

PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' BELIEFS
ABOUT KINDERGARTEN
READINESS SKILLS

By

CAROL BALDWIN ROWLAND

Bachelor of Elementary Education

Southwestern University

Georgetown, Texas

1973

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirement for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
May, 2007

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Thesis Approved:

Dr. Deborah Norris

Thesis Adviser
Dr. Mona Lane

Dr. Amy Halliburton

Dr. A. Gordon Emslie
Dean of the Graduate College

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The necessity of children attending school ready to learn has been on the radarscope of our nation since 1989 when President George H. Bush made the importance of early education a national agenda item (Halle, Zaslow, Zaff, Calkins & Margie, 2000; National Education Goals Panel (NEGP), 1990; Prince & Lawrence, 1993). The importance of education, in general, has impacted schools for many years. As a result, the issue of readiness has received attention at the local, state, and federal levels (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Janus & Offord, 2000; Kagan, 1992; Ramey, 2000). Although researchers, educators, parents, and policymakers agree that a child's future academic success is dependent on being ready to learn and participate in a successful kindergarten experience, the exact definition of readiness depends on who is doing the defining (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Bredekamp, Knuth, Kunesh, & Shulman, 1992). In fact, there appear to be two types of readiness: *readiness to learn*, which involves a level of development at which the child has the capacity to learn specific materials, and *readiness for school*, which involves a specific set of cognitive, linguistic, social, and motor skills that enables a child to assimilate the school's curriculum (Kagan, 1990; Lewit & Baker, 1995). These early studies fostered the belief that children should

have certain skills--such as being able to count or recite the alphabet--or that they should be able to conform to a set of desired behaviors before they enter kindergarten. Because of inequities in children's experiences and differences in their backgrounds, schools and communities must pay attention to the factors that influence how families support readiness and the transition to school (Kagan, 1992; National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1995).

Helping children who live in poverty and have a language barrier are the most challenging issues in regards to school success. Many children who are considered "vulnerable" live below the poverty level. Poverty has been documented repeatedly as a risk factor; the developmental and achievement deficits in children from low socioeconomic backgrounds are significant by kindergarten entry and increase with each year in school (West, Denton, & Germino-Hausken, 2000). It is also important to underscore the fact that children with certain ethnic or language backgrounds are at greater risk for poverty, including children of African American and Hispanic descent, children whose first language is not English or who speak a nonstandard dialect of English, and children who have limited language skills. Currently, African American and Hispanic students account for 34% of the public school population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). The Hispanic population in Oklahoma, according to the 2000 Census Bureau report is 6.6% with Tulsa County showing 8.2% of the population as Hispanic (US Census Bureau, Quick Facts, 2000). One looks at the "School Profiles" from Tulsa Public Schools and the percentage of students in the school connected to Tulsa Educare is 55.4% Hispanic. The Hispanic population drops to 44% in the feeder middle school and 20% at the high school level (Tulsa Public Schools, 2006).

A concept like Educare holds real promise for children at risk of school failure. Aiming to provide a "continuum of care" for low-income families, the Educare Center welcomes children, six weeks to entering kindergarten, from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., all year long. But childcare, in its most basic sense, is only the beginning. Educare begins educating children as they enter the center. Teachers talk to infants and engage them in structured play activities to sharpen language and motor skills. The environment promotes learning; for example: the restrooms have long mirrors facing miniature toilets that help toddlers see what they are doing as they conquer toilet training. The relationship building and learning experiences for infants and toddlers happen in one wing of the building. Working with a mixed-age group of eight children from birth to 3 is a bachelor-degreed teacher as well as associate degreed teacher or teacher with a CDA. There is a "master teacher" with training as an early childhood professional who can provide "hands-on" experiential advice to help with issues such as environment, behavior challenges, ideas for curriculum and, sometimes, just an extra set of hands. For infants and toddlers, there is a master teacher for every four classrooms. In Educare, for preschool children aged 3 through 5, the teacher-child ratio is 2:17 with the lead teacher holding a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and the assistant with an associate degree. There is a "master teacher" with graduate-level training in education that works with eight classrooms. These numbers are a rarity among full-day, year-round child-care centers, although research has shown that one mark of classroom quality, particularly for very young children, is the teacher-to-student ratio (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005).

Designed by Tulsa architects Kinslow, Keith and Todd, the Educare Center itself is a facility built to foster learning and development in a calm and enriching setting. Windows are at children's level where they can look out and see people moving from one place to another. Windows that allow sunlight into the room leave classrooms awash in natural light. Classrooms, hallways and even floor tiles have wood and tile to encourage a sense of home. The wonderful skylights give a sense of peacefulness and beauty. Overstuffed chairs and couches are outside in the halls so parents can sit with their child before class or just relax -- before leaving for the day. Rooms are connected so children can move freely from one side to the other with a sense of family.

Problem

As previously stated, children living in poverty along with a language barrier, are at a much higher risk for entering school already at a deficit and dropping out because of falling farther and farther behind (Stormont, Espinosa, Knipping, & McCathren, 2003; West et al., 2000). The evidence is increasingly showing that there is a need to begin educating children with high risk factors before they attend a school setting (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Halle et al., 2000). As stated, although researchers, educators, parents, and policymakers agree that a child's future academic success is dependent on being ready to learn and participate in a successful kindergarten experience, the exact definition of readiness depends on who is doing the defining (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Bredekamp et al., 1992).

What parents and teachers believe children need to know when the child arrives at the kindergarten classroom door has been an ongoing discussion in the literature (Piotrkowski, Botsko, & Matthews, 2000). Studies show that kindergarten teachers are

more concerned with health and safety as well as social-emotional skills, whereas parents want their children to have cognitive skills (West, Germino- Hausken & Collins, 1993). The pre-school teachers are caught between the different perspectives of the parents' beliefs and the kindergarten teachers' beliefs, trying to provide a quality experience without compromising best practices for the early learner.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to study the Educare community, which is an “at risk” population with a majority of non-English language speakers, to determine if parents and teachers have similar beliefs of what skills children need to be successful in kindergarten. Although there have been several surveys addressing this issue, none of these has been able to capture the beliefs of the non-English speakers in a high risk community. Piotrkowski, et al. 2000 studied parents' and teachers' beliefs about school readiness in a high risk community, but due to language barriers, the surveys to the non-English speakers had to be discarded.

One other area of interest deals with the Head Start Performance Standard requirement of supporting and respecting the home language, culture, and family composition of each child in ways that support the child's health and well-being. Many programs have tried to employ individuals that reflect the culture and ethnicity of the school community. Educare has two bilingual preschool teachers and three bilingual assistants in the infant and toddler classrooms. Some parents have expressed a concern that the teachers are not entirely English speaking. It is not known if this is a universal concern among the Educare families but it is an issue that can be explored and then may be reported to the national level for further internal exploration. This would be an area

that could only be changed at that level. Therefore, the following questions will be explored:

- (1) What do teachers and parents of children from a high-risk community believe are skills necessary for children to have when they enter kindergarten?
- (2) How do non-English speaking and bilingual parents feel about bilingual teachers in their child's classroom?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature reveals the immense challenges that a child from poverty as well as a non-English speaker faces when coming to kindergarten. The definition as well as the overall concept of school readiness has many dimensions that will be addressed. There is much controversy among professionals as to what school readiness looks like for children. The issues that surround this lack of agreement from professionals has a profound effect on children, parents and their teachers, both preschool and kindergarten. The issues involving the non-English speaking population that includes children and their families are discussed. Looking at similarities and differences in parental and teacher beliefs about what school readiness should encompass for non-English speaking children and children from poverty are the crux of this study. Early childhood education interventions such as Head Start and specifically the Educare model are cited as a catalyst for change in this movement to motivate families to break the cycle of poverty.

Theoretical Framework

How poverty intersects with every dimension of a child's readiness for school is seen in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory. This theory emphasizes that a child's own

biology is a primary environment fueling his or her development. In his book on human development, Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1989) provided a theory that looked at relationships that intersect to create the individual. This theory defined complex “layers” of the environment, each having a possible bidirectional effect on a child’s development. Factors that included family, educational experiences, health, community and countless others overlap to create a backdrop that affects a child’s maturation and development that includes bidirectional influences. Most importantly the child was at the center of this model.

There are three levels in Bronfenbrenner’s theory that provide a basis for this research. The microsystem is defined as the child and the systems that have the greatest immediate spheres of influence. The child is affected by and has an effect on these same systems. In this research study, this would involve the parents’ beliefs of what is expected for a child to be ready for school as well as the teachers, both preschool and kindergarten, who have a list of desirable qualities for school readiness. Bronfenbrenner states that a child’s development is determined by the experiences she has in the different places where she spends time. What is the child experiencing? Is there more television than interactions with real people? Is the child read to on a regular basis? Does someone give the child an opportunity to eat and visit with one another in a family-style environment with appropriate behavior expectations? Is the environment not only safe and healthy but also enriching? These experiences are referred to as proximal – or near – involvement, which a child has with the people and objects in these settings are, as stated by Bronfenbrenner and Morris, “the primary engines of human development” (p. 997).

The mesosystem is the connection between different groups that have an impact or are impacted by the child. If the beliefs surrounding the issue of school readiness were different, will and how might the relationships be affected between all of these groups? In the environment of Educare, the mesosystem includes how a child might be impacted by family and cultural issues and influenced by society, media and a basic belief system of what a child needs to be successful in school.

Finally is the macrosystem, which if one is looking at this model as a circle within a circle alluding to a rock being thrown in a pool of water and the ripple effect that occurs, one could visualize this circle as the final outer one. While the effects might not be as obvious, this circle is concerned with cultural values, customs and laws. A major impact from this group would be the No Child Left Behind legislation as well as the National Education Panel's goal of 1989 that all children by the year 2000 will start school ready to learn (Halle et al., 2000; NEGP, 1990; Prince & Lawrence, 1993).

The factors are different for all children and will shape their view of the world and how they develop. Poverty as well as the issues involved with non-English speakers create many obstacles. Children who come to school hungry, eat mainly fast-food fare, have teeth that hurt and cannot think because they feel bad often have a hard time learning, so their scores in language, literacy, problem solving and other cognitive skills are low (Brooks-Gunn, Britto, & Brady, 1999; Stipek & Ryan, 1997). Teachers and parents see children not ready for school from a cognitive standpoint when there are many issues involved. An issue might create a ripple that can have an effect that may create a change or conflict in any one layer. In order to look at a child individually, we

must look not only at the child and her immediate environment, but also at the interaction of the larger environments as well (Lang, 2005).

An extensive body of research on child development helps identify the factors that influence children's readiness for school, beginning with those closest to the child and moving outward to encompass the family, early care and education, schools, the neighborhood, and beyond that, society (Brooks-Gunn & Markham, 2005; Currie, 2005; Noble, Tottenham, & Casey, 2005). This *ecological* view supports Bronfenbrenner's theory of child development and provides a useful framework for understanding where and how communities can intervene to support and promote healthy child development in general and school readiness in particular.

According to Pianta and Walsh (1996), readiness

cannot be reduced to getting children ready for school or getting schools ready for children... Rather the answer lies in where and how children (and families) and schooling come together in a relationship, and in the quality of that relationship (p. 4).

Bronfenbrenner would encourage all involved to look at how the issue of school readiness impacts the child, the family, the school, and the community. This intertwining of the systems is why it is important to look at beliefs of parents, preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers to have an idea of what a community encourages as school readiness skills. It will be interesting to compare with national studies from a decade ago to see if beliefs have changed or if the same findings will be substantiated.

School Readiness

In 1989, President George H. Bush set a national agenda with the state governors who developed six goals for the education of children in America. The first goal was that

by the year 2000, all children would start school ready to learn (Halle et al., 2000; NEGP, 1990; Prince & Lawrence, 1993).

There were objectives determined by the group that included the beliefs that children would receive the nutrition, physical activity, and health care needed to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies, thus maintaining the mental alertness necessary to be prepared to learn. Additionally, the number of low birth weight babies would be significantly reduced through enhanced prenatal health systems (NEGP, 1990). Every parent in the United States would be a child's first teacher and would devote time each day to helping preschool children learn, and parents would have access to the training and support parents need. Mainly due to economic constraints, all children cannot access programs that are high quality and are developmentally appropriate that help prepare children for school. (NEGP, 1990).

So, the question then became: did the child have to be ready for school or should the school be ready for the child? The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) believes it is the responsibility of schools to *meet the needs of children as they enter school* and to provide whatever services are needed *in the least restrictive environment* to help each child reach his or her fullest potential (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1990). There is, however, much that can be done prior to a child entering school that can help children be successful. The National Educational Goals Panel (1998) stated:

Though some in the past defined “readiness” primarily as readiness to learn to read, the prevailing view today, endorsed by the National Education Goals Panel, is that readiness to learn hinges on a range of factors, including a child’s health and physical development; social and emotional development; approaches to learning; language and communicative skills; and cognition and general knowledge. Efforts to improve school readiness, therefore, begin long before

children enroll in kindergarten. They begin with efforts to support families, educate parents, expand access to health care, and raise the quality of early care and education. Getting all children to start—and continue—school “ready to learn” is a shared responsibility of all adults and institutions in a community (p.3).

Obviously, trying to define what is meant by school readiness is not a simple task. In fact, Kagan (1992) claims that scholarly debates on how to define readiness and how to measure it have gone on for decades. One view is that children are ready if they can sit in a circle for an extended period of time, show interest in learning new skills and be able to share, make friends and self-regulate. So, does ready for school mean that one has cognitive skills such as knowing their letters or numbers, knowing shapes and colors or are teachers more interested in children who know how to work in groups, can play with others and can follow directions? When teachers and parents are asked these questions what are the differences in their beliefs? Are there differences based on the issues of poverty and non-English speakers being explored? These divergent views of readiness have resulted in equally divergent instructional approaches, school policies, and teacher opinions about who is ready to enter school and who is not (Kagan, 1992; Prince & Lawrence, 1993).

Based on what is perceived as an underprivileged group of children who attend Educare, both because of poverty as well as non-English speaking learners, there is the belief that families may feel that their children need to be better prepared for kindergarten than parents who send their children to schools in more affluent areas (Ramey, 2000). Similarly, preschool teachers in high-poverty communities feel the need to teach a more academic-based curriculum based on their concept of what the kindergarten teachers expected the child to know when he/she arrived at school (Piotrkowski et al., 2000). As

Kagan (1992) pointed out, these divergent views of readiness have resulted in equally divergent instructional approaches, school policies, and teacher opinions about who is ready to enter school and who is not.

Impact of Poverty on School Readiness

Poverty is affecting more and more of our children. In 2004, there were more than 24 million children in the United States under the age of 6. Forty-three percent or 10.4 million live in low-income families; twenty-one percent or 5 million live in families who are poor. The percentage has risen by fourteen percent since the year 2000 (National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP, 2006). Over 3 million young children of Hispanic descent (65 percent) and 2 million young African-American children (64 percent) live in low-income families. This is double the percentage for white children (NCCP, 2006).

“Children living in poverty are at a heightened risk for school failure, which has serious and long-lasting consequences” (Piotrkowski et al., 2000, p. 537). Poverty is a risk factor by itself. A child is considered “at risk” in at least one area if they live in a family whose income is below the poverty level. Many children in poverty have a documented delay in developmental and cognitive areas that are discovered in kindergarten and have a tendency to decline each year in school (West et al., 2000).

Studies have shown relationships among a family with multiple variables which might include: living at the poverty level, inadequate amount of education, ethnicity, as well as health and living factors which may significantly affect a child’s cognitive, language and social emotional skills as they enter kindergarten (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Currie, 2005; Vandivere, Pitzer, Halle, & Hair, 2004). Statistics show that children from families in poverty are half as likely to attend a center-based program for early

education than children whose mothers have a college degree. The same gap, half as likely, happens for children from low income as compared to high-income families (Magnuson, Ruhm & Waldfogel, 2004). Readiness can be adversely affected by various risk factors. Whether or not children are successful in school has been traced to events and/or experiences that happen before a child ever gets to school (West et al., 2000). How a child is prepared for school developmentally, physically and emotionally determines not only success in kindergarten but appears to be the road map for continued success throughout the child's school experience. If the child is healthy, has basic academic skills, can get along with others and is excited about learning, then his/her chances of success are much higher than children who have an absence of people who can help supply these qualities through resources and support (Currie, 2005; West et al., 2000).

Those working with and in high-needs communities are inundated with those who tout the need for school readiness whether the term is actually voiced or not. Making sure that children are prepared for success at the start of kindergarten is an important challenge for all involved (Piotrowski et al., 2000). Poverty is only one of the risk factors that impact the families at the Tulsa Educare Center. The non-English speaking children and parents are another sector that has a higher risk of not being successful in school.

Non-English Speaking Children and School Readiness Issues

The difficulties that children face when English is not their first language or when they use a more casual or unacceptable, by teachers' standards, form of language places children at a greater risk for failure, especially children of African-American or Hispanic parents (Payne, 1996; Stormont, et al., 2003; Valdivieso & Nicolau, 1992). Currently, African American and Hispanic students account for 34 percent of the public school

population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Multiple risk factors can clearly create greater vulnerability in children. For example, Hispanic children, and particularly those children whose first language is not English, are about twice as likely as non-Hispanic white children to read below average for their grade (Kao & Tienda, 1995).

Historically, Hispanic children are much less likely than white children to attend preschool. In 2000, only twenty-three percent of Hispanic three-year-olds were in preschool compared with forty-nine percent and forty-three percent of their black and white peers, respectively. Similar gaps are also apparent for Hispanic four-year-olds (Magnusen & Waldfogel, 2005). Also the types of preschool that children attend also differ. Both black and Hispanic children are more likely than white children to attend Head Start programs.

Public funding of early childhood care and education, particularly Head Start, is already reducing ethnic and racial gaps in preschool attendance. Multiple researchers have considered whether further increases in enrollment and improvements in quality would reduce school readiness gaps (Halle et al., 2000; Piotrkowski et al., 2000; Prince & Lawrence, 1993; Rimm-Kaufman, 2004). Most have concluded that incremental changes in enrollment or quality will do little to narrow gaps. But substantial increases in Hispanic and black children's enrollment in preschool, alone or in combination with increases in preschool quality, have the potential to decrease school readiness gaps. Boosting enrollment of Hispanic children may be especially beneficial given their current low rates of enrollment (Magnusen & Waldfogel, 2005).

Research has shown that those from the Hispanic culture, especially those from Mexico, are a minority group that has a high vulnerability when considering education (Valdivieso & Nicolau, 1992). Kindergarten is not as successful for this community because many of them have not attended a preschool setting. Unfortunately then they follow the statistics discussed earlier. By age 13, many are at least one year below expected grade level; and more than forty percent drop out before completing high school (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990). Although the academic achievement levels and dropout rates for other racial and ethnic groups have improved in the past decade, Hispanic school performance remains consistently poor (Magnusen & Waldfogel, 2005; Stormont et al., 2003). The difference that a quality preschool could make on children being ready for kindergarten along with the long-term outcomes for Hispanic children is a focus of the Educare program.

Exactly what is school readiness and how is this affecting children from Hispanic families? In particular, is this a goal that can be obtained by language minority students? The latter question is especially important for educators and Magnuson, Waldfogel, Stormont and others are making the readers aware of the complications this creates for the largest minority- non-English speaking children (Magnusen & Waldfogel, 2005; Stormont et al., 2003). The issues involved are the following: language minority students are forming an increasingly greater share of school populations, particularly in urban school districts; poor and minority children, many of whom are limited English proficient, are more likely to be at risk on measures of health care and access to preschool programs; and the belief persists that coming to school ready to learn implies that

children should come to school knowing English, a belief which has led to policies harmful to both children and their families (Prince & Lawrence, 1993).

When researchers are looking at the issue of being ready for school, it seems that one should look at the definition from a viewpoint that involves cultural differences. There is a grave danger that normal developmental differences among groups of children may be misinterpreted as "evidence" that minority children are not ready for school (Prince, 1992, p. 51),

Culturally speaking, different minority groups develop differently, for example, in the area of social relations. Asian Americans (e.g., Chinese) and Native Americans do not follow the same trend of early social development as the mainstream. In the area of social development these and similar populations are likely to come out quite differently, although it does not mean that they are not ready for school. But how will the results of the assessment be interpreted by those who do not understand the cultural basis of the differences?

Knowing that 40 percent of Hispanic children are living in poverty, that Hispanics are the most under-educated major segment of the U.S. population, and that many Hispanic children enter kindergarten seriously lacking in language development and facility, regardless of whether they are bilingual, speak only English, or speak only Spanish, the need to bring more children into a quality preschool experience could make a difference for this group of children.

Parent/Teacher Beliefs about School Readiness

There have been several surveys and studies that explored how parents, kindergarten teachers and preschool teachers all view the issue of when a child is ready for kindergarten. Two surveys given in the spring of 1993 were sponsored by the United States Department of Education's National Center for Educational Statistics. One was the National Household Education Survey (NHES) and the other was the Kindergarten

Teacher Survey on Student Readiness (KTSSR). The NHES survey focused on parents' beliefs of what preschool children needed to know upon entering kindergarten in order to be successful. The KTSSR survey centered on public school kindergarten teachers and focused on the same with similar questions (West et al., 1993).

Of the 1,339 kindergarten teachers surveyed (West et al., 1993), over 75 percent of those who responded felt there were three top indicators for school readiness: 1. a child needed to be physically healthy, rested, and well nourished; 2. able to communicate his or her thoughts and needs in words; and 3. curious and enthusiastic in their approach to new activities. More than half of the teachers in this study also indicated that readiness included not being disruptive, being sensitive to other children's feelings, and being able to take turns and share. Ten percent or less thought being able to count to 20 or more or knowing the letters of the alphabet were important in terms of kindergarten readiness. In contrast, at least fifty-eight percent of preschoolers' parents felt this was essential (West et al., 1993). Parents' viewpoints also vary according to their socioeconomic status. When examined via parents' 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. Conversely, only 41 to 50 percent of college graduates felt their children needed these skills in order to be considered ready for kindergarten (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005).

There have also been several research papers that took information from the studies and stated findings based on their review of the data. Only one study (Piotrowski et al., 2000) looked at the beliefs specifically in a high-need community that included families in poverty who were predominantly Hispanic and Black. Unfortunately, the

survey's data from the Hispanic community was only from the Hispanic population who could read English. "Excluded parents were poorer, less educated, less likely to be employed, and more likely to speak only Spanish at home than Hispanic respondents who completed the survey in English" (Piotrkowski et al., 2000, p. 544).

Another survey of interest, sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation, was called the National Survey of Kindergarten Teachers (NSKT). This survey asked Kindergarten teachers to estimate how many children were coming to school ready to learn (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Lewit & Baker, 1995). When teachers were asked to describe the key components of school readiness, positive behaviors including enthusiasm, cooperation, following directions, and not disrupting the class were rated more important than specific skills such as naming letters of the alphabet or counting numbers. When comparing this study with the two surveys given in the spring of 1993 which were the National Household Education Survey (NHES) and the Kindergarten Teacher Survey on Student Readiness (KTSSR), parents and teachers were in basic agreement about the order of importance of the different characteristics of school readiness but parents were more likely than teachers to judge basic academic skills as important (West et al., 1993). For example, while nearly 60% of parents felt that knowing the alphabet before entering kindergarten was "essential" or "very important," only 10% of teachers agreed (Lewit & Baker, 1995).

Finally in the group of surveys is The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K), sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The survey began following a nationally representative sample of some 22,000 kindergartners in the fall of 1998 (Zill & West, 2001). ECLS-K

followed the same cohort of children from their entry into kindergarten through their fifth-grade year. Data was collected not only in the fall of kindergarten but also in the spring of kindergarten, fall of first grade, spring of first grade, spring of third grade, and spring of fifth grade. This survey was included because parents and teachers were interviewed about the child and the readiness factors that were brought to the classroom (Zill & West, 2001). Although this does not actually address the belief system of parents and teachers, these have to be inherent in their answers. More recent data from the ECLS-K study showed the importance of nonacademic readiness skills for kindergarten teachers. Again, specific academic tasks—such as using a pencil, knowing the names of colors and shapes, recognizing letters, or counting to 20 or more—were less likely to be rated as essential readiness qualities. With the exception of being able to use a pencil or brush, these tasks were rated as essential or very important by less than one-third of teachers. Conversely, over 75 percent of the 3,305 kindergarten teachers sampled in this study felt being able to follow directions and communicate both needs and thoughts, as well as not being disruptive, were more essential or very important readiness skills (Zill & West, 2001).

As stated earlier, there is limited research on issues that parents and teachers face in a high-needs community. What is known may contribute to the children's increased failure in the school setting. If the receiving teachers are expecting children to arrive at school fully speaking and understanding English or with all of the social-emotional and cognitive skills in place even with a high-risk population, this sets children and families up for failure. There is information drawn from data across a socio-economically different community but no one had focused specifically on the families

who were considered high poverty. This is an area that was considered important in the study looking at parents' and teachers' beliefs about school readiness skills in a high-need community (Piotrkowski et al., 2000). The survey conducted was *Community Attitudes on Readiness for Entering School (CARES)*. The readiness resources that were assessed were based on the five dimensions of school readiness identified by the National Education Goals Technical Planning Group as well as a review of the literature (Piotrkowski et al., 2000). The sample group included parents, preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers in one mostly Hispanic and African American high-need urban school district to learn what each group felt was necessary for success in school.

Overall, kindergarten teachers rated motor skills less important than parents and preschool teachers. Beyond that, parents and teachers all felt that all other skills involving health, playing well with others, being able to verbalize needs and feelings in their own language as well as emotional maturity were "absolutely necessary" (Piotrkowski et al., 2000).

Parents placed more importance on compliance with teacher authority. Seven out of ten parents both Black and Hispanics believed that all children should be able to express their feelings and needs in English. Teachers did not agree. Parents felt children should know basic knowledge such as some body parts, colors, letters of the alphabet and teachers rated this much lower as a necessity. This was the same with knowing one's address and phone number, which parents felt was a necessity and teachers ranked much lower (Piotrkowski et al., 2000).

Based on this study, several findings are worth further exploration. Parent ethnicity did not change the agreement of what children should know and be able to do

when they enter kindergarten. Black and Hispanic families felt that their children should be able to speak and communicate in English, but this was not the belief of the preschool or kindergarten teachers. Due to the survey not being given to non-English speaking parents, results must be viewed with caution. Also, there was only one item that addressed this value. Another stark difference with this study over the other three is that this one did not show a difference in school readiness beliefs among the parents with different levels of education. Moreover, the educational levels of the parents were determined to not be statistically significant, and parents were treated as a single group for comparison data in their study (Piotrkowski et al., 2000). Piotrkowski's survey produced outcomes highlighting that parents want their children to learn cognitive skills because of realistic concerns that their children might not be successful in low-performing schools that do not prioritize cognitive skills. Finally, preschool teachers seemed to place more emphasis on a child's knowledge base than the kindergarten teacher. The authors wondered if this was due to a lack of communication between the two groups, a perception that kindergarten is more knowledge-focused or on-going pressure from outside sources. It was felt that further research was needed (Piotrkowski et al., 2000).

All of same data from the Piotrkowski study relate to the new Tulsa Educare Center. The children who attend have to come from families where a family of four makes \$20,000 or less and all are eligible for the free lunch program (CACFP- Child and Adult Care Food Program). Fifty-eight percent of our families are of Hispanic descent, 15% are Caucasian, 12% are Black or African American, 9.5% are Biracial or multiracial, 5 % are Native American and .5% is Asian.

Quality Early Childhood Programs

The positive impact of high-quality early childhood programs on children's success in school and their future has been well documented. The studies that tout the importance of early brain development have made a noticeable impact on the early childcare industry (American Federation of Teachers, 2002). Many studies that focused on quality care and early education looked at well-known groups that had a lower child-staff ratio, teachers with higher degrees which were college or higher, ongoing professional development, family involvement and children from a lower socioeconomic income- Perry Preschool Study and the Abecedarian Project are two that point to high-quality early childhood education that increases the likelihood that children will become successful students and citizens (Barnett, 2003; Bogenschneider, & Mills, 2000; Magnusen, et. al., 2004; NICHD, 1998). A good education is often the only means of breaking the cycle of poverty for poor children.

All children need an education that is founded in high standards and high expectations (Pellino, 2006). Providing an experience that is based on best practices is the foundation and core features of the Educare philosophy and program design.

An American Federation of Teachers publication lists the following qualities that identify a high quality program:

- Language-rich and responsive communication between adults and children;
- Positive and appropriate reinforcement of skills and behavior;
- Extensive rehearsal of old and new cognitive, academic, and developmental skills;
- Guidance in desirable social skills and facilitation of positive interactions between peers and adults;
- Various structured and informal activities that encourage children to reflect, predict, question, and hypothesize;
- Availability of numerous materials, resources, and toys that focus on language and literacy;

- Activities that encourage the involvement of children's families and caretakers; and
- Incorporation of adequate nutrition and habits that will support good health. (American Federation of Teachers, 2002, p.2)

These are all qualities that one finds at Tulsa Educare. Educare, through the Ounce of Prevention Fund and the Bounce Network, is nationally helping to change public policy and change how business and community leaders look at early childhood education, especially for children from at-risk communities

Five years after the Ounce's Educare Center opened in Chicago, and in three other states across the country, Educare Centers are stimulating new conversations, new alliances, new action and new policy changes that will have a profound impact on the lives of at-risk infants, toddlers and preschoolers. There is every reason to believe that the vision of many has sparked conversations and has moved community leaders to invoke significant change in the early childhood landscape. This could be revolutionary and could make a profound difference in the long-range outcomes for children and families. The future already looks brighter.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The families and teachers within the Tulsa Educare Center define the community for this study. Most of the families were located in close proximity to the center and lived in what is known as the Kendall-Whittier neighborhood. All of the families qualified for the Head Start program, which means they are 100% below the federal poverty level and all qualify for the free lunch program through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The ethnic background of the families was of great interest in this study. Of the 200 children and approximately 175 families, 58% were Hispanic, of which 52% were non-English speakers. Fifteen percent were Caucasian; 12% were African American; 9.5 % were bi-racial or multi-racial, 5 % were Native American and less than 1 % was Asian.

Seventy-two parents and guardians completed the demographics survey with 55 (76%) mothers, 9 (13%) fathers and 1 (1%) guardian. Half of the parents who completed the survey were between the ages of 26-35. The ethnicity of the respondents who completed the survey was close to the Educare Center parent demographics, except biracial and Asian. Only one biracial person and no Asian completed the survey as shown in Table 1. The highest level of education for parents showed only 12 of the 72 had more than a high

school diploma. Finally, 40 percent of parents from the infant/toddler group completed the survey compared to 36 percent of parents from the preschool group. Twenty-three percent of parent respondents have children in both the infant/toddler and preschool groups.

Twenty-five out of 41 staff completed the survey. The largest age grouping for staff was over the age of 45 (36%). Of the staff respondents, only 8% or 2 staff who completed the survey were Hispanic, 6 (24%) were African American, 14 (56%) were Caucasian, 2 (8%) were Native American and 1 (4%) was bi-racial. Sixteen (64%) staff respondents had graduated from college and 4 (16%) had master's level courses. The staff respondents for the survey were equally divided between infant/toddler staff and pre-school staff. All demographics have been reported in Table 1.

Procedures

Parents as well as guardians attended a parent meeting at Educare where they were invited to complete a survey and were given the information sheet describing the purpose of the survey. There were members of the Educare staff as well as parents who are bilingual who were available to answer questions for the parents. Some read to respondents who could not read. It was observed that most, if not all, of the respondents who were Hispanic answered the survey in Spanish and some asked the translators for clarification. The respondents also completed the demographics form (Appendix B). Each person who completed a survey had his/her name placed in a basket for a drawing for a \$40.00 gift basket that included a \$25.00 gift card from a convenience store. Although the number of surveys collected at the parent meeting was adequate, a reflection of the Educare Center's ethnicity had not been met. Additional collecting of data continued for

5 more days that met the end of the month deadline. Fourteen additional surveys were completed to try and match the demographics of the Educare center. These included 8 more from Caucasian families and 6 more from African American families.

Teachers attended a staff meeting and were invited to complete the survey, the demographics form and the information sheet. Teachers were asked to think about what developmentally appropriate practice looks like when completing the survey. After everyone turned in the survey there was a drawing for a \$25.00 gift card for the Learning Shop. Anonymity was protected for all parents and staff as a designated staff member was asked to collect the surveys.

Instrument

The *CARES* (Community Attitudes for Entering School) survey (see Appendix A) was developed by Chaya Piotrkowski and associates because they had not found an instrument that adequately measured school or kindergarten readiness beliefs (Piotrkowski et al., 2001). Beliefs about the importance of health; basic care; social and emotional skills involving self-regulation; motor skills; cognitive knowledge; peer interactions; communication; and classroom adjustment by students are all included in this survey. The questions were developed based on the five areas outlined by the National Education Technical Planning Group for Goal 1 (Kagan, Moore, & Bredekamp, 1995; Piotrkowski et al., 2001). In the original study for the parent sample, alpha coefficients for the subscales ranged from 0.74 to 0.90. For the teaching sample, in the original study, alpha coefficients ranged from 0.77 to 0.92.

This study used the same 46-item *CARES* survey (2001) that was translated into Spanish by a bilingual staff member and reviewed by two bilingual staff members as well

as one bilingual parent. The questions were reviewed to make sure that the translations resulted in questions asking for the same information and to check for readability. Piotrkowski's study had eight subscales which were: health; basic self-care; socioemotional maturity and self-regulation; interaction with peers; interest and engagement in the world; motor skills; cognitive knowledge; communication; and classroom routines. Slightly different subscales were created for this study in order to reflect skills based on the five dimensions of school readiness identified by the National Education Goals Technical Planning Group for Goal 1 (Kagan et al., 1995). Five of the subscales represented the five most common domains of school readiness: physical health/motor development, social-emotional development, language and literacy development, cognitive development/general knowledge, and disposition for learning. There was also an independence subscale as well as an understanding of school subscale. The items included in each subscale have been presented in Table 2. Item 46 which asked the importance of a child being able to write on a line and color within the lines was eliminated from any subscale. It was eliminated because using it on any subscales lowered the reliability below acceptable levels for any subscale.

Cronbach's alpha reliabilities were calculated for all of the subscales. Acceptable reliabilities were found for all subscales: physical health/motor development ($\alpha = .84$), social-emotional ($\alpha = .89$), language/literacy development ($\alpha = .91$), cognitive development/general knowledge ($\alpha = .94$), disposition for learning ($\alpha = .90$), understanding of school ($\alpha = .93$), and independence ($\alpha = .87$).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to describe and compare school readiness beliefs of parents and teachers at Tulsa Educare. Trying to discern whether children need to be ready for school or schools ready for children is a debate for another study. Due to children with multiple risk factors attending the Educare program, making an effort to connect parents with teachers might have been difficult with the differences between the two of what are important and necessary skills for children to have as they enter kindergarten.

Descriptive Information

Descriptive information for each item has been organized by subscales for parents/guardians in Table 3 and staff in Table 4. The scoring scale for these items were: 1= “not too important”, 2= “somewhat important”, 3= “very important but not essential” and 4= “absolutely necessary”. No item had a mean score of 1 for either group. The lowest means for parents were “read simple stories” at 2.93 and “can count to 50 or more” at 2.85. The order for the staff was the same but the means were 2.00 and 1.84, respectively. There was one other that was 2.00 and that was “can read a few simple words”. The parents and teachers had similar scores on only one item, which was “child is rested, well-nourished and has health care needs met”. The parents had a mean score of

3.83 and the staff's mean score was 3.80. The second highest mean for parents was "follows teacher's direction."

A mean subscale score was created for each of the seven subscales by adding the scores for each item in the subscale and dividing by the number of items for that subscale. The number of items per subscale was as follows: physical health/motor development- 5 items, social-emotional development- 5 items, language/literacy development- 8 items, cognitive development/general knowledge- 8 items, disposition for learning- 6 items, understanding of school- 8 items and independence- 5 items. Means and standard deviations have been presented for each subscale for the entire sample as well as parents/guardians' and teachers' subgroups in Table 5. The social/emotional, physical health/motor development and understanding of school had the highest scores while independence, cognitive development/general knowledge and language/literacy development had the lowest scores of the subscales for the overall sample (Table 5).

Research Questions

Research Question 1. The first purpose of this project was to compare the differences between parents' and teachers' school readiness beliefs. T-test analyses indicated that means for all seven subscales were statistically significantly different: physical health/motor development [t(95)=-2.437, p=.017], social-emotional development [t(95)=-3.771, p<.000], language/literacy development [t(93)=-4.743, p<.000], cognitive development/general knowledge [t(95)=-2.826, p=.006], disposition for learning [t(95)= -3.901, p<.000], understanding of school [t(95)=-4.839,p<.000], and independence [t(95)=-2.603,p=.011]. For all seven subscales the parents' means were higher. There was a variation in the means when placed in descending order for the

subscales that indicated that social-emotional was the highest mean for the parents and the subscale for teachers was health and safety. Another variation was that parents' mean for child being independent was the lowest subscale while the mean for it was one of the top three subscales.

Although there were statistically significant differences between responses of parents and teachers, the differences only varied between $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ of a point, so the meaningfulness of the differences was questionable. Based on the data, further examination of these differences was warranted.

Therefore the scores for each of the items on the school readiness measures were recoded to further delineate differences between the school readiness beliefs of teachers and parents. The four scoring categories were collapsed into three as “not too important” and “somewhat important” scores were combined into one group in order to minimize the number of cells with frequency less than five while “very important” and “essential” remained separate response categories. Chi square analyses were conducted for each of the 45 items in order to compare the responses of parents and teachers. Thirty-eight of the analyses were statistically significant as presented in Table 6. For all items, parents were more likely to rate items as essential than teachers. At least 50% of the parents rated 36 of the 45 items as essential. Fifty percent of the teachers rated only one of these items as essential to school readiness. The subscales where all items were scored as essential by 50% or more of the parents were social/emotional development and understanding of school. The teachers only scored one *item* as essential and that was “child is well rested, health needs are met”. Eighty-seven percent of parents rated this item as essential, as well. At least 50% of the teachers rated 13 items as “not too important” to school

readiness while none of the items were identified as “not too important” by the parents. The one subscale with half of the items as “not too important” was “cognitive development/general knowledge”. These have been reported in Table 6.

Research Question 2. How do non-English speaking and bilingual parents feel about bilingual teachers in their child’s classroom? The chi-square tests (Table 7) showed that there was not a real preference for one or the other. Seventy-seven percent of parents responded that the teacher being bilingual was essential or important but 64% also listed English only as essential or important. The teacher assistant data was the same- 73% felt it was essential or important that the assistant be bilingual, while 57% felt it was essential or important that the assistant speak English only.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was to examine the beliefs of parents and teachers at Tulsa Educare about the skills that children need for school readiness with a secondary purpose of exploring if parents wanted only English-speaking teachers. Most studies have not looked at the families and children who are at a higher risk for failure due to poverty and dual language learner issues. This study was of particular importance because the survey was given to the parents and staff of Tulsa Educare, which is an early learning center for children from 6 weeks to school age. Tulsa Educare is specifically for children from poverty and has a high Hispanic population with only 6% of the 58% of parents being bilingual.

Summary of Results and Previous Research

The results of this survey are consistent in many ways with the existing literature but had some distinct differences. Previous research has shown that preschool teachers in high-poverty communities felt the need to teach a more academic-based curriculum based on their concept of what the kindergarten teachers expected the child to know when he/she arrived at school (Piotrkowski et al., 2000). This was not the outcome of the current study. Teachers at Tulsa Educare only had one item that they felt was essential for a child's readiness for school and that was that the child be rested, well nourished and

health care needs are met. There were other items that teachers felt were necessary such as can throw a ball, skip, hop and walk up and down stairs; does not hit or bite and has self-control; can express feelings or needs in the primary language, but not essential to a child's success in kindergarten.

When examining the Kindergarten Teacher Survey on Student Readiness (KTSSR) (1993) and the *CARES* surveys (2000), the teachers' beliefs in those surveys were still very similar with teachers at Tulsa Educare. Teachers at Tulsa Educare rated a child's physical health/motor development as the most important subscale with social-emotional development as a close second. Surprisingly, the parents at Tulsa Educare had the social-emotional subscale as the most important with understanding of school as the next highest. Why this was surprising is that this is not what teachers tell me that parents want them to emphasize and it is very different from results of surveys a decade ago. This could be because the teachers are assuming, based on past experience, that parents only want their children to know their alphabet, numbers, colors, shapes as opposed to how to share, make a friend, listen to the teacher or each other. It may also be what a few parents or one parent have said. However, interestingly, both teachers and parents rated cognitive development/general knowledge as the fifth most important subscale out of seven. This is similar to studies done a decade ago, which show that kindergarten teachers were more concerned with health and safety as well as social-emotional skills, but very different for parents who a decade ago wanted their children to have cognitive skills (West et al., 1993).

Of the 1,339 kindergarten teachers surveyed (West et al., 1993), over 75 percent of those who responded felt there were three top indicators for school readiness: 1. a child

needed to be physically healthy, rested, and well nourished; 2. able to communicate his or her thoughts and needs in words; and 3. curious and enthusiastic in their approach to new activities. The *CARES* survey had the subscale of “Disposition for Learning” which included curiosity, interested in the world around him/her, eager to learn as several items which was fourth on the scores for both teachers and parents. More than half of the teachers in the West, et al. study also indicated that readiness included not being disruptive, being sensitive to other children’s feelings, and being able to take turns and share. Ten percent or less thought being able to count to 20 or more or knowing the letters of the alphabet were important in terms of kindergarten readiness. In contrast, at least fifty-eight percent of preschoolers’ parents felt this was essential (West et al., 1993). As stated earlier, in the Tulsa Educare survey, parents rated social-emotional and understanding of school a higher priority than cognitive skills. Teachers had physical health/motor development first, social-emotional second and independence was third. Independence was the least important of the subscales to the parents. This could be a reflection of the beliefs of other cultures that foster a sense of cooperation through helping one another as opposed to our cultural belief that fosters self-help skills at an early age, which can encourage competition.

The parents at Tulsa Educare matched the belief that families with multiple risk factors feel that their children need to be better prepared for kindergarten than parents who send their children to school in more affluent areas (Ramey, 2000). Although this survey was not given to a group of parents from a higher socio-economic level, the parents from Tulsa Educare did rate 36 out of 46 items as essential to a child’s readiness for kindergarten that matched the outcome of Ramey’s survey.

Only one study (Piotrowski et al., 2000) looked at the beliefs specifically in a high-need community that included families in poverty who were predominantly Hispanic and Black. Unfortunately, the survey's data from the Hispanic community was only from the Hispanic population who could read English. "Excluded parents were poorer, less educated, less likely to be employed, and more likely to speak only Spanish at home than Hispanic respondents who completed the survey in English" (Piotrkowski et al., 2000, p.544).

There were 41 of the 72 respondents from Tulsa Educare that were Hispanic and many, if not all, answered the survey in Spanish. Most had attended elementary school with a few graduating from high school and attending college. Over 50 percent of the respondents with less than a high school degree, no matter the ethnicity, rated all items as essential or very important.

In Piotrkowski's survey parents placed more importance on compliance with teacher authority. Seven out of ten parents both Black and Hispanics believed that all children should be able to express their feelings and needs in English. Teachers did not agree. Parents felt children should know basic knowledge such as some body parts, colors, letters of the alphabet and teachers rated this much lower as a necessity. This was the same with knowing one's address and phone number, which parents felt was a necessity and teachers ranked much lower (Piotrkowski et al., 2000).

In comparison, the Tulsa Educare survey had several items where parents and teachers were in agreement with the importance. These were: "child is rested and well nourished and health needs are met", "feeds self with a fork", "can hold a pencil and can use scissors", "can throw a ball, skip, hop, and walk up and down stairs", "is curious",

“uses classroom equipment correctly”, and “finds own belongings.” All agreed on level of importance but in the other areas there were significant differences in the importance, not only of the subscales but different items within the subscales. Several items that parents felt were more important than teachers were: “ plays well with other children”, “ can express feelings/needs in primary language”, has a sense of right/wrong”, is self-confident and proud of his/her work”, takes turns”, “lines up, stays in line, waits quietly”, “can count to 50 or more”. On the subscale scores teachers rated independence skills as third highest mean which was the lowest mean for the parents.

Items 47-50 were added to the original *CARES* survey because of negative comments heard by staff from parents about teachers who were bilingual. In trying to discover if the issue was with many of our families or just a few, the researcher decided to include several questions about this issue. Based on the response, 77% of parents stated that it is essential that the teacher is bilingual and 64% stated it was essential that the teacher speak English only. Either respondents did not understand the questions or were not reading by the end of the survey.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is the number of respondents. Although the staff numbers were high, 25 out of 40; the parent population was less than what the researcher had hoped to attain with 72 respondents out of approximately 175 families.

Another limitation of the survey is that it only included the families and staff at Educare and did not include other childcare facilities in the area or the kindergarten teachers at the “feeder” elementary school. The size of the sample/test group is too small

and limited to collect more extensive data. The time needed to do further exploration was not available nor were the processes to get approval for all entities.

Finally was the translation of the *CARES* instrument itself. Even though there was staff to help with questions, it is not known if the majority of respondents understood the meaning of each question or truly believed that each of the items were essential to their child being successful in kindergarten. This however seemed better than the original study by Piotrkowski, 2000) that mailed the surveys out to individuals without help for translation. The length of a 46-item survey could have caused respondents to mark answers without reading the item thus skewing the outcomes.

Implications

Although researchers, educators, parents, and policymakers agree that a child's future academic success is dependent on being ready to learn and participate in a successful kindergarten experience, the exact definition of readiness depends on who is doing the defining (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Bredekamp et al., 1992). Because of inequities in children's experiences and differences in their backgrounds, schools and communities must pay attention to the factors that influence how families support readiness and the transition to school (Kagan, 1992; National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1995).

What parents and teachers believe children need to know when the child arrives at the kindergarten classroom door has been an ongoing debate between the two groups (Piotrkowski et al., 2000). The preschool teachers are caught between the different perspectives of the parents' beliefs and the kindergarten teachers' beliefs trying to provide a quality experience without compromising best practices for the early learner.

The implications of this study should provide an insight to teachers and parents about necessary ongoing dialogues of how to meet the needs of the children, which should be the ultimate concern. There is a substantial difference in the parents' and teachers' beliefs of skills necessary for success in kindergarten and even if the differences are not significant in the data, the differences should make those of us as leaders cognizant of the impact of this information. Parents must have the opportunity to be an integral part of their child's education. If a parent does not feel the school is meeting the needs of their child, there must be open dialog to facilitate a discussion between parents and staff. The information from this survey will help us begin a discussion between staff and parents as to how to communicate our curriculum as well as philosophy of early childhood education to our families, our "feeder" school and the public.

There is the pressure from the "No Child Left Behind" Act that has implications for the public school teachers. Children need to be successful when they leave the classroom and that expectation trickles down to the preschool teachers to provide more and more readiness skills. Preschool teachers are receiving children who have few skills and speak no English, and the preschool teachers are expected by the kindergarten teachers receiving these children to have them at the same level as an English-speaking child by the time they enter school. Many of the preschool teachers feel that if they can help a child understand English then most of the other readiness skills for many of the Hispanic children will be easier. If the Hispanic child acquires other skills, then so much the better, but helping him/her learn English and start the social-emotional skills necessary to be successful in school has been a goal for our staff. This does not mean that cognitive skills are ignored. On the contrary, language and literacy along with math and

science are equally as important, but again, teachers know that if children are healthy, rested and well nourished and have the important social-emotional skills, the cognitive skills are easier to foster which segues into the next issue.

Being an Educare site creates the additional pressure of expecting teachers to help children develop cognitive skills with the same emphasis on the social-emotional skills. This typically has not been the belief of many early childhood professionals. Trying to teach every skill to every child and have them with a level of proficiency does not match what many professionals believe to be developmentally appropriate or what is needed. An example of some of the frustrations for all in the early childhood field is helping staff when they come to us and say they are going to teach their children the “ABC song”. When asked the purpose the reply is because the parents want to know that their children know their ABCs. After delving into what “knowing” means and how we help children learn their letters as well as the developmental stage of the children we teach, it was obvious that discussion must be with all, staff as well as parents, in order to effectively communicate what, how and why we teach the way we teach.

Suggestions and Future Research

It is the suggestion of this researcher that there be more face-to-face dialogues starting with parents and staff at Tulsa Educare about what skills both groups feel are important for children who come from poverty and are dual language learners. There are already plans for an on-going parent group to meet weekly where many of these issues will be explored more in-depth and face-to-face. Discussion about the curriculum, how parents feel about bilingual teachers, how parents can be involved as their child’s first teacher, any shortcomings or suggestions for improvement in our program that parents

want to discuss, and opportunities for staff to share how they try to help each child to be successful and provide individual goals for each child. Delving into what staff feel are essential skills and why they felt that only one of the 47 skills was essential for a child's success in school is a critical discussion that needs to be explored to ensure the goal of keeping these children in school through at least their high school graduation.

The future next steps of this study could be to give the *CARES* survey to the kindergarten teachers at Kendall-Whittier Elementary School where the majority of the Tulsa Educare students will attend, as well as several other elementary schools with similar demographics with the intention of working together to meet the needs of families and children. This would begin to bridge communication between preschool teachers and the kindergarten teachers by opening discussion between two groups who do not typically share expectations of the children entering kindergarten. Through focus groups involving both preschool and kindergarten teachers, the parents would see a common interest in the desire for successful outcomes for the children and families in our programs.

All entities from parents to the teachers at Tulsa Educare and Kendall-Whittier to those at the management level who make curriculum decisions to the policy makers, must be involved in determining who is responsible for helping all children be successful in school as shown by Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model. What we do not only impacts the 200 children at Tulsa Educare but also has long-term implications for the future of early childhood programs and children in poverty throughout our country.

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APPENDIX A

Beliefs about Preparing Children for Kindergarten

Creencias acerca de como preparar los niños para el Kinder

Think about a child who will BEGIN kindergarten in the fall. For each item below, please indicate how IMPORTANT or NECESSARY it is for a child starting kindergarten.

Piense en un niño que esta por comenzar el kinder en el Otoño. Por favor indique que tan IMPORTANTE o NECESARIO es para un niño que esta comenzando el kinder, los siguientes articulos.

		Not too Important No muy importante	Somewhat important Algo impotante	Very important but not essential Bien importante pero no indispensable	Absolutely Necessary Absolutamente necesario
1.	Child is rested and well-nourished. Health care needs are met. El niño/a este descansado esta bien nutrido. Todas sus necesidades medicas estan al corriente.				
2.	Plays well with other children Juege bien con otros niños				
3.	Can express feelings/needs in primary language Pueda expresar su necesidades y sentimientos en su idioma principal				
4.	Does not hit/bite. Has self-control. No golpe/muerda. Tenga control de si mismo.				
5.	Has sense of right/wrong Tenga conocimiento de lo bueno y lo malo				
6.	Is self-confident and proud of his/her work Es seguro/a de si mismo y este orgulloso(a) de su trabajo				
7.	Takes turns Tome turnos				
8.	Shows independence Demuestre independencia				
9.	Feeds self with a fork Coma con tenedor				
10.	Buttons own clothes Se abroche su propia ropa				

11.	Finds own belongings Encuentre sus pertenencias				
12.	Zips own jacket Sepa subirse el cieme de su chamarra				
13.	Asks a lot of questions about how and why Haga muchas preguntas de cómo y porqué				
14.	Is curious Sea curioso				
15.	Is interested in the world around him/her Interesado/a en el mundo a su alrededor				
16.	Starts things on his/her own Comience a hacer cosas por si solo/a				
17.	Is eager to learn Le guste aprender				
18.	Likes to solve puzzles Le gusta armar rompecabezas				
19.	Can hold a pencil and can use scissors Sepa como agarrar un lápiz y usar las tijeras				
20.	Can throw a ball, skip, hop and walk up/down stairs Pueda aventar una pelota, brincar, saltar, subir y bajar las escaleras				
21.	Stacks 5-6 blocks by him/herself Sepa apilar 5-6 (cinco o seis) bloques por si solo/a				
22.	Is interested in books and stories Este interesado/a en historias y libros				
23.	Can express feelings/needs in English Pueda expresar sus sentimientos y necesidades en ingles				
24.	Pays attention to the teacher Preste atención a la maestra				
25.	Follows teacher's direction Sigua las instrucciones de la maestra				
26.	Listens during group discussions and stories Preste atención durante grupos de discusion e historias				
27.	Knows names of body parts (eyes, nose, leg) Sepa los nombres de las partes de su cuerpo (ojos, nariz, piernas)				
28.	Knows ABC's Sepa el abecedario				
29.	Knows basic colors like "red, blue, yellow" Sepa los colores básicos como "rojo, azul, amarillo"				
30.	Can count to 10 or 15 Pueda contar hasta el 10 o el 15				
31.	Understands big/small. Sorts by color/size Entienda pequeño/grande. Puede clacificar par color/tamaño				
32.	Uses classroom equipment correctly Use los articulos en la clase correctamente				

33.	Cleans up work space and spills Limpie si tira a ensucia algo				
34.	Lines up and stays in line. Waits quietly Se forme y se quede en linea y espere llamado/a				
35.	Moves from one activity to the next with no problems. Se mueva de una actividad a otra sin problemas				
36.	Completes tasks on time Termine sus tareas a tiempo				
37.	Knows own address/telephone number Sepa su dirección y numero de telefono				
38.	Writes first name, even if some letters are backward Escriba su primer nombre, aunque algunas letras esten al revez				
39.	Understand yesterday, today, and tomorrow Comprenda entre el ayer, hoy y mañana				
40.	Knows days of the week in correct order Sepa los días de la semana en orden				
41.	Cuts simple shapes with scissors Corte figuras faciles con las tijeras				
42.	Recognizes words that rhyme like “cat,.hat” Reconozca palabras que riman como “taza, casa”				
43.	Can read a few simple words Pueda leer palabras simples				
44.	Can read simple stories Pueda leer historias simples				
45.	Can count to 50 or more Pueda contar hasta 50 o más				
46.	Can write on a line and color inside lines Pueda escribir en una linea y colorear dentro de las lineas				
47.	Teacher is bilingual. Que la maestra sea bilingue				
48.	Teacher speaks English only Que la maestar hable sólo Ingles.				
49.	Teacher Assistant is bilingual. Que la asistente de la maestra sea bilingue.				
50.	Teacher Assistant speaks English only. Que la assitente de la maestra hable sólo Ingles.				

Is there anything else you would like for me to know?

Hay algo mas que le gustaria que yo sepa

APPENDIX B

Survey Demographics Encuesta

Please check the following statements before answering the questions on the survey.
Por favor marque los siguientes datos antes de contestar las preguntas en la encuesta.

1. I am the child's:
Yo soy:
 - Mother
 - Mama**
 - Father
 - Papa**
 - Teacher
 - Maestra**
 - Legal Guardian
 - Guardian legal**
2. My age is:
Mi edad es:
 - 18-25
 - 26-35
 - 36-45
 - over 45
3. I am:
Yo soy:
 - Hispanic
 - Hispano/a**
 - African American
 - White
 - Native American
 - Bi-racial
 - Other- _____
 - Otro- _____**
4. My level of education is:
My nivel educativo es:
 - Attended Elementary school
 - Asisti a la escuela elemental**
 - Attended High School
 - Asisti a la Preparatoria**
 - Graduated from High School
 - Me gradue de la Preparatoria**
 - Graduated from college
 - Recibi titulo Universitario**
 - Attended graduate school
 - Asisti a la Universidad para La Maestria**
5. I have a child in:
Tengo un nino en:
 - Infant/Toddler classroom

- Infante/ niño pequeño
- Preschool classroom
- Salon para escolares
- Both
- En los dos

Table 1- Demographics of Survey Participants

Characteristics	Parents/Guardians		Teachers	
	n	%	n	%
Relation to child				
Mother	55	76.4	0	
Father	9	12.5	0	
Teacher	0	0	25	100
Guardian	1	1.4	0	
Age				
18-25	15	21.1	6	24.0
26-35	36	50.7	7	28.0
36-45	14	19.7	3	12.0
Over 45	6	8.3	9	36.0
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	41	56.9	2	8.0
African American	8	11	6	24.0
White	15	20.8	14	56.0
Native American	5	6.9	2	8.0
Bi-racial	1	1.4	1	4.0
Highest Education Level				
Attended Elementary School	19	26.4	0	
Attended High School	24	33.3	0	
Graduated from High School	17	23.6	5	20.0
Graduated from College	8	11.1	16	64.0
Attended graduate school	4	5.6	4	16.0
Child is in:				
Infant/Toddler group	29	40.3	10	40.0
Pre-school group	26	36.1	12	48.0
Both	17	23.6	3	12.0

Table 2- Items Included on School Readiness Subscales

Physical Health/Motor Development

Child is rested and well-nourished. Health care needs are met.

Can hold a pencil and can use scissors

Can throw a ball, skip, hop and walk up/down stairs

Stacks 5-6 blocks by him/herself

Cuts simple shapes with scissors

Social-Emotional Development

Plays well with other children

Does not hit/bite. Has self-control

Has sense of right/wrong

Is self-confident and proud of his/her work

Takes turns

Language/Literacy Development

Can express feelings/needs in primary language

Is interested in books and stories

Can express feelings/needs in English

Writes first name, even if some letters are backward

Table 2 (continued)

Recognizes words that rhyme like “cat, hat”

Can read a few simple words

Can read simple stories

Cognitive Development/General Knowledge

Knows names of body parts (eyes, nose, leg)

Knows basic colors like “red, blue, yellow”

Can count to 10 or 15

Understands big/small. Sorts by color/size

Knows own address/telephone number

Understand yesterday, today, and tomorrow

Knows days of the week in correct order

Can count to 50 or more

Disposition for Learning

Asks a lot of questions about how and why

Is curious

Is interested in the world around him/her

Is eager to learn

Likes to solve puzzles

Table 2 (continued)

Understanding of School

Pays attention to the teacher

Follows teacher's direction

Listens during group discussions and stories

Uses classroom equipment correctly

Cleans up work space and spills

Lines up and stays in line. Waits quietly

Moves from one activity to the next with no problems

Completes tasks on time

Independence

Shows independence

Feeds self with a fork

Buttons own clothes

Finds own belongings

Zips own jacket

Table 3 Descriptive Information for Individual Items from Parent Surveys

Item	mean	sd	Range
<i>Physical Health/Motor Development</i>			
Child is rested and well-nourished. Health Care needs are met.	3.83	.50	1-4
Can hold a pencil and can use scissors	3.36	.83	1-4
Can throw a ball, skip, hop and walk up/down stairs	3.40	.74	2-4
Stacks 5-6 blocks by him/herself	3.42	.84	1-4
Cuts simple shapes with scissors	3.15	.94	1-4
<i>Social-Emotional Development</i>			
Plays well with other children	3.54	.69	1-4
Does not hit/bite. Has self-control	3.63	.68	1-4
Has sense of right/wrong	3.61	.70	1-4
Is self-confident and proud of his/her work	3.57	.73	1-4
Takes turns	3.42	.80	1-4
<i>Language/Literacy Development</i>			
Can express feelings/needs in primary language	3.64	.68	1-4
Is interested in books and stories	3.65	.63	1-4
Can express feelings/needs in English	3.60	.71	1-4
Knows ABC's	3.53	.74	1-4

Table 3 (continued)

Writes first name, even if some letters are backward	3.46	.90	1-4
Recognizes words that rhyme like “cat, hat”	3.28	.88	1-4
Can read a few simple words	3.22	.91	1-4
Can read simple stories	2.93	.97	1-4
<i>Cognitive Development/General Knowledge</i>			
Knows names of body parts (eyes, nose, leg)	3.63	.62	1-4
Knows basic colors like “red, blue, yellow”	3.50	.75	1-4
Can count to 10 or 15	3.50	.75	1-4
Understands big/small. Sorts by color/size	3.46	.79	1-4
Knows own address/telephone number	3.33	.90	1-4
Understand yesterday, today, and tomorrow	3.31	.90	1-4
Knows days of the week in correct order	3.11	.97	1-4
Can count to 50 or more	2.85	.97	1-4
<i>Disposition for Learning</i>			
Asks a lot of questions about how and why	3.49	.69	1-4
Is curious	3.14	.84	1-4
Is interested in the world around him/her	3.43	.73	1-4
Starts things on his/her own	3.43	.73	1-4
Is eager to learn	3.64	.66	1-4
Likes to solve puzzles	3.36	.79	1-4
<i>Understanding of School</i>			
Pays attention to the teacher	3.68	.62	1-4

Table 3 (continued)

Follows teacher's direction	3.74	.53	2-4
Listens during group discussions and stories	3.49	.75	1-4
Uses classroom equipment correctly	3.43	.82	1-4
Cleans up work space and spills	3.49	.75	1-4
Lines up and stays in line. Waits quietly	3.44	.77	1-4
Moves from one activity to the next with no problems	3.43	.75	1-4
Completes tasks on time	3.29	.91	1-4
<i>Independence</i>			
Shows independence	3.44	.73	1-4
Feeds self with a fork	3.47	.69	1-4
Buttons own clothes	3.26	.79	1-4
Finds own belongings	3.25	.77	1-4
Zips own jacket	3.11	.82	1-4

1=not too important 2=somewhat important 3=very important but not essential
4=absolutely necessary

Table 4 Descriptive Information for Individual Items from Teachers' Surveys

Item	mean	sd	range
<i>Physical Health/Motor Development</i>			
Child is rested and well-nourished. Health Care needs are met.	3.80	.41	3-4
Can hold a pencil and can use scissors	3.00	.91	1-4
Can throw a ball, skip, hop and walk up/down stairs	3.16	.85	2-4
Stacks 5-6 blocks by him/herself	2.96	.89	1-4
Cuts simple shapes with scissors	2.56	.82	2-4
<i>Social-Emotional Development</i>			
Plays well with other children	3.12	.67	2-4
Does not hit/bite. Has self-control	3.16	.69	2-4
Has sense of right/wrong	3.16	.69	2-4
Is self-confident and proud of his/her work	3.04	.74	2-4
Takes turns	2.72	.74	2-4
<i>Language/Literacy Development</i>			
Can express feelings/needs in primary language	3.16	.62	2-4
Is interested in books and stories	3.16	.90	1-4
Can express feelings/needs in English	2.96	.89	1-4
Knows ABC's	3.00	.91	1-4
Writes first name, even if some letters are backward	2.88	.83	2-4

Table 4 (continued)

Recognizes words that rhyme like “cat, hat”	2.24	.93	1-4
Can read a few simple words	2.00	1.04	1-4
Can read simple stories	2.00	1.04	1-4
<i>Cognitive Development/General Knowledge</i>			
Knows names of body parts (eyes, nose, leg)	3.00	.82	2-4
Knows basic colors like “red, blue, yellow”	3.04	.79	2-4
Can count to 10 or 15	2.84	.85	1-4
Understands big/small. Sorts by color/size	2.88	.83	2-4
Knows own address/telephone number	2.40	.87	1-4
Understand yesterday, today, and tomorrow	2.32	.99	1-4
Knows days of the week in correct order	2.24	1.05	1-4
Can count to 50 or more	1.84	.94	1-4
<i>Disposition for Learning</i>			
Asks a lot of questions about how and why	2.92	1.08	1-4
Is curious	3.00	.71	2-4
Is interested in the world around him/her	2.88	.78	2-4
Starts things on his/her own	2.80	.91	1-4
Is eager to learn	3.08	.81	2-4
Likes to solve puzzles	2.40	.91	1-4
<i>Understanding of School</i>			
Pays attention to the teacher	3.12	.78	2-4
Follows teacher’s direction	3.20	.82	2-4
Listens during group discussions and stories	3.00	.71	2-4
Uses classroom equipment correctly	3.04	.84	2-4
Cleans up work space and spills	2.96	.79	2-4

Table 4 (continued)

Lines up and stays in line. Waits quietly	2.44	.77	1-4
Moves from one activity to the next with no problems	2.68	.80	1-4
Completes tasks on time	2.32	.90	1-4
<i>Independence</i>			
Shows independence	2.96	.84	2-4
Feeds self with a fork	3.32	.90	1-4
Buttons own clothes	2.80	.91	1-4
Finds own belongings	2.96	.89	1-4
Zips own jacket	2.52	.96	1-4

1=not too important 2=somewhat important 3=very important but not essential
4=absolutely necessary

Table 5 School Readiness Subscale Scores

Subscale	Overall Sample		Parents		Teachers		T-test analyses
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Physical Health/ Motor Development	3.34	1.2	3.43	.60	3.10	.60	[t(95)=-2.437,p<.05]
Social-Emotional Development	3.42	.63	3.55	.60	3.04	.54	[t(95)=-3.771,p<.00]
Language/Literacy Development	3.23	.70	3.41	.63	2.72	.64	[t(93)=-4.743,p<.00]
Cognitive Development/General Knowledge	3.22	.94	3.37	.68	2.78	1.36	[t(95)=-2.826,p<.01]
Disposition for Learning	3.27	.67	3.41	.60	2.85	.71	[t(95)=-3.901,p<.00]
Understanding of school	3.35	.67	3.52	.61	2.85	.59	[t(95)=- 4.839,p<.00]
Independence	3.21	.61	3.31	.63	2.91	.73	[t(95)=- 2.603,p<.05]

Table 6-Comparison of Parents and Teacher Responses to School Readiness Issues

<i>Items</i>	Parents/Guardian N=72						Teachers N=25				χ^2 Tests Results		
	Not Too Important		Important		Essential		Not Too Important		Important			Essential	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		N	%
<i>Health/Motor Development</i>													
Child is rested. Health needs met.	2	2.80	7	9.7	63	87.8	0	0	5	20.0	20	80.0	$\chi^2(2)=2.40, p=.301$
Can hold a pencil and use scissors	12	16.7	20	27.8	40	55.6	8	32.0	8	32.0	9	36.0	$\chi^2(2)=3.64, p=.162$
Can throw a ball, skip, hop	11	15.3	21	29.2	40	55.6	7	28.0	7	28.0	11	44.0	$\chi^2(2)=2.10, p=.350$
Stacks 5-6 blocks by him/herself	8	11.1	25	34.7	39	54.2	8	32.0	9	36.0	8	32.0	$\chi^2(2)=6.80, p=.033$
Cuts simple shapes with scissors	17	23.6	22	30.6	33	45.8	16	64.0	4	16.0	5	20.2	$\chi^2(2)=13.5, p=.001$
<i>Social-Emotional Development</i>													
Plays well with other children	6	8.3	20	27.8	46	63.9	4	16.0	14	56.0	7	28.0	$\chi^2(2)=9.65, p=.008$
Does not hit/bite. Has self-control	6	8.3	14	19.4	52	72.2	4	16.0	13	52.0	8	32.0	$\chi^2(2)=13.0, p=.002$
Has sense of right/wrong	7	9.7	13	18.1	52	72.2	4	16.0	13	52.0	8	32.0	$\chi^2(2)=13.5, p=.001$
Is self-confident, proud of work	8	11.1	14	19.4	50	69.4	6	24.0	12	48.0	7	28.0	$\chi^2(2)=13.2, p=.001$

Table 6 (continued)

Takes turns	12	16.7	17	23.6	43	59.7	11	44.0	10	40.0	4	16.0	$\chi^2(2)=15.0, p=.001$
<i>Language/Literacy Development</i>													
Feelings/needs in first language	4	5.6	16	22.2	52	72.2	3	12.0	15	60.0	7	28.0	$\chi^2(2)=15.3, p=.000$
Is interested in books and stories	4	5.6	16	22.2	52	72.2	6	24.0	8	32.0	11	44.0	$\chi^2(2)=9.12, p=.010$
Express feelings/needs in English	5	6.9	17	23.6	50	69.4	6	24.0	12	48.0	7	28.0	$\chi^2(2)=13.9, p=.001$
Knows ABC's	6	8.6	19	27.1	45	64.3	8	32.0	8	32.0	9	36.0	$\chi^2(2)=9.61, p=.008$
Writes first name, even backwards	12	16.7	11	15.3	49	68.1	10	40.0	8	32.0	7	28.0	$\chi^2(2)=12.3, p=.002$
Recognizes rhyming words	16	22.2	18	25.0	38	52.8	17	68.0	5	20.0	3	12.0	$\chi^2(2)=19.0, p=.000$
Can read a few simple words	15	20.8	22	30.6	35	48.6	15	60.0	4	16.0	6	24.0	$\chi^2(2)=13.3, p=.001$
Can read simple stories	26	36.1	20	27.8	26	36.1	18	72.0	4	16.0	3	12.0	$\chi^2(2)=9.92, p=.007$
<i>Cognitive Development/ Knowledge</i>													
Knows body parts	3	4.2	20	27.8	49	68.1	8	32.0	9	36.0	8	32.0	$\chi^2(2)=17.2, p=.000$
Knows basic colors	9	12.5	17	23.6	46	63.9	7	28.0	10	40.0	8	32.0	$\chi^2(2)=7.88, p=.019$
Can count to 10 or 15	6	8.3	22	30.6	44	61.1	9	36.0	10	40.0	6	24.0	$\chi^2(2)=14.6, p=.001$

Table 6 (continued)

Knows big/small. Sorts	9	12.5	19	26.4	44	61.1	10	40.0	8	32.0	7	28.0	$\chi^2(2)=11.2, p=.004$
Knows own address/phone number	13	18.1	18	25.0	41	56.9	15	60.0	7	28.0	3	12.0	$\chi^2(2)=19.6, p=.000$
Knows yesterday, today, and tomorrow	13	18.1	20	27.8	39	54.2	16	64.0	5	20.0	4	16.0	$\chi^2(2)=19.6, p=.000$
Knows days of the week	20	27.8	19	26.4	33	45.8	18	72.0	2	8.0	5	20.0	$\chi^2(2)=15.3, p=.000$
Can count to 50 or more	28	38.9	21	29.2	23	31.9	20	80.0	3	12.0	2	8.0	$\chi^2(2)=12.7, p=.002$
<i>Disposition for Learning</i>													
Asks a lot of questions- how, why	6	8.3	24	33.3	42	58.3	9	36.0	6	24.0	10	40.0	$\chi^2(2)=10.9, p=.004$
Is curious	15	20.8	29	40.3	28	38.9	6	24.0	13	52.0	6	24.0	$\chi^2(2)=1.85, p=.397$
Is interested in his/her world	8	11.1	24	33.3	40	55.6	9	36.0	10	40.0	6	24.0	$\chi^2(2)=10.7, p=.005$
Starts things on his/her own	8	11.1	24	33.3	40	55.6	11	44.0	7	28.0	7	28.0	$\chi^2(2)=13.3, p=.001$
Is eager to learn	5	6.9	15	20.8	52	72.2	7	28.0	9	36.0	9	36.0	$\chi^2(2)=12.2, p=.002$
Likes to solve puzzles	10	13.9	24	33.3	38	52.8	16	64.0	5	20.0	4	16.0	$\chi^2(2)=24.3, p=.000$

Table 6 (continued)

<i>Understanding of School</i>													
Pays attention to the teacher	4	5.6	14	19.4	54	75.0	6	24.0	10	40.0	9	36.0	$\chi^2(2)=13.6, p=.001$
Follows teacher's direction	3	4.2	13	18.1	56	77.8	6	24.0	8	32.0	11	44.0	$\chi^2(2)=12.6, p=.002$
Listens to discussions/stories	5	6.9	13	18.1	54	75.0	6	24.0	13	52.0	6	24.0	$\chi^2(2)=20.5, p=.000$
Can use classroom equipment	11	15.3	17	23.6	44	61.1	8	32.0	8	32.0	9	36.0	$\chi^2(2)=5.29, p=.071$
Cleans up work space and spills	9	12.5	18	25.0	45	62.5	8	32.0	10	40.0	7	28.0	$\chi^2(2)=9.59, p=.008$
Lines up, stays quiet	10	13.9	19	26.4	43	59.7	16	64.0	6	24.0	3	12.0	$\chi^2(2)=26.3, p=.000$
Moves from one activity to another	9	12.5	22	30.6	41	56.9	11	44.0	10	40.0	4	16.0	$\chi^2(2)=16.1, p=.000$
Completes tasks on time	14	19.4	19	26.4	39	54.2	16	64.0	6	24.0	3	12.0	$\chi^2(2)=19.6, p=.000$
<i>Independence</i>													
Shows independence	8	11.1	23	31.9	41	56.9	9	36.0	8	32.0	8	32.0	$\chi^2(2)=8.84, p=.012$
Feeds self with a fork	6	8.3	25	34.7	41	56.9	5	20.0	6	24.0	14	56.0	$\chi^2(2)=2.90, p=.235$
Buttons own clothes	11	15.3	29	40.3	32	44.4	9	36.0	10	40.0	6	24.0	$\chi^2(2)=5.85, p=.054$

Table 6 (continued)

Finds own belongings	12	16.7	29	40.3	31	43.1	8	32.0	9	36.0	8	32.0	$\chi^2(2)=2.77, p=.251$
Zips own jacket	16	22.2	30	41.7	26	36.1	14	56.0	6	24.0	5	20.0	$\chi^2(2)=9.91, p=.007$

Table 7- Parent Responses to Questions About Bilingual Teachers (n=72)

Items	Not Too Important		Important		Essential		χ^2 Tests Results
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Teacher is bilingual	16	22.2	5	6.9	24	33.3	$\chi^2(2)=20.0, p=.000$
Teacher speaks English only	25	34.7	27	38.0	19	26.8	$\chi^2(2)=6.46, p=.091$
Teacher Assistant is bilingual	19	26.8	19	26.4	34	47.2	$\chi^2(2)=18.4, p=.000$
Teacher Assistant speaks English	31	43.0	27	37.5	14	19.4	$\chi^2(2)=7.98, p=.046$

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Friday, February 02, 2007
IRB Application No: HEC73
Proposal Title: To Explore Parents and Teachers Beliefs of What Children Should Know for Kindergarten Success
Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 2/1/2008

Principal Investigator(s)

Carol B. Rowland 1356 E. 20th St Tulsa, OK 74120	Deborah J. Norris 233 HFS Stillwater, OK 74078
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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacobs, Chair
Institutional Review Board

Scripts for Teachers and Parents

The teachers will be told "you are being asked to participate in a study to help us understand the school readiness beliefs of teachers and parents at this school. No names will be reported on the information. You have the right to not participate. Please read and sign the informed consent form if you are willing to complete the survey. A drawing will be held for a \$25 Learning Tree gift certificate for people who have completed the survey. Thank you for helping with this project."

The parents will be told "you are being asked to participate in a study to help us understand what teachers and parents think are important for school readiness. No names will be reported with your answers. You have the right to not participate. Please read and sign the informed consent form if you are willing to complete the survey. A drawing will be held for this gift basket worth about \$40 for people who have completed the survey. Thank you for helping with this project."



**A Research Study of Parents' and Teachers' Beliefs of What Children
Need to Know to be Successful in School**



Investigators:

Carol B. Rowland, B.S., Principal Investigator

Deborah Norris, Ph.D., Project Advisor

Purpose:

This research study is being done to identify what parents and teachers believe children should know when the child goes to Kindergarten. The information gathered would help our program by encouraging a discussion between parents and teachers as to what is important for the child to be successful in school.

Procedures:

As a participant in this research study, you will be asked to participate in a survey which will only be given parents and teaching staff at the Tulsa Educare site. The topic is school readiness skills and the study is to evaluate what are the skills that you feel are the most important. The survey is in English and Spanish and there will be bilingual staff available for questions. The survey will be presented at the February parent meeting and should take 20-30 minutes to complete. Please be assured that there are no right or wrong answers to any of the survey items and that this study is being done to improve the educational experiences of your children.

Risks of Participation:

There are no known risks associated with this project that are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits:

The benefits will be enhanced communication between staff and families about the skills that both feel are necessary to help the children in our program be successful in Kindergarten and grades beyond Kindergarten.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not include information that will identify you or your child. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people who participate in research. The surveys and data will be destroyed in May after the completion of this thesis.

Compensation:

To compensate you for your time, there will be a random drawing for a gift basket worth \$40.00. All who complete the surveys will be eligible to win. Surveys will be completed at this meeting on February 28th 2007. Each person who completes the survey will get a ticket. The individual will write his/her name on the ticket that will be placed in a bowl. The drawing will happen as soon as the surveys are collected. Tickets will be destroyed on the spot after the drawing.

Contacts:

For information concerning this study, contact Dr. Deborah Norris at (405) 744-7084 or Carol Rowland at (918) 799-6233. For information on subjects' rights, contact Dr. Sue Jacobs, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, 405-744-1676 or irb@okstate.edu

Participant Rights:

Your agreement to participate in this study is voluntary, and you can discontinue participation at any time without reprisal or penalty. Please feel free to ask any questions you have regarding any part of the study.

Un Estudio sobre las Creencias de Padres y Maestros acerca de lo Qué los Niños Necesitan Saber para tener éxito en la Escuela

Investigadores:

Carol B. Rowland, B.S., Principal Investigator

Deborah J. Norris, Ph.D., Thesis Advisor

Propósito:

Este estudio se hace para identificar lo que los padres y maestros creen que los niños deben saber antes de entrar al Pre-Escolar. La información reunida ayudará a nuestro programa a animar una discusión entre padres y maestros en cuanto a lo que en realidad es importantes para que el niño tenga éxito en la escuela.

Procedimientos:

Como participante de este estudio, se le pedirá tomar parte de un cuestionario que se le dará solos a los padres y maestras en el sitio de Tulsa Educare. El tema es la prontitud de las habilidades de la escuela y el estudio deberá evaluar lo que son las habilidades que usted siente son mas importantes. La inspección es en Inglés y Español y allí habrá personal bilingüe disponible para preguntas. La inspección se presentará en la junta de padre en Febrero y debe tomar acerca de 20-30 minutos para completar. Asegúrese por favor de que no haya respuestas incorrectas o correctas en cualquiera de los artículos de inspección y que este estudio se hace para mejorar las experiencias educativas de sus niños.

Riesgos de la Participación:

No hay los riesgos conocidos asociados con este proyecto que son más que esos comúnmente encontrado en la vida cotidiana.

Beneficios:

Los beneficios se aumentarán en comunicación entre el personal y las familias acerca de las habilidades que se sienten son necesarias para ayudar a los niños en nuestro programa para tener éxito en el Pre-Escolar y grados más arriba del Pre-Escolar.

Confidencialidad:

Los registros de este estudio se mantendrán privados. Ningún resultado escrito se discutirá con conclusiones de grupo y no incluirá información que identificará usted (o su niño, si es aplicable). Los registros de investigación se guardaran seguramente y sólo los investigadores e individuos responsables del cuidado de la investigación tendrán acceso a los registros. Es posible que el proceso del consentimiento de datos recogidos serán observados por el personal del investigación responsable de salvaguardar los derechos y el bienestar de las personas que toman parte en la investigación.

Compensación:

Habrà una compensación por su tiempo, se rifará una canasta con valor de \$40.00. Todos los que terminen la encuesta sean elegibles para participar en la rifa. Las encuestas van a ser terminadas en la junta del 28 de Febrero, 2007. Al terminar la encuesta recibirán un boleto en donde escribirán su nombre para ser depositado en una canasta. La rifa tomará efecto inmediatamente después que las encuestas sean recogidas.

Contactos:

Para la información con respecto a este estudio, contacte Dr. Deborah Norris a (405) 744-7084 o Carol Rowland a (918)799-6233. Para la información en los derechos de los sujetos, contacte Dr. Sue Jacobs, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, a 405-744-1676 o irb@okstate.edu

Derechos del Participante:

Su acuerdo para tomar parte en este estudio es voluntario, y usted puede discontinuar la participación en tiempo sin represalia o pena. Siéntase por favor libre de preguntar cualquier pregunta que usted tenga con respecto a cualquier parte del estudio.



Contacts:

For information concerning this study, contact Dr. Deborah Norris at (405) 744-7084 or Carol Rowland at (918)799-6233. For information on subjects' rights, contact Dr. Sue Jacobs, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, 405-744-1576 or irb@okstate.edu.

Participant Rights:

Your agreement to participate in this study is voluntary, and you can discontinue participation at any time without reprisal or penalty. Please feel free to ask any questions you have regarding any part of the study.



VITA

Carol Baldwin Rowland

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT KINDERGARTEN
READINESS SKILLS

Major Field: Human Development and Family Sciences

Biographical:

Education:

Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education,
Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX, 1973

Tulsa Community College, 12 hours of Early Childhood
Education, Tulsa, OK, 1999

Completed the Requirements for the Master of Science degree at
Oklahoma State University in May, 2007/graduation.

Experience:

Co-Director, Educare , Tulsa Educare, Incorporated (Gold Director
Certification- reinstated, 2006). March, 2006- present

Curriculum Specialist, (Head Start, Early Head Start, Privately
Funded Slots) Community Action Project of Tulsa County, Tulsa,
OK. August, 2001- March, 2006

Director, Crosstown Learning Center Tulsa, OK August, 1996-
August, 2001 (Gold Director's Certification, 2001).

NAEYC (National Association for the Education of the Young
Child) Validator- 2000-present.

Professional Affiliations:

National Association for the Education of Young Children
(NAEYC)

National Head Start Association

Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma (ECO)A)

Success By Six Advisory Board- Community Service Council
Friends of Early Childhood (FOEE)- Top Ten Award- October,
2000

Name: Carol Baldwin Rowland

Date of Degree: May, 2007

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Tulsa, OK

Title of Study: PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT KINDERGARTEN
READINESS SKILLS

Pages in Study: 74

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to identify the beliefs of teachers and parents as to the skills necessary to insure that a child enters school ready to learn. Data was gathered using the *CARES* survey developed by Chaya Piotrkowski and colleagues (2001) that was given to parents and teachers in English and Spanish at an educational child care program in a Midwestern city. This program is an early learning center that provides an educational environment for children who come from families that are 100% or more of poverty and many of whom have the additional risk factor for school challenges by speaking only Spanish. The research goal for this study was to describe similarities and differences between the school readiness beliefs of teachers and low-income parents from the same educational program for young children.

Findings and Conclusions: Parents and teachers only agreed on one item that both considered essential to success in school which was that a child is rested, well nourished and has good health care. Parent responses did not match the beliefs of parents a decade ago when several surveys given to parents showed that parents believed cognitive skills were the most important skills necessary for school success. For parents in this survey the mean for the social-emotional subscale was the highest and the understanding of school subscale had the second highest mean. The mean for the physical health and motor development subscale was the highest for teachers with the independence subscale second. There were many discrepancies between the beliefs of parents and teachers when rating the importance of the individual items. These discrepancies provide a starting point for discussion about expectations for children, teachers, parents, and the school curriculum.

ADVISOR'S APPROVAL: Dr. Deborah Norris