is enrolled in a full day program stated that they were mostly happy with the overall program, while the other two stated that they were very happy with the overall program.

Subfindings were also discovered during the research. The first subfinding is, parents from both groups found the curriculum and activities that the children participate in during pre-K important. Two surveyed parents of full day students stated that they appreciated the fact that free play was encouraged at times, with one parent even stating, “She has many opportunities for play, which I know as a teacher is so essential at this age.” Two participants, one parent of a full day student and one of a part time student also stated that they like the amenities that the children have access to, such as the “gym, library, playground, field, and gross motor room.”

The second subfinding in the research is that parents’ value the social aspect of pre-K programs. Three of the five parent participants discussed the importance of interactions with other students. One parent was of a part time child while the other two parents had children who were enrolled in full day programs. These parents stated that this was the reason that they liked the current pre-K program that their student was enrolled in. Two of these parents also expressed how they liked that the pre-K programs were integrated with students with disabilities.

The last subfinding that was found in this research is that parents pick their child’s pre-K programs for different reasons, but one of the most common reasons is location. Four of the five parent participants listed location as one of the reasons why they chose their child’s program.

Other reasons that were listed from the participants were: availability for other children in the family to go to the same school (convenience), reputation, access to school amenities, and integration of students with disabilities.

Overall, parents who enroll their children in different types of pre-K programs have different perceptions about the pre-K program and various aspects of the pre-K program are important to the parents. Based on the responses, it is evident that parents in the full day group were more satisfied with their program than the parents in the part time group.

Finding Two: Parents Perception of Literacy Development

Parent participants of children who were enrolled in different pre-K programs also saw different types of literacy development within their child. Both parents who have children enrolled in a part time program stated that they saw some growth in reading, some growth in writing, and found the overall program as somewhat beneficial. Two parents of children who were enrolled in full day pre-K stated that they saw some growth in reading, while the other parent stated that they could not tell if any growth was made. One parent of a child enrolled in full day pre-K stated that they saw some writing growth, while the other two participants stated that a lot of writing growth was noticed. All three parents of children who were enrolled in full day pre-K stated that the overall program was very beneficial. One participant stated,

“She comes home and teaches me what she learned at school (recycling, yoga, compliments) and has made SO much growth with writing. In September, she was not even sure how to trace something. Today, 8 months later, she wrote out her name for me independently, and a few other letters. She is not even 3.5 years old yet- she amazes me!”

The second finding in this research suggests that parents that enroll their children in different types of pre-K programs see different types of growth within their child when it comes to reading and writing. Even within the same program, parents see different types of growth within their child. Overall, parents who enrolled their children in a full day program saw greater growth within their child in writing.

Finding Three: Teachers' Perceptions of Pre-K Programs

In addition to parent perceptions, teachers' perceptions were included in this research to compare the similarities and differences between what teachers of different programs (full day or part time) perceive, as well as the similarities and differences between what parents see versus what teachers see within the same child relative to the program that they are enrolled in.

Out of the three teacher participants, two teachers teach full day and the other teacher teaches part time students. All of the teachers were asked how happy they are with the current pre-K program that their student is enrolled in. Two teachers, one who teaches full day children and the other who teaches part time children said that they are very happy with the program the student is enrolled in. While the last teacher, a full day teacher stated that they were mostly happy with the program the student is enrolled in. The teachers were also asked how beneficial the overall program was for their students. Two teachers, one from full day and one from part time, said the program was very beneficial for their students and the last teacher said the program was somewhat beneficial, this response came from a full day teacher. All teachers' regardless of the pre-K program that they teach state that full day pre-K would be the most beneficial for children. These teachers stated that the benefits of full day pre-K would be, (1) having more time for the students to learn and engage in what is being taught and learn the school routine, (2)

adjusting to a full day school setting to prepare the students for upper grades such as full day Kindergarten or 1st Grade, and (3) gaining the opportunities for social interactions that are not typically received at home.

Finding Four: Teachers' Perception of Literacy Development

In addition to the overall program, teachers also see literacy growth within the student. All teachers stated that they have seen some literacy growth within their student regardless of the pre-K program that they attend. This is consistent with the findings from the parents perceptions of literacy growth within their child. This means that the teachers and parents, from both programs, have seen literacy growth within the child.

A subfinding from this research is that each of the participants that was surveyed values literacy differently in their classroom. Each teacher was asked what types of literacy material (books, paper, markers, crayons, iPad, magnetic letter, etc.) were available to their children daily and how many times weekly they read with their children one-to-one. One participant stated that they had seven different literacy materials available to their children and read over ten times weekly with students in a one-to-one setting. The second participant stated that they had six different literacy material available in the classroom and they read with their children zero to two times one-to-one weekly. The last participant stated that they had eleven different literacy items available and they read with their children three to four times weekly in a one-to-one setting.

Summary

In this study, I found that parents who have children enrolled in full day programs seemed overall more satisfied with the program than those parents who had children enrolled in part time pre-K programs. Under this finding, there were also two additional subfindings. The first subfinding was that parents found the curriculum and activities that the children were doing

throughout the day were important and that contributed to their overall feelings toward the program. The second subfinding was that one of the main reasons parents pick the child's pre-K program is due to location.

The second finding in this study discussed the literacy growth that parents see within their child. Regardless of the type of program, parents saw varying degrees of growth. However, the parents who had children in full day programs reported a higher level of writing growth.

Next, teachers' regardless of the program that they teach identified full day pre-K to be the most beneficial because you are able to teach the routine, there is more time for social interaction, and you can reinforce what is being taught throughout the day.

The last finding in this study was about teachers' perceptions about how the children in their classroom learn literacy. All of the teachers, full day and part time, reported that they saw some growth within the child. In addition, the teachers and parents, from both programs have seen literacy growth within the child. However, it should be noted that a subfinding was discovered. The subfinding is that all of the teachers that were surveyed for the research put varying degrees of importance on literacy in their classroom.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Introduction

This study was conducted in order to learn parent and teacher perceptions of various types of pre-K programs. In order to find this information, a review of literature was conducted, and a survey was developed and implemented. Eight participants, one male and seven females, agreed to participate in the study. Within the participants, five parents and three teachers were recruited. The data from the survey was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively and four findings emerged.

Reflection

The main findings from the research were as follows: parents who had children in the different pre-K programs perceived the programs differently. Parents who had children enrolled in full day programs seemed to have more positive outlook toward the overall program their child was enrolled in. Parents from both programs considered the curriculum and the activities that the children engage in during the day as important and social interaction were important for development. Next, parents who had children enrolled in different programs also saw different amounts of literacy growth within their child. Most parents regardless of the program stated that they saw some growth in reading skills while parents of children who were enrolled in full day programs stated they saw more writing growth in their children compared to the part time parents. The third finding from the research was that teachers regardless of the program that they teach stated that full day programs would be most beneficial for their students because they would get exposure to things like classroom routines, social interactions, and to reiterate what is being taught throughout the day. The last finding from this research is that all teachers saw

literacy growth within their students, which is consistent with the findings from the parents. In addition, each teacher places a different value of literacy in their classroom.

Significance

Parents and teachers have different perceptions of pre-K programs and the amount of literacy growth they see within their child. The participants in this study demonstrated this. It is important for parents to be able to make informed decisions when choosing a literacy program for their child and for teachers to be able to explain the benefits of the program that they teach.

This research will also help teachers of Kindergarten understand the type of knowledge that the children coming into their classroom will have. For example, if they receive a child that has been in a half day or part time program they will know that they may have lower skills in writing than children who were enrolled in a full day pre-K program.

Dissemination

At the conclusion of this study the results were disseminated. Dissemination occurred in multiple ways. The first way was a regional poster presentation at the university where the researcher is a soon to be alumna. The poster presentation displayed the background of the study, the participants, the methods that were used for the research and preliminary findings.

Additionally, when this study is completed, it will be archived in the State University of New York at Fredonia's Reed Library, where it will be available to future researchers and searchable through the library's database website.

Limitations

Some limitations of this study were: the sample size, time constraints, and location. If this study were to be repeated in the future, it should be with a much larger sample size. The results from this study cannot be generalized to parent and teacher perceptions as a whole because the sample size was too small. Also, it would be interesting to see the data if all three pre-K

programs were involved in the study. Since only two programs were involved full day and part time pre-K, it can not be stated how parents and teachers perceive all three programs.

Another limitation was time constraint. Due to the amount of time and concerns from the IRB board at the participating school. The interviews to gain more information from the participants was unable to be conducted. The results from the interview could have produced different results.

A final limitation of this study was the location. This study was completed in a suburban area, if it was completed again it would be beneficial to learn more about parent and teacher perceptions' of pre-K programs and the literacy growth within the child in a rural or urban area.

Implications

The data collected in this study suggests that parents choose the programs that they enroll their children in for different reasons, however, parents should be aware of the benefits and drawbacks that each program has. The participants in this study demonstrated different preferences for what made the program truly successful and beneficial for their children. Educators also demonstrated different emphasis on literacy in their classroom. Teachers of pre-K or Kindergarten children can use the data collected in this study to bridge the gap in knowledge between the children who are enrolled in different programs.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this study examined parent and teacher perceptions' of pre-K programs and the literacy growth that has been seen within the child. It was found that parents from both full day and part time programs perceived the programs differently from each other and in some cases within the same program. Parents of full day children also saw more literacy growth within their child compared to their counterpart. In addition, all educator believed that the children

would be exposed to more beneficial routines and social interactions in a full day program.

However, all of the teachers saw literacy growth within the child regardless of the program that they were enrolled in. This data can be used to help parents make a more informed decision when enrolling their children in a pre-K program as well as help educators see potential gaps in student knowledge or help to explain the benefits of their program to parents. This study and the data collected from it are archived in the State University of New York at Fredonia's Reed Library.

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Appendix A

SURVEY QUESTIONS for PARENTS– URL to online survey will be sent via email to consenting participants

Disclaimer: You are receiving this survey because you have checked “Yes” on the consent form given to you allowing you to complete this survey.

Directions: Please answer all questions honestly and to the best of your ability. If you are uncomfortable answering any questions, please feel free to skip them.

Demographics

Gender (Check one)

- Male Female Self-identify

Ethnic Background (Check one)

- White Hispanic/Latinx Black/African American Multiracial
 Asian Native Hawaiian Other Pacific Islander Other:

1. Which type of pre-K program is your child enrolled in?
 - a. Full day
 - b. Half day
 - c. Part time (does not attend school everyday)
2. What type of literacy materials does your child have access to regularly at home? (check all that apply)
 - a. Books
 - b. Magazines
 - c. Paper
 - d. iPad/Tablet application
 - e. Educational Television Programs
 - f. Magnetic Letters
 - g. Sight Word Cards
 - h. Phonics Games
 - i. Dry Erase Boards
 - j. Educational Toys
 - k. Writing utensils (for example, crayons, pencils, chalk, and markers)
 - l. Other _____
3. On average how many times does someone in your household read with your child in a week?
 - a. 0-2
 - b. 3-5
 - c. 6-10
 - d. Over 10
4. How often do you communicate with your child’s teacher in a week?

- a. 0-2 times
 - b. 3-5 times
 - c. Over 5 times
5. How do you communicate with your child's teacher?
- a. By email
 - b. By phone
 - c. By text message
 - d. In person
 - e. Other (please write in response)
6. How happy are you with your child's current pre-K program?
- a. Not happy
 - b. Somewhat happy
 - c. Neither happy nor unhappy
 - d. Mostly happy
 - e. Very Happy
7. How happy are you with your child's teacher?
- a. Not happy
 - b. Somewhat happy
 - c. Neither happy nor unhappy
 - d. Mostly happy
 - e. Very happy
8. Have you seen reading growth in your child?
- a. No growth at all
 - b. Hardly any growth
 - c. I can't tell if my child has grown
 - d. Some growth
 - e. A lot of growth
9. Have you seen writing growth in your child?
- a. No growth at all
 - b. Hardly any growth
 - c. I can't tell if my child has grown
 - d. Some growth
 - e. A lot of growth
10. How beneficial do you think your child's current pre-K program is?
- a. Not beneficial
 - b. Somewhat beneficial
 - c. I can't tell if it's been beneficial or not
 - d. Somewhat beneficial
 - e. Very beneficial
10. What are some things you like about your child's pre-K program?
-
11. What are some things you dislike about your child's pre-K program?
-

12. Did you choose your child's current pre-K program? Explain

If yes, what made you choose the pre-K program your child is in?

13. Please tell me anything else that might help me to understand your feelings about your child's pre-K program.

SURVEY QUESTIONS for TEACHERS– URL to online survey will be sent via email to consenting participants

Disclaimer: You are receiving this survey because you have checked "Yes" on the assent form given to you allowing you to complete this survey.

Demographics

Gender (Check one)

Male Female Self-identify

Ethnic Background (Check one)

White Hispanic/Latinx Black/African American Multiracial
 Asian Native Hawaiian Other Pacific Islander Other:

-
1. Which type of pre-K program is your student enrolled in?
 - a. Full day
 - b. Half day
 - c. Part time (does not attend school everyday)
 2. What type of literacy materials are available for your student at school? (check all that apply)
 - a. Books
 - b. Magazines
 - c. Paper
 - d. iPad/Tablet application
 - e. Educational Television Programs
 - f. Magnetic Letters
 - g. Sight Word Cards
 - h. Phonics Games
 - i. Dry Erase Boards
 - j. Educational Toys
 - k. Writing utensils (for example, crayons, pencils, chalk, and markers)

1. Other _____
3. On average how many times do you read with your student one-on-one in a week?
 - a. 0-2
 - b. 3-5
 - c. 6-10
 - d. Over 10
4. How often do you communicate with your student's parent in a week?
 - a. 0-2 times
 - b. 3-5 times
 - c. Over 5 times
5. How do you communicate with your student's parents?
 - a. By email
 - b. By phone
 - c. By text message
 - d. In person
 - e. Other (please write in response)
6. How happy are you with the pre-K program in which this student is enrolled?
 - a. Not happy
 - b. Somewhat happy
 - c. Neither happy nor unhappy
 - d. Mostly happy
 - e. Very Happy
7. How involved are the students parents in his/her education?
 - a. Not at all involved
 - b. Rarely involved
 - c. Sometimes involved
 - d. Often involved
 - e. Very frequently involved
8. Have you seen literacy growth in your student?
 - a. No, not at all
 - b. Some
 - c. Yes, I'm impressed
9. How beneficial do you think your student's current pre-K program is?
 - a. Not beneficial
 - b. Somewhat beneficial
 - c. Very beneficial
10. What do you think are the benefits of the pre-K program in which this student is enrolled?

11. What do you think are some of the challenges of the pre-K program in which this student is enrolled?

12. If you could place this student in one of the pre-K programs here (half day, full day, part time), which would you select and why?

13. Please tell me anything else that might help me to understand your feelings about this student's enrollment in your pre-K program.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – additional part of the study that was not approved through the schools IRB Committee

1. How old is your child / student?
2. What type of program is your child / student enrolled in?
 - a. Follow up to parent: Why did you pick this program?
 - b. Follow up to teacher: What are the main differences between the programs offered here?
3. How long has your child / student been enrolled in this program?
4. To parent: What made you choose the current program that your child is enrolled in?
5. To parent: Are you satisfied with the current program that your child is enrolled in? Why or why not?
6. To teacher: Do you think the student is succeeding in this program? Why or why not?
7. If possible what would you change about the program that your child / student is in?
8. What types of literacy growth do you see in your child / student? Example attempting to write, holding books, etc.
9. Do you think a different program would benefit your child's / student's literacy growth?
10. Does your child / student receive any education outside of the school day?
11. What do you find beneficial about your child's / student's current program?
12. Does your child / student have access to literacy materials outside of the program? What types? (Books, crayons, paper, etc.)
 - a. Follow up to teacher: What kinds of out-of-school supports do you think this student would benefit from?
13. What else would you like me to know about your child's/student's pre-K experience?

Appendix B

Coded Data

Black - Teacher Survey

Blue - Parent Survey

Staff

- Benefit - having multiple staff (p1, q12)
- The day care that we combine with is always understaffed or does not hire adequate staff. (p2, q13)
- When you are removing your heart from your chest each day, and handing it to strangers to care for, one of the greatest determining factors is going to be your gut reaction. There is no faking that. Of course you will be heartbroken to leave your baby, but your gut will tell you if the people caring for him or her are truly CARING. I feel great about the teachers who spend so much time with my babies, and that is the most important thing. (p7P, q17)

Curriculum

- The curriculum applied to each student is curriculum designed just for their specific needs which can help them to grow at their own pace. (p2, q12)
- The daycare chosen curriculum for this age group is inappropriate. (p2, q13)
- Some of the curriculum activities are not age appropriate (p3, q13)
- I like that they support free play. I love that they read every day. They teach the letter sounds with the kids' names so it is engaging and authentic. (p5P, q13)
- She has many opportunities for play, which I know as a teacher is so essential at this age. She comes home and teaches me what she learned at school (recycling, yoga, compliments) and has made SO much growth with writing. (p7P, q13)
- I really don't like Pre-K Common Core and they follow this curriculum. (p6P, q14)
- love access to school amenities like gym, library, playground (p6P, q16)
- The students have many options to not be stuck in the room all day- playground, field, gross motor room, gym (p7P, q16)

Placement

- Not having students in the right placement (p1, q13)
- and some behavioral challenges with other students. (p3, q13)
- Full day to enforce what's being learned (p1, q14)
- Full day. All students can benefit from getting used to full day school and they will get social interactions not typically gained at home. (p2, q14)
- Full day because I feel that they would get more social interaction. I also think they would benefit from the school day routine. (p3, q14)

Interaction

- They also get the opportunity to interact with typically developing peers around the same ages. (p2, q12)
- there are many benefits but the main benefit I find is the peer interaction in our integrated preschool rooms. (p3, q12)
- exposure to other children (p4P, q13)
- I also LOVE that her pre-K is integrated with students who have special needs. (p7P, q13)
- facilitates social skills (p8P,q13)
- Integrated with students with special needs.(p7P, q16)
- I also like that peers with disabilities are integrated into the class. (p8P, q16)

Routine

- structure of a school day routine (p4P, q13)
- Very structured (p8P,q13)

Communication

- The tadpole app and pictures (p6P, q13)
- uses positive language (p8P,q13)
- Inconsistent reporting on app, primarily when tokens are not earned. (p6P, q14)
- Communication could always use improvement especially with shift in teachers both with schedule and changes in staff (p6P, q17)

Availability

- I am a teacher who is off all summer, yet I have to pay for 2 days a week for both kids to hold their spot for fall. (p7P,q14)
- availability of programming for our other children- convenience for our family (p4P, q16)

Location

- location to our home (p4P, q16)
- Location (p6, q16)
- I was able to nurse on demand when my children were infants. That was huge. Also, being able to check in, have them walk by my room. (p7P, q16)
- I work at the school and it's a great daycare program. (p8P, q16)

Reputation

- Great reputation (p5P, q16)

Main Findings:

- All teachers believe that full time would benefit the children the most
- Location is important to parents when picking a program for their child
- Parents use the curriculum and the extra curricular activities to judge the overall program.