

SUNY COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT

**KINDERGARTEN READINESS: TEACHER AND PARENT
EXPECTATIONS**

By

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Master of Science in Education**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to compare the expectations of kindergarten teachers and parents of pre-school-aged children on school readiness. Clarifying expectations can provide guidance and direction for parents in order to prepare their children in ways that meet teachers expectations.

The subjects of this study were parents of pre-school-aged children and kindergarten teachers from the Rochester area. A survey was distributed to determine which readiness skills both parents and teachers found as critical for entrance into kindergarten.

The data from the survey reveal that teachers and parents in the Rochester area have similar expectations when it comes to what readiness skills are critical for kindergarten. Teachers and parents ranked the readiness skills with a score of one being *not important* and a score of five being *very important*. The highest ranked skill by teachers and parents was that children be healthy, rested and well nourished. The least ranked skill by teachers was concept of time, while parents felt that general knowledge about the world was the least critical skill on the survey. The readiness skill with the greatest discrepancy was knowing the alphabet, numbers, colors, and shapes. Parents felt more strongly about the importance of the skill upon entering kindergarten than teachers.

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Chapter 1- Statement of Purpose

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to compare the expectations of kindergarten teachers and parents of pre-school-aged children on school readiness. Clarifying expectations can provide guidance and direction for parents in order to prepare their children in ways that meet teachers expectations.

Introduction

My Interest in the Study

As a teacher, but currently a stay-at-home mother of two children ages two and eight-months, I have a real interest in how to best prepare my children for academic success. Being a certified Elementary and Special Education teacher and working on my Master's Degree in

Reading, I have decided that it would benefit my children by surrounding them with a variety of books. My husband and I both read to our children several times throughout the day. I want to help my children develop a love for reading while creating an environment that would be stimulating enough to create curiosity about the world.

I was proud that at 20 months old, my son, [REDACTED] was able to recognize all of the letters of the alphabet, numbers one through nine, and most colors. To my surprise, I have read that most kindergarten teachers are not looking for those skills as necessary for kindergarten readiness. This sparked an interest and I decided that I really needed to find out what I should be doing to help my children so that they are ready for kindergarten when the time comes.

Need for the Study

Kindergarten is a common experience for children in the United States, with 98% of all children attending kindergarten prior to entering first grade (Zill, Collins, West, & Hausken, 1995). These children come from increasingly diverse backgrounds that include different racial, ethnic,

and cultural backgrounds, family types, parent education levels, socio-economic status, and language backgrounds. Teachers are expected to meet the wide range of needs of the students in their kindergarten classes. Knowing the range of developmental accomplishments when they arrive can help teachers provide children with the appropriate activities and instruction to make sure that each child begins his/her schooling with a positive experience (Zill, Collins, West, & Hausken, 1995).

Teachers' Perspective

In a study that examined 176 kindergarten teachers, teachers ranked 149 skills within five domains they regarded as essential to be successful in kindergarten:

- (1) gross motor
- (2) fine motor
- (3) general knowledge and school readiness
- (4) language
- (5) social. (Johnson, 1995).

Johnson (1995) also included in his findings that skills related to independence were more critical than items relating to academic readiness. While, Welch and White (1999) found that “teachers from both the local and national study identified the same three attributes as essential or very important for children entering public school:

- (1) physically healthy, rested, and well nourished;
- (2) can communicate needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child’s primary language; and
- (3) is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities.” (p.)

Harridine and Clifford (1996) said that teachers “were more likely than other groups to rate being enthusiastic, being able to communicate effectively, and being able to not disrupt the class as most important.”

In Starting Out Right (1999), the National Research Council states that one major goal of kindergarten has always been to assist children in becoming “comfortable in a formal classroom setting”(p.65). This is a major adjustment for many children, therefore, children “must learn to sit quietly, to share, to listen, to communicate cooperatively, and to do what is asked,” (National Research Council,1999, p. 65). Kindergartners find

this to be a real challenge emotionally and behaviorally because they are receiving much less individual attention than they are used to.

Kindergarten must also prepare children to learn to read, and this must be a key priority. Children enter kindergarten with different preschool reading and writing experiences: some write with scribbling and others with letters; some have lots of storybooks in their past and recite them eagerly; for others, books seem pretty unfamiliar (National Research Council, 1999, pg. 65).

Parents' Perspective

Parents are struggling with how to make the right decision as to whether they send their child off to kindergarten or hold him/her back a year. "Driving the decision usually—though not ideally—is a child's birth date. Age is the fairest way to determine access, but not the best," said Diana Guerin, chairwoman of child and adolescent studies at Cal State Fullerton (Jameson, 2000). Many parents want to know how much that year matters, and could waiting be harmful to future academic success? (Jameson, 2000). Wendy Diamond, a mother in Pacific Palisades, said "she understands the attitude of parents wanting to shelter their children from the sense of failure and emotional pain that can come from being the struggling young kid in class," (Groves, 1999). Ira Tobin, Superintendent of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District says, "Not wanting

your child to get chewed up is very much on the minds of parents,” (Groves, 1999). Parents do not want their child to be the smallest, slowest, or the last to read (Groves, 1999).

Grove (1999) also states that parents “talk with neighbors and seek advice from preschool directors. They watch for signs—physical, social, and psychological—of kindergarten readiness: Can the child recite his letters? Tie his or her shoes? Hop on one foot? Share toys with friends?”

Limitations of the Study

The results of my study reflect the opinions of parents and teachers in Rochester, New York and surrounding areas. Results may vary if the same study were done in a different part of the United States.

Chapter 2 - Review of the Literature

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to compare the expectations of kindergarten teachers and parents of pre-school-aged children on school readiness. Clarifying expectations can provide guidance and direction for parents in order to prepare their children in ways that meet teachers expectations.

Kindergarten readiness is a complicated issue due to the fact that parents, teachers and school administrators may view readiness very differently. Powell (1996) says, "Readiness entails more than a set of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that a child brings to school." He also says, "research shows that early childhood programs, schools, and families are key influences on school success. Community support for health and physical development and family well being also are considered important." Douglas Powell, head of the Purdue University Department of Child Development and Family Studies, says "it's important for parents to learn what the school system's expectations are for

kindergartners—they vary wildly across the country—then try to find a good match for the child” (Hall, 2000).

Assessment Tests

According to Powell (1996), assessment tests are a poor predictor of determining school readiness. He says that young children are not used to taking tests, they lose interest, and can undergo rapid changes in development. Black (1997) discovered two reasons why kindergarten screening is probably a waste of time for anything other than catching vision or hearing problems. First, the kindergarten screening information is seldom used in any purposeful way (Black, 1997). Second, most teachers redo their own assessment once the 5-year-olds arrive in their classrooms because the children are six months older. In kindergarten-life, they have grown a half-year and there is a lot of growth in that time (Black, 1997).

Chronological Age

Deciding when a child goes to kindergarten is a major life decision and preschool and kindergarten educators agree that chronological age is probably one of the least important factors in deciding whether a child is ready for kindergarten. School districts in New York State are bound to accept all children in kindergarten who are five by December 1st. Some parents opt to keep their children back a year, because kindergarten is not mandatory in New York State.

Academic Skills

Parents are more likely than teachers to view academic skills (letters of the alphabet and counting to twenty) as a predictor of kindergarten readiness. “Teachers say these skills can be taught if a child comes to school with curiosity and the ability to pay attention, play cooperatively and follow directions” (Hall, 2000).

Kindergarten was originally a year of relatively informal education designed to form a bridge from home to a more formal schooling in the elementary grades. Gradually the curriculum from the upper grades has been pushed down to lower levels, escalating academic demands in kindergarten and even preschool. (Black, 1991)

“As expectations become more academic and assessments more formal pressure increases to retain children who do not meet expectations or to place them in a transition class between kindergarten and first grade,” (Nurss, 1987).

Parents' Perspective

According to teacher Pat Bernath, springtime is a season for “telephone calls and meetings with anxious parents who feel pressured by their parents, spouses, even neighbors—all of whom are giving conflicting advice on when to send a child to kindergarten,” (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 1997). Some parents spend a great deal of time making a decision and for other parents there is no choice. Children who come from single parent homes or lower income areas are more likely to be sent to kindergarten as soon as legally possible because their families just can not afford another year of expensive day care (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 1997).

Kindergarten

“Frederick Froebel (1893) created the first kindergarten and introduced the idea that play was the young child’s natural mode of learning and self-expression” (Elkind, 1996, p.13).

When asked what parents could do to better prepare their children, teachers most frequently mentioned the areas of receptive language, cognitive-attention/problem-solving, and small muscle coordination. Parents, however, tended to emphasize helping children with pre-reading, math, and social skills. (Cromwell, 1998)

“Love, confidence, and encouragement are the emotional prerequisites kindergartners need to succeed in school,” says Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, the well-known and widely published children’s doctor (Black, 1997, p. 36). The following characteristics are important predictors of a child’s school performance says Brazelton: confidence, curiosity, intentionality, self-control, relatedness, capacity to communicate and cooperativeness (Black, 1997).

Susan Black, a contributing editor for *The American School Board Journal*, an education research consultant answers the question: What makes a good kindergarten? She responds by saying:

Turning to the best research available, one finding shines through: A good kindergarten is not an academic kindergarten. In fact, researchers say, you should be alarmed if a kindergarten teacher says the purpose of kindergarten is “getting kids ready” for first grade. And you should be on guard if you see kids grouped by

ability, filling out worksheets, and simply following teacher's orders (Black, 1997, p.35).

David Elkind, a professor of child study at Tufts University, says:

We need to move away from the idea that the first years of life are a time for intervention and school readiness. Early childhood is a stage of life that should be considered on its own terms, not as a preparation for later stages. If we think of early childhood in this way, we will create kindergarten and first-grade environments that are flexible, activity-oriented, and filled with plants and animals. (Elkind, 1996, p.13)

While a study conducted by West and Hausken (1995) identifies emerging literacy and numeracy skills as the most crucial for children entering kindergarten, its authors note that kindergarten teachers do not agree with this assessment. Results of a survey reveals that only a percentage of kindergarten teachers believe that knowledge of primary colors and shapes, and the ability to count and recognize letters, are important for success in kindergarten. A large majority of teachers emphasized the importance of health, the ability to communicate thoughts and needs, following directions, and participating without disrupting the classroom (Elkind, 1996). "Because young children's rates of intellectual attainment are so variable, it makes little sense to have uniform, standardized kindergarten and first-grade curricula," (Elkind, 1996, p.13).

We can address this diversity best if we regard early education as a liberating, rather than a remedial, enterprise, and organize our kindergarten and first-grade accordingly. Early education programs that accommodate this diversity will provide a suitable environment for the young child's abilities, needs, and interests (Elkind, 1996, p.13).

Communication between the schools (pre-school and kindergarten) and parents of pre-school-aged children needs to take place so that there is a smooth and successful transition to kindergarten.

Chapter 3 - Design of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to compare the expectations of kindergarten teachers and parents of pre-school-aged children on school readiness. Clarifying expectations can provide guidance and direction for parents in order to prepare their children in ways that meet teachers expectations.

Research Questions

What school readiness skills do kindergarten teachers believe are critical for school success?

What school readiness skills do parents perceive are critical for kindergarten?

What do responses from parents and teachers mean for children entering kindergarten?

Methodology

Subjects

The subjects of this study were parents of pre-school-aged children and kindergarten teachers from urban, rural, and suburban school districts. Thirty parents and eighteen teachers completed surveys.

Materials

The materials used in this study consisted of two surveys. (See Appendix A for the survey that was distributed to parents of pre-school-aged children and Appendix B that was distributed to kindergarten teachers.)

Procedures

The teacher survey was distributed to kindergarten teachers from rural, urban and suburban districts. A letter was attached to the survey stating the purpose of the study and indicating that the survey was voluntary. The survey that was distributed to parents of pre-school-aged children was conducted in the same manner. A self addressed, stamped envelope was attached to the letter and survey so that it would be as quick and easy to complete and return as possible. I would be happy to

share my information with any interested participants (teachers and/or parents) and would send my findings upon completion of the study. Teachers and parents could indicate whether or not they want a pamphlet of my findings by filling out their name and address on the survey. The researcher will collect and compile the data from the completed surveys.

Analysis of Data

Quantitatively, the responses will be sorted and compared by readiness skills the teachers and parents indicate are critical for entrance into kindergarten. The information gained from the study will provide information to both teachers and parents so that they become aware of each other's perspectives, while making the transition into kindergarten more pleasant for all concerned. Qualitatively, brief discussions and email responses with some parents of preschool-aged children and some teachers and administrators will also be noted.

Chapter 4 - Results of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to compare the expectations of kindergarten teachers and parents of pre-school-aged children on school readiness. Clarifying expectations can provide guidance and direction for parents in order to prepare their children in ways that meet teachers expectations.

Results of the Study

As mentioned earlier, an administrator in a surrounding school district emailed me to remind me that, all schools in New York State are required to accept all five-year-olds into kindergarten regardless of their readiness skills.

One parent that was surveyed emailed me to share additional comments regarding her experience with the transition process. This mother's son had an August birthday and she decided to hold him back a year due to a speech delay, despite strong recommendations from his teachers to send him to kindergarten that year. This particular parent felt

it is important that parents know that many school districts prohibit repeating kindergarten. This mother was more concerned about her child experiencing success in first grade, rather than in kindergarten.

Another mother commented that as long as a child is physically ready to learn and has developed some social skills required for learning in a group situation, then the actual learning of knowledge as well as the fine-tuning of the social skills could be accomplished in kindergarten. If more is accomplished prior to starting kindergarten, that's okay, too. However, if too much is done prior to kindergarten, the child has not only lost some of the precious free play time of the pre-k years and in addition could be bored in kindergarten and perhaps lose interest in school.

Parents in this study also added additional readiness skills they felt were important such as: have self-confidence, display imaginative and creative play, have emotional needs met, have knowledge of name and address, and have a minimum amount of separation anxiety. The additional readiness skills that were important to teachers were: for the child to have a supportive and positive home life; to be polite, respectful and well-behaved; to be familiar with the concept of print; able to follow directions; maintain self-control; and (in agreement with parents) to have knowledge of name and address.

The data from the survey reveal that teachers and parents in the Rochester area have similar expectations when it comes to what readiness skills are critical for kindergarten. Teachers and parents ranked the readiness skills with a score of one being *not important* and a score of five being *very important*. The highest ranked skill by teachers and parents was that children be healthy, rested and well nourished. The least ranked skill by teachers was concept of time, while parents felt that general knowledge about the world was the least critical skill on the survey. The readiness skill with the greatest discrepancy was knowing the alphabet, numbers, colors, and shapes. Parents felt more strongly about the importance of the skill upon entering kindergarten than teachers.

Teacher/Parent Priority

Table 1

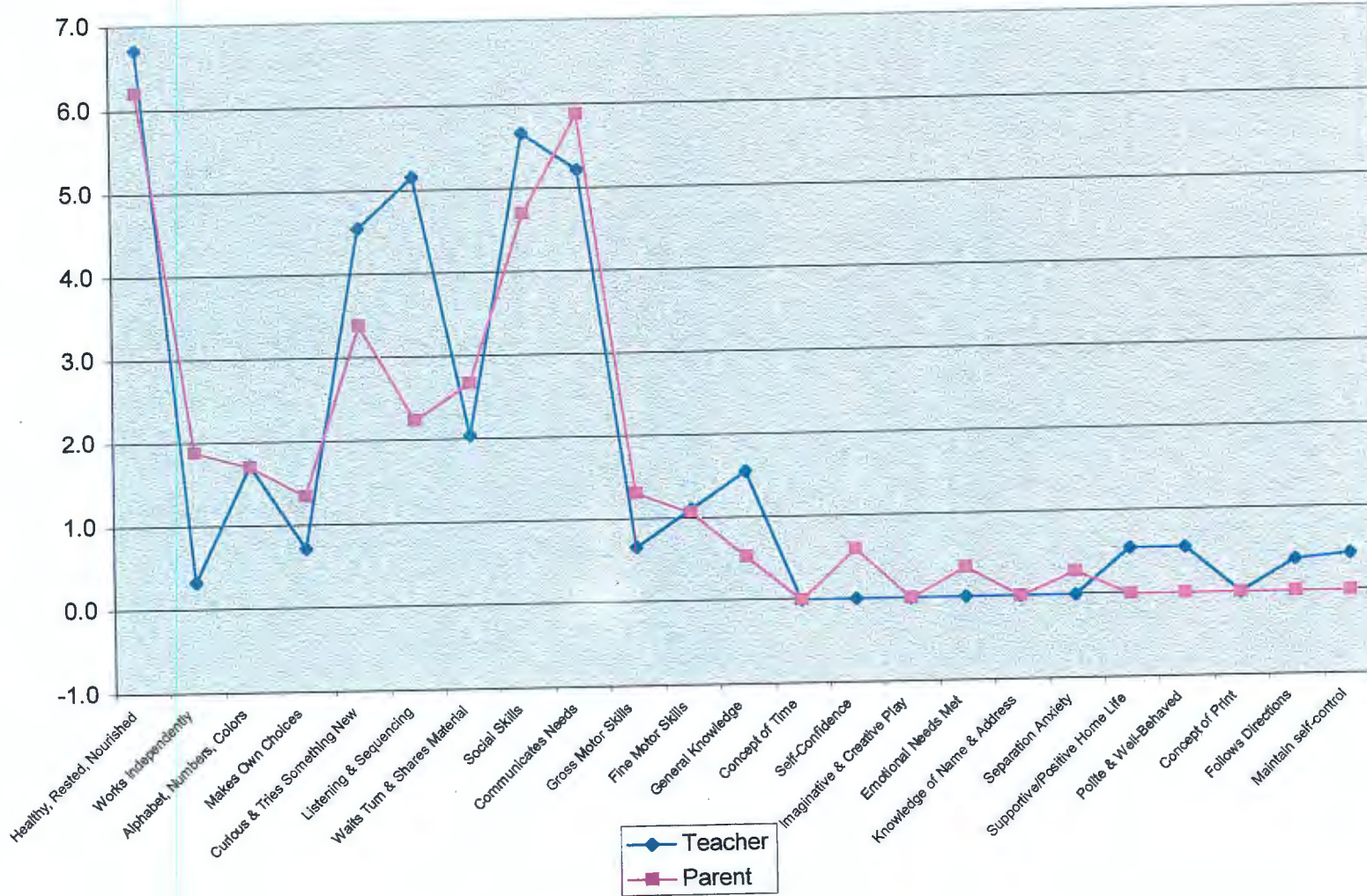
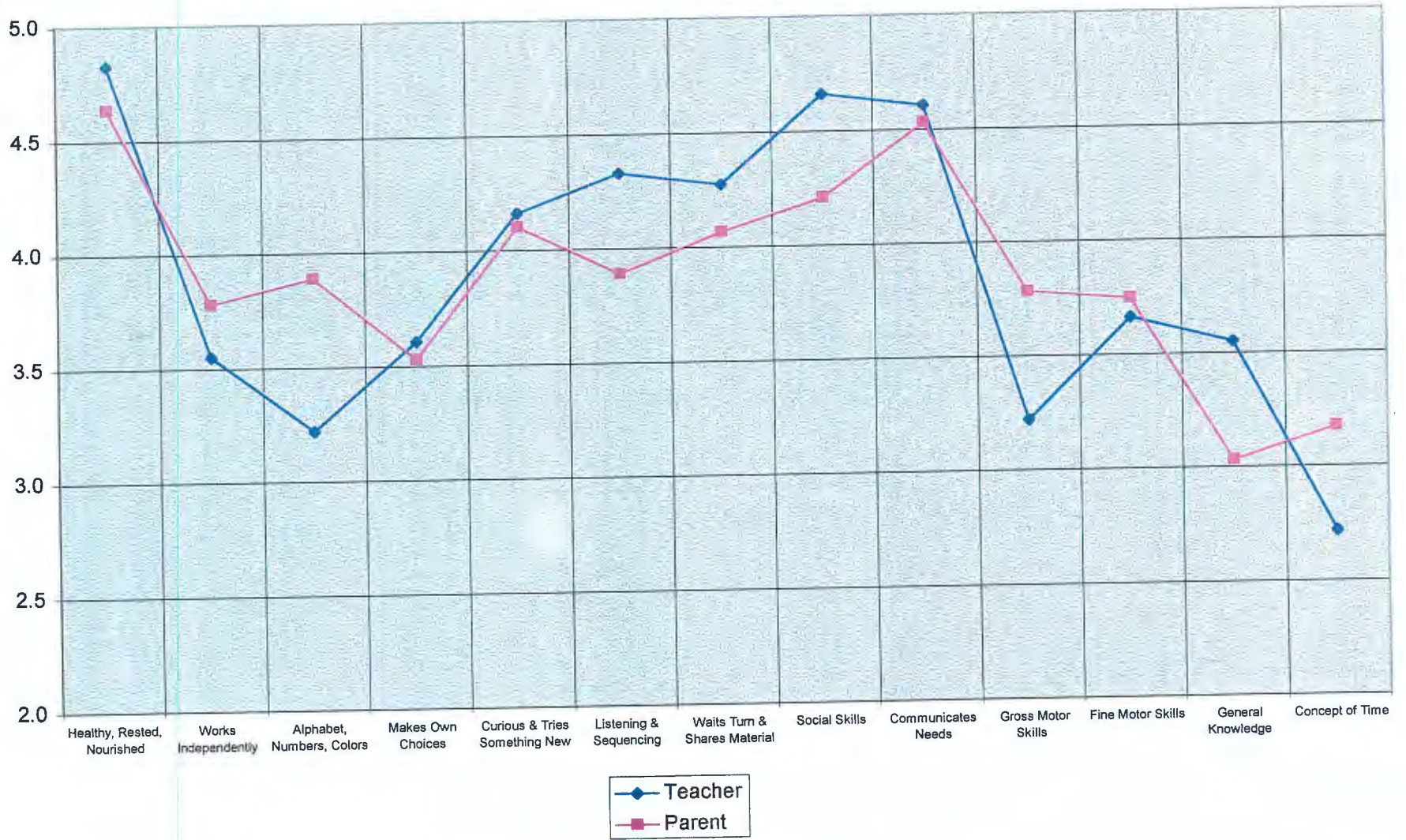


Table 2
21

Teacher/Parent Ranking



Chapter 5 - Conclusions and Implications

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to compare the expectations of kindergarten teachers and parents of pre-school-aged children on school readiness. Clarifying expectations can provide guidance and direction for parents in order to prepare their children in ways that meet teachers expectations.

Conclusion

In the Rochester area, the small study worked because I was looking for trends and not statistically sound data. Data results may have turned out differently if parents and teachers from across the nation were surveyed.

Curriculum in the early grades has been altered due to escalating standards. Therefore, risk of failure is a concern. This is why I believed the trend for school readiness would be more academic for children entering kindergarten. I was a bit surprised by the results of the study as to how close teachers' and parents' expectations were. Based on my

research, there was a lot of conflicting advice to parents as to how to best prepare children for school readiness. As the results show, teachers are looking for children entering kindergarten to: be physically healthy, rested, and well nourished; interact well with other children (social skills); communicate needs, wants and thoughts; be able to listen and sequence; and be curious and show willingness to try something new. School related skills such as concept of time, knowing the alphabet, numbers, colors and shapes, and gross motor skills fell at the bottom of the ranking for teachers.

Implications for Parents

Geraldine Chapey, author of *Ready For School: How Parents Can Prepare Children For School Success* (1986), encourages the following list of **Do's** as a focus for parents (p. 131-132).

- Enjoy your child.
- Hum and sing as you go around the house dusting or cooking.
- Use self-talk when with your young child.
- Use parallel talk when watching your young child do something.

- Use a soothing, caring, comforting voice.
- Listen to your child and give reassuring facial gestures when he/she is talking.
- Set clear firm limits.
- Use short sentences when you talk to your child.
- Use names for objects when you talk.
- Keep explanations simple.
- Use a slow rate.
- Have patience.
- Ask “what” questions first; ask “why” questions when he/she is older.
- Read to your child everyday.
- Encourage your child to ask questions.
- Be generous with rewards: praise, a hug.
- Encourage curiosity and imagination in your child.
- Encourage your child to play with other children.
- Give your child experiences so he/she will have something to talk about.
- Involve your child in cooking, walking, playing in the sand, planting window boxes, making bookshelves.

- Tape favorite songs, rhythm, jingles or stories so your child can listen over and over again to them.
- Teach your child his/her name and family names.
- Work with your child in developing a collection or starting a hobby: boats, cars, bottle-caps; be interested in what your child likes to do.
- Join in classes for parents and children at the children's museum, in learning centers, at the library and at the local public school.
- Take your child regularly to the library.
- Serve as a model: let your child see you enjoy reading papers, books, and magazines.
- Keep your sense of humor.
- Play games with your child.
- The generation gap does not exist when parents and children do things together and grow to be friends.

Chapey discourages the following list of **Don'ts** (p. 133).

- Interrupt your child, nod or turn away before your child has finished telling his/her story; in other words, don't appear disinterested in what he/she has to say.
- Ask him/her too many questions.

- Pressure him/her to do things he/she isn't quite ready for.
- Force your child when he/she appears restless, tired or frustrated; change to another activity.
- Expect too much too soon; for example to put toys away alone or to clean up alone.
- Correct him over and over again, saying, "No, you're wrong. Do it *this way!*"
- Say, "No, it is *not* red." Simply say, "It is blue."
- Criticize him/her face to face or in front of others.
- Have so many rules that your child pays no attention to you.
- Over-stimulate your child by providing too many toys or by going too many places.
- Expect your preschool child to understand all logical relationships, all about people's feelings (mother is tired), or abstract reasoning or explanations.
- Become anxious about each small change or incremental step backwards or forwards.
- Compare your child with any other child: siblings, neighbors, relatives, or friends.

Implications for Future Research

It would be interesting to reevaluate the data to get a diversity of findings such as: compare different teachers' expectations as compared to their districts', compare urban schools to rural schools, or define whether this is academic or social readiness.

I also wonder if expectations differ from parents/teachers in the suburbs and those in high poverty areas and across the United States.

Education is so subject to trends, that I am curious that if my current results would have been different five years ago and how it could change five years from now!

What do school districts do to prepare students prior to school entrance? Do the elementary school and preschools work together to align a smooth transition to kindergarten?

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Appendix A

December, 2000

Dear Parent(s) of a Pre-School-Aged Child,

I am a graduate student at the State University of New York at Brockport pursuing my Master's Degree in Reading. I am currently working on my thesis and would appreciate any information regarding my topic of Kindergarten Readiness. The purpose of my study is to compare the expectations of kindergarten teachers and parents of pre-school-aged children on school readiness. Clarifying expectations can provide guidance and direction for parents in order to prepare their children in ways that meet teachers' expectations.

As a teacher and a parent of two young children, I am interested in finding out what readiness skills parents' of pre-school-aged children perceive are critical for kindergarten. Kindergarten readiness is a complicated issue due to the fact that parents, teachers, and school administrators may view readiness very differently. Therefore, communication between the schools and parents of pre-school-aged children need to take place so that there is a smooth and successful transition to kindergarten.

The information found from the study will provide information to both teachers and parents so that each become aware of the other's perspectives while making the transition into kindergarten more pleasant for all concerned. I would be happy to share my information with any interested participants. Please indicate at the bottom of the attached survey if you are interested in a pamphlet of my findings upon completion of the study (Sometime in May 2001).

Please return the completed survey to an envelope at your child's pre-school as I will collect them sometime at the end of January, 2001. You may also contact me with any additional information or comments regarding this subject at my email address [REDACTED]

Thank you for your time and I appreciate your input.

Sincerely,

Debra M. Ramsey

Parent Expectations for Kindergarten Readiness Survey

1. What is your child's date of birth? _____ 2. Is your child male or female? _____ 3. Do you live in an urban, suburban, or rural area? _____
4. List age and gender of other children in your household. _____
5. Using a scale of 1-5 with 1= not important and 5= very important please rank the importance of each readiness skill by circling your answer. After you have completed this, please indicate your *top 5 priorities* by numbering them 1-5 in the far LEFT column with 1= most important, 2= next most important, etc.

PRIORITY	READINESS SKILLS	Not imp. Very imp.				
		1	2	3	4	5
_____	PHYSICALLY HEALTHY, RESTED AND WELL-NOURISHED	1	2	3	4	5
_____	WORKS INDEPENDENTLY	1	2	3	4	5
_____	KNOWS THE ALPHABET, NUMBERS, COLORS, & SHAPES	1	2	3	4	5
_____	MAKES HIS/HER OWN CHOICES WITHOUT TEACHER OR PARENT INTERACTION	1	2	3	4	5
_____	IS CURIOUS AND SHOWS WILLINGNESS TO TRY SOMETHING NEW	1	2	3	4	5
_____	LISTENING AND SEQUENCING (sound recognition, story recall, attending)	1	2	3	4	5
_____	WAITS HIS/HER TURN IN A GROUP SITUATION IN PLAY OR SHARING MATERIALS	1	2	3	4	5
_____	SOCIAL SKILLS (interacts well with other children)	1	2	3	4	5
_____	CAN COMMUNICATE NEEDS, WANTS AND THOUGHTS	1	2	3	4	5
_____	GROSS MOTOR SKILLS (hopping, running, jumping, climbing)	1	2	3	4	5
_____	FINE MOTOR SKILLS (coloring, cutting, drawing, buttoning, zippering)	1	2	3	4	5
_____	GENERAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE WORLD	1	2	3	4	5
_____	CONCEPT OF TIME (day/night, calendar, seasons)	1	2	3	4	5
_____	OTHER _____	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate the name of your child's pre-school if you are interested in a pamphlet of my findings. _____

*** Feel free to add any additional comments on the back of this survey.*

Appendix B

December, 2000

Dear Kindergarten Teachers,

I am a graduate student at the State University of New York at Brockport pursuing my Master's Degree in Reading. I am currently working on my thesis and would appreciate any information regarding my topic of Kindergarten Readiness. The purpose of my study is to compare the expectations of kindergarten teachers and parents of pre-school-aged children on school readiness. Clarifying expectations can provide guidance and direction for parents in order to prepare their children in ways that meet teachers' expectations.

As a teacher and a parent of two young children, I am interested in finding out what kindergarten teachers' feel are crucial readiness skills for incoming kindergartners. Kindergarten readiness is a complicated issue due to the fact that parents, teachers, and school administrators may view readiness very differently. Therefore, communication between the schools and parents of pre-school-aged children need to take place so that there is a smooth and successful transition to kindergarten.

The information found from the study will provide information to both teachers and parents so that each become aware of the other's perspectives while making the transition into kindergarten more pleasant for all concerned. I would be happy to share my information with any interested participants. Please indicate at the bottom of the attached survey if you are interested in a pamphlet of my findings upon completion of the study (Sometime in May 2001).

Please return the completed survey to an envelope at your school as I will collect them sometime at the end of January, 2001. You may also contact me with any additional information or comments regarding this subject at my email address [REDACTED]

Thank you for your time and I appreciate your input.

Sincerely,

Debra M. Ramsey

Kindergarten Teachers Expectations for Kindergarten Readiness Survey

1. How many years have you been teaching kindergarten? _____
2. Do you teach in an urban, suburban, or rural district? _____
3. Using a scale of 1-5 with 1= not important and 5= very important please rank the importance of each readiness skill by circling your answer. After you have completed this, please indicate your *top 5 priorities* by numbering them 1-5 in the far LEFT column with 1= most important, 2= next most important, etc.

PRIORITY	READINESS SKILLS	Not imp. Very imp.				
		1	2	3	4	5
_____	PHYSICALLY HEALTHY, RESTED AND WELL-NOURISHED	1	2	3	4	5
_____	WORKS INDEPENDENTLY	1	2	3	4	5
_____	KNOWS THE ALPHABET, NUMBERS, COLORS, & SHAPES	1	2	3	4	5
_____	MAKES HIS/HER OWN CHOICES WITHOUT TEACHER OR PARENT INTERACTION	1	2	3	4	5
_____	IS CURIOUS AND SHOWS WILLINGNESS TO TRY SOMETHING NEW	1	2	3	4	5
_____	LISTENING AND SEQUENCING (sound recognition, story recall, attending)	1	2	3	4	5
_____	WAITS HIS/HER TURN IN A GROUP SITUATION IN PLAY OR SHARING MATERIALS	1	2	3	4	5
_____	SOCIAL SKILLS (interacts well with other children)	1	2	3	4	5
_____	CAN COMMUNICATE NEEDS, WANTS AND THOUGHTS	1	2	3	4	5
_____	GROSS MOTOR SKILLS (hopping, running, jumping, climbing)	1	2	3	4	5
_____	FINE MOTOR SKILLS (coloring, cutting, drawing, buttoning, zipping)	1	2	3	4	5
_____	GENERAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE WORLD	1	2	3	4	5
_____	CONCEPT OF TIME (day/night, calendar, seasons)	1	2	3	4	5
_____	OTHER _____	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate the name and address of your school if you are interested in a pamphlet of my findings _____

*** Feel free to add any additional comments on the back of this survey.*

Appendix C

Priorities	***Point ranking			
	Teacher	Parent	Teacher	Parent
Healthy, Rested, Nourished	121	174	6.7	6.2
Works Independently	6	53	0.3	1.9
Alphabet, Numbers, Colors	31	48	1.7	1.7
Makes Own Choices	13	38	0.7	1.4
Curious & Tries Something New	82	95	4.6	3.4
Listening & Sequencing	93	63	5.2	2.3
Waits Turn & Shares Material	37	75	2.1	2.7
Social Skills	102	132	5.7	4.7
Communicates Needs	94	165	5.2	5.9
Gross Motor Skills	12	37	0.7	1.3
Fine Motor Skills	20	30	1.1	1.1
General Knowledge	28	15	1.6	0.5
Concept of Time	0	0	0.0	0.0
Self-Confidence	0	17	0.0	0.6
Imaginative & Creative Play	0	0	0.0	0.0
Emotional Needs Met	0	10	0.0	0.4
Knowledge of Name & Address	0	0	0.0	0.0
Separation Anxiety	0	8	0.0	0.3
Supportive/Positive Home Life	10	0	0.6	0.0
Polite & Well-Behaved	10	0	0.6	0.0
Concept of Print	0	0	0.0	0.0
Follows Directions	7	0	0.4	0.0
Maintain self-control	8	0	0.4	0.0
Rankings			Legend	
	Teacher	Parent	*** This number represents a weighted average divided by the number of entries. An arbitrary point system was used: 10 points for a 1 priority 9 points for 2 priority descending down to 6 points for a 5 rating.	
Healthy, Rested, Nourished	4.8	4.6		
Works Independently	3.6	3.8		
Alphabet, Numbers, Colors	3.2	3.9		
Makes Own Choices	3.6	3.5		
Curious & Tries Something New	4.2	4.1		
Listening & Sequencing	4.3	3.9		
Waits Turn & Shares Material	4.3	4.1		
Social Skills	4.7	4.2		
Communicates Needs	4.6	4.5		
Gross Motor Skills	3.2	3.8		
Fine Motor Skills	3.7	3.8		
General Knowledge	3.6	3.0		
Concept of Time	2.7	3.2		

READINESS SKILLS-PARENT PRIORITY																					Total Count of Rankings by Priority																																		
	1	2	3	4	5							6	Point Ranking																																										
Physically Healthy, Rested and Well-Nourished			1	1		1						3	4	1		1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	15	1	1	1	0	174																				
Works Independently	3					4													3		4	4								1	0	2	3	1	53																				
Knows The Alphabet, Numbers, Colors, & Shapes	2		5			2										2						5								0	4	0	0	2	48																				
Makes his/her Own Choices Without Teacher or Parent												5	5		5			4				4							5			0	0	0	2	4	38																		
Is Curious and Shows Willingness to Try Something New					5	3		4	5	2			3		4	3	4		3			5							4	3	0	1	5	4	3	95																			
Listening & Sequencing (sound recognition, story recall, attending)							5		4	3		2				5		5	5	5									2	0	2	1	1	5	63																				
Waits his/her Turn In A Group Situation In Play or Sharing	1		5		3		3	3			4		4			5		4										3			1	0	4	3	2	75																			
Social Skills (interacts well with other children)	4		2		2	1	4	2	1	4	2	3	5	4	2		3					3	2							2	6	3	4	1	132																				
Can Communicate Needs, Wants, & Thoughts	5		4		4		2	1		5	1	1	2	1	3	2		2	2	3	2	4	5					2	4	4	7	2	4	3	165																				
Gross Motor Skills (hopping, running, jumping, climbing)			3			5				2																			3		5		0	1	2	0	2	37																	
Fine Motor Skills (coloring, cutting, drawing)			4							3					3															4			0	0	2	2	0	30																	
General Knowledge About the World																																					5	0	1	0	0	1	15												
Concept of Time (day/night, calendar, seasons)																																							0	0	0	0	0	0											
OTHER																																										0	0	0	0	0	0								
Self Confidence			3																																									0	1	1	0	0	17						
Imaginative & Creative Play																																														0	0	0	0	0	0				
Emotional Needs Met																																															1	0	0	0	0	10			
Knowledge of Name and Address																																																0	0	0	0	0	0		
Separation Anxiety																																																	3	0	0	1	0	0	8

READINESS SKILLS-TEACHER RANKING																			Average
Physically Healthy, Rested and Well-Nourished	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.8
Works Independently	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	3	3	2	3	2	4	3	5	5	4	4	3.6
Knows The Alphabet, Numbers, Colors, & Shapes	5	5	4	1	3	4	4	3	4	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	5	2	3.2
Makes his/her Own Choices Without Teacher or Parent Interaction	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	3	3	5	3.6
Is Curious and Shows Willingness to Try Something New	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	2	5	3	4	5	2	4	4	4	5	4.2
Listening & Sequencing (sound recognition, story recall, attending)	5	5	5	3	5	3	5	4	4	4	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	3	4.3
Waits his/her Turn In A Group Situation In Play or Sharing Materials	5	3	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	3	4	4	3	4	5	5	5	4.3
Social Skills (interacts well with other children)	5	3	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4.7
Can Communicate Needs, Wants, & Thoughts	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.6
Gross Motor Skills (hopping, running, jumping, climbing)	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	2	3	2	3	3	4	4	3.2
Fine Motor Skills (coloring, cutting, drawing)	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	5	5	2	3.7
General Knowledge About the World	4	3	3	5	3	3	4	3	3	5	3	3	3	1	4	4	5	5	3.6
Concept of Time (day/night, calendar, seasons)	4	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	1	4	3	3	2	2.7
OTHER																			
Self Confidence																			
Imaginative and Creative Play																			
Emotional Needs Met																			
Knowledge of Name and Address																	5		
Separation Anxiety																			
Supportive/Positive Home Life				5															
Polite, Respectful, Well-Behaved							5					5							
Concept of Print										4									
Follows Directions																	5		
Maintain Self-control																	5		

READINESS SKILLS-TEACHER PRIORITY																	1	2	3	4	5	Priority ranking			
																	10	9	8	7	6	Point Ranking			
Physically Healthy, Rested and Well-Nourished	1			2		1	1	1	1		2	5	1	1	3	1	2	8	3	1	0	1	121		
Works Independently															5			0	0	0	0	1	6		
Knows The Alphabet, Numbers, Colors, & Shapes	5	1				5												1	1	0	0	2	31		
Makes his/her Own Choices Without Teacher or Parent Interaction														5	4				0	0	0	1	1	13	
Is Curious and Shows Willingness to Try Something New				3	3		5	2		1	4	3	2		1		4	2	2	3	2	1	82		
Listening & Sequencing (sound recognition, story recall, attending)	4	2			4		2			3			1	3	3	2	2	2		1	5	3	2	0	93
Waits his/her Turn In A Group Situation In Play or Sharing Materials	3				2	4		5		4									0	1	1	2	1	37	
Social Skills (interacts well with other children)	2				1	2	3	4	4	5		4	5	4	5	1		1	3	2	1	4	3	102	
Can Communicate Needs, Wants, & Thoughts		3			5	3	4	3		3	3	2	4	2			3	3	0	2	7	2	1	94	
Gross Motor Skills (hopping, running, jumping, climbing)		5									5								0	0	0	0	2	12	
Fine Motor Skills (coloring, cutting, drawing)		4						5								4			0	0	0	2	1	20	
General Knowledge About the World				4						2							5	5	0	1	0	1	2	28	
Concept of Time (day/night, calendar, seasons)																			0	0	0	0	0	0	
OTHER																			0	0	0	0	0	0	
Self Confidence																			0	0	0	0	0	0	
Imaginative and Creative Play																			0	0	0	0	0	0	
Emotional Needs Met																			0	0	0	0	0	0	
Knowledge of Name and Address																			0	0	0	0	0	0	
Separation Anxiety																			0	0	0	0	0	0	
Supportive/Positive Home Life				1															1	0	0	0	0	10	
Polite, Respectful, Well-Behaved										1									1	0	0	0	0	10	
Concept of Print																			0	0	0	0	0	0	
Follows Directions															4				0	0	0	1	0	7	
Maintain Self-control															3				0	0	1	0	0	8	

Kindergarten Readiness: Teacher and Parent Expectations

By
Debra M. Ramsey

SUNY College at Brockport
May 2001

The purpose of my thesis was to compare the expectations of kindergarten teachers and parents of pre-school-aged children on school readiness. Clarifying expectations can provide guidance and direction for parents in order to prepare their children in ways that meet teachers' expectations.

The data from the survey reveal that teachers and parents in the Rochester area have similar expectations when it comes to what readiness skills are critical for kindergarten. Teachers and parents ranked the readiness skills with a score of one being not important and a score of five being very important. The highest ranked skill by teachers and parents was that children are healthy, rested, and well nourished. The least ranked skill by teachers was concept of time, while parents felt that general knowledge about the world was the least critical on the survey. The readiness skill with the greatest discrepancy was knowing the alphabet, numbers, colors, and shapes. Parents felt more strongly about the importance of the skill upon entering kindergarten than teachers.

Parents in this study also added additional readiness skills they felt were important such as: have self-confidence, display imaginative and creative play, have emotional needs met, have knowledge of name and address, and have a minimum amount of separation anxiety.

The additional readiness skills that were important to teachers were: for the child to have a supportive and positive home life; to be polite, respectful and well-behaved; to be familiar with the concept of print; to be able to follow directions; to maintain self-control; and (in agreement with parents) to have knowledge of name and address.

All schools in New York State are required to accept all five-year-olds into kindergarten regardless of their readiness skills.

Based on my research, there was a lot of conflicting advice to parents as to how to best prepare children for school readiness. As the survey results show, teachers are looking for children entering kindergarten to: be physically healthy, rested, and well-nourished; interact well with other children (social skills); communicate needs, wants and thoughts; be able to listen and sequence; and be curious and show willingness to try something new. School related skills such as concept of time, knowing the alphabet, numbers, colors and shapes, and gross motor skills fell at the bottom of the ranking for teachers.

Geraldine Chapey, author of Ready for School: How Parents Can Prepare Children For School Success (1986), encourages the following list of Do's as a focus for parents (p. 131-132).

- *Enjoy your child.
- *Hum and sing as you go around the house dusting or cooking.
- *Use self-talk when you are with your young child.
- *Use parallel talk when watching your young child do something.
- *Use a soothing, caring, comforting voice.
- *Listen to your child and give reassuring facial gestures when he/she is talking.
- *Set clear firm limits.
- *Use short sentences when you talk to your child.
- *Use names for objects when you talk.
- *Keep explanations simple.
- *Use a slow rate.
- *Have patience.
- *Ask "what" questions first; ask "why" questions when he/she is older.
- *Read to your child everyday.
- *Encourage your child to ask questions.
- *Be generous with rewards: praise, a hug.
- *Encourage your child to play with other children.
- *Give your child experiences so he/she will have something to talk about.
- *Involve your child in cooking, walking, playing in the sand, planting window boxes, making book shelves.
- *Tape favorite songs, rhythm, jingle or stories so your child can listen over and over to them.
- *Teach your child his/her name and family names.
- *Work with your child in developing a collection or starting a hobby.
- *Join in classes for parents and children at the children's museum, in learning centers, at the library and at the local public school.
- *Take your child regularly to the library.
- *Serve as a model: let your child see you enjoy reading papers, books, and magazines.
- *Keep your sense of humor.
- *Play games with your child.
- *The generation gap does not exist when parents and children do things together and grow to be friends.

