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An Examination of Kindergarten Readiness Perceptions from Prekindergarten Teachers, Kindergarten Teachers, and Parents: A Quantitative Study of Kindergarten Readiness Perceptions

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An Examination of Kindergarten Readiness Perceptions from Prekindergarten Teachers, Kindergarten Teachers, and Parents: A Quantitative Study of Kindergarten Readiness Perceptions

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Abstract

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This study examined the perceptions of kindergarten readiness for kindergarten teachers, public prekindergarten teachers in both public and private settings, and parents. Data were collected and analyzed through a quantitative method using an inferential approach. A Likert-style survey was distributed to current kindergarten teachers, prekindergarten teachers, and parents; and the data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The data collected from the surveys indicated differences in kindergarten readiness perceptions in the areas of social/emotional skills, literacy skills, and communication between kindergarten parents and teachers and between public and private prekindergarten participants. There were also differences in kindergarten readiness perceptions based on the age of the participants. The study concluded that these differences in kindergarten readiness perceptions have an impact on public education programs, and the success of public school students effects the communities in which they reside.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

According to the National Education Goals Panel, the concept of school readiness is a collective endeavor that includes children readiness to enter school, school readiness for children, and family and community support (Clark & Zygmunt-Fillwalk, 2008). School readiness incorporates all developmental domains (social, emotional, physical, and cognitive) and is cultivated when all children have access to quality early care and learning experiences in classrooms with warm teachers and an engaging learning environment (Wilson & Hanson, 2009). Maxwell and Clifford (2004) stated that school readiness involves more than just children. School readiness, in the broadest sense, is about children, families, early environments, schools, and communities. Children's skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through the interactions with other people and environments before coming to school (Sparagana, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

The education pendulum is always moving with constant changes in curriculum, program innovations and ideas, and multiple ideas of school reform. According to Howard (2011) with the Council of Chief State School Officers, this is because young children are being assessed in multiple domains and settings, including at the beginning of kindergarten. The number of states with laws mandating kindergarten assessments is at least 25%, an increase of 72% over the last 5 years. Unfortunately, the students who are not prepared for kindergarten lag behind and have to work at closing the achievement gap while also mastering new material and curriculum. As many as 46% of kindergarten teachers in the United States reported that at least half of their class exhibited specific problems upon entering kindergarten (Stull, 2013, p. 53). Teachers in districts with higher levels of poverty, in rural areas, and those with higher proportions of minority

students were especially likely to report that their students had difficulties (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000).

Kindergarten is a natural point of entry into formal schooling at age 5, because fewer than half of the children enter kindergarten with prior formal preschool education (Montes, Lotyczewski, Halterman, & Hightower, 2011). Data from the U.S. National Survey of Children's Health estimated that 14% of the preschool age children in the United States are at high risk of developmental problems based on the Parent's Evaluation of Developmental Status. This brings into question their readiness for kindergarten (Montes et al., 2011). The focus on readiness in early childhood education in the United States has increased dramatically in the face of growing concerns about the number of failing students and failing schools (Cassidy, Mims, Rucker, & Boone, 2003). The increased academic demands of kindergarten resulted in expectations that preschool children will enter kindergarten having some familiarity with print, letter and sound recognition, and beginning writing skills (Goldstein, 2007).

Readiness can be adversely affected by various risk factors. Studies show that differences in children's cognitive, language, and social skills upon entry to kindergarten are correlated with families' poverty status, parents' educational levels or ethnic backgrounds, and children's health and living environments (Currie, 2006). Living in an unsafe or poverty-stricken neighborhood and having a minimal family income are correlated with scoring low on an assessment of verbal abilities, and thus being "at risk" for experiencing problems in school (Kohen, Hertzman, & Brooks-Gunn, 1998). Families may also have less access to public transportation, libraries, and healthcare services, and little choice when it comes to adequate childcare. Rural schools may also be less able to serve the diverse needs of students from wide geographic areas (Perroncel,

2000). Although none of these risk factors "guarantee" that children will not be ready for kindergarten, children from low-income or less-educated families are less likely to have the supports necessary for healthy growth and development, resulting in lower abilities at school entry (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005). Some differences are to be expected as normal variations in development; unfortunately, socioeconomic factors appear to contribute significantly to school readiness (Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2001). One study found that the average cognitive scores of our nation's most affluent children are 60% higher than those of our poorest children before they enter kindergarten (Daily et al., 2001).

School readiness is also a critical issue for middle-income families (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005). A 2002 Maryland survey found only 52% of children entering kindergarten to be fully ready (Bowler, 2003). Many middle-income families lack access to the kind of preschool education that sends their children to kindergarten ready to learn, often because family income is too high to qualify for programs for disadvantaged children but not high enough to afford high-quality programs (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005).

According to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD, 2001), health and education disparities persist when children enter kindergarten lacking fundamental school readiness skills and are also at risk of obesity. Achievement gaps of children are compounded by alarming rates of obesity, which has struck hardest among low-income, minority children already at high risk for poor academic performance (Winter & Sass, 2011). One in seven economically disadvantaged preschoolers is obese when they enter school (Winter & Sass, 2011). School readiness is a complex, multidimensional concept in which children's health, development, and experience are

interrelated. Concerns have been raised about the potential effects of rising childhood obesity rates on school performance (Dockett & Perry, 2009; NICHD, 2001).

School readiness is the developmental stage when a child has the ability to receive instruction and engage in particular assigned activities independently in a structured environment (Malone, West, Flanagan, & Park, 2006). Readiness is being able to listen attentively and have the ability to partake in the regular school curriculum (Anita, 2004). The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2009) affirmed that children are not naturally "ready" or "not ready" for the academic demands of kindergarten. Instead, development is dependent upon the experiences provided to them by their parents, environment, and interactions they have from contact with others.

States establish the age when students are eligible to attend school to prevent having a broad range of ages within a kindergarten classroom. There is generally a cutoff date establishing a deadline for children turning 5 to enter kindergarten; however, parents still have the choice of when to send their child within limits. Parents may not enroll their child early into a kindergarten program but may decide to delay his or her entry into kindergarten by 1 year if they feel that their child is not ready for the academic or social demands of school (Chen, 2016).

Young children differ in the types of preschool experiences they bring to kindergarten. Skills and development are influenced by a variety of factors, including interaction with family and environments prior to coming to school. There is agreement that how a child does in school depends on things that happen before he or she enters a kindergarten classroom (Jensen, 2009).

Other key factors contribute to children readiness for school such as family context; the context and quality of their childcare arrangements prior to school entry; and

the resources available within the community to support at-risk children and families such as health, mental health, family support, and nutrition services (Daily et al., 2001). Most children, however, do not attend high-quality preschool and many do not enter kindergarten fully prepared. They trail behind in the knowledge and skills that will facilitate their ability to succeed in kindergarten and beyond, including social-emotional skills (Hains, Fowler, Schwartz, Kottwitz, & Rosenkoetter, 1989). The concept of school readiness tethers the notion of readiness for learning to a standard of physical, intellectual, and social development that enables children to fulfill school requirements and assimilate the school's curriculum (Lewit & Baker, 1995; Sparagana, 2007).

Various instruments have been used to assess the knowledge and skills of children prior to kindergarten since the early 1900s (Meisels, 1998). There are currently over 35 tests, the majority of which are standardized, that teachers or other school personnel might use to assess kindergarteners. At least six of these standardized tests are specifically designed to assess children's readiness or developmental skills (Niemeyer, & Scott-Little, 2001). Although formal readiness assessments are prevalent in many schools, teacher perceptions of the demands of kindergarten can play a role in determining which children are ready for this grade (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005).

Studies of parent attitudes about readiness show that most parents believe children can make a more effective transition into kindergarten if they have positive dispositions about going to school and can adjust socially (Dockett & Perry, 2001); however, their views differ from teacher opinions. Parent viewpoints also vary according to their socioeconomic status. When examined via parent educational backgrounds, almost three fourths of parents who did not graduate from high school rated counting to 20 and knowing the letters of the alphabet as essential or very important (Ackerman & Barnett,

2005).

Children views about the skills or approaches to learning that are needed as one starts kindergarten have not received much attention (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005). Instead, studies have primarily focused on what children think they will learn or do in kindergarten, what their experiences have been, or self-ratings of their academic or social competence as kindergarten students (Altermatt, Pomerantz, Ruble, Frey, & Greulich, 2002). A small number of published studies focusing on children perspectives related to "what it takes" to be ready for kindergarten have been conducted in Australia as part of the Starting School Research Project (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005). In these studies, children were asked to name the things that are important as they start school. The top answer for children was knowing—and following—a teacher's rules, followed by becoming familiar with where things were and what to do and knowing how to make friends (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005).

The "ready school" movement is attempting to shift national attention away from children readiness for school onto school readiness for incoming kindergarteners (Early, Pianta, Taylor, & Cox, 2001; National Education Goals Panel, n.d.). The practices that teachers employ as they help children and families transition to school is one important aspect of the school's readiness for the incoming children (Early et al., 2001). Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta (2000) concluded that the system of relationships among social contexts (including teachers, parents, and preschool care providers) is a critical predicator of successful transitions. Increased attention needs to be directed at assessing school readiness and identifying successful, evidence-based programs in early childhood in order to improve long-term academic outcomes (Daily et al., 2001). The changing culture of kindergarten has given rise to significant questions about how preschool fits

into children's overall school careers (Hatcher, Nuner, & Paulsel, 2012). Information is currently lacking to inform us as to which practices are most beneficial in aiding children as they make their transition to kindergarten.

The Research Purpose

The kindergarten year symbolizes entrance into formal schooling and is a crucial structure for young children, although more and more children across the United States are entering formal schooling during prekindergarten (Clark & Zygmunt-Fillwalk, 2008). The primary focus of preschool education has shifted in recent years from experiential, play-based programs to a more academic model (Hatcher et al., 2012). The increased academic demands of kindergarten have resulted in expectations that preschool children enter kindergarten having some familiarity with print, letter and sound recognition, and beginning writing skills (Hatcher et al., 2012).

The Common Core State Standards Initiative put forth a common set of standards that have been adopted by 43 states that define skills and knowledge for kindergarten through twelfth-grade students in English/language arts and mathematics. Kindergarten readiness is a complex idea linked to multiple meanings and factors such as chronological age, developmental stage, specific academic and social skills, and home/school connection (Hatcher et al., 2012).

A limited notion of school readiness has led to a dangerously high-stakes approach to early education where a child's readiness can impact whether they enter kindergarten, which programs receive funding, and how teachers will be evaluated. Public school systems face enormous pressure to close the achievement gap for students who are struggling, address underachievement in academic performance, and ensure all learners are proficient across identified standards (Pretti-Frontczak, 2014). Expanded

awareness of the achievement gap has encouraged efforts to acquire an early picture of children's skills so problems can be identified and addressed as soon as possible (Howard, 2011).

According to LEGO Education (2015), social and emotional learning is one of the most important indicators of future success, as understanding emotions and social skills translates into not only kindergarten preparedness but also a student's readiness for their entire educational and professional career. Social emotion learning is critical for early childhood development. In many cases, a student's first introduction to learning the basics of sense of self, collaboration, and an understanding of their own feelings occur within their preschool classroom (LEGO Education, 2015). When it comes to social-emotional skills for children, the development of secure attachments between children and teachers is important because better social and emotional development not only benefits young children but can also provide long-term positive social, emotional, and academic success that can carry children through their adult lives (Wilson & Hanson, 2009). Stull (2013) stated, "The importance of early childhood education cannot be underestimated" (p. 53). When a child enters kindergarten, there is an expectation to have a combination of intellectual skills, motivational qualities, and social-emotional skills.

With more than 3 million children enrolling in a public kindergarten program each year, the federal government has demonstrated an interest in supporting school readiness (Daily et al., 2001). In 2002, Good Start, Grow Smart was launched by the Bush administration which urged states to develop voluntary early literacy and early math guidelines for children between the ages of 3-5 and align them with K-12 standards. The Obama administration provided $5 billion of new funding for Child Care, Head Start, and

programs for young children with special needs in the American Recovery and

Reinvestment Act (Daily et al., 2001). All states have identified the skills and abilities

children need to develop during the preschool years, but few states are tracking children

readiness skills. As states begin to align their curriculum with the Common Core State

Standards, there is an opportunity to examine school readiness issues to ensure that

assessments currently in place are developmentally appropriate and reliable. According

to the School Readiness Report in North Carolina (2000), schools could use a measure of

children readiness to help them understand the needs of individual children and provide

individualized instruction to improve the performance of children.

While the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) has been widely

used as a valid measure of the global quality of group care for preschool aged children for

more than 20 years, it does not address the more academic and intellectual development

that is increasingly expected of even young children. For instance, The National

Academy of Sciences Report, Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers (2001) called

for curriculum and teaching practices that support enhanced development and learning

for all young children. This report summarized recent research showing that young

children are more capable learners and can benefit more from good early education than

previously thought. The current measures of preschool quality do not adequately capture

the enriched language, early literacy, and mathematical and scientific learning that can

occur during the preschool years.

There are two generally accepted approaches to measuring the quality of early

childhood programs: process and structure. Process emphasizes the actual experiences

that occur in educational settings such as child-teacher interactions and the types of

activities in which children are engaged. Process measures also include health and safety

provisions as well as materials available and relationships with parents. The process of early childhood programs is typically measured by observing the experiences in the center and classrooms and rating the multiple dimensions of the program such as teacher-child interactions, type of instruction, room environment, materials, relationships with parents, and health and safety routines.

ECERS has been widely used in early education research to measure process quality. The revised edition of ECERS includes 43 items organized into seven areas of center-based care for children aged 2½ through 5 years (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998). The areas are personal care routines, space and furnishings, language-reasoning, interaction, activities, program structure, and parents and staff. Each item has detailed descriptors and can be rated from 1-7, with (1) inadequate, (3) minimal, (5) good, and (7) excellent. When the activities and interactions are rated higher, children develop more advanced language and math abilities as well as social skills. Poorer process quality has been linked to increased behavioral problems. A longitudinal study of the short- and long-term effects of center-based care on children's development concluded, "High-quality child care experiences, in terms of both classroom practices and teacher-child relationships, enhance children's abilities to take advantage of the educational opportunities in school" (Espinosa, 2002, p. 3).

The second way to measure the quality of prekindergarten programs is to review the structural and teacher characteristics of the program such as teacher-child ratios, class size, qualifications and compensation of teachers and staff, and square footage. The structural features of a program are thought to contribute to quality in more indirect ways than process features. Structural features are frequently regulated through state licensing requirements. Researchers have consistently found that process and structure indicators

are related and influence the quality of the educational experiences. For example, when groups are smaller, teachers tend to have more positive, supportive, and stimulating interactions. Warm and nurturing interactions are directly linked to children's social competence and future academic success, and such interactions are essential to high quality. Early childhood teachers who are more highly qualified and have smaller groups can more effectively provide individualized, responsive learning opportunities. The NICHD Early Child Care Research Network (2002) study of early childcare in nine states concluded that in early childhood settings for children through age 3, 8% were rated "poor," 53% "fair," 30% "good," and 9% "excellent" in process quality. The Children of the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Go to School (1999) examined full-day childcare centers in four states and found the average quality as rated on the ECERS to be 4.26 (on the 1-7 scale). In this large-scale study of typical programs, only 24% had total average scores in the "good" to "excellent" range.

The North Carolina Smart Start program was created in 1993 as an innovative solution to the problem: *Children were coming to school unprepared to learn*. This program allows communities to take control of and determine the best approach to achieving their goals and currently has 75 partnerships. Each partnership is an independent, nonprofit organization. The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC) establishes measurable, statewide goals for increasing the health, well-being, and development of North Carolina's children birth to five. Local partnerships then take responsibility for making decisions about how best to achieve those goals based on the needs and resources in their local communities.

The North Carolina More at Four Program was a statewide initiative for at-risk 4 year olds. The purpose was to provide a high quality educational program for at-risk

children prior to starting kindergarten. It was supervised by the North Carolina Office of Early Learning from 2001-2011. During the 2011-2012 academic school year, the statewide program was changed to the North Carolina Prekindergarten program and was then supervised by the North Carolina Division of Child Development in Early Education (DCDEE). More at Four provided funding for classroom-based educational programs as designed by each local county administration including public schools, private for-profit and nonprofit childcare centers, and Head Start.

According to Gilliam (2005), high-quality prekindergarten provides children with the cognitive, academic, social, and emotional skills they require to be successful in elementary school. State-funded prekindergarten programs, operating in 40 states across the nation, serve approximately 800,000 each year. Researchers found that early childhood educators with higher levels of training and education in child development often facilitate a high level of developmentally appropriate activities and interactions in their classrooms (Stull, 2013, p. 56). Higher quality prekindergarten programs are associated with the early years of schooling and more positive academic outcomes in children (Collett, 2013). In the United States, 76% of children aged 3 and 4 receive education and care from someone other than a parent, with about 58% typically in a center-based program. Studies of model programs show that intensive early childhood services can improve children's cognitive, academic, and social skills with gains maintained into adulthood (Collett, 2013).

In order to improve long-term academic outcomes, increased attention needs to be focused on supporting and assessing school readiness by identifying successful, evidence-based programs in early childhood that can ensure a more even start when entering school (Daily et al., 2001). The purpose of this study was to evaluate a current

prekindergarten program and gather feedback and perspectives from a variety of stakeholders to assess how this type of prekindergarten experience affects kindergarten readiness.

Significance of the Study

The study evaluated the existing public prekindergarten program with regard to kindergarten readiness. Outcomes from this study helped to aid school districts in determining the effect of their current prekindergarten program on student readiness and increased emphasis on high quality early childhood programming. There is a need for additional research to assist public schools in making important decisions regarding early intervention and support as states address the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. First, the information gathered in this study was based on the experiences of individual stakeholders and was varied based on resources available and location. A second limitation was the number of participants in the study was based on the size of the school district and individual school population. A third limitation of this study was that the curriculum implemented in the prekindergarten classrooms was newly adopted and teachers were still receiving training in order to implement with fidelity. This new curriculum aligned with the Kindergarten Entry Assessment indicators which was also in its first year of implementation. A fourth limitation was that all classrooms in the school district implemented the same curriculum so there was no comparison of curriculums to gather information.

Definition of Terms

Common Core State Standards. The Common Core State Standards Initiative is an educational initiative in the United States that details what K-12 students should

know in English/language arts and mathematics at the end of each grade (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2017).

Disadvantaged/at-risk children. An at-risk student describes a student who requires temporary or ongoing intervention in order to succeed academically. At-risk students, sometimes referred to as at-risk youth, are also adolescents who are less likely to transition successfully into adulthood and achieve economic self-sufficiency. Characteristics of at-risk students include emotional or behavioral problems, truancy, low academic performance, showing a lack of interest for academics, and expressing a disconnection from the school environment (At-Risk Students, 2017).

Early childhood education (ECE; also nursery education). A branch of education theory which relates to the teaching of young children (formally and informally) up until the age of about eight (Early Childhood Education, 2017).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015; represents good news for our nation's schools. This bipartisan measure reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students (Every Student Succeeds Act, n.d.).

Head Start. A program of the United States Department of Health and Human Services that provides comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families (Head Start, 2017).

Kindergarten/school readiness. Refers to the developmental domains that contribute to the ability of children to adapt to the kindergarten classroom which is often a new and unfamiliar environment. There is no single agreed-upon definition of kindergarten readiness. The domains often included in the definition include academic

skills (e.g., early literacy and mathematics understanding); social-emotional development

(e.g., self-regulation, pro-social behavior); and physical development (e.g., motor

development, sensory development). In addition to these competencies, the child's

environment and opportunities for learning should also be considered. This includes the

child's home environment and their interactions with teachers and peers (Kindergarten

Readiness, 2017).

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in
   kindergarten for social/emotional skills?

2. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in
   kindergarten for literacy skills?

3. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in
   kindergarten for communication skills?

4. What the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in public
   prekindergarten for social/emotional skills?

5. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in public
   prekindergarten for literacy skills?

6. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in public
   prekindergarten for communication skills?

7. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in private
   prekindergarten for social/emotional skills?

8. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in private
   prekindergarten for literacy skills?

9. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in private

prekindergarten for communication skills?

10. What are the perceptions of kindergarten teachers for social/emotional skills?

11. What are the perceptions of kindergarten teachers for literacy skills?

12. What are the perceptions of kindergarten teachers for communication skills?

13. What are the perceptions of public prekindergarten teachers for social/emotional skills?

14. What are the perceptions of public prekindergarten teachers for literacy skills?

15. What are the perceptions of public prekindergarten teachers for communication skills?

16. What are the perceptions of private prekindergarten teachers for social/emotional skills?

17. What are the perceptions of private prekindergarten teachers for literacy skills?

18. What are the perceptions of private prekindergarten teachers for communication skills?

Overview of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 contains the introduction to the study, the significance of the study, the historical background, statement of the problem, research questions, limitations of the study, definitions of key terms used, and an overview. Chapter 2 incorporates a review of literature relevant to prekindergarten historically and currently. It also includes an overview, details of research-based studies, and professional development of early education educators. Chapter 3 explains the methodology used to conduct this study. It contains the research questions, interview questions, and participants as well as the instrument used in the data collection process.

Chapter 4 details the results of the data collected during this study. The participants and results of the data analysis are shared with the audience. Chapter 5 is a conclusion of the findings through the reporting of the data collected. Recommendations of specific findings and the need for further research and study are shared.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

School readiness, in the broadest sense, is about children, families, early

environments, schools, and communities (Harris, 2015). According to the Proceedings

from a working meeting on school readiness research: Guiding the synthesis of early

childhood research (2009), "In theory, a definition of school readiness should identify the

foundational skills, content knowledge, and concepts children need when they enter

school, in order to achieve academic success in early elementary schools and beyond" (p.

6).

Educational reform across the nation has resulted in many states increasing its

appropriation to public education (Sparagana, 2007). Prekindergarten and kindergarten

programs are not a mandated part of the public school educational program. The

programs that are offered differ in requirements, length of day, and whether or not the

kindergarten program is part of the public school system (McGill-Franzen, 1996). In

order to insure quality, affordability, and equal access to all children, early education

programs, specifically prekindergarten, should be part of the public education system

(Schultz, Lopez, & Hochberg, 1995).

Readiness for school does not begin in kindergarten (Sparagana, 2007). One of

the aspects of prekindergarten programs that are supported by research is the opportunity

to facilitate brain development during critical years prior to the age of 5 as 90% of brain

growth occurs before kindergarten (Jensen, 1998). If a child between birth and 5 years

old has a rich environment and a wide variety of experiences, he or she will develop the

skills necessary for success in later years (Sparagana, 2007).

Prekindergarten programs in America have been supported by both private and

federal funds. Federally supported prekindergarten programs were established to help poor families, unemployed parents, working parents, and disadvantaged children (Karweit, 1998; Sparagana, 2007). Federal funding of prekindergarten programs increased with the passing of the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) in 1964; however, the majority of prekindergarten programs were still operated by private agencies. These private prekindergarten programs were established for Caucasian children from high-income families who mothers were not in the workforce (Karweit, 1998).

The Boston Infant School, which was considered the country's first daycare center, began in 1828. This program was established to enable mothers to work in factories in order to provide a more appropriate setting for children. The infant education movement extended to more affluent families seeking to provide their children with the same educational opportunities they believed were being offered to poor children. Interest in infant schools ceased in 1832 when the Public School Society established primary schools. In the absence of infant schools, the care of preschool children whose parents worked fell to the day nurseries (Collett, 2013).

In 1860, the first kindergarten for English speaking children opened in Boston. Ten years later, the Boston School Board opened an experimental kindergarten in a public school. The kindergarten movement continued to expand. By 1890, the number of children enrolled had increased from 31,117 to 143,720. As the kindergarten movement grew and diversified, other childcare programs underwent changes (Sparagana, 2007).

The first nursery school was organized by a group of wives at the University of Chicago in 1915 to provide socialization and play activities for their children (Collett, 2013). Other nursery school programs were established during the nursery school

movement in the 1920s and were directed toward the cognitive enrichment of upper- and middle-class children. Most nursery school programs differed from previously existing programs for young children because they were half-day programs rather than full-day programs (Sparagana, 2007). Nursery school activities were designed to provide children with an opportunity to develop socially through association with their peers under the expert supervision of a trained teacher. Nursery school classes provided opportunities for children to interact in an environment that promoted normal social development. Nursery schools also worked in consultation with and, in some cases, employed professional dieticians, pediatricians, nurses, psychologists, and social workers (Cahan, 1989; Collett 2013).

One aspect of prekindergarten programs supported by research (Jensen, 1998) is the opportunity to facilitate brain development during the critical years prior to age 5 as 90% of brain growth occurs before kindergarten. If a child between birth and 5 years old has a rich environment and a wide variety of experiences, he or she will develop the skills necessary for success in later years. Children who start behind stay behind, with nearly 90% who are poor readers in first grade continuing to be poor readers by fourth grade (Sparagana, 2007).

Initiated by President Kennedy and continued by President Johnson, early childhood education quickly became an important component in the war against poverty. Research by Cantor (2013) indicated that a panel of pediatricians, child development researchers, educators, and psychologists recommended to the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) that preschool programs be implemented in order to help poor children develop to their full potential. They declared that by the time poor children got to public school, they were too often already unable to take full advantage of the situation

since their preschool years were deprived. The OEO acted on the recommendations of

the panel and created Project Head Start. Head Start enrolled 561,359 children in 11,068

centers located in 1,398 communities when it was launched in 1965 (Collett, 2013).

Project Head Start sought to reach out not only to the "whole child" but also to parents

and the community. Head Start programs sought to involve parents in such a way as to

facilitate community organization and political action. Nationally, Head Start has five

objectives on which their performance measures are based: (a) enhance children's growth

and development; (b) strengthen families as the primary nurturers of their children; (c)

provide children with educational, health, and nutritional services; (d) link children and

families to needed community services; and (e) assure well-managed programs that

involve parents in decision making (Sparagana, 2007; Zill et al., 1998).

Reed and Bergemann (1992) conducted a study to determine the effects of Project

Giant Step. Project Giant Step was a half-day, comprehensive program for 4 year olds

and their families. Children spent 3 hours in the classroom (either in the morning or

afternoon), 5 days per week, 9 months per year. The curriculum covered children's

social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development as well as health and nutrition.

Project Giant Step also placed a strong emphasis on parental involvement, assigning one

full-time staff member to each classroom to work with parents. These "family assistants"

conducted workshops for parents, performed home visits, and referred parents to other

community resources. In addition to the family assistants, about 75% of all Giant Step

classrooms had a social worker and psychologist available to parents. The researchers

discovered that large gains in the cognitive, social, and emotional development of

children took place in a comprehensive public school prekindergarten (Sparagana, 2007)

In 2002, President George Bush proposed an early childhood initiative called

Good Start, Grow Smart to help states and local communities support new learning

opportunities for young children. The initiative addressed three major areas:

strengthening Head Start; partnering with states to improve early childhood learning; and

providing parents, teachers, and caregivers with information on early learning. The idea

was to help children develop their thinking language and literacy skills and to prepare

them for continued school success (Sparagana, 2007).

The Chicago Longitudinal Study is a federally funded investigation of the effects

of an early and extensive childhood intervention called the Child-Parent Center (CPC)

program. The CPC program provides educational and family support services to children

from preschool to third grade. It is funded by Title 1 and has operated in Chicago Public

Schools since 1967. The study began in 1986 to investigate the effects of government-

funded kindergarten programs for 1,539 children in Chicago Public Schools (Sparagana,

2007). In addition to investigating the short-and long-term effects of early childhood

interventions, the study traces the scholastic and social development of participating

children and the contributions of family and school practices to children's behavior

(Sparagana, 2007). The researchers indicated that children who enter kindergarten from

quality prekindergarten programs have better reading, language, and social skills than

those who did not go to preschool (Sparagana, 2007). Chicago children who attended a

prekindergarten program were 29% more likely to graduate from high school than their

peers who did not attend prekindergarten (Sparagana, 2007).

The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (2010-2011) is a study that followed a

nationally representative sample of students from their kindergarten year to the spring of

2016, when most of them were expected to be in fifth grade. During the first year of data

collection, when all children were in kindergarten, data were collected in both the fall and

the spring. Approximately 18,200 children enrolled in 970 schools during the 2010-2011

school year participated during the kindergarten year. The Early Childhood Longitudinal

Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-2011 is sponsored by the National Center for

Education Statistics (NCES) in the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S.

Department of Education to provide detailed information on the school achievement and

experiences of students throughout their elementary school years (Mulligan, Hastedt,

McCarroll, 2012).

Scores on reading and math were lowest for first-time kindergartners in

households with incomes below the federal poverty level and highest for those in

households with incomes at or above the federal poverty level. For both reading and

math, assessment scores increased with parental education level. Students in households

with two parents had higher reading and math scores than those in households of different

structures. First-time kindergartners with a primary home language of English scored

higher in reading and math than those coming from homes with a primary home language

other than English. First-time kindergartners attending private school had higher reading

and math scores than those attending public school (Mulligan et al., 2012).

The Kindergarten Readiness and Preschools Research Project conducted by

Copple and Bredekamp (2009) involved three programs in two states. All three programs

served preschool-aged children using developmentally appropriate play-based approaches

as described by NAEYC. Programs were distinct in location; setting (rural, small city,

suburban); and size.

Program A is a small, university-based lab school in a predominately rural county

of a northeastern state. Children exiting the program and entering kindergarten have one

public school option, as the surrounding area has no private or parochial schools. More

than 21% of the county's approximately 2,000 children live in poverty. Program A

employs five staff members and enrolls children in one of two programs: a full-day, full-

year classroom or a three mornings per week, school-year classroom. Total program

enrollment is 36 children ages 3-5. The program serves as a teaching site for the

university's early childhood education program, but 90% of enrolled families are from

the surrounding community.

Program B is a university-based full-time childcare center in a small city of more

than 120,000 in a southwestern state. Multiple kindergarten settings including private,

public, and parochial schools are available to children exiting the preschool program.

Twenty-seven percent of the county's approximately 58,000 children live in poverty.

The average annual household income is $38,963, and approximately 20% of the

population has a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). Program B

serves 61 children, infants through preschool, with 31 preschool-aged children enrolled.

The full-day, full-year program employs 19 staff members. Program B is a part of the

child and family studies academic component of a private university and serves as a

teaching and research laboratory. Sixty-five percent of the children in the program are

children of university faculty, staff, or students. The remaining 35% are from families

not directly associated with the university.

Program C is a full-day Head Start program that operates preschool classrooms

during the school year in partnership with school districts throughout a five-county region

in a southwestern state. This region includes urban, suburban, and rural communities.

The multisite program serves 1,071 children and employs 54 teachers and 53

instructional assistants. Head Start is intended to serve children from families with

incomes below federal poverty guidelines; however, local programs may reserve 10% of

slots for families whose income is above the poverty guidelines. In this service area, those slots were filled with children with identified disabilities.

Beliefs among parents and teachers were consistent within each program. In each program, teachers and parents described social and emotional skills as being essential to readiness. Teachers and parents generally agreed that literacy skills and school-related routines were important elements in readiness. Parents and teachers had positive perceptions of preschools and shared some anxieties about kindergarten expectations. Teachers and parents also agreed that communication about developmental progress, as related to readiness, was an important part of their programs. Participants held beliefs in common about meanings of kindergarten readiness and the importance of preschool to children's readiness. Participants indicated that preschool goals should be consistent with those of kindergarten. Concern for the future school success of children dominated participant responses, regardless of group location or role (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

Social and Emotional Skills

Schools serving students with the most challenging needs are most likely to have the least qualified and least effective teachers. Early learning programs that possess high-quality curricula improve the self-esteem, motivation, and social behaviors of children. Socioeconomic status has been found to be a significant determinant both in terms of student academic achievement and student behavior. As the primary teachers and influences on their children's lives, stable parents help to shape more socially and emotionally stable children (Wilson & Hanon, 2009).

Conscious Discipline® is a comprehensive social and emotional intelligence classroom management system that empowers both teachers and students (Bailey, 2001). One of the goals of the program is to help teachers enhance social and emotional skills of

children identified as having behavioral disorders. The instruction provides a skill set to improve teacher-student relationships and to develop discipline interventions to facilitate behavioral change.

In 2001-2002, a study was conducted to examine the impact of training elementary school teachers using the Conscious Discipline® classroom management system (Hoffman, Hutchinson, & Reiss, 2005). The research was used to investigate the hypothesis that there is a positive effect on difficult children when teachers use the precepts promoted by the Conscious Discipline® program. The participants were two teachers from Florida schools. These teachers were asked to identify disruptive students, and the researchers randomly selected 15 student-teacher pairs to study. The researchers administered the Teacher Rating Scales (TRS) portion of the Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC) system as pre and posttests before and after the teachers attended training in October 2001 and April 2002. The BASC-TRS survey instrument contains 150 self-administered questions that gather teacher responses regarding their identified "difficult" students. When the researchers administered the BASC-TRS posttest, they asked each teacher if they used the concepts introduced in the Conscious Discipline® training sessions. The researchers checked teacher responses for reliability and bias and then aggregated them into scales and subscales. The teachers who did not use the Conscious Discipline® principles showed both a gain and a loss in scale scores, but the users had dramatic results with four students reducing their scale scores by more than 15 points. The researchers concluded that the use of Conscious Discipline® is a significant factor in dealing with "difficult" children (Hoffman et al., 2005).

The academic and social competencies of children at kindergarten entry are important predictors of success throughout school (Jeon et al., 2011). Children who enter

school not ready to learn struggle with academic difficulties and manifest social behavior problems in later school years (Duncan et al., 2007). At kindergarten entry, the average cognitive scores of children from families with the lowest socioeconomic status are 60% lower than the average scores of those from families with the highest socioeconomic status (Burkham & Lee, 2002). The adverse effects of poverty are often more extreme when poverty is experienced during earlier, compared to later, childhood periods (Duncan et al., 2007).

Researchers Weikart, Bond, and McNeil (1978) found that students who did not attend prekindergarten programs consistently lacked social-emotional maturity in comparison to students who had attended prekindergarten. High-quality education is associated with better cognitive and social development (Barnett, 1995). In a study conducted by Lynch-Pyles (1986), it was concluded that preschool experiences seem to make a great contribution to the development of the social skills of kindergarten children. It was also concluded from his study that attending preschool seems to help children become more independent and achieve more emotional maturity and intellectual development is enhanced (Sparagana, 2007).

Teachers realize that social competence is extremely complex, and they may consider their job to include teaching children how to be more socially skillful. The interpersonal social skills for school readiness include behaviors such as making friends, offering to help someone, giving and accepting compliments, and apologizing (Sparagana, 2007). Socially competent children are responsive and able to mesh their behavior with the behavior of their peers (Mize, 1995; Sparagana, 2007). The ultimate goal is for kindergarten children to be independent, self-sufficient, and socially competent for success in the school setting (Foulks & Morrow, 1989; Sparagana, 2007).

Communication

Bohan-Baker and Little (2002) suggested that strong leadership in establishing transition policies and practices is paramount to creating an effective transition. Teacher training to support family involvement is another integral piece of the transition puzzle. Finally, a school and program transition team (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 1999) that is responsible for the coordination of efforts can facilitate successful school transition for children and families alike. Research suggests that schools with more successful coordination and communication had staff who were responsible for transition activities (Love et al., 2005). Bohan-Baker and Little (2002) suggested the imperative of naming a transition coordinator to serve as a bridge to work with children and families making the transition from home/preschool to kindergarten. The transition to kindergarten is a process among partners rather than an event that happens to a child. Effective practices take into consideration the context from which children and families come and are planned locally to support the dynamic nature of transition. While promising practices have been well documented in the research, locally based transition teams can select from a menu of strategies, devising plans that are individually and culturally relevant to the children in their communities. Within the context of accumulated knowledge, the application of such local wisdom and understanding holds great promise for the successful transition of children to kindergarten and their subsequent success in school.

Communication between the preschool program and the elementary school can provide a valuable link to ensuring consistency among environments. While the benefits of learning about the cognitive competency, social skills, and learning styles of children are apparent, Love et al. (2005) found that only 10% of kindergarten teachers systematically contact each child's previous teachers.

The Ready School Assessment invited early childhood programs to assist in the assessment and starting discussions about what was occurring in early childhood programs and in the elementary school. Each community then found ways to build on these initial discussions. In some communities, kindergarten teachers visited prekindergarten programs to get a better idea of what the program was like, and preschool teachers visited kindergarten classrooms. In other communities, kindergarten and preschool teachers were invited to share dinner and conversation to discuss issues important to both (Pianta, Cox, Taylor, & Early, 1999).

One of the issues related to communication that often arose was that of sharing information and records about children moving from prekindergarten programs to kindergarten. Many of the Ready Schools communities developed parent permission forms to be distributed to the early childhood programs. In addition, most of the elementary school districts put into place new procedures for obtaining those records from the wide variety of early childhood programs children attended – Head Start, faith-based programs, family childcare homes, childcare centers, and half-day preschools. To get the families' perspectives and to reach out to families whose children do not participate in out-of-home care, some of the communities created a "Getting To Know You" pamphlet through which families could share information about their children prior to the beginning of the school year (Pianta et al., 1999)

Curriculum Alignment Coordination of preschool and kindergarten curriculum has been identified as another vehicle by which to improve the continuity between settings, thus supporting children transitions. Love et al. (2005) found that a mere 12% of elementary schools throughout the United States had kindergarten curricula designed to build on preschool programs. Similarly, providing joint training for preschool and

kindergarten staff can support shared knowledge and consistency in philosophy, which would encourage a more seamless transition. Love et al. (2005) also found that less than 25% of preschool staff participate in such joint training.

The Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids (SPARK) Initiative was to form partnerships of childcare providers, schools, and community stakeholders to share practices, ideas, and resources (Ma, Nelson, Shen, & Kreen, 2014). For example, in Ohio, there was a parent-focused intervention program seeking collaboration with families, schools, and the community to improve readiness in kindergarten. The project provided developmental screenings, referrals, and linkages to community resources and home- and group-based learning opportunities; trained parents to become effective learning advocates for their children; and provided coaching, professional development, and technical assistance to teachers and administrators to build social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills that children need as they transition from home or preschool to kindergarten (Ma et al., 2014).

Longitudinal data were collected on a sample of SPARK children and comparison children in a preschool program in which intervention strategies were implemented. Specifically, two cohorts of children took part in the preschool program across the eight SPARK sites. In each project, the specific needs of children were identified, and corresponding intervention strategies were implemented to target those needs. This sample of SPARK children and comparison children entered different kindergartens after the preschool program; SPARK followed them through kindergarten measuring their school readiness twice (once in the fall and once in the spring). Outcome measures were obtained from children at the time of entering kindergarten (fall collection) and about 9 months later (spring collection).

The Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scales (PKBS) is a behavior checklist administered to parents to identify social skills and problem behaviors of children ages 3-6. The social skills composite measures positive social skill characteristics of well-adjusted children (e.g., follow instructions from adults, try to understand another child's behavior, separate from parent without extreme distress). A higher score indicates a higher level of social functioning. The problem composite measures problem behaviors with young children who are experiencing adjustment problems (e.g., will not share, overly sensitive to criticism or scolding). A lower score indicates less problematic behaviors.

The Bracken Basic Concept Scales (BBCS) is a developmentally sensitive measure of the basic concept acquisition and receptive language skills of children. The school readiness composite collectively represents the readiness concepts that parents and preschool programs traditionally teach in preparation for formal education, and receptive readiness composite provides information about the child's overall conceptual development. A higher score is desirable in terms of both composites and indicates a higher level of school readiness.

The study found no convincing evidence to support SPARK's theory that emphasizes strong partnerships among families, providers, communities, and schools (Berkley, 2003). Neither 9 months of kindergarten instruction nor intervention strategies implemented in the preschool program had any impact on gains in school readiness. Intervention strategies implemented at the preschool level are not enough to keep children growing in kindergarten (Ma et al., 2014).

The extent to which families are involved and invested in their children's education has been identified as a key predictor of academic success (Anderson & Berla,

1994). Although the importance of smoothing the transition to kindergarten is specifically emphasized, practices often fall short of achieving such goals. Transition practices commonly employed by kindergarten teachers involve experiences taking place after the start of school and/or such contact as flyers, brochures, and group open houses. Although teachers generally endorse more personal and intensive transition practices as "good ideas," Pianta et al. (1999) found that less than 17% of teachers nationally either called or visited children at home or visited preschool programs in an effort to smooth children's transition to kindergarten. Only 20% of teachers nationally reported receiving any information or training in facilitating the transition to kindergarten (Early et al., 2001).

Establishing links with families before the first day of school is highly recommended to ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten. Maintaining periodic contact with families of preschoolers and/or with preschoolers themselves can be the beginning of developing positive relationships which facilitate easier transition. Extending invitations to visit the classroom, disseminating home-learning activities, and encouraging families to acquaint themselves with the Parent Teacher Association can help familiarize families and children with new environments, expectations, and opportunities for involvement. Making home visits to children and families about to begin kindergarten and establishing support groups for parents of children new to the school system also can facilitate security and confidence in the new setting (Bohan-Baker & Little, 2002).

According to Pianta et al. (1999), "ready" schools have three characteristics: (a) they reach out, linking families, preschool settings, and communities with schools; (b) they reach backward in time, making connections before the first day of school; and (c)

they reach with appropriate intensity. According to the National Education Goals Panel

(n.d.), the "ready" school movement is attempting to shift national attention away from

children readiness for school and onto school readiness for incoming kindergartens.

Ready Schools recognize the importance of reaching out to children and families coming

into the elementary school. While all of the schools involved in the Ready Schools

initiative held some sort of open house for families during the first month of school and

some had an event prior to school starting, until the Ready Schools initiative, none of the

schools held an event targeted at families and children entering kindergarten prior to the

start of school. As a result of the Ready Schools initiative, however, all of the

participating elementary schools have organized orientation events for incoming

kindergarten children and their families prior to the first day of school. In many districts,

these events are scheduled in the evening and include a light supper and activities for the

children and parents to do together (Pianta et al., 1999). In addition to highlighting the

need to improve communication between preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers

about the children entering kindergarten, the Ready School Assessment indicated a lack

of knowledge on both sides regarding curriculum in each setting. That is, the

kindergarten teachers had little knowledge of the curriculum in early childhood programs,

and the prekindergarten teachers had questions about what the kindergarten teachers

expected children to know and be able to do when they entered kindergarten. The

discussions that arose around curriculum in both settings were eye opening.

Kindergarten teachers found that many of the early childhood programs did, in fact, have

a well-defined curriculum that linked to the K-12 standards. The early childhood

teachers found that kindergarten teachers were, for the most part, more concerned with

the social and behavioral development of children at the start of kindergarten than with

academic preparation (Pianta et al., 1999).

In all cases, the community has been an integral part of the success of the Ready Schools initiative. The brochures, videos, and materials developed through the Ready Schools initiative have been distributed to families at community events, through pediatricians and libraries, and with the help of community agencies that work with families (housing authority, social service agencies). A few of the Ready Schools communities have United Way agencies involved in a Success by Six initiative which provides support for children and families before kindergarten (Pianta et al., 1999).

In one study of kindergarten teachers in the United States, nearly 50% reported that half of the children experience some degree of difficulty in the transition to formal schooling and that 16% face serious adjustment problems (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta 2000). The researchers used a questionnaire and asked teachers to indicate transitions they had used such as home visits, preschool learning workshops/activities, or placement of a learning advocate (Ma et al., 2014). For each practice, teachers were asked to check if they "did not use," "used for children with special needs," or "used for the whole class." Teachers were least likely to use the most time-intensive practices: those that take place before school starts and involve individualized interaction/communication with particular children/families (Early et al., 2001). Thirty-six percent of teachers also reported using few practices involving "coordination with preschool programs and the community." The most commonly used practices were those that take place after the beginning of the school year and are aimed at the class as a whole – 65% (Early et al., 2001).

Literacy Skills

Gullo (2000) reported that high-risk children who attended preschool when they

were 3 and 4 years of age scored statistically higher on a standardized norm-referenced readiness test than high-risk children with no such preschool experience. In another study, disadvantaged children who attended preschool experienced greater subsequent success in early elementary grades than students who did not attend preschool (Sheehan, Cryan, Wiechel, & Brandy, 1991). Another team of researchers (Frede & Bamett, 1992) provided evidence that preschool intervention increases at-risk students' school preparedness. Criteria for this claim included preschool attendees' statistically higher grades, higher scores on achievement tests, and being less likely to be retained in a grade or placed in special education than students who did not attend preschool programs.

Failure to meet grade-level expectations in reading is the most cited reason for retention in the early grades (Goldstein, 2007). Of the multiple developmental domains used to define student skills at kindergarten entry, data from a study conducted by Goldstein (2007) suggested that literacy and numeracy skills are more influential in defining academic outcomes than language, creative, personal/social, and physical/motor skills.

According Kindergarten Readiness Program Aims to Close Achievement Gap (2015), the Kindergarten Readiness Program is helping low-income and at-risk children prepare for kindergarten. The summer program is for low-income children and focuses on developing the skills that help students improve their transitions into school. Programs for low-income families that improve family economic security, parental involvement in children's development, or access to high-quality childcare can substantially reduce the achievement gap. During the 4-week program, 72 students were exposed to the routines and procedures of kindergarten in a typical school day to help them develop a positive outlook and a love of learning.

The South Leadership Council in Idaho was created by The Idaho Community Foundation that addresses community issues such as early childhood education which they set as a priority based on the percentage of kindergartners not scoring at grade level on the Idaho Reading Indictor (IRI). They created the "Ready! for Kindergarten" program that consists of three workshops per year for parents and caregivers of children 5 years old and younger. These workshops focus on understanding developmental milestones and literacy skills and provide tools and curriculum for childcare providers to ramp up skill levels of children based on their ability and interests (Oppenheimer, 2014).

According to Oppenheimer (2014), 80% of children whose parents take part in READY! have met the kindergarten reading readiness standard regardless of family income or ethnicity, compared to 55% of children whose parents do not attend.

Summary

Prekindergarten programs operated by local public school districts are diverse and innovative. As accessibility of public and private preschool programs increase, parents describe heightened awareness about preschools' roles in specific school preparation and readiness (Hatcher & Engelbrecht, 2006). Comparison of parental and teacher beliefs within and across programs in diverse locations lends to insight into both local and national shared readiness perceptions and preschool connections to K-3 education (Hatcher et al., 2012). Teacher beliefs are crucial factors in determining practice, but empirical studies linking teacher beliefs to parent beliefs in the same settings are limited (Hatcher et al., 2012). Kim, Murdock, and Choi (2005) noted that parent beliefs about kindergarten readiness varied; they also found few links between expressed beliefs and engagement in readiness-related, at-home activities with children (Hatcher et al., 2012). Parent and teacher beliefs about kindergarten readiness influence their decisions about

kindergarten enrollment, their choices of curricula, and their overall images of both preschools and kindergarten (Hatcher et al., 2012).

It is projected that by 2020, the number of children living in poverty will increase by approximately 16.5 million, which is an increase of 33% from 1987. That is 4 million more than children that in 1987! Also, the number of children not living with both parents is projected to increase by 18%, and the number of children living with mothers who have low educational attainment is projected to increase by 41%. Another observable trend is the number of children whose primary language is not English will increase by approximately 8% (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990; Sparagana, 2007). The school readiness of young children is an area of interest and debate in our current educational policy. The most important resources in every community are its children. We have the responsibility to provide our children with every opportunity to develop the highest possible skills to compete in a global market place. Measures of the development and well-being of children as they enter school can provide important indicators of how young children are being nurtured in our society and the challenges teachers and schools face in preparing schools to be ready for a diverse population of children (Sparagana, 2007; Zill et al., 1998).

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the kindergarten readiness perceptions of prekindergarten teachers, kindergarten teachers, and parents. The areas of social-emotional skills, literacy skills, and communication were studied in order to determine if there are differences in these perceptions and to gain a deeper understanding of necessary skills. A Likert-style survey was utilized to collect the data.

Restatement of the Problem

Kindergarten readiness is one of the major predicting factors of school success and to success later in life (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005). The findings of a research study done in Santa Clara County California from 2001-2008 in which results of school readiness were tracked for 7 years found that children who enter kindergarten near proficient across all readiness skills perform significantly better on standardized tests in English. Ackerman and Barrett (2005) also found that even though kindergarten academics have the strongest associations with higher test scores, the solution is not drilling children on their letters and numbers at even earlier ages but rather to take extra efforts to boost critical readiness skills during the summer prior to kindergarten.

Research Questions

This study answered the following questions with regard to perceptions of kindergarten readiness through quantitative data analysis.

1. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in kindergarten for social/emotional skills?

2. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in kindergarten for literacy skills?

3. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in

kindergarten for communication skills?

4. What the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in public

    prekindergarten for social/emotional skills?

5. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in public

    prekindergarten for literacy skills?

6. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in public

    prekindergarten for communication skills?

7. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in private

    prekindergarten for social/emotional skills?

8. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in private

    prekindergarten for literacy skills?

9. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in private

    prekindergarten for communication skills?

10. What are the perceptions of kindergarten teachers for social/emotional skills?

11. What are the perceptions of kindergarten teachers for literacy skills?

12. What are the perceptions of kindergarten teachers for communication skills?

13. What are the perceptions of public prekindergarten teachers for

    social/emotional skills?

14. What are the perceptions of public prekindergarten teachers for literacy skills?

15. What are the perceptions of public prekindergarten teachers for

    communication skills?

16. What are the perceptions of private prekindergarten teachers for

    social/emotional skills?

17. What are the perceptions of private prekindergarten teachers for literacy

skills?

18. What are the perceptions of private prekindergarten teachers for

communication skills?

Research Design

The researcher used quantitative methodology with an inferential approach to

collect data for the research project. An inferential approach to research is to form a data

base from which to infer characteristics or relationships of a population (Kothari, 2004).

Survey. The survey used in this study was one that was modified from one used

in a national study, Teacher and Parent Expectations for Kindergarten Readiness (Welch

& White, 1999). Permission was obtained from the researcher prior to using it in this

study (Appendix A). According to Creswell (2009), using an existing survey increases

the validity and reliability of the data being reported by the participants and thus

increases the generalizability of the results because the surveys have been previously

tested. The survey (Appendix B & C) was given to the three different groups:

prekindergarten teachers, kindergarten teachers, and parents within the school district

being studied. Borrego, Douglas, and Amelink (2009) noted that "data collected, often

through surveys administered to a sample or subset of the entire population, allow the

researcher to generalize or make inferences" (p. 54).

The kindergarten readiness perceptions survey was broken down into three

sections. The first section gathered demographic information such as the role of the

participant (prekindergarten teacher, kindergarten teacher, or parent). This allowed the

researcher to place data into categories based on role. The second demographic question

was for parents to indicate if their child participated in a public or private early education

program. This allowed the researcher to compare the perceptions according to program

type.

In the second section of the survey, participants were asked to rate 10 statements regarding what makes children ready for school. They were asked to rate each statement using a 5-point Likert scale to measure the items: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree.

In the third section of the survey, participants were asked to rate how important 15 qualities are for a child to be ready for kindergarten. They were asked to rate each quality using a 5-point Likert scale to measure the items: 1=not at all, 2=not very, 3=somewhat, 4=very, and 5=essential. In part 3 of the parent perception survey, the parents were given the same statements and qualities related to children being ready for kindergarten.

Study Participants

The school district consists of three elementary schools comprised of grades prekindergarten through fifth grade, one elementary school comprised of grades kindergarten through fifth, one primary school comprised of grades prekindergarten through second, two middle schools comprised of Grades 6-8, and two high schools comprised of Grades 9-12. The school district qualifies for Title 1 funding at the elementary and middle school levels.

This study involved the school district's full day prekindergarten program, kindergarten program, and three private prekindergarten programs within the school district. In this school district, prekindergarten and kindergarten programs operate on the same schedule as the regular elementary school in which they are housed. All teachers in the district's prekindergarten programs use the Creative Curriculum program to deliver basic instruction.

All prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers within the school district and the participants from the three private prekindergarten programs were asked to participate in this study by taking the kindergarten readiness perception survey. Each teacher in the county and at the private facilities received a packet from the researcher that was delivered directly to the site. Each packet contained a consent letter (Appendix D) that indicated the purpose of the study and a copy of the survey. The teachers were asked to return the packets to the receptionist in a sealed envelope within 2 weeks from the time they received the packet. The researcher contacted each site and scheduled arrangements to pick up each of the packets from the designated locations.

All four elementary schools within the school district were asked to report the number of prekindergarten students they served and/or students who would enter kindergarten in the spring of 2017. Packets were sent to the teachers at each location and teachers were asked to send them home with their students. Parent packets contained a letter that indicated the purpose of the study (Appendix D). Parents were asked to return the survey to their child's teacher within 2 weeks from the distribution date. Teachers were asked to collect the surveys, and the principal of each school notified the researcher when they were available for pick up.

All four elementary schools within the school district were asked to report the number of kindergarten students they served. Packets were sent to the teachers at each location and asked to be sent home with their students. Parent packets contained a letter that indicated the purpose of the study. Parents were asked to return the survey to their child's teacher within 2 weeks from the distribution date. Teachers were asked to collect the surveys and the principal of each school notified the researcher when they were available for pick up.

Data Analysis

This study relied on quantitative methodology with an inferential approach to examine kindergarten readiness perceptions for all three groups (prekindergarten teachers, kindergarten teachers, and parents). Using the demographic data, the researcher was able to report on the differences in perceptions based on the role of the participant and type of early childhood program participation. The results from the survey were reported using a frequency distribution table, and data collected from the survey were converted into statistical calculations using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Summary

This chapter described the context of the study which included the population and the setting. The researcher used a quantitative methodology design with an inferential approach using a Likert-style survey. Frequency distribution analysis was used to describe the information found in the surveys along with the statistical analysis using SPSS.

In Chapter 4, the researcher discusses the findings of the study and presents the data that were collected from the survey. The findings lead to Chapter 5 in which the researcher interprets the data and makes recommendations for the prekindergarten program and opportunities for further study.

Chapter 4: Analysis of Data

The purpose of this chapter is to provide data regarding the perceptions of kindergarten readiness of kindergarten teachers, prekindergarten teachers, and parents. Chapter 4 presents the results of statistical analyses of the research questions identified in Chapters 1 and 3.

Data were collected from 154 kindergarten readiness surveys given to prekindergarten teachers, kindergarten teachers, and parents in five elementary schools in a small, rural county in North Carolina along with three private preschool facilities in the same county. Data collected from the survey were converted into statistical calculations using SPSS.

Teacher Survey

The first three items of the teacher survey gathered demographic information about the participants. Item 1 was used to determine how many respondents were public prekindergarten teachers, private prekindergarten teachers, or kindergarten teachers. Of the 22 teachers who responded, seven (31.2%) were public prekindergarten teachers, two (9.1%) were private prekindergarten teachers, and 13 (59.1%) were kindergarten teachers.

Item 2 on the survey gathered data on the total number of years each participant taught in their current teaching position. The choices were broken down into six different ranges for years of experience. The years ranged from 0-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 20-25 years, and more than 25 years. Teaching experience for the majority of the participants was 0-5 years having seven participants or 31.2%. Teaching experience of 6-10 and 16-20 years of experience had the fewest number of participants with two or (9.1%). This was followed by 11-15 years of experience with three

participants or 13.6%, 21-25 years of experience had four participants or 18.2%, and 25 or more years of experience had five participants or 22.8%.

Item 3 on the survey gathered information about the participants' age group. The choices were broken down into four different ranges. The age ranges were from 18-28 years old, 29-40 years old, 41-54 years old, and 55 years or older. The majority of the participants were in the 41-54 age group with 14 participants or 63.6%. There were no participants in the age range of 18-28, four participants or 18.2% were in the 29-40 age group, and three participants or 13.6% were in the 55 or older age group.

Parent Survey

The first three items of the parent survey gathered demographic information about the participants. Item 1 was used to determine how many respondents had children currently attending a public prekindergarten program, a private prekindergarten program, or kindergarten. Of the 132 parents who responded, 89 (67.4%) had children currently enrolled in kindergarten, 25 (18.9%) had children attending a public prekindergarten program, and 18 (13.6%) had children attending a private prekindergarten program.

Item 2 on the survey gathered information about the participants' age group. The choices were broken down into four different ranges. The age ranges were from 18-28 years old, 29-40 years old, 41-54 years old, and 55 years or older. The majority of the participants were in the 29-40 age group with 75 participants or 56.8%. There were no participants in the age range of 55 or older, 18 participants or 13.6% were in the 41-54 age group, and 38 participants or 28.8% were in the 18-28 age group.

Item 3 on the survey gathered information about the participants' number of children. This was a fill in the blank question. The majority of the parents have two children with 69 participants or 52.3%. This was followed by participants who have one

child with 29 participants or 22%, 18 participants or 13.6% have three children, 10

participants or 7.6% have four children, three participants or 2.3% have five children, and

three participants or 2.3% have six children.

Table 1

Participant Responses to Demographics

	N	%
Parent	132	85.71
Teacher	22	14.29
Kindergarten	102	66.23
Prekindergarten	52	33.77
Public	134	87.01
Private	20	12.99
18-28 years old	38	24.84
29-40 years old	80	52.29
41-54 years old	32	20.92
55+ years old	3	1.96
1 child	29	21.97
2 children	69	52.27
3 children	18	13.64
4 children	10	7.58
5 children	3	2.27
6 children	3	2.27
0-5 years of experience	7	4.55
6-10 years of experience	1	.65
11-15 years of experience	3	1.95
16-20 years of experience	1	.65
21-25 years of experience	4	2.60
25+ years of experience	5	3.25

Analysis of Research Questions

The kindergarten readiness perception survey was broken down into three

sections based on themes that were evident in Chapter 2: social/emotional skills, literacy

skills, and communication skills. Each group of participants was asked to respond to

statements regarding their perceptions of what children should know in order to be ready

for kindergarten.

There were 18 research questions that guided this study. The research questions and results follow.

Table 2

Research Question 1. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in kindergarten for social/emotional skills?

		N	%	Mean
Attending preschool is very important for success in kindergarten	SD	3	3.53	
	D	6	7.06	
	N	12	14.12	
	A	19	22.35	
	SA	45	52.94	
	Total	85		(4.14)
If a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, I would suggest he or she wait a year before enrolling	SD	14	16.67	
	D	19	22.62	
	N	26	30.95	
	A	14	16.67	
	SA	11	13.10	
	Total	84		(2.87)
Children with a readiness problem should enter school as soon as they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need	SD	2	2.35	
	D	5	5.88	
	N	19	22.35	
	A	31	36.47	
	SA	28	32.94	
	Total	85		(3.92)
Readiness, comes as children mature; you can't push it	SD	3	3.53	
	D	13	15.29	
	N	23	27.06	
	A	22	25.88	
	SA	24	28.24	
	Total	85		(3.60)
I can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills	SD		2.35	
	D	1	1.18	
	N	6	7.0	
	A	36	42.35	
	SA	40	47.06	
	Total	85		(4.31)
I assume that by the end of the kindergarten year all children will be ready for first grade	SD	2	2.35	
	D	10	11.76	
	N	14	16.47	
	A	27	31.76	
	SA	32	37.65	
	Total	85		(3.91)
Is physically healthy, rested, well nourished	Not At All			
	Not Very	1	1.20	
	Somewhat	3	3.61	
	Very	21	25.30	
	Essential	58	69.88	
	Total	83		(4.64)

(continued)

		N	%	Mean
Finishes tasks	Not At All			
	Not Very	2	2.47	
	Somewhat	15	18.52	
	Very	29	35.80	
	Essential	35	43.21	
	Total	81		(4.20)
Takes turns and shares	Not At All			
	Not Very	2	2.41	
	Somewhat	14	16.87	
	Very	24	28.92	
	Essential	43	51.81	
	Total	83		(4.30)
Has good problem-solving skills	Not At All			
	Not Very	4	4.88	
	Somewhat	26	31.71	
	Very	20	24.39	
	Essential	32	39.02	
	Total	82		(3.98)
Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities	Not At All			
	Not Very	1	1.20	
	Somewhat	12	14.46	
	Very	33	39.76	
	Essential	37	44.58	
	Total	83		(4.28)
Is not disruptive of the class	Not At All	1	1.22	
	Not Very	4	4.88	
	Somewhat	11	13.41	
	Very	27	32.93	
	Essential	39	47.56	
	Total	82		(4.21)
Is sensitive to other children's feelings	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	16	19.28	
	Very	30	36.14	
	Essential	37	44.58	
	Total	83		(4.25)
Sits still and pays attention	Not Very	1	1.20	
	Somewhat	15	18.07	
	Very	27	32.53	
	Essential	37	44.58	
	Total	83		(4.17)
Can follow directions	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	9	10.98	
	Very	26	31.71	
	Essential	47	57.32	
	Total	82		(4.46)

Table 3

Research Question 2. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in kindergarten for literacy skills?

		N	%	Mean
Children who began formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school	SD	2	2.35	
	D	6	7.06	
	N	18	21.18	
	A	23	27.06	
	SA	36	42.35	
	Total	85		(4.00)
Parents should make sure that their children know the alphabet before they start kindergarten	SD	1	1.19	
	D	7	8.33	
	N	11	13.10	
	A	27	32.14	
	SA	38	45.24	
	Total	84		(4.12)
Parents should set aside time every day for their kindergarten children to practice schoolwork	SD	2	2.35	
	D			
	N	2	2.35	
	A	23	27.06	
	SA	58	68.24	
	Total	85		(4.59)
Homework should be given in kindergarten almost every day	SD	6	7.06	
	D	15	17.65	
	N	26	30.59	
	A	16	18.82	
	SA	22	25.88	
	Total	85		(3.39)
Can count to 20 or more	Not At All	5	6.02	
	Not Very	1	1.20	
	Somewhat	17	20.48	
	Very	20	24.10	
	Essential	40	48.19	
	Total	83		(4.14)
Is able to use pencils or paint brushes	Not At All			
	Not Very	2	2.41	
	Somewhat	15	18.67	
	Very	26	31.33	
	Essential	40	48.19	
	Total	83		(4.25)
Knows the letters of the alphabet	Not At All			
	Not Very	3	3.61	
	Somewhat	16	19.28	
	Very	22	26.51	
	Essential	42	50.60	
	Total	83		(4.24)

		N	%	Mean
Identifies primary colors and basic shapes	Not At All	3	3.61	
	Not Very	15	18.07	
	Somewhat	21	25.30	
	Very	1	1.20	
	Essential	43	51.81	
	Total	83		(4.27)

Table 4

Research Question 3. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in kindergarten for communication?

		N	%	Mean
Knows the English language	Not At All			
	Not Very	3	3.75	
	Somewhat	5	6.25	
	Very	22	27.50	
	Essential	50	62.50	
	Total	80		(4.49)
Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child's primary language	Not At All			
	Not Very	2	2.44	
	Somewhat	7	8.54	
	Very	26	31.71	
	Essential	47	57.32	
	Total	82		(4.44)

Table 5

Research Question 4. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in public prekindergarten for social/emotional skills?

	0	N	%	Mean
Attending preschool is very important for success in kindergarten	SD			
	D			
	N	6	24.00	
	A	7	28.00	
	SA	12	48.00	
	Total	25		(4.24)
If a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, I would suggest he or she wait a year before enrolling	SD	3	12.00	
	D	9	36.00	
	N	4	16.00	
	A	5	20.00	
	SA	4	16.00	
	Total	25		(2.92)
Children with a readiness problem should enter school as soon as they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need	SD			
	D			
	N	6	24.00	
	A	12	48.00	
	SA	7	28.00	
	Total	25		(4.04)
Readiness, comes as children mature; you can't push it	SD	2	8.00	
	D	4	16.00	
	N	7	28.00	
	A	4	16.00	
	SA	8	32.00	
	Total	25		(3.48)
I can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills	SD			
	D			
	N	3	12.00	
	A	13	52.00	
	SA	9	36.00	
	Total	25		(4.24)
I assume that by the end of the kindergarten year all children will be ready for first grade	SD			
	D			
	N	5	20.00	
	A	4	16.00	
	SA	16	64.00	
	Total	25		(4.44)
Is physically healthy, rested, well nourished	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	5	20.83	
	Essential	19	79.17	
	Total	24		(4.79)

	0	N	%	Mean
Finishes tasks	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	4	16.67	
	Very	12	50.00	
	Essential	8	33.33	
	Total	24		(4.17)
Takes turns and shares	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	3	12.00	
	Very	11	45.83	
	Essential	10	41.67	
	Total	24		(4.29)
Has good problem-solving skills	Not At All			
	Not Very	1	4.35	
	Somewhat	6	26.09	
	Very	10	43.48	
	Essential	6	26.09	
	Total	23		(3.91)
Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	4	17.39	
	Very	13	56.52	
	Essential	6	26.09	
	Total	23		(4.09)
Is not disruptive of the class	Not At All	2	8.70	
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	5	21.74	
	Very	6	26.09	
	Essential	10	43.48	
	Total	23		(3.96)
Is sensitive to other children's feelings	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	1	4.35	
	Very	10	43.48	
	Essential	12	52.17	
	Total	23		(4.48)
Sits still and pays attention	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	7	30.43	
	Very	8	34.78	
	Essential	8	34.78	
	Total	23		(4.04)
Can follow directions	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	3	13.04	
	Very	9	39.13	
	Essential	11	47.83	
	Total	23		(4.35)

Table 6

Research Question 5. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in public prekindergarten for literacy skills?

		N	%	Mean
Children who began formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school	SD			
	D			
	N	5	20.00	
	A	10	40.00	
	SA	10	40.00	
	Total	25		(4.20)
Parents should make sure that their children know the alphabet before they start kindergarten	SD			
	D			
	N	4	16.00	
	A	12	48.00	
	SA	9	36.00	
	Total	25		(4.20)
Parents should set aside time every day for their kindergarten children to practice schoolwork	SD			
	D			
	N	2	8.00	
	A	11	44.00	
	SA	12	48.00	
	Total	25		(4.40)
Homework should be given in kindergarten almost every day	SD	1	4.00	
	D	4	16.00	
	N	9	36.00	
	A	9	36.00	
	SA	2	8.00	
	Total	25		(3.28)
Can count to 20 or more	Not At All			
	Not Very	1	4.17	
	Somewhat	1	4.17	
	Very	13	54.17	
	Essential	9	37.00	
	Total	24		(4.25)
Is able to use pencils or paint brushes	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	1	4.35	
	Very	13	56.52	
	Essential	9	39.13	
	Total	23		(4.35)
Knows the letters of the alphabet	Not At All			
	Not Very	1	4.35	
	Somewhat	2	8.70	
	Very	12	52.17	
	Essential	8	34.78	
	Total	23		(4.17)

		N	%	Mean
Identifies primary colors and basic shapes	Not At All			
	Not Very	1	4.35	
	Somewhat	1	4.35	
	Very	14	60.87	
	Essential	7	30.43	
	Total	23		(4.17)

Table 7

Research Question 6. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in public prekindergarten for communication?

		N	%	Mean
Knows the English language	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	2	8.70	
	Very	8	34.78	
	Essential	13	56.52	
	Total	23		(4.48)
Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child's primary language	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	2	8.70	
	Very	8	34.78	
	Essential	13	56.52	
	Total	23		(4.48)

Table 8

Research Question 7. What are the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in private prekindergarten for social/emotional skills?

		N	%	Mean
Attending preschool is very important for success in kindergarten	SD			
	D			
	N	1	8.33	
	A	4	33.33	
	SA	7	58.33	
	Total	12		(4.50)
If a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, I would suggest he or she wait a year before enrolling	SD			
	D	4	33.33	
	N	5	41.67	
	A	2	16.67	
	SA	1	8.33	
	Total	12		(3)
Children with a readiness problem should enter school as soon as they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need	SD			
	D			
	N	2	16.67	
	A	9	75.00	
	SA	1	8.33	
	Total	12		(3.92)
Readiness, comes as children mature; you can't push it	SD			
	D			
	N	2	16.67	
	A	8	66.67	
	SA	2	16.67	
	Total	12		(4)
I can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills	SD			
	D			
	N			
	A	10	83.33	
	SA	2	16.67	
	Total	12		(4.17)
I assume that by the end of the kindergarten year all children will be ready for first grade	SD			
	D	1	8.33	
	N	2	16.67	
	A	7	58.33	
	SA	2	16.67	
	Total	12		(3.83)
Is physically healthy, rested, well nourished	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very			
	Essential	12	100.00	
	Total	12		(5)

(continued)

		N	%	Mean
Finishes tasks	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	1	8.33	
	Very	3	25.00	
	Essential	8	66.67	
	Total	12		(4.58)
Takes turns and shares	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	2	16.67	
	Essential	10	83.33	
	Total	12		(4.83)
Has good problem-solving skills	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	4	33.33	
	Essential	8	66.67	
	Total	12		(4.67)
Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	1	8.33	
	Essential	11	91.67	
	Total	12		(4.92)
Is not disruptive of the class	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	2	16.67	
	Very	1	8.33	
	Essential	9	75.00	
	Total	12		(4.92)
Is sensitive to other children's feelings	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	1	8.33	
	Essential	11	91.67	
	Total	12		(4.92)
Sits still and pays attention	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	1	8.33	
	Very	2	16.67	
	Essential	9	75.00	
	Total	12		(4.67)
Can follow directions	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	2	16.67	
	Essential	10	83.33	
	Total	12		(4.83)

Table 9

Research Question 8. What the perceptions of parents of children currently enrolled in private prekindergarten for literacy skills?

		N	%	Mean
Children who began formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school	SD			
	D			
	N	1	8.33	
	A	6	50.00	
	SA	5	41.67	
	Total	12		(4.33)
Parents should make sure that their children know the alphabet before they start kindergarten	SD			
	D			
	N	1	8.33	
	A	7	58.33	
	SA	4	33.33	
	Total	12		(4.25)
Parents should set aside time every day for their kindergarten children to practice schoolwork	SD			
	D	1	8.33	
	N	1	8.33	
	A	7	58.33	
	SA	3	25.00	
	Total	12		(4)
Homework should be given in kindergarten almost every day	SD	1	7.69	
	D	3	25.00	
	N	2	16.67	
	A	6	50.00	
	SA	1	8.33	
	Total	12		(3.42)
Can count to 20 or more	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	2	16.67	
	Essential	10	83.33	
	Total	12		(4.83)
Is able to use pencils or paint brushes	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	1	8.33	
	Essential	11	91.67	
	Total	12		(4.92)
Knows the letters of the alphabet	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	3	25.00	
	Essential	9	75.00	
	Total	12		(4.75)

(continued)

		N	%	Mean
Identifies primary colors and basic shapes	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	3	25.00	
	Essential	9	75.00	
	Total	12		(4.75)

Table 10

Research Question 9. What are the perceptions of children currently enrolled in private prekindergarten for communication skills?

		N	%	Mean
Knows the English language	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	1	8.33	
	Essential	11	91.67	
	Total	12		(4.92)
Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child's primary language	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	1	8.33	
	Essential	11	91.67	
	Total	12		(4.92)

Table 11

Research Question 10. What are the perceptions of kindergarten teachers for social/emotional skills?

		N	%	Mean
Attending preschool is very important for success in kindergarten	SD			
	D			
	N	1	8.33	
	A	4	33.33	
	SA	7	58.33	
	Total	12		(4.50)
If a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, I would suggest he or she wait a year before enrolling	SD			
	D	5	38.46	
	N	5	38.46	
	A	2	15.38	
	SA	1	7.69	
	Total	13		(2.92)
Children with a readiness problem should enter school as soon as they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need	SD			
	D	1	8.33	
	N	2	16.67	
	A	4	33.33	
	SA	5	41.67	
	Total	12		(4.08)
Readiness, comes as children mature; you can't push it	SD			
	D	4	30.77	
	N	3	23.08	
	A	3	23.08	
	SA	3	23.08	
	Total	13		(3.38)
I can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills	SD			
	D			
	N			
	A	4	30.77	
	SA	9	69.23	
	Total	13		(4.69)
I assume that by the end of the kindergarten year all children will be ready for first grade	SD	1	7.69	
	D	8	61.54	
	N	1	7.69	
	A	3	23.08	
	SA			
	Total	13		(2.46)
Is physically healthy, rested, well nourished	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	3	23.08	
	Essential	10	76.92	
	Total	13		(4.77)

		N	%	Mean
Finishes tasks	Not At All			
	Not Very	1	7.69	
	Somewhat	6	46.15	
	Very	6	46.15	
	Essential			
	Total	13		(3.38)
Takes turns and shares	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	4	30.77	
	Very	8	61.54	
	Essential	1	7.69	
	Total	13		(3.77)
Has good problem-solving skills	Not At All			
	Not Very	1	7.69	
	Somewhat	10	76.92	
	Very	2	15.38	
	Essential			
	Total	13		(3.08)
Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	6	46.15	
	Very	7	53.85	
	Essential			
	Total	13		(3.54)
Is not disruptive of the class	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	4	30.77	
	Very	5	38.46	
	Essential	4	30.77	
	Total	13		(4.00)
Is sensitive to other children's feelings	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	5	41.67	
	Very	7	58.33	
	Essential			
	Total	12		(3.58)
Sits still and pays attention	Not At All			
	Not Very	2	15.38	
	Somewhat	4	30.77	
	Very	5	38.46	
	Essential	2	15.38	
	Total	13		(3.54)
Can follow directions	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	3	23.08	
	Very	8	61.54	
	Essential	2	15.38	
	Total	13		(3.92)

Table 12

Research Question 11. What are the perceptions of kindergarten teachers for literacy skills?

		N	%	Mean
Children who began formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school	SD			
	D	1	7.69	
	N	2	15.38	
	A	4	30.77	
	SA	6	46.15	
	Total	13		(4.15)
Parents should make sure that their children know the alphabet before they start kindergarten	SD			
	D			
	N	1	7.69	
	A	9	69.23	
	SA	3	23.08	
	Total	13		(4.15)
Parents should set aside time every day for their kindergarten children to practice schoolwork	SD			
	D			
	N	1	7.69	
	A	5	38.46	
	SA	7	53.85	
	Total	13		(4.46)
Homework should be given in kindergarten almost every day	SD	1	7.69	
	D	5	38.46	
	N			
	A	5	38.46	
	SA	2	15.38	
	Total	13		(3.15)
Can count to 20 or more	Not At All	1	7.69	
	Not Very	3	23.08	
	Somewhat	7	53.85	
	Very	1	7.69	
	Essential	1	7.69	
	Total	13		(2.85)
Is able to use pencils or paint brushes	Not At All			
	Not Very	2	15.38	
	Somewhat	3	23.08	
	Very	6	46.15	
	Essential	2	15.38	
	Total	13		(3.62)
Knows the letters of the alphabet	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	9	69.23	
	Very	1	7.69	
	Essential	2	15.38	
	Total	13		(3.31)

		N	%	Mean
Identifies primary colors and basic shapes	Not At All	1	7.69	
	Not Very	1	7.69	
	Somewhat	6	46.15	
	Very	4	30.77	
	Essential	1	7.69	
	Total	13		(3.23)

Table 13

Research Question 12. What are the perceptions of kindergarten teachers for communication skills?

		N	%	Mean
Knows the English language	Not At All			
	Not Very	3	3.75	
	Somewhat	5	6.25	
	Very	22	27.50	
	Essential	50	62.50	
	Total	80		(4.49)
Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child's primary language	Not At All			
	Not Very	2	2.44	
	Somewhat	7	8.54	
	Very	26	31.71	
	Essential	47	57.32	
	Total	82		(4.44)

Table 14

Research Question 13. What are the perceptions of public prekindergarten teachers for social/emotional skills?

		N	%	Mean
Attending preschool is very important for success in kindergarten	SD			
	D			
	N			
	A	2	28.57	
	SA	5	71.43	
	Total	7		(4.71)
If a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, I would suggest he or she wait a year before enrolling	SD	2	28.57	
	D	3	42.86	
	N	2	28.57	
	A			
	SA			
	Total	7		(2.00)
Children with a readiness problem should enter school as soon as they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need	SD			
	D			
	N			
	A	3	42.86	
	SA	4	57.14	
	Total	7		(4.57)
Readiness, comes as children mature; you can't push it	SD			
	D			
	N	1	14.29	
	A	4	57.14	
	SA	2	28.57	
	Total	7		(4.14)
I can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills	SD			
	D			
	N			
	A	1	14.29	
	SA	6	85.71	
	Total	7		(4.86)
I assume that by the end of the kindergarten year all children will be ready for first grade	SD			
	D	3	42.86	
	N	1	14.29	
	A	3	42.86	
	SA			
	Total	7		(3.0)
Is physically healthy, rested, well nourished	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	2	28.57	
	Essential	5	71.43	
	Total	7		(4.71)

		N	%	Mean
Finishes tasks	Not At All			
	Not Very	2	28.57	
	Somewhat	1	14.29	
	Very	3	42.86	
	Essential	1	14.29	
	Total	7		(3.43)
Takes turns and shares	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	1	14.29	
	Very	2	28.57	
	Essential	4	57.14	
	Total	7		(4.43)
Has good problem-solving skills	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	1	14.29	
	Very	2	28.57	
	Essential	4	57.14	
	Total	7		(4.43)
Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	1	14.29	
	Very	2	28.57	
	Essential	4	57.14	
	Total	7		(4.43)
Is not disruptive of the class	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	3	42.86	
	Very	2	28.57	
	Essential	2	28.57	
	Total	7		(3.86)
Is sensitive to other children's feelings	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	1	16.67	
	Very	1	16.67	
	Essential	4	66.67	
	Total	6		(4.50)
Sits still and pays attention	Not At All			
	Not Very	1	16.67	
	Somewhat	2	33.33	
	Very	2	33.33	
	Essential	1	16.67	
	Total	6		(3.50)
Can follow directions	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	4	57.14	
	Essential	3	42.86	
	Total	7		(4.43)

Table 15

Research Question 14. What are the perceptions of public prekindergarten teachers for literacy skills?

		N	%	Mean
Children who began formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school	SD			
	D			
	N	2	28.57	
	A	3	42.86	
	SA	2	28.57	
	Total	7		(4.0)
Parents should make sure that their children know the alphabet before they start kindergarten	SD			
	D	3	42.86	
	N	2	28.57	
	A	1	14.29	
	SA	1	14.29	
	Total	7		(3.0)
Parents should set aside time every day for their kindergarten children to practice schoolwork	SD			
	D			
	N	4	57.14	
	A	2	28.57	
	SA	1	14.29	
	Total	7		(3.57)
Homework should be given in kindergarten almost every day	SD	2	28.57	
	D	3	42.86	
	N	1	14.29	
	A	1	14.29	
	SA			
	Total	7		(2.14)
Can count to 20 or more	Not At All	1	16.67	
	Not Very	1	16.67	
	Somewhat	2	33.33	
	Very	1	16.67	
	Essential	1	16.67	
	Total	6		(3.0)
Is able to use pencils or paint brushes	Not At All			
	Not Very	1	14.29	
	Somewhat	3	42.86	
	Very	1	14.29	
	Essential	2	28.57	
	Total	7		(3.57)
Knows the letters of the alphabet	Not At All			
	Not Very	1	14.29	
	Somewhat	2	28.57	
	Very	2	28.57	
	Essential	1	14.29	
	Total	7		(3.14)

		N	%	Mean
Identifies primary colors and basic shapes	Not At All	1	14.29	
	Not Very			
	Somewhat	1	14.29	
	Very	3	42.86	
	Essential	2	28.57	
	Total	7		(3.71)

Table 16

Research Question 15. What are the perceptions of public prekindergarten teachers for communication skills?

		N	%	Mean
Knows the English language	Not At All			
	Not Very	1	14.29	
	Somewhat	1	14.29	
	Very	3	42.86	
	Essential	2	28.57	
	Total	7		(3.86)
Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child's primary language	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	2	28.57	
	Essential	5	71.43	
	Total	7		(4.71)

Table 17

Research Question 16. What are the perceptions of private prekindergarten teachers for social/emotional skills?

		N	%	Mean
Attending preschool is very important for success in kindergarten	SD			
	D			
	N			
	A			
	SA	2	100.0	
	Total	2		(5)
If a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, I would suggest he or she wait a year before enrolling	SD			
	D	1	50.00	
	N	1	50.00	
	A			
	SA			
	Total	2		(2.50)
Children with a readiness problem should enter school as soon as they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need	SD			
	D			
	N			
	A	2	100.0	
	SA			
	Total	2		(4)
Readiness, comes as children mature; you can't push it	SD			
	D			
	N			
	A	2	100.0	
	SA			
	Total	2		(4)
I can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills	SD			
	D			
	N			
	A			
	SA	2	100.0	
	Total	2		(5)
I assume that by the end of the kindergarten year all children will be ready for first grade	SD			
	D			
	N			
	A	1	50.00	
	SA	1	50.00	
	Total	2		(4.50)
Is physically healthy, rested, well nourished	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very			
	Essential	2	100.0	
	Total	2		(5)

(continued)

		N	%	Mean
Finishes tasks	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very			
	Essential	2	100.0	
	Total	2		(5)
Takes turns and shares	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very			
	Essential	2	100.0	
	Total	2		(5)
Has good problem-solving skills	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	1	50.00	
	Essential	1	50.00	
	Total	2		(4.50)
Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	1	50.00	
	Essential	1	50.00	
	Total	2		(4.50)
Is not disruptive of the class	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very			
	Essential	2	100.0	
	Total	2		(5)
Is sensitive to other children's feelings	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	1	50.00	
	Essential	1	50.00	
	Total	2		(4.50)
Sits still and pays attention	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very			
	Essential	2	100.0	
	Total	2		(5)
Can follow directions	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very			
	Essential	2	100.0	
	Total	2		(5)

Table 18

Research Question 17. What are the perceptions of private prekindergarten teachers for literacy skills?

		N	%	Mean
Children who began formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school	SD			
	D			
	N			
	A			
	SA	2	100.00	
	Total	2		(5)
Parents should make sure that their children know the alphabet before they start kindergarten	SD			
	D			
	N			
	A	2	100.00	
	SA			
	Total	2		(4)
Parents should set aside time every day for their kindergarten children to practice schoolwork	SD			
	D			
	N			
	A	1	50.0	
	SA	1	50.0	
	Total	2		(4.50)
Homework should be given in kindergarten almost every day	SD			
	D			
	N			
	A	2	100.00	
	SA			
	Total	2		(4)
Can count to 20 or more	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very			
	Essential	2	100.00	
	Total	2		(5)
Is able to use pencils or paint brushes	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very			
	Essential	2	100.00	
	Total	2		(5)
Knows the letters of the alphabet	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very			
	Essential	2	100.00	
	Total	2		(5)

(continued)

		N	%	Mean
Identifies primary colors and basic shapes	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very			
	Essential	2	100.00	
	Total	2		(5)

Table 19

Research Question 18. What are the perceptions of private prekindergarten teachers for communication skills?

		N	%	Mean
Knows the English language	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very			
	Essential	2	100.00	
	Total	2		(5)
Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child's primary language	Not At All			
	Not Very			
	Somewhat			
	Very	1	50.00	
	Essential	1	50.00	
	Total	2		(4.50)

The participants were then compared by their role of parent/teacher, the setting of prekindergarten/kindergarten, and the setting of public/private.

A single sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate the difference in perceptions of parents and teachers with social/emotional kindergarten readiness. The test was significant p<.001; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The results indicate there is a significant difference in perceptions of social/emotional skill readiness between parents and teachers.

Parent/Teacher

Table 20

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Parent	75	61.0707	7.75827	.89585
Teacher	10	55.3000	3.77271	1.19304

Table 21

T Test for Social/Emotional

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
4.473	0.37	3.868	21.191	.001

A single sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate the difference in perceptions of parents and teachers with literacy skills and kindergarten readiness. The test was significant p<.012; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The results indicate there is a significant difference in perceptions of literacy skill readiness for parents and teachers.

Table 22

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Parent	78	32.8179	4.84963	.54911
Teacher	13	28.9231	4.55451	1.26319

Table 23

T Test for Literacy

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
.081	.776	2.828	16.870	.012

A single sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate the difference in perceptions of parents and teachers with communication skills and kindergarten readiness. The test was not significant p<.039; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The results indicate there is a significant difference in perceptions of communication skill readiness for parents and teachers.

Table 24

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Parent	80	8.9250	1.34799	.15071
Teacher	13	8.0769	1.25576	.34828

Table 25

T Test for Communication

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t* test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	*t*	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
.069	.793	2.235	16.825	.039

Prekindergarten/Kindergarten

A single sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate the difference in perceptions of prekindergarten parents and teachers with social/emotional skills and kindergarten readiness. The test was not significant p<.520; therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The results indicate there is not a significant difference in perceptions of social/emotional skill readiness for prekindergarten parents and teachers.

Table 26

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PK Parent	34	63.0588	6.57793	1.12811
PK Teacher	7	64.4286	4.57738	1.73009

Table 27

T Test for Social/Emotional

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t* test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	*t*	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
3.106	.086	-.663	11.799	.520

A single sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate the difference in perceptions of prekindergarten parents and teachers with literacy skills and kindergarten readiness. The test was not significant p<.140; therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The results indicate there is not a significant difference in perceptions of literacy skill readiness for prekindergarten parents and teachers.

Table 28

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PK Parent	35	33.8000	3.90927	.66079
PK Teacher	8	29.0000	8.03563	2.84103

Table 29

T Test for Literacy Skills

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t* test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	*t*	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
14.390	.000	1.646	7.773	.140

A single sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate the difference in perceptions of prekindergarten parents and teachers with communication skills and kindergarten readiness. The test was not significant p<.333; therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The results indicate there is not a significant difference in perceptions of communication skill readiness for prekindergarten parents and teachers.

Table 30

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PK Parent	35	9.2571	1.12047	.18939
PK Teacher	9	8.7778	1.30171	.43390

Table 31

T Test for Communication

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t* test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	*t*	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
.077	.783	1.103	11.243	.333

Public/Private

A single sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate the difference in perceptions of public and private prekindergarten parents and teachers with social/emotional skills and kindergarten readiness. The test was significant p<.003; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The results indicate there is a significant difference in perceptions of social/emotional skill readiness for public or private prekindergarten parents and teachers.

Table 32

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Public	27	61.5185	6.54200	1.25901
Private	14	66.7143	3.95024	1.05575

Table 33

T Test for Social/Emotional

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t* test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	*t*	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
5.429	.025	-3.162	37.921	.003

A single sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate the difference in perceptions of public and private prekindergarten parents and teachers with literacy skills and kindergarten readiness. The test was significant p<.006; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The results indicate there is a significant difference in perceptions of literacy skill readiness for public or private prekindergarten parents and teachers.

Table 34

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Public	29	31.6207	5.44724	1.01153
Private	14	35.5714	3.32159	.88773

Table 35

T Test for Literacy

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	*t*	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
2.476	.123	-2.936	38.522	.006

A single sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate the difference in perceptions of public and private prekindergarten parents and teachers with communication skills and kindergarten readiness. The test was significant p<.001; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The results indicate there is a significant difference in perceptions of communication skill readiness for public or private prekindergarten parents and teachers.

Table 36

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Public	30	8.8667	1.27937	.23358
Private	14	9.7857	.42582	.11380

Table 37

T Test for Communication Skills

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t* test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	*t*	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
12.187	.001	-3.537	39.444	.001

The kindergarten readiness survey was broken down into two sections. The first section consisted of 10 statements about what makes children ready for school. The second section consisted of 15 qualities for a child to be ready for kindergarten. The results were compared by parent/teacher, prekindergarten/kindergarten, and public/private prekindergarten.

A single sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate the difference in perceptions of parents and teachers with regard to statements about what makes children ready for school. The test was not significant p<.430; therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The results indicate there is not a significant difference in perceptions of what makes children ready for school with regard to kindergarten readiness for parents and teachers.

Table 38

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Parent	83	38.7229	6.12932	.67278
Teacher	11	37.8182	2.99393	.90270

Table 39

T Test for Ready for School

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t* test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	*t*	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
2.242	.138	.804	23.317	.430

A single sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate the difference in perceptions of prekindergarten parents and teachers with regard to statements about what makes children ready for school. The test was not significant p<.248; therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The results indicate there is not a significant difference in perceptions of what makes children ready for school with regard to kindergarten readiness for prekindergarten parents and teachers.

Table 40

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PK Parent	37	39.4324	4.50642	.74085
PK Teacher	9	37.4444	4.39065	1.46355

Table 41

T Test for Ready for School

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t* test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	*t*	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
.001	.978	1.212	12.444	.248

A single sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate the difference in perceptions of public and private prekindergarten participants with regard to statements about what makes children ready for school. The test was not significant p<.354; therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The results indicate there is not a significant difference in perceptions of what makes children ready for school with regard to kindergarten readiness for public and private prekindergarten participants.

Table 42

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Public	32	38.6875	4.94119	.87349
Private	14	39.8571	3.32490	.88862

Table 43

T Test for Ready for School

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			*t* test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.		*t*	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
2.760	.104		-.939	36.118	.354

A single sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate the difference in perceptions of parents and teachers with regard to the importance of qualities that children need to be ready for school. The test was not significant p<.000; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The results indicate there is a significant difference in perceptions of importance of qualities that children need to be ready for school for parents and teachers.

Table 44

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Parent	77	64.3000	8.86084	1.00979
Teacher	12	54.1667	5.35696	1.54642

Table 45

T Test for Qualities for School

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			*t* test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.		*t*	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
3.941	.050		5.487	21.807	.000

A single sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate the difference in perceptions of prekindergarten parents and teachers with regard to the importance of qualities that

children need to be ready for school. The test was not significant p<.905; therefore, the

null hypothesis was not rejected. The results indicate there is not a significant difference

in perceptions of importance of qualities that children need to be ready for school for

prekindergarten parents and teachers.

Table 46

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PK Parent	34	66.7059	7.37535	1.26486
PK Teacher	6	67.1667	8.51861	3.47771

Table 47

T Test for Qualities for School

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t* test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	*t*	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
.003	.958	-.125	6.393	.905

A single sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate the difference in perceptions of

public and private participants with regard to the importance of qualities children need to

be ready for school. The test was significant p<.000; therefore, the null hypothesis was

rejected. The results indicate there is a significant difference in perceptions of

importance of qualities that children need to be ready for school for public and private

prekindergarten participants.

Table 48

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Public	26	63.8462	7.17603	1.40733
Private	14	72.2143	4.24588	1.13476

Table 49

T Test for Qualities for School

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t* test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	*T*	Df	Sig (2-tailed)
7.965	.008	-4.629	37.551	.000

Summary

In summary, the results of the survey indicated that there are differences in kindergarten readiness perceptions between parents and teachers in all three areas of social/emotional, literacy, and communication skills. There is also a difference in perceptions between public and private prekindergarten teachers and parents in all three areas. These also include kindergarten teachers in the public school setting. The data found no significant difference between prekindergarten teachers and parents.

The data collected also indicated that there was not a significant difference in kindergarten readiness perceptions regarding what makes children ready for school for any of the groups that were compared: parent/teacher, prekindergarten teacher/parent, and public/private. However, there was a significant difference in kindergarten readiness perceptions regarding the importance of qualities that children need to be ready for school with parents/teachers and public/private prekindergarten teachers and parents. There was no significant difference indicated for prekindergarten teachers and parents in this area.

Chapter 5 contains the conclusions, recommendations based on the data provided, and further study recommendations for readers who are interested in early childhood programs and the impact they will have on their public education systems.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter contains the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for readers who are interested in the perceptions of parents and teachers with regard to kindergarten readiness. It is intended to help those who are facing readiness concerns regarding enrolling children in a variety of early childhood programs. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers along with parents of both kindergarten children and prekindergarten children who are currently enrolled in public or private prekindergarten programs. This study used data collected using a kindergarten readiness survey. The study's population consisted of prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers and parents who currently have children enrolled in a public or a private prekindergarten program.

Summary of Findings

The statistical analysis reported in the study was based on 18 research questions presented in Chapter 1. The findings were analyzed using the SPSS software program.

Social/Emotional Skills

Figure 1 displays the data collected for social/emotional skills perceptions for parents and teachers as indicated on the kindergarten readiness survey.
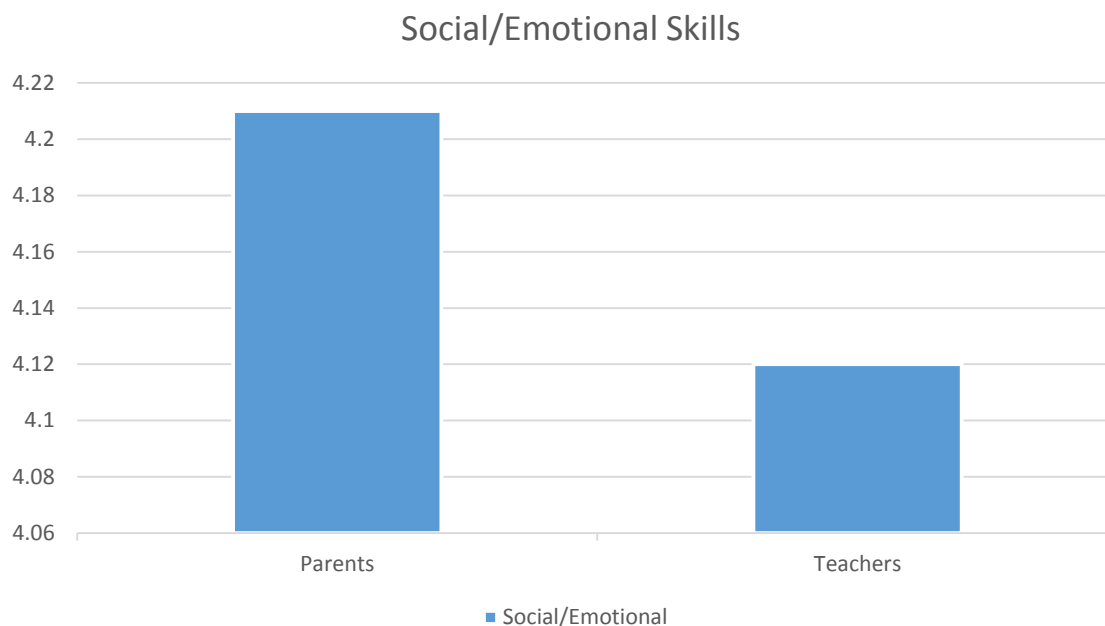
Figure 1. Parent and Teacher Social/Emotional Skills.

The data collected indicated a difference in perceptions of social/emotional skills regarding kindergarten readiness between parents and teachers. Parents perceive social/emotional skills to be more important to kindergarten readiness than teachers.

This is in contrast to the Kindergarten Readiness and Preschools Research Project conducted by Copple and Bredekamp (2009) that found beliefs among parents and teachers that described social and emotional skills as being essential to readiness. The Project Giant Step study that was conducted by Reed and Bergemann (1992) discovered that large gains in the social and emotional development of children took place in a comprehensive public school prekindergarten program (Sparagana, 2007). According to LEGO Education (2015), social and emotional learning is one of the most important indicators of future success and is critical for early childhood development.

Figure 2 displays the data collected for social/emotional skill perceptions for

public and private participants as indicated on the kindergarten readiness survey.

Social/Emotional Skills
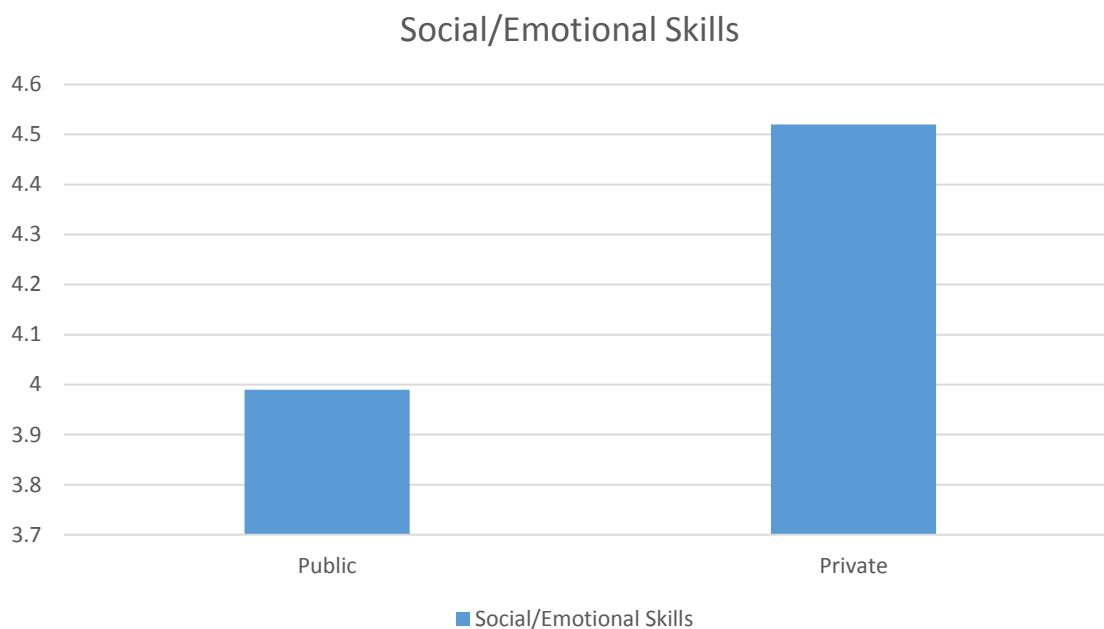
Figure 2. Public and Private Social/Emotional Skills.

The data collected indicated a difference in perceptions of social/emotional skills regarding kindergarten readiness between public and private prekindergarten settings. Participants in private settings perceive social/emotional skills to be more important to kindergarten readiness than those in public settings. Early childhood teachers indicated that kindergarten teachers were more concerned with the social and behavioral development of children at the start of kindergarten than with academic preparation (Pianta et al., 1999).

Literacy Skills

Figure 3 displays the data collected for literacy skill perceptions for parents and teachers as indicated on the kindergarten readiness survey.
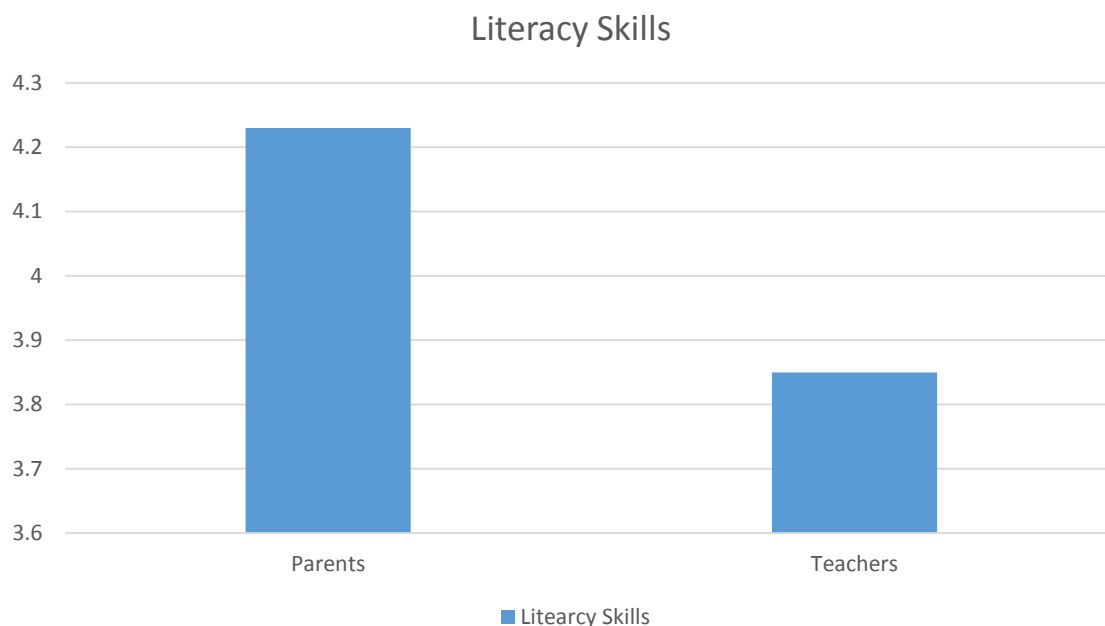
Figure 3. Parent and Teacher Literacy Skills.

The data collected indicated a significant difference in perceptions of literacy skills regarding kindergarten readiness between parents and teachers. Parents perceive literacy skills to be more important with regard to kindergarten readiness than teachers. This is in contrast to the Kindergarten Readiness and Preschools Research Project (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009) that found that teachers and parents generally agreed that literacy skills were an important element in readiness. Researchers with the Chicago Longitudinal Study who researched government-funded kindergarten programs indicated that children who enter kindergarten from quality prekindergarten programs have better reading and language skills than those children who did not attend prekindergarten (Sparagana, 2007). According to the Starting School Research Project (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005), almost three fourths of parents who did not graduate from high school rated counting to 20 and knowing the letters of the alphabet as essential or very

important. There is an expectation that preschool children entering kindergarten have familiarity with print, letter and sound recognition, and beginning writing skills (Hatcher et al., 2012).

Figure 4 displays the data collected for literacy skills for public and private participants as indicated by the kindergarten readiness survey.
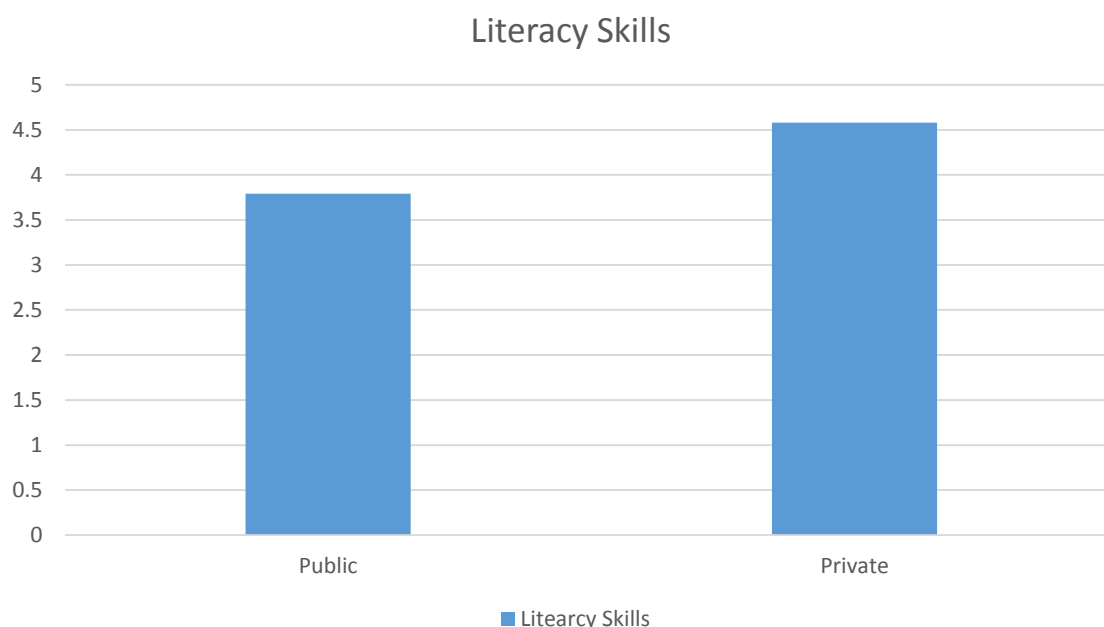
Literacy Skills

Figure 4. Public and Private Literacy Skills.

The data collected indicated a significant difference in perceptions of literacy skills regarding kindergarten readiness between public and private prekindergarten participants. Participants in private settings perceive literacy skills to be more important to kindergarten readiness than those in public settings.

Communication

Figure 5 displays the data collected for communication skills for participants in public and private settings as indicated by the kindergarten readiness survey.

Communication Skills
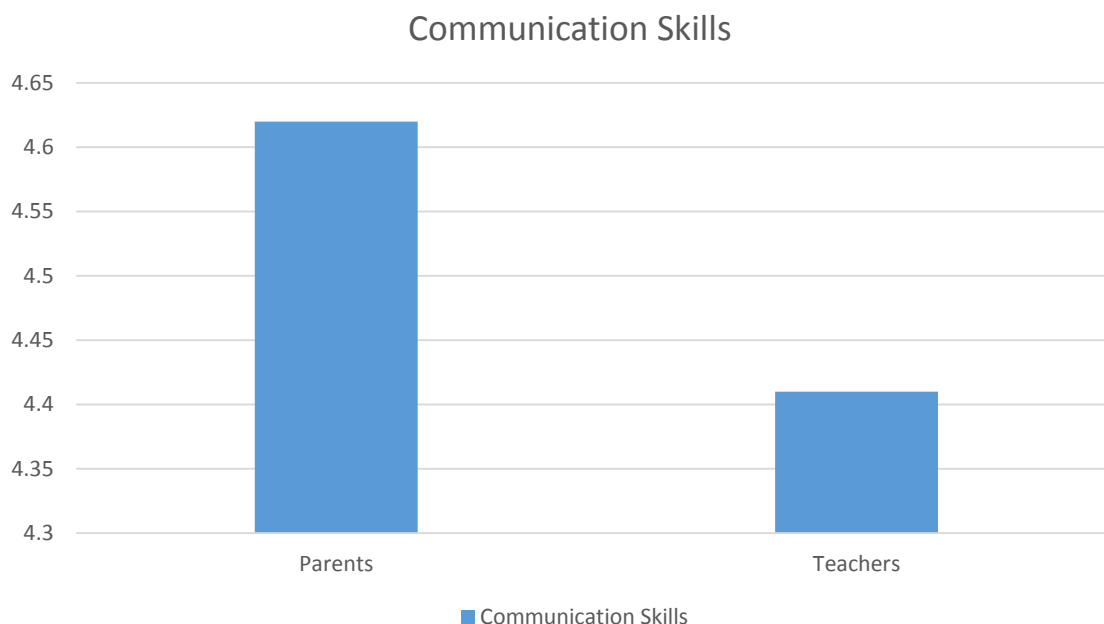
Figure 5. Parent and Teacher Communication Skills.

The data collected indicated a significant difference in perceptions of communication skills with regard to kindergarten readiness between parents and teachers. Parents perceive communication skills to be more important with regard to kindergarten readiness than teachers. This is in contrast to the Kindergarten Readiness and Preschools Research Project conducted by Copple and Bredekamp (2009) that indicated that both teachers and parents agreed that communication, as related to readiness, was an important part of their programs. In the Starting School Research Project (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005), it was indicated that knowing and following a teacher's rules, followed by becoming familiar with where things were and what to do and knowing how to make friends, were important as they start school.

Figure 6 displays the data collected for communication skills for participants in public and private settings as indicated by the kindergarten readiness survey.
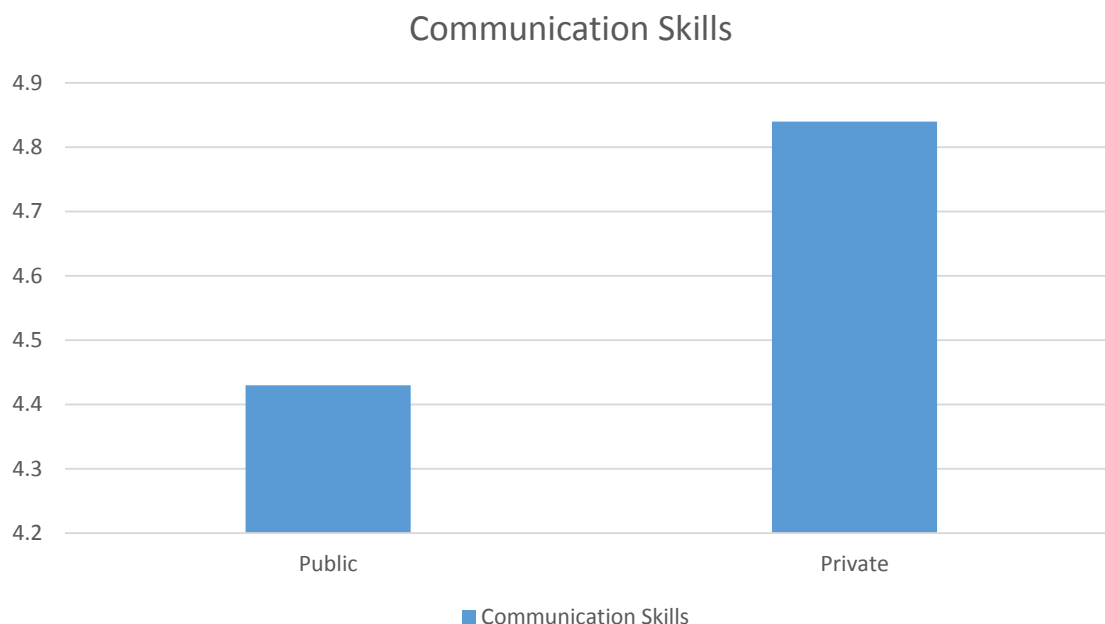
Figure 6. Public and Private Communication Skills.

The data collected indicated a significant difference in perceptions of communication skills with regard to kindergarten readiness between public and private prekindergarten participants. Participants in private settings perceive communication skills to be more important to kindergarten readiness than those in public settings.

The following 10 statements on the kindergarten readiness survey relate to kindergarten readiness in terms of what participants indicated children need to be ready for school. The data are reported below.

Figure 7 displays the number of responses that were collected from the parent participants according to their age.
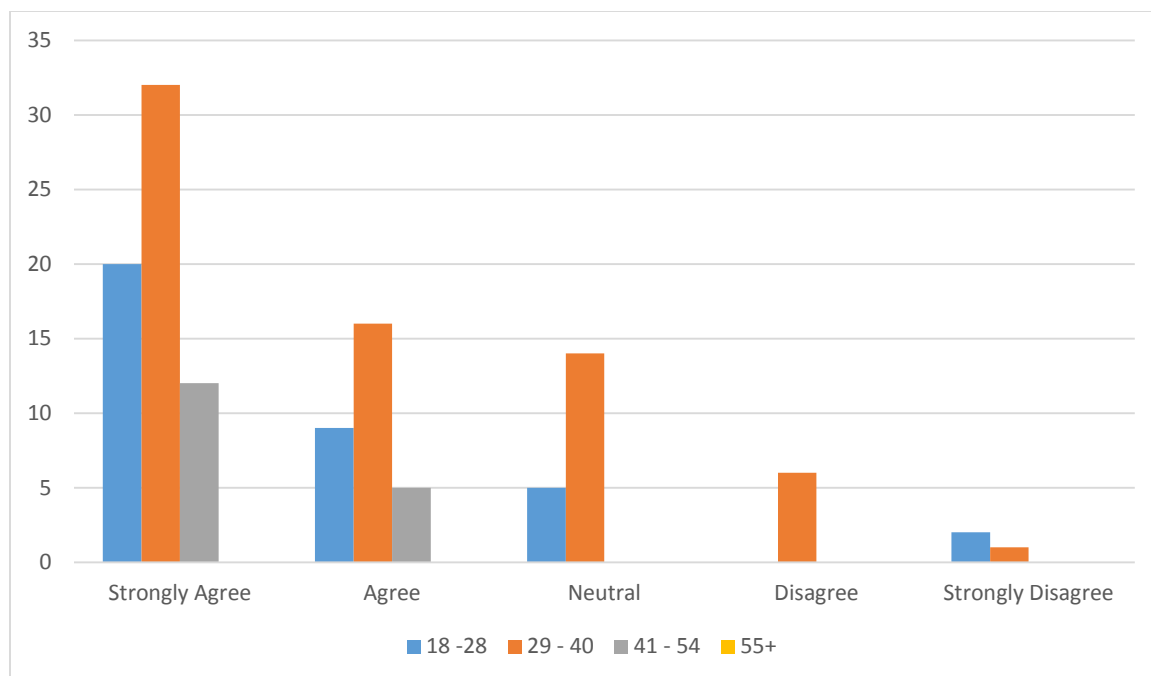
Figure 7. Ready for School Statement 1: Attending preschool is very important for success in kindergarten (Parents).

The data indicated that 67% of the parents in the 18-28 age group, 47% of the parents in the 29-40 age group, and 71% of the parents in 41-54 age group strongly agree that preschool is an important indicator for kindergarten readiness.

These data suggest parents are in agreement about the benefits of preschool education. School districts need to continue to inform parents about the enrollment and eligibility criteria benefits for preschool. This will help increase the number of children who attend public prekindergarten programs. According to Gilliam (2005), high-quality prekindergarten provides children with the cognitive, academic, social, and emotional skills they require to be successful in elementary school.

Figure 8 displays the number of responses that were collected from the parent participants according to their age.
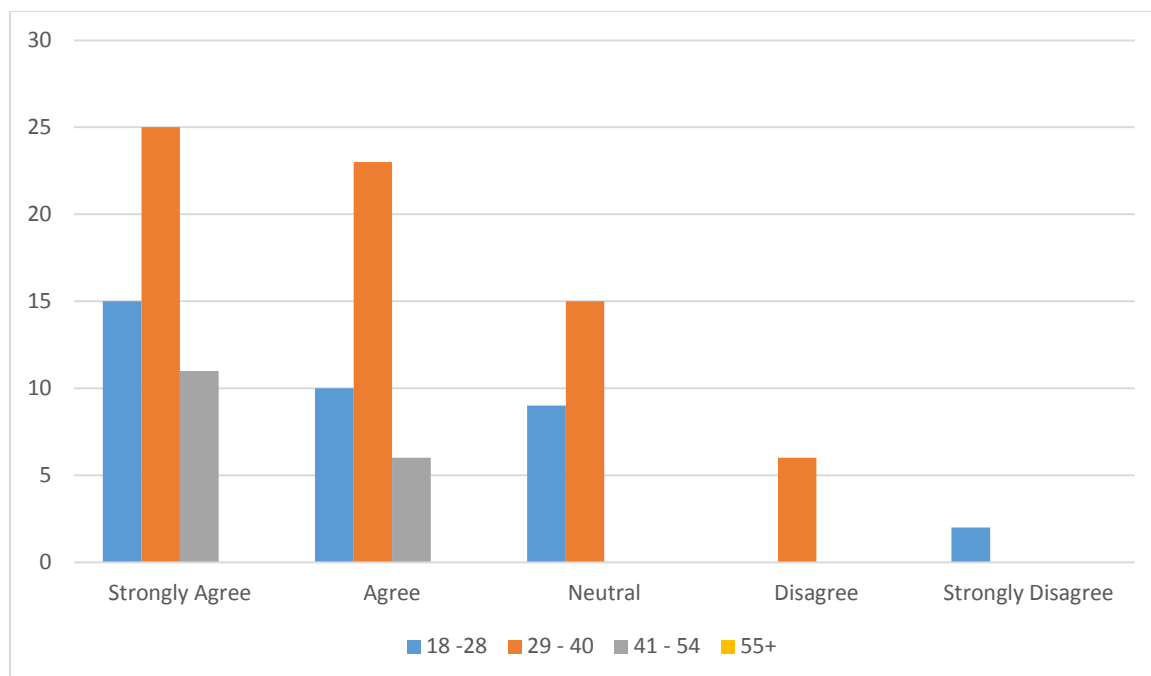
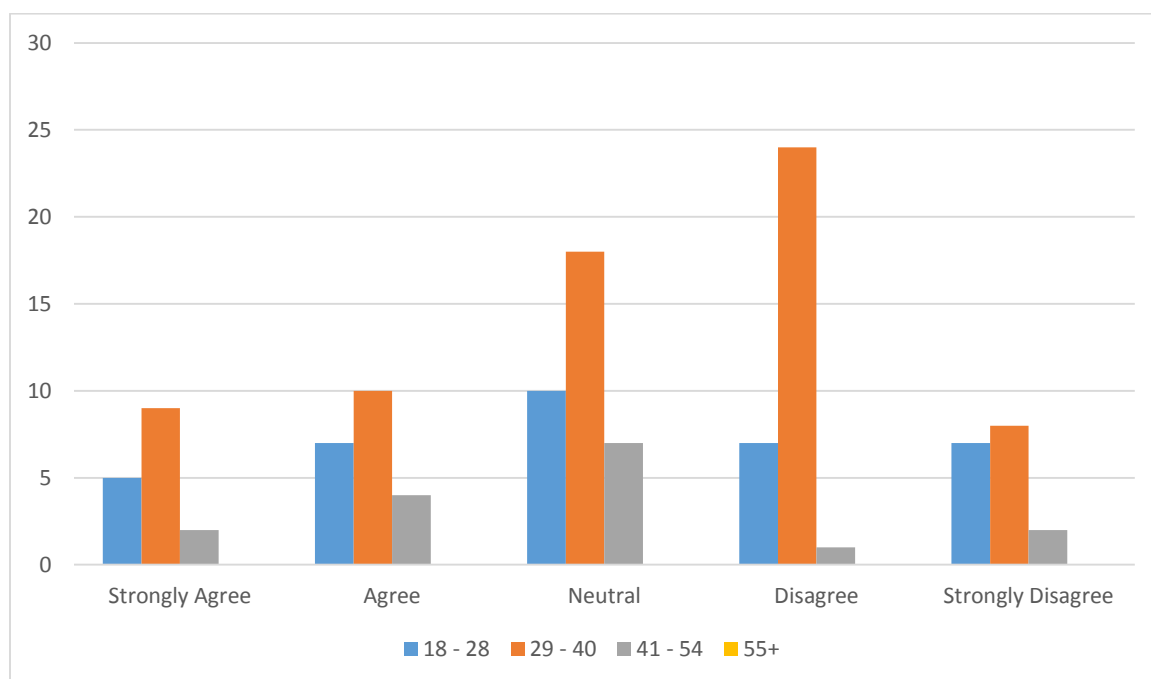*Figure 8.* Ready for School Statement 2: Children who began formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school (Parents).

The data indicated that 42% of the parents in the 18-28 age group, 36% of the parents in the 29-40 age group, and 65% of the parents in 41-54 age group strongly agree that children who began formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school. Six percent of parents in the 18-28 age group strongly disagreed with that statement.

These data suggest that parents understand the importance of reading and math instruction prior to beginning kindergarten; however, most students in rural school districts continue to come to school unprepared. School districts should continue to review prekindergarten curriculum that focuses on academics because parents do perceive it to be beneficial to their children. Higher quality prekindergarten programs are associated with the early years of schooling and more positive academic outcomes in children. Studies of model programs show that intensive early childhood services can

improve children's cognitive, academic, and social skills with gains maintained into adulthood (Collett, 2013).

Figure 9 displays the number of responses that were collected from the parent participants according to their age.
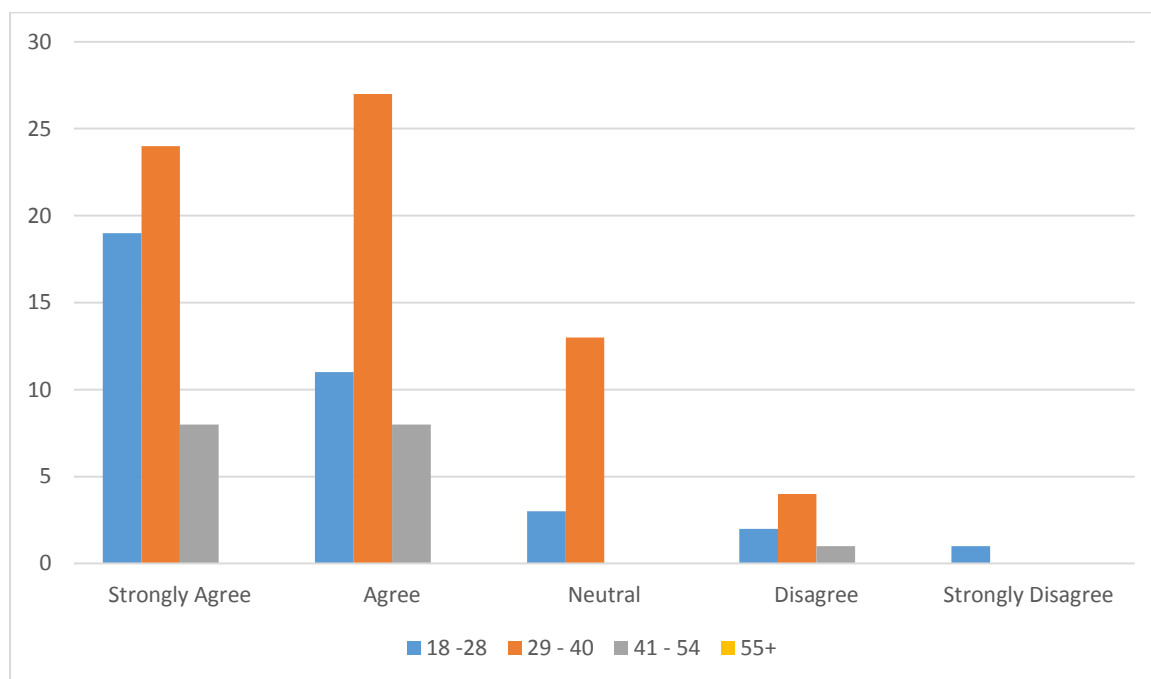
Figure 9. Ready for School Statement 3: Parents should make sure that their children know the alphabet before they start kindergarten (Parents).

The data indicated that 53% of the parents in the 18-28 age group, 35% of the parents in the 29-40 age group, and 47% of the parents in 41-54 age group strongly agree that parents should make sure that their children know the alphabet before they start kindergarten. Six percent of parents in the 29-40 age group strongly disagreed with that statement.

These data suggest that parents understand the importance of literacy skills prior to the beginning of school; however, students in rural districts continue to come to school without the literacy skills needed to be successful. School districts should continue to

inform parents about what students need to know prior to starting school. Data from a study conducted by Goldstein (2007) suggested that literacy and numeracy skills are more influential in defining academic outcomes than language, creative, personal/social, and physical/motor skills.

Figure 10 displays the number of responses that were collected from the parent participants according to their age.

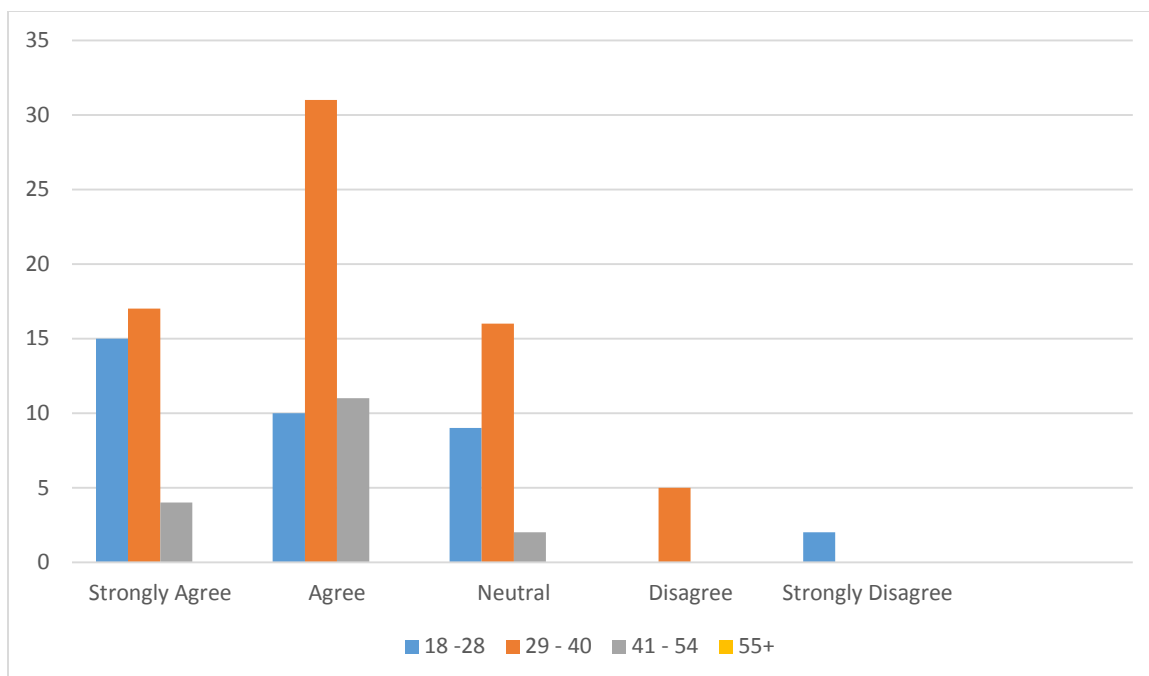*Figure 10.* Ready for School Statement 4: If a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, I would suggest he or she wait a year before enrolling (Parents).

The data indicated that 14% of the parents in the 18-28 age group, 13% of the parents in the 29-40 age group, and 12% of the parents in 41-54 age group strongly agree that if a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, he or she wait a year before enrolling. However, 19% of the parents in the 18-28 age group and 12% of the parents in the 41-54 age group strongly disagreed that parents should wait a year to enroll their children if they do not appear ready. Thirty-five percent of the parents in the 29-40 age

group also disagreed with that statement.

These data suggest that parents do not feel the need to wait until their children are ready to send them to school even if they appear not to be ready. Parents need to be made aware of the expectations of kindergarten in order to best help their child be prepared. Also, these data indicated that school districts need to continue to inform parents about age eligibility components for children and resources they can access to help their children with skills needed prior to kindergarten, especially if they are showing signs of not having the necessary skills. Prekindergarten coordinators and other early education directors need to review policies and procedures for allowing students who are not yet ready for kindergarten to be able to complete another year of prekindergarten. Gullo (2000) reported that high-risk children who attended preschool when they were 3 and 4 years of age scored statistically higher on standardized norm-referenced readiness tests than high-risk children with no such preschool experience.

Figure 11 displays the number of responses that were collected from the parent participants according to their age.

Figure 11. Ready for School Statement 5: Children with a readiness problem should enter school as soon as they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need (Parents).

The data indicated that 42% of the parents in the 18-28 age group, 13% of the parents in the 29-40 age group, and 12% of the parents in 41-54 age group strongly agree that if a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, he or she wait a year before enrolling. However, 19% of the parents in the 18-28 age group and 12% of the parents in the 41-54 age group strongly disagreed that parents should wait a year to enroll their children if they do not appear ready. Thirty-five percent of the parents in the 29-40 age group also disagreed with that statement.

These data suggest that school districts and local community agencies need to work together to ensure that parents have the information that they need to best determine the readiness level for their children and indicators of kindergarten readiness. Children who enter school not ready to learn struggle with academic difficulties and manifest

social behavior in later school years (Duncan et al., 2007).
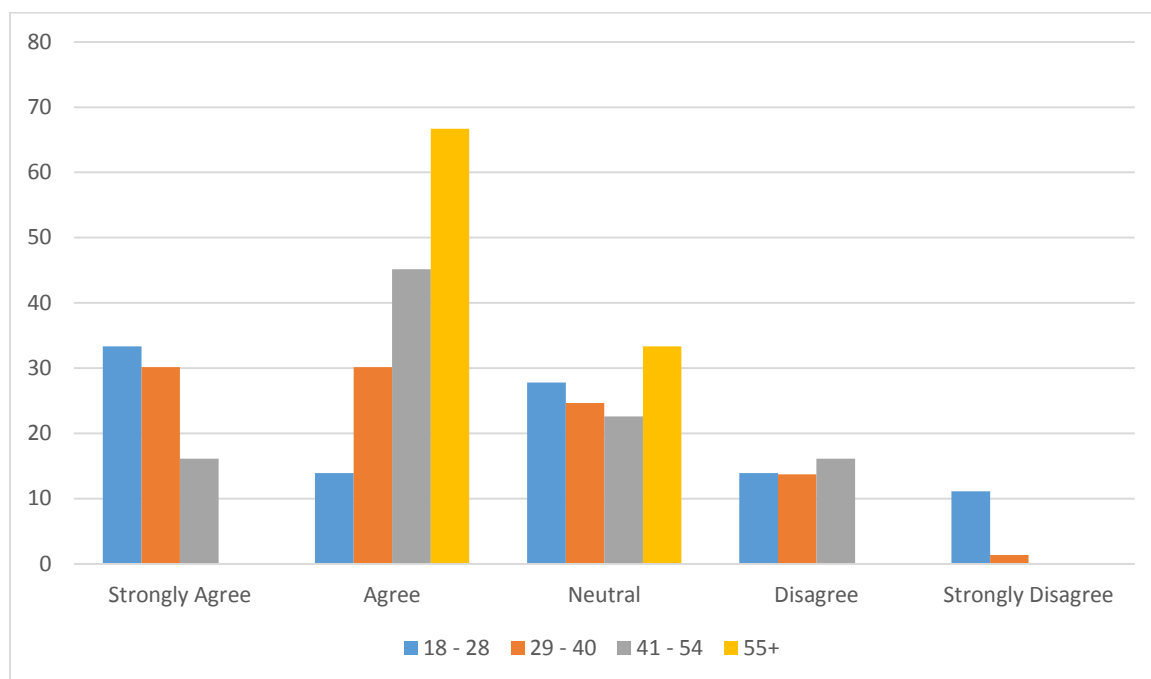
Figure 12. Ready for School Statement 6: Readiness, comes as children mature; you can't push it (Parents).

The data indicated that more participants in the 55+ age group feel that readiness comes as children mature compared to the 18-28 age group. There was a 53% difference between the two groups.

These data suggest that school district and local community agencies need to work together to ensure that parents know the benefits of the exposure to different environments and experiences prior to the beginning of kindergarten in order to enhance their children's social and emotional skills. Social emotional learning is critical for early childhood development (LEGO Education, 2015). NAEYC (2009) affirmed that children are not naturally "ready" or "not ready" for the academic demands of kindergarten. Instead, development is dependent upon the experiences provided to them by their parents, environment, and interactions they have from contact with others (NAEYC,

2009).
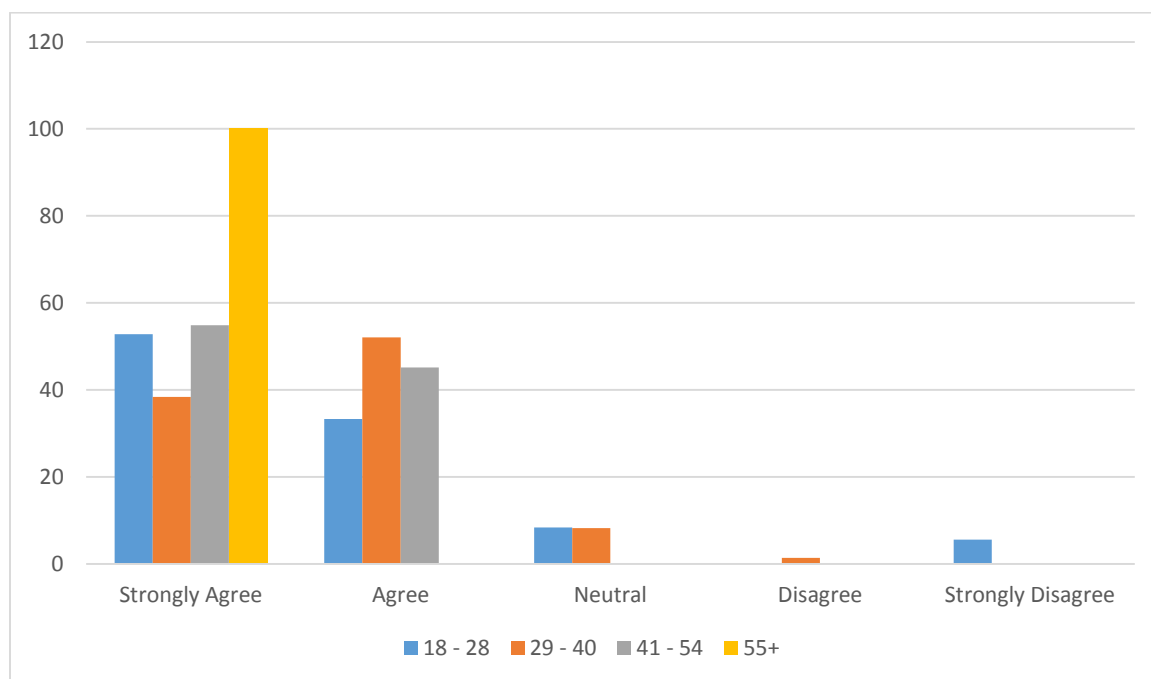
Figure 13. Ready for School Statement 7: I can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills. (Parents).

The data indicated that more participants in the 55+ age group feel that they can enhance readiness by providing experiences to build skills for children compared to the 29-40 age group. There was a 62% difference between the two groups.

These data suggest that school district and local community agencies need to work together to ensure that parents have the resources to be able to provide experiences to their children. There also needs to be access to activities within the community that will aide parents in their efforts to prepare their children for kindergarten. The skills and development of children are strongly influenced by their families and through the interactions with other people and environments before coming to school (Sparagana, 2007).
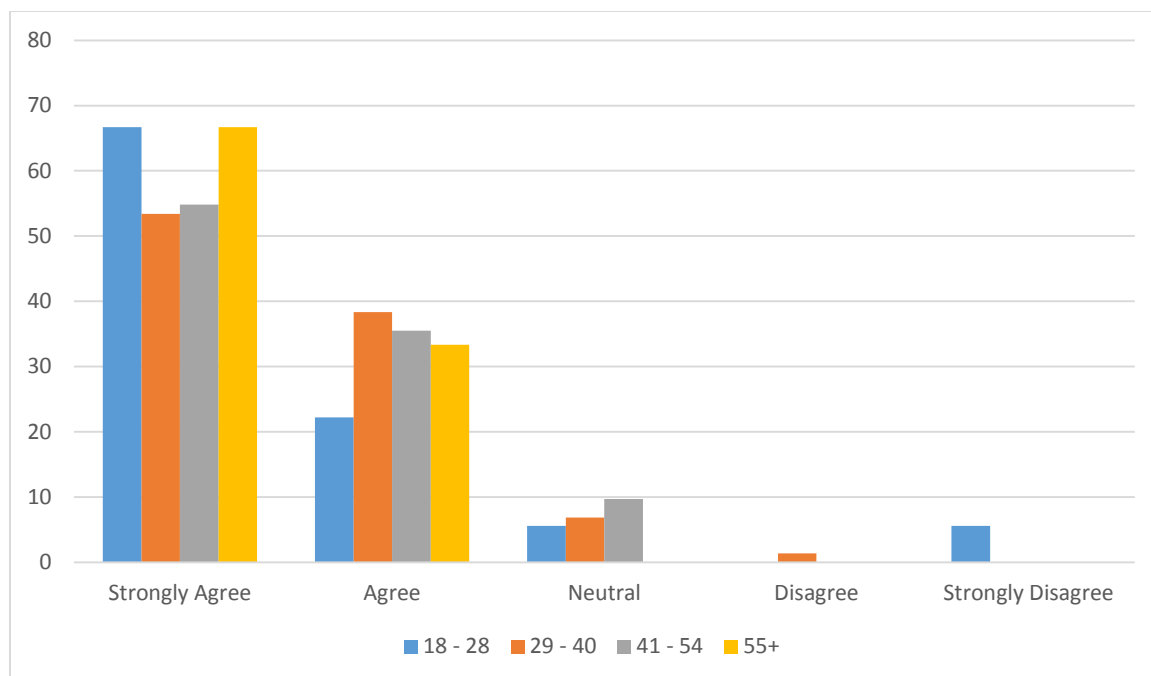
Figure 14. Ready for School Statement 8: Parents should set aside time every day for their kindergarten children to practice schoolwork (Parents).

The data indicated that participants in the 55+ age group and 18-28 age group both feel that time should be set aside every night for schoolwork.

These data suggest that teachers and parents need to establish communication about what is expected of kindergarten children and skills that they need to work on at home with their children. Activities and resources for parents need to be made available so routines can be established at home prior to the beginning of school. The increased academic demands of kindergarten resulted in expectations that preschool children will enter kindergarten having some familiarity with print, letter and sound recognition, and beginning writing skills (Goldstein, 2007).
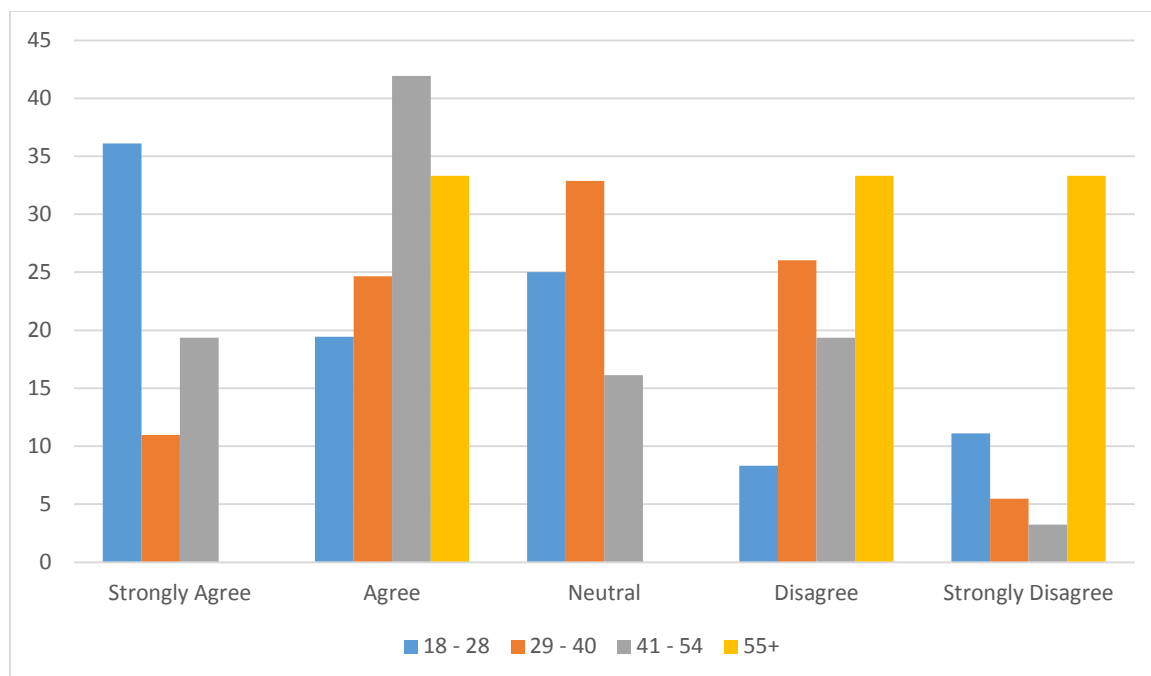
Figure 15. Ready for School Statement 9: Homework should be given in kindergarten almost every day (Parents).

The data indicated that participants in the 55+ age group do not feel that homework should be given every night for kindergarten students. However, participants in the 18-28 age group and 29-40 age group do feel that homework should be given. This is contrast to the previous statement with regard to setting time aside for schoolwork every day.

These data suggest that there is a misconception with regard to the terms of "schoolwork" and "homework." The data indicates that the participants feel that time should be spent at home working with their children but not necessarily calling it "homework." The data also suggest that teachers and parents need to have a clear communication about what activities are required as homework and skills that they need to work with their children on a continuous basis with regard to "schoolwork." The concept of school readiness tethers the notion of readiness for learning to a standard of

physical, intellectual, and social development that enable children to fulfill school requirements and assimilate the school's curriculum (Lewit & Baker, 1995; Sparagana, 2007).
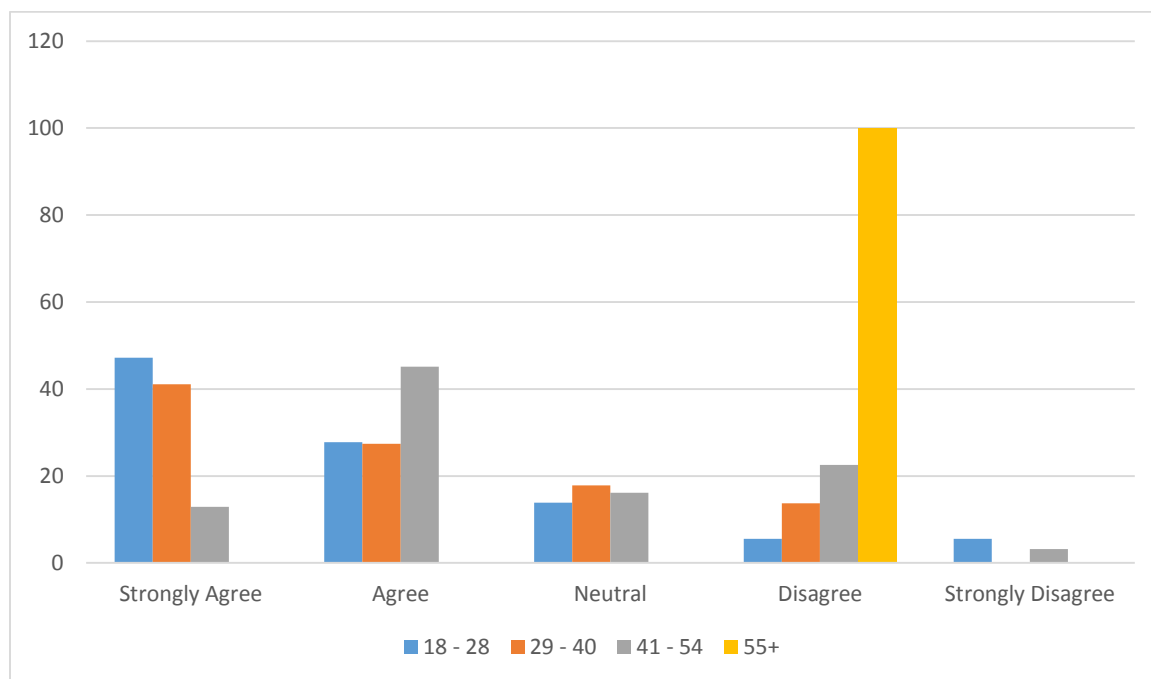

Figure 16. Ready for School Statement 10: I assume that by the end of the kindergarten year all children will be ready for first grade (Parents).

The data indicated that participants in the 55+ age group do not feel that all children will be ready for the first grade compared to participants in the 18-28 age group. There was a 53% difference in the perceptions between the two age groups.

These data suggest that the expectations of each grade need to be better communicated to parents. Retentions are a big decision for administrators and school personnel; however, the decisions are made based on the ability of the children involved. If parents know the expectations, they will be able to advocate for their children. Failure to meet grade-level expectations in reading is the most cited reason for retention in the early grades (Goldstein, 2007).

Recommendations for Practice

The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of kindergarten readiness by prekindergarten teachers, kindergarten teachers, and parents. Data were collected using a kindergarten readiness survey that was given to prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers and their parents in five elementary schools in eastern North Carolina. It was indicated that perceptions of kindergarten readiness differ with parents and teachers in both public and private prekindergarten programs in social/emotional skills, literacy skills, and communication.

The data indicated that there were differences in perceptions for kindergarten readiness. It is recommended that school districts utilize the resources in their community to better inform parents about the benefits of public prekindergarten programs and advocate for financial assistance in an effort to offer a variety of services to meet the diverse needs of students especially in rural areas. This may include finding financial assistance to help with the coordination of home visits at the beginning of the school year for students going into kindergarten. Currently, many school districts require home visits for enrollment in public prekindergarten programs. Perhaps it would be beneficial to likewise require home visits before beginning kindergarten.

It is also recommended that school systems allow time for collaboration and professional development opportunities between prekindergarten teachers and kindergarten teachers in order to aid with the transition of students and their families as they begin their educational journey. Professional development needs to be offered to teachers in order to review and revise prekindergarten curriculum with regard to not only social/emotional skills but academics as well.

Another recommendation would be for school districts to work closely with

community resources and agencies that could offer assistance to families prior to starting

kindergarten in order to establish routines and stable environments to best prepare

children for kindergarten readiness. This could possibly entail reviewing policies and

procedures for prekindergarten enrollment and allowing more children the opportunity to

attend public prekindergarten. Also, county commissioners and business leaders should

be involved in creating opportunities in their communities for children to be exposed to

different environments and interactions with others.

The results of this study indicate that there is a difference in perceptions of

social/emotional skills, literacy skills, and communication skills between parents of

children currently enrolled in kindergarten and current kindergarten teachers. It also

indicates that there is a difference in kindergarten readiness perceptions based on the

setting of public or private prekindergarten programs. These perceived differences affect

the enrollment of children into the local prekindergarten program, therefore affecting the

overall county's kindergarten enrollment regardless of location. Comparison of parent

and teacher beliefs within and across programs in diverse locations lends insight into both

local and national shared readiness perceptions and preschool connections to K-3

education (Hatcher et al., 2012).

The kindergarten readiness survey looked at communication as a skill in relation

to if students know the English language and if they can communicate their wants and

needs; however, there was a fourth theme that was not specific to the data but inferred

when developing recommendations for practice and when completing the literature

review. Communication among a variety of stakeholders is an important indicator with

regard to kindergarten readiness.

There needs to more open communication between prekindergarten and

kindergarten teachers in order to align curriculum and provide professional development opportunities to address these areas of concern. Curriculum alignment coordination of preschool and kindergarten curriculum has been identified as another vehicle by which to improve the continuity between settings, thus supporting children's transition (Love et al., 2005). The Ready School Assessment indicated a lack of knowledge on both sides regarding curriculum in each setting. Kindergarten teachers had little knowledge of the curriculum in early childhood programs, and the prekindergarten teachers had questions about what the kindergarten teachers expected children to know and be able to do when they entered kindergarten (Pianta et al., 1999).

Communication between the preschool program and the elementary school can provide a valuable link to ensuring consistency among environments. Many of the Ready Schools communities have developed parent permission forms to be distributed to the early childhood programs. In addition, most of the elementary school districts put into place new procedures for obtaining records from a wide variety of early childhood programs that children attended such as Head Start, faith-based programs, family childcare homes, childcare centers, and half-day preschools (Pianta et al., 1999).

Pianta et al. (1999) found that less than 17% of teachers either called or visited children at home or visited preschool programs in an effort to smooth children's transition to kindergarten. Thirty-six percent of teachers reported that they use few practices involving coordination with preschool programs and the community (Early et al., 2001). Love et al. (2005) found that only 10% of kindergarten teachers contact each child's previous teachers. The Kindergarten Readiness and Preschools Research Project conducted by Copple and Bredekamp (2009) indicated that both teacher and parents agreed that communication about developmental programs, as related to readiness, were

an important part of their programs.

Recommendations for Further Research

Increasing demands in standards and curriculum have parents, teachers, and school districts concerned with students entering kindergarten with the readiness skills needed to be successful. More research should be conducted on the long-term effects of students starting school from a variety of settings.

Another recommendation for further research is that this study be replicated using data gathered from teachers who are teaching other grade levels besides prekindergarten and kindergarten. The perceptions of teachers over a long period of time could be helpful in understanding readiness differences among students entering kindergarten have a long-term impact. Data could also be collected from the newly implemented Kindergarten Entry Assessment that assesses several domains including social/emotional skills and literacy in order to track student performance over time.

Summary

In summary, the purpose of this study was to examine and review the perceptions of kindergarten teachers, prekindergarten teachers, and parents in order to gain a better understanding of kindergarten readiness. The information from this study should be utilized by individual school districts and communities in an effort to promote public education and provide the best learning environments for children and their families.

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Appendix A

Permission for Survey

Hi!

You are certainly welcome to use my study materials. That was a long time ago, so I do not recall the modifications I made to the original NCES survey for my study. You might want to take a look at that too.

National Center for Education Statistics. (1993). *Public school kindergarten teachers' views on children's readiness of school*. (NCES Publication No. NCES 93-410). Retrieved January 3, 1999 from the World Wide Web: http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubs.

Perhaps you will share your results later?

V/R,

Mike

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Appendix B

Parent Survey

1. Please indicate what type of early childhood program or grade your child is currently participating?

    a. Public School Prekindergarten Program

    b. Private Prekindergarten Program

    c. Kindergarten

2. What is your age group?

    a. 18 – 28
    b. 29 – 40
    c. 41 – 54
    d. 55 & older

3. How many children do you have? _____

How important do you think these qualities are for a child to be ready for kindergarten? Show how important they are by placing an X in the column matching your answer using this scale:

1 = not at all; 2 = not very; 3 = somewhat; 4 = very; 5 = essential

Quality	1	2	3	4	5
Is physically healthy, rested, well nourished (SE)					
Finishes tasks (SE)					
Can count to 20 or more (LS)					
Takes turns and shares (SE)					
Has good problem-solving skills (SE)					
Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities (SE)					
Is able to use pencils or paint brushes (LS)					
Is not disruptive of the class (SE)					
Knows the English language (C)					
Is sensitive to other children's feelings (SE)					
Sits still and pays attention (SE)					
Knows the letters of the alphabet (LS)					
Can follow directions (SE)					
Identifies primary colors and basic shapes (LS)					
Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child's primary language (C)					

SE = Social/Emotional Skills   LS = Literacy Skills   C = Communication Skills

Here are some statements about what makes children ready for school. Show how much you agree with each of the statements by placing an X in the column matching your answer using this scale:

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Attending preschool is very important for success in kindergarten (SE)					
Children who began formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school (LS)					
Parents should make sure that their children know the alphabet before they start kindergarten (LS)					
If a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, I would suggest he or she wait a year before enrolling (SE)					
Children with a readiness problem should enter school as soon they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need (SE)					
Readiness, comes as children mature; you can't push it (SE)					
I can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills (SE)					
Parents should set aside time every day for their kindergarten children to practice schoolwork (LS)					
Homework should be given in kindergarten almost every day (LS)					
I assume that by the end of the kindergarten year all children will be ready for first grade (SE)					

SE = Social/Emotional   LS = Literacy Skills

Appendix C

Teacher Survey

1. Please indicate what program you currently teach?

   a. Public School Prekindergarten Program

   b. Private Prekindergarten Program

   c. Kindergarten

2. How many years of experience do you have teaching your current grade?

a. 0 – 5
b. 6 – 10
c. 11 – 15
d. 16 – 20
e. 20 – 25
f. 25 +

3. What is your age group?

a. 18 – 28
b. 29 – 40
c. 41 – 54
d. 55 & older

How important do you think these qualities are for a child to be ready for kindergarten? Show how important they are by placing an X in the column matching your answer using this scale:

1 = not at all; 2 = not very; 3 = somewhat; 4 = very; 5 = essential

Quality	1	2	3	4	5
Is physically healthy, rested, well nourished (SE)					
Finishes tasks (SE)					
Can count to 20 or more (LS)					
Takes turns and shares (SE)					
Has good problem-solving skills (SE)					
Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities (SE)					
Is able to use pencils or paint brushes (LS)					
Is not disruptive of the class (SE)					
Knows the English language (C)					
Is sensitive to other children's feelings (SE)					
Sits still and pays attention (SE)					
Knows the letters of the alphabet (LS)					
Can follow directions (SE)					
Identifies primary colors and basic shapes (LS)					
Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in the child's primary language (C)					

SE = Social/Emotional Skills   LS = Literacy Skills   C = Communication Skills

Here are some statements about what makes children ready for school. Show how much you agree with each of the statements by placing an X in the column matching your answer using this scale:

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Attending preschool is very important for success in kindergarten (SE)					
Children who began formal reading and math instruction in preschool will do better in elementary school (LS)					
Parents should make sure that their children know the alphabet before they start kindergarten (LS)					
If a child appears to be unready for kindergarten, I would suggest he or she wait a year before enrolling (SE)					
Children with a readiness problem should enter school as soon they are eligible so they can be exposed to the things they need (SE)					
Readiness, comes as children mature; you can't push it (SE)					
I can enhance children's readiness by providing experiences they need to build important skills (SE)					
Parents should set aside time every day for their kindergarten children to practice schoolwork (LS)					
Homework should be given in kindergarten almost every day (LS)					
I assume that by the end of the kindergarten year all children will be ready for first grade (SE)					

SE = Social/Emotional   LS = Literacy Skills

Appendix D

Letter of Consent

Dear Participant:

The study: In order to complete my study, I need your participation in a survey regarding your perceptions about which readiness skills are needed for children to be successful. As part of the survey, you will be asked to identify your role (prekindergarten teacher, kindergarten teacher, or parent). Also, parents will be asked to provide information regarding what type of early childhood program their child is currently participating. The survey will take approximately ten to fifteen minutes to complete.

Benefits: This study will serve as a tool that can be used to determine support that can be provided and opportunities for further study. There will be minimal risks involved.

Confidentiality: The survey is paper/pencil and copies of the results of the survey will be kept in the locked cabinet in the home of the researcher for two years and then destroyed. All research records will be kept confidential.

Right to Refuse: Your participation is optional and there will be no penalty if you choose not to participate. You may skip any question that you do not feel comfortable answering..

Conflict of Interest: As the researcher, I am not receiving any financial (or otherwise) conflict of interest relating to the results of this study.