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ABC or AEI:

A Comparison of Approaches to Early Childhood Education in Samoa

Sofia Valbuena

Study Advisor: Maria Kerslake

Academic Director: Jackie Fa'asisila

S.I.T Samoa, Spring 2017



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Email Address: svalbuen@villanova.edu

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Abstract

Due to discussion about the importance of early childhood education (ECE), the scene in Samoa has shifted. The present study compares and analyzes approaches to ECE in Samoa from three schools: Brilliant Star Montessori Preschool, Divine Mercy Preschool, and Saoluafata Preschool. Data was collected through participatory observation over the course of two and three days at each school. Results showed both similarities and differences within the preschools in themes such as play, academic curriculum, and classroom management. Analysis found ECE in Samoa is developing and potential tools to further improve the schools were presented. This study will provide a report for educators to refer to in the future.

Key Words: Early Childhood Education, Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Psychology

“It is not enough to love the young; they must know that they are loved.”
St. John Bosco

Dedication

*This study is dedicated to Querencia and all who
are and will be involved in the project of my lifetime.
Everything I do is for them.*

Acknowledgements

I would like to start by thanking my family and friends who have always encouraged me to be a little crazy. Mami and Daddy, you inspire me to follow my heart and step thousands of miles outside my comfort zone, something I could never do without your love and support. Nanis, you may have little feet yet I tried for years to fill your shoes. I learned a while back that is impossible and therefore am inspired by you everyday to try a little harder and smile a little bigger. To all my cousins, your tough love and unconditional support (even if you do not understand me sometimes) made me who I am today. To my childhood friends, thank you for being so far and yet staying so close. To all the friends I have made along the way, thank you for sticking with me through all this craziness I call my life. I love you all and will continue to be grateful for you throughout the remainder of my life for all that you are.

To Maria and Jackie, you both have been an incredible support during this whole journey. Maria, you heard and felt my passion for what I wanted to do and helped me make it possible. Without you and all that you did for me, I would not have accomplished what I did. Jackie, from your hug greeting me at the airport to your hugs when things got a little tough, I am grateful to your support through this entire journey. You have taught me more about myself than I realized I did not know and more about Samoa than I ever imagined knowing. Thank you both for being there for me through it all.

To the three schools that allowed me into their spaces and welcomed me as their own. Brilliant Star, you have shown me the light that shines within our youth and have inspired me to keep that light burning strong and bright. Divine Mercy, you are a home that welcomes, a playground where friends meet, a parish that evangelizes, and a school that prepares for life. I cannot express how much it meant to me to find a home far from

home. Saoluafata Preschool, you helped me realize where my heart lies and fueled the passion I carry within me. Thank you all for opening your doors to me, I cherished my time with you.

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Introduction

Early childhood education (ECE) has increasingly become relevant and emphasized in international discussion about sustainable development goals and nations' action plans to achieve them. The 1990 Jomtien Declaration for Education for All called to attention the importance of ECE claiming that education starts at birth (UNESCO, 2016). The Education for All global movement is a commitment to educate all children, youth, and adults. The inclusion of early childhood care and education (ECCE) in the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action as the first of six goals was another step on the international scene to promote ECE (Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Samoa).

ECE was introduced in Samoa in the early 1970's. It was officially recognized through Cabinet Approval in 1976 by the government. The Convention for the Rights of the Child in 1994 proclaimed every child has the right to an education 'on the basis of equal opportunity'. The following year, Samoa began including ECE in its National Policies. The Education Act of 2009 enforces compulsory education for children between 4 to 14 years old. Though legislation exists supporting ECE, the quality of education has not been monitored or evaluated systematically. In Samoa, ECE has been the responsibility of private non-government bodies. Most preschools are run by churches, religious institutions, women's committee groups, or other individuals and organizations (Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Samoa). As of 2015, than less than 10% of the preschools met the National Council of Early Childhood Services (NCECS) minimum service standards. Research conducted for the National Review Report found that the preschools were under-resources and not child-friendly.

Recent moves continue to improve ECE in Samoa. In February 2017, the Ministry of Education Sports and Culture (MESC) pushed to make ECE compulsory in Samoa. A

MESC survey found only 30% of children from 3 to 5 years of age were enrolled in ECE (Pacific Island Report). This finding motivated the move to make ECE compulsory. Consultation for the act began recently with the goal that children have within a year or two ECE experience by the age of 4 (Simanu, Personal Communication, 24 April 2017).

Parents and teachers have noticed a gap between the students who attend preschools and those who do not when they enter primary school. Children with ECE backgrounds are more confident in school (Simanu, Personal Communication, 24 April 2017). This can be attributed to developmental benefits of ECE for young children. Safe and nurturing environments encourage children to build strong psychosocial skills such as playing, exploring, talking, listening, trusting, problem solving, etc. These settings are those commonly found in preschools (Miyahara, 2008).

The purpose of this study is to compare different approaches to ECE in Samoa observing three preschools: Brilliant Star Montessori Preschool, Divine Mercy Preschool, and Saoluafata Preschool (see Appendix B). The question proposed is: What are different approaches to early childhood education being used in Samoa in terms of play, academic curriculum, and classroom management? The goal of the study is to collect useful information about ECE from which educators, and ultimately children, can benefit.

Literature Review

Throughout each stage of child development, psychologists have found biosocial, cognitive, and psychosocial aspects that are evolving. Piaget describes the cognitive development of early childhood as symbolic thought and pre conceptual representation (Richmond, 1970). This is a time when children are developing language and imagination but not yet logical and operational thinking. During early childhood, an infant begins to process what people around them are doing and is able to put it into an assisted practice (Straub & Stassen, 2011). Vygotsky talks about this stage through the lens of social learning. Young children have guided perceptions by mentors about experiences and use these mentors also to assist them with skills they cannot yet perform independently (Straub & Stassen, 2011). Miyahara (2008) claims that if the physical, social, and psychological capacities that a child is born with are not recognized and supported, their ability to communicate, learn, and develop will wither rather than flourish.

Phillips (2016) reviewed a study looking at the sustaining benefits of preschool education and what factors emphasized this wanted outcome. Evidence showed that “highly manualized curricula that specifically address social-emotional skills and early language-literacy development” are essential for ECE to have a sustained impact. The same study found that professional development for teachers increased the odds that effective curricula would be implemented. A positive correlation was also shown between parent involvement and improved child achievement. The strong connections between cognitive, social-emotional, self-regulatory, and health-related aspects of development led to the conclusion that both cognitive and social-emotional skill development should be a focus in ECE (Phillips, 2016).

Approaches to ECE are numerous and vary in how to increase success for the children. In the 1980’s the National Association for the Education of Young Children of

the United States of America published their first position statement about developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). This statement has been altered three times since its first publication (Fowler, 2016). The most recent approach suggested in DAP refers to Epstein's (2006) intentional teaching. Intentional teaching attempts to balance children's interests and activities through the support of teachers and experiences shaped by teachers' goals intentionally rather than allowing one to dictate the other. The current edition of DAP follows an if/then approach:

If children are likely to acquire a certain capacity by engaging in child-guided spontaneous activity, then teachers should deploy one set of teaching strategies; however, if acquisition of the skills in question typically requires adult guidance, then teachers should deploy another set of strategies. (Flower, 2016 p.159)

This multi-dimensional approach to ECE helps educators identify how to tailor instruction based on a variety of theories to best accommodate the children.

Educators may be hesitant to assess ECE students because of the negative stigma placed on testing. Pene (2008) discusses how to assess, monitor and evaluate ECCE in the context of the Pacific region. Assessment is founded on a vision of who children are expected to become in each country and culture. The vision must incorporate the values of the specific country. Such an assessment can aid in classroom decision-making and can be collected through testing or a look at performance over time. Assessment will be beneficial to the student for future reference and also the school to improve performance. The assessment must be valid and consistent throughout the years it is used (Pene, 2008). Different assessments are recommended for different age groups. Proper analysis of assessments and monitoring the progress of ECE centers can be the key to developing a groundwork for a successful ECE system in the region (Pene, 2008).

Methodology

This study seeks to identify effective approaches to early childhood education in Samoa. To complete this task, a comparative study of three preschools was conducted in three weeks on April 2017 using participant observations. During two or three days of observation at the schools, 17 specific points were observed (see Appendix C) and recorded. These points were established based on the information presented from the literature review. Results were analyzed and three areas were chosen as key points to compare. The schools used for the study were chosen based on accessibility and connections made prior to the start of the study.

Because of the limited time for research due to school breaks and other factors, only three preschools were observed. Though the schools were intentionally chosen for their diverse backgrounds, management, location, and demographic, the results cannot be generalized to all schools. Being an outsider observing the schools was also a constraint. Having more time to introduce myself and become immersed in the school would have allowed for a more accurate observation. A second limitation was when the language of instruction was Samoan. Though most was translated and some was understood based on context, this was still a limitation in the study.

In the case of all three schools, relationships were formed with the administrators which facilitated transition into the schools. Time was also spent outside of school hours with the teachers and staff which provided more information about their experience than observation revealed. Spending more than one day at the schools was beneficial as by the last day, the students were more accustomed to the outside presence and acted more naturally.

Studying children is a serious ethical consideration because they are of a vulnerable population; this was an aspect I had to consider while attending and

observing the schools. I could not interview the children and had to assure that my behavior was appropriate to that of the standards of the preschool teachers. To maintain the ethics in my project, all participation was done at the request of the teachers or school administrator. Students were not interviewed or put at any risk.

Focus Points

Observations at the schools were made on 17 points which were examined and discussed with the administrators and teachers. For the sake of time and brevity, three of these points will be discussed and analyzed: student play patterns and toys, academic curriculum, and classroom management. These points were chosen from the weight they carried in all three schools and the role they played with the students.

Play

All three schools provides toys for their students, some of which are similar. They all have wooden and plastic building blocks, books to read, and an outside playground. Brilliant Star has the largest variety of books and also a train track and train. The students have age appropriate puzzles in each of the classrooms and plastic toys such as phones and computers. Both Divine Mercy and Saoluafata have stuffed animals and dolls for the children to play with. Divine Mercy has colorful shape tiles and interactive singing toys without batteries. Saoluafata has colorful foam puzzle pieces that, if organized correctly, form a floor mat with the alphabet.

Play can be categorized as free play or structured play and also referred to as child guided or teacher guided play. This was where the schools differed greatly. Brilliant Star was mostly structured play while the students were inside and free play when they were outside. While the students were in the classroom, they could play with the toys in the area to which they were assigned (e.g. blocks or train set). While they played outside they were not limited to an area and could play as they pleased. In Divine Mercy, play was entirely free play. Children were allowed to play anywhere in the room and the teacher rarely interacted with the children as they played. Though this school has a playground, on neither of the days of observation were the children taken outside to play.

Saoluafata, like Brilliant Star, also uses a combination of child and teacher guided play. Though the children mostly are given the liberty to play as they will and most of their play is free play. The teachers occasionally organize games and activities for the children. Not all students participate. Some prefer to play on their own but most enjoy the guided activities. The next section will focus on what and how children were being taught.

Academic Curriculum

Because of the National Council's guidelines the schools are required to follow, all of the schools had weekly themes that are relevant in their daily lives. The way this lessons were taught varied greatly among the schools. During the two days at Divine Mercy, there were nurses caps colored by the students hanging from the ceiling but no other indication. In Saoluafata, the theme was teachers and what they do. This was explained to the students during a 15 minute lesson in the morning after prayer and before the students split into age groups. The teachers talked about the theme pointing to a different visual aids they had available. Brilliant Star did not follow the theme provided by NCECS but rather used a different theme. The theme during observations for this study was "What can I wear?". This theme was introduced to the students as they were already split into age groups. Each age group teacher taught the lesson differently according to their audience. Hands-on activities were done by the students during to further emphasize the theme (a worksheet with items, some wearable and some not, for the children to color which they could wear). Brilliant Star also focuses on a weekly virtue such as friendliness, helpfulness, or honesty. As part of the Baha'i virtue program, children are introduced to the virtue at the beginning of the week and complete different activities to remind the students of the virtue throughout the week.

In all three schools, the children are taught lessons via songs. They learn the alphabet, counting, and body parts through different songs. In both Brilliant Star and Saoluafata, the songs are sung while the students are sitting and looking up at the teacher. Divine Mercy used dance and movement as the songs progressed. Both the alphabet and numbers were sung while the letters were being pointed to on a poster so the students could see what they were singing.

The students are encouraged to practice writing with a pencil and paper at each school. Brilliant Star does an individualized approach teaching students literacy and numeracy. They are taken to a private desk with a teacher's aid and work in a workbook on letters and numbers. Each student has their own lesson plan to personalize instruction. In Divine Mercy, the students are taught a letter or number daily to focus on and are given notebooks and pencils to practice writing them but they are not forced to. This gives the students the freedom to simply write and draw as they will. The teacher does not monitor what the students are doing. Saoluafata combines both methods; the teacher is active in what the students are doing and motivates them to perform their task. The younger students are asked to color or draw as they wish while the older students are asked to practice writing their name. The students' names are printed at the top of the paper and the students are prompted to copy it but are also allowed to simply draw on the paper.

Classroom Management

In all the schools the teachers are forbidden from hitting the students. This forces the teachers to find creative ways to keep the students orderly and when addressing problematic situations. In all three schools, the teachers raise their voices to get the students' attention when they are being rambunctious but do not yell. Brilliant

Star teachers require their students to sit on a mat before changing activity and send them one-by-one to the next activity which makes for controlled transitions. At Saoluafata the same method is used when sending the students to get their lunches but not other activities which often have chaotic transitions. Both schools also have multiple teachers in the classroom because of the number of students therefore there is more help to control the students. The few students in Divine Mercy meant there was only one teacher (and occasionally a volunteer) which also helped in the management of the students. When things became out of hand the students were reprimanded and allowed to continue to play. In all of the schools, punishment for misbehavior was inconsistent. None of the schools rewarded students for sociable or appropriate behavior either.

Analysis

The analysis for this study is presented on the three focus points: play, academic curriculum, and classroom management.

All schools encouraged free play but structured play was inconsistent. This gave students a lot of time to develop sociability but also left room for students to be left out if they were not the ones to initiate play with others. The three schools had students who always played independently during free play. They were not sociable with the other students unless required to be. At Brilliant Star, the balance between free and structured play gave the students the opportunity to play on their own when appropriate but also gave them the space to interact with the other children during structured activities. At the other two schools, constant free play gave the students the autonomy to choose their playmates and use their imaginations while playing. Divine Mercy did not use structured play therefore students who were more shy and independent were rarely encouraged to play with other students. At Saoluafata, there were afternoon games organized by the teachers but not all the students played which meant that the students with isolating tendencies continued to play alone.

Though free play is important for the children to practice being sociable with children their own age, structured play is also important to guide students to develop other skills. When teachers organize activities, students must listen to the instructions and then apply what they understood from them. They also practice patience in waiting their turn and, depending on the activity, team work or sportsmanship. Activities can also be tailored to include all students and can be designed to highlight the skills of students who are often left out. Free play is a good way for teachers to gauge the student's strengths and weaknesses and then design activities to help support that. More structured activities could be beneficial to all the schools.

Academic curriculum was the point that varied most among the schools. Each school approached teaching the students quite differently although the topics overlapped. Divine Mercy and Saoluafata followed the themes provided from the NCECS yet taught them quite differently. In none of the schools were they a priority in the lessons for the kids though Saoluafata spent more time talking about it than Divine Mercy did. The teachers seemed to struggle explaining the theme and it is unclear how much the students understood from the lesson. The theme taught at Brilliant Star was one that was easily explained to the students as it was something they could conceptualize since they with interact with it daily. The teacher also spent a significant amount of time talking about the theme and prepared activities for the students to do revolving around it which allowed the students to process the information visually, physically, aurally, and verbally.

All the schools used songs to teach the students numbers, the alphabet, and body parts. This technique seemed effective at all the school for many of the students though there were some who did not follow what was being sung and mumbled the words. At Divine Mercy, the teacher pointed at the letters and numbers on a poster on the wall while the students sang to help them visualize what they were singing. This helped the students when they were identifying letters and numbers in a different moment of the day because they knew what the characters looked like. When it came to writing though, the students were not required to write the letter or number of the day but rather given the time to simply write or draw in their notebooks. Though it is important to allow young students to work at their own speed, this system made the teacher passive in the writing process to the point of no interaction which the students paid for in their inability to write most letter or numbers. Brilliant Star approached literacy and numeracy differently therefore the songs were merely support for the individualized

lessons the students received later in the day. This allowed the students the opportunity to work and learn at their own pace also which seemed beneficial to all the students. Along with singing, Saoluafata students were practicing writing their names and had more support than those in Divine Mercy but prompting was still minimal. Teacher-student interaction was the key difference among the schools in this case.

The weekly theme is not something the teachers from Saoluafata and Divine Mercy can control because it is passed down from the NCECS but possibly with more planning, the teachers could find a way to teach the lesson in a way where the students interact with the theme more. Young students often struggle to stay focused when they are being talked to and do not always receive all the information. When activities are organized to teach a lesson, it allows the opportunity for students with different learning styles to become engaged in the lesson. It also forces the teachers to reflect on their students and what where they believe their students are in terms of learning to create an effective activity. This is also applicable to lessons such as the alphabet, counting, and colors. Different activities to teach the students the lessons are often well received by the children because they stay engaged with the material.

By creating activities, the teachers are also establishing a method to evaluate and assess the students' growth. Of the three schools, only Brilliant Star does assessments of growth by tracking the students' progress through their workbooks. Pene (2008) claims assessment for ECE students can be observational data collected by the teacher about 'physical, social, cognitive, emotional, moral, spiritual, and cultural development'. It can also include portfolios of student work, checklists for numeracy and language, photographs, and running records. These tools will allow teachers to track the students' progress which will be beneficial for their future studies and also to help the school improve.

Classroom management and ways of interacting with students are often dictated by culture yet this is not entirely the case at school. At the three preschools, teachers are not allowed to hit or spank the children when they are misbehaving or do something they are not supposed to. Brilliant Star approaches situations with logic by talking to the child about why their behavior was inappropriate. These conversations were few and most of the time students who were hurt by other students were consoled but the hurter was never addressed. This was consistent throughout the schools. When a child was hurt by another, the one who acted aggressively was usually left to play while the teacher consoled the crying one. This allowed for the children who were trouble makers to get away with their misconduct and continue to act this way to get what they wanted. These situations normally occurred during chaotic or less structured moments of the day which were more frequent at Divine Mercy and Saoluafata. None of the schools had a set of rules for the students to follow and often behavior that was permitted in some situations were not during others, depending on the mood of the teacher and what other students were doing; this was clearly confusing to students.

Establishing a list of simple rules that the students are expected to follow would help the teachers and students identify misbehavior. In doing this, the students could be reminded what they are and are not allowed to do and therefore punishment could be consistent. An effective tool for punishing preschoolers is timeout: isolating a child from the rewards misconduct grants them for a set amount of time to reflect on what they did. Hamilton (1993) stated the proper use of timeout is the less violent and often a most effective tool to teach a preschooler how to act sociably. Timeout gives children time to reflect on unacceptable behavior and removes them from the advantage they intended to receive from their action. When children misbehave they are normally seeking something such as another child's toy, attention, or revenge on what they perceive to be

an injustice (Hamilton, 1993). By being consistent with these consequences, adults remind children that certain behaviors will be punished and eventually, the child will stop doing them. This takes time and persistence but is effective and will alter unsociable behavior. Timeout is quite effective when rewards for appropriate behavior are granted as well. Giving a child recognition for sitting and listening when they were asked to encourages other students to do the same. There is great power in granting children attention or acknowledgments and can be used to the advantage of the teachers.

Conclusion

The impacts ECE has on children and the development of nations has been a topic of discussion and research internationally. If in a conducive setting, early childhood is formative to a child's development physically, socially, and psychologically. These are the years that begin the process of learning language, sociability, and self-regulation among other key skills. Participation in ECE has been found to be beneficial to students because it is a structured and safe environment where children can explore and discover themselves and the world.

During the three weeks spent observing the schools, it was made clear that ECE in Samoa is dynamic and developing. Though mentioned in legislation and acts in the past, ECE is unmonitored and under resourced in Samoa. Moves are being made to help change that status and to help ECE thrive such as legislation and a curriculum review.

This study was conducted to provide a comparative report on current approaches to ECE being used by three preschools in Samoa. Both similarities and differences were found between the schools on 17 points of observation. Further analysis revealed effective approaches being used by the schools in play, academic curriculum, and classroom management with room for growth. Recommendations for different approaches supported by research were provided in hopes of assisting the schools.

Future studies can broaden the research to other preschools in different areas of the country comparing urban preschools and rural ones or looking at the different islands. Conducting an activity to assess the students could be beneficial if more days are spent at each school. Studying the administration and funding of the school as factors of the performance of the school can potentially be telling as well. ECE in Samoa is in transition therefore any future study conducted will find a transformed field.

Resources

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Brilliant Star Montessori Preschool. Tiapapata, Samoa. 25 April 2017

Divine Mercy Preschool. Malololelei, Samoa. 26 April 2017

Divine Mercy Preschool. Malololelei, Samoa. 27 April 2017

Saoluafata Preschool. Saoluafata, Samoa. 1 May 2017

Saoluafata Preschool. Saoluafata, Samoa. 2 May 2017

Saoluafata Preschool. Saoluafata, Samoa. 3 May 2017

Glossary of Acronyms

Early childhood education: ECE

Developmentally appropriate practices: DAP

Ministry of Education, Sport, and Culture: MESC

Early childhood care and education: ECCE

National Council of Early Childhood Services: NCECS

Appendix A

Interview questions for MESC:

- How long have you been working in education?
 - What has been your experience in education?
- What are some of the changes that have been made in early childhood education from when you started to now?
- What has been the development and justification of the legislation?
 - What impacts do you think it will have?
 - What preparations have been put in place for these changes?
 - Who can open preschools? What are the basic requirements?
- How will teachers be trained?
 - What does it consist of?
 - Who is assisting?
- What is the curriculum that ECE educators have to follow?
 - How will the curriculum be distributed, supported, and monitored?
- What type of approaches are suggested in the ECE curriculum?
- How are parents being involved in ECE?
- Where do you see ECE going in a future?
- Discuss points to observe in the preschools I visit.
- Other suggestions

Appendix B

Brilliant Star Montessori Preschool

Brilliant Star is owned, run, and managed by principal Yassamin Yazdani. The preschool is based from the Montessori curriculum internationally recognized that takes on an individualized and hands on approach to learning. The language of instruction at the school is in English though there are some songs the children sing that are bilingual in Samoan and English. Yassamin is Baha'i and the school was originally run by the temple therefore there are inspirations that come from the Baha'i virtue program. Through this program the students are taught virtues such as friendliness, honesty, or faithfulness weekly. The school also places a high value on teaching the students and their families about the importance of health by encouraging cleanliness and proper nutrition. The parents are asked to send a fruit every day that is cut up and shared with the school during fruit time which is a moment in the morning for a snack. Lunches are brought by the students and it is highly encouraged the meal be nutritious. Parents also participate in their children's school when reviewing the work they bring home and during an annual show the students put on. Part of the work the students bring home is the workbook they do their individual lessons in. This is used as a tool to monitor the child's progress throughout the term. The other work the children take home are creative pieces they make. These are usually tools the teachers use to teach the students a lesson which involves coloring or cutting and pasting. All the tasks the students perform are friendly to all, including the one student with autism in the class with the older students. Parents pay \$490 WST per term for school and \$200 WST for the bus.

Divine Mercy Preschool

Divine Mercy Preschool is a branch of Divine Mercy Primary School run by Sr. Carol (LAST NAME) and the Salesian Sisters. All of the grade levels have only one class including the preschool with 15 students enrolled. The students are taught in Samoan though are taught some words and songs bilingually with English. The school is run as a Catholic institution, teaching prayer and stories from the Bible as part of the daily lessons. Because the school is Salesian, the students are taught specifically about St. Don Bosco and his love and vocation for the youth. Students are taught numbers, letters, and body parts through song and dance. There is no systematic monitoring for the preschoolers of their progress though the teacher does give parents an oral report for their child at the end of the term when they come to the class for a display of the student's artwork. Art work is not sent home regularly but rather decorates the classroom so the students can see their work continuously. Because there are few students, there is usually only one teacher in the room with them though it is not uncommon for a teacher's aid or volunteer to come and help her when needed. Students bring their own lunches which are typically the treats bought at corner stores such as pork filled buns or cream filled bread. Some of the students are dropped off by their parents at the school while others ride a bus that the school provides. Some of the students come from Malololelei while others come from Apia, the demographic varies greatly. Parents pay a school fee of (FIND OUT PRICE) and bring in an undetermined amount of tala or sene for the bus fare which is provided by the school.

Saoluafata Preschool

Saoluafata Preschool is a small building in front of Saoluafata Primary School and Anoamaa College. It is run by the women's committee of the village and taught by two teachers and two teacher's aids. Following the regulation in Samoa, the students are

taught in Samoan until year four, including ECE. Some songs teaching the students about numbers, colors, letters, and body parts are taught in English and they teachers often do trivia games asking the students to translate words from Samoan to English. There is no monitoring of the student's growth in place except for teacher observation, though it was not evident if the information was passed on to anyone. Parents were not active in their child's learning process though they did support the school by attending and participating in fundraisers for the school every term. During this time the parents also see the arts and crafts that the student have done although they are few. Students at Saolufata spend more time physically active than doing other activities as they are allowed to move freely around the room constantly throughout the day. They are also taken outside to play for about 45 minutes during the school day after lunch. Lunch is provided by the school in hope of promoting and providing a nutritious meal they would not receive otherwise. The students are given soup prepared differently daily. They are asked to not bring outside food though this is not enforced therefore the students often have pastries from the corner store as snacks before or after lunch. Parents pay a fee of \$20 WST per term though occasionally, when they cannot afford it, they bring vegetables or other ingredients for the students's lunch as payment. There is no bus provided by the school therefore the students are dropped off by their parents or older siblings who attend the other schools.

Appendix C

School observation points:

- Daily schedule
- Teacher-student ratio
- Language of instruction
- Academic curriculum
- Monitoring and evaluation processes in place for program and student growth
- classroom management
- How is creativity incorporated?
- What toys do the children play with? How long do they have to play? structured (teacher guided) or free play (child guided)
- Physical activity
- Nutrition
- Any students with disabilities
- Parent involvement — how are parents being involved in the education process?
- How is the school being funded?
- How is it being managed?
- Job embedded learning—professional development for teaching and learning
- How are teachers allocated or is it free arrangement?
- How much are teachers being paid?