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LATINO CHILDREN'S KINDERGARTEN ENTRY:
VIEWS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

by

Shanda Stephens

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Family and Human Development

Approved:

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

2001

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ABSTRACT

Latino Children's Kindergarten Entry:
Views of Parents and Teachers

by

Shanda Stephens, Masters of Science
Utah State University, 2001

Major Professor: Dr. Shelley L. Knudsen-Lindauer
Department: Family and Human Development

This study examined parental and teacher expectations of kindergarten readiness of Latino children. The perceptions of Latino mothers, Latino fathers, and kindergarten teachers were analyzed and compared. Specifically, parents' and teachers' responses were compared in three areas: perceptions of what parents can do to prepare children for kindergarten, priorities for requisite kindergarten entry skills, and rankings of the importance of specified skills to be emphasized in kindergarten. Differences between kindergarten teachers' expectations for nonnative English-speaking children and native English-speaking children were also examined.

The parent sample consisted of 35 Latino mother/father pairs. All were parents of children who entered kindergarten Fall, 2000. The teacher sample consisted of 33 kindergarten teachers from two large school districts in a western state.

Major findings indicate that some differences do exist between teachers' and Latino parents' priorities for requisite kindergarten entry skills as well as their rankings of the importance of specified skills to be emphasized in kindergarten. Supporting previous research, both mothers and fathers rated academic concepts such as counting, reading, and writing higher than teachers. By contrast, teachers rated more developmentally appropriate concepts higher. All groups agreed that parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten, but parents and teachers differed in their responses of what parents could specifically do to encourage this preparation. Teachers mentioned reading to children, enriching the child's environment, and communication more often than both mothers and fathers. Parents were more likely to mention emotional support and discussing school with their children as ways parents could foster kindergarten preparation.

Teachers expected native English-speaking children to know how to follow directions upon kindergarten entry more than they expected it for nonnative English-speaking children. Furthermore, teachers who had training in ESL education placed more emphasis on incorporating speaking skills in nonnative children's kindergarten curricula than did teachers without multicultural training. Also included in the study are concrete examples of concerns Latino parents have as their child enters school, challenges teachers face in having linguistic diversity in their classroom, as well as teacher suggestions for improving ESL kindergarten preparation.

Implications of these findings for parents, schools, and children are discussed.

Suggestions for future research are then offered.

(150 pages)

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Shanda Stephens

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The transition to kindergarten is a critical point in a child's development (Early, Pianta, & Cox, 1999; Gredler, 1997; Lombardi, 1992). Kindergarten entry comes at a time when children are expected to manifest independence from parents, display intellectual abilities in a formal setting, and engage in increased social contact with peers (Early et al., 1999). The challenges to which children are exposed upon entrance into kindergarten set the stage for later school success (Early et al., 1999; Lombardi, 1992; May & Kundert, 1997). The importance of the transition to school has been exemplified in the "National Goals for 2000: Educate America Act" (U.S. Department of Education, 1996). In 1990, the President of the United States and the National Governors' Association set eight educational goals for the new century. The first of these goals was that "by the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn" (U.S. Department of Education, 1996, p. 1).

Statement of the Problem

Although the national goals reflect the importance of school readiness issues, little is known about the ecology of the kindergarten transition period (Early et al., 1999; Mangione & Speth, 1998). Presently, there is no direct measurement of kindergarten readiness, nor is there consensus on critical activities that foster readiness (Early et al., 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 1993). Kindergarten readiness is commonly determined by assessment and screening (Early et al., 1999; May & Kundert, 1997),

which places the sole responsibility of school readiness on the child. This approach to readiness fails to recognize the important role parents, teachers, and society play in the lives of children.

Early et al. (1999) developed the “Contextual Systems Model” that applies the ecological theory to kindergarten readiness. This ecological approach defines interactions among the child, school, classroom, teachers, family, and community as considerable influences in the child’s transition to kindergarten.

This ecological approach looks to the child’s on-going experience in context, as well as the interactions and relationships that develop and continue over time, to explain the child’s experiences during this transition. Such an approach enlarges the focus from the child alone, to the entire system in which the child operates. (Early et al., 1999, p. 28)

An approach such as this creates a broader perspective for understanding issues of kindergarten readiness (Early et al., 1999).

School readiness issues are of particular interest with regard to Latino children. The Latino population is the fastest growing of all ethnic groups in the United States. Between 1980 and 2000, the Latino population in the United States increased by 55% (United States Census Bureau, 1998, 2000). Currently, Latinos comprise approximately 11% of the national population (United States Census Bureau, 2000) and 6.3% of the Utah population (Utah Office of Planning and Budget, 1996). The United States Census Bureau (1998) has estimated that the Latino population will reach 24.5% of the national population by the year 2050.

Latino children are increasingly becoming an integral part of the education system. In the 1998-99 school year, 7.2% of Utah K-12 students were Latino (Utah State Office

of Education, 1999). Latino children are the largest and fastest growing minority group in the Utah educational system. There are more Latino children enrolled in Utah schools than all other ethnic minorities combined (Utah State Office of Education, 1999).

Although the Latino population is increasing, little research has been done to understand these children's transition into the school system (Cosden, Zimmer, Reyes, & Gutierrez, 1995; Espinosa, 1995).

Kindergarten readiness takes on a new meaning when dealing with an ethnic minority (De Cos, 1997). Spanish-speaking children fall behind in academic skills at a very young age and tend to stay behind their peers throughout their schooling (Cosden et al., 1995; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Espinosa, 1995; Goldenberg, Reese, & Gallimore, 1992; Mendoza, 1994). Approximately 50% of Latino students leave school prior to graduation (Fisher, 1998; Garcia, 1997). Thirty-eight percent of Latino students are held back at least one grade in elementary school (Garcia). Latino children are significantly below national norms on academic achievement tests in reading, math, science, social science, and writing (Garcia). Therefore, it is important to examine readiness issues within Latino populations in order to meet the national goal and improve future academic achievement.

Objectives of the Study

This study examined parental and teacher expectations of kindergarten readiness of Latino children. The perceptions of Latino mothers, Latino fathers, and kindergarten teachers were compared. Comparisons were also made of the expectations teachers have for nonnative English-speaking children and native English-speaking children. The results

of this study provide information to enhance communication between the parents and teachers of Latino children; encourage continuity between the educational beliefs of parents and teachers; foster congruence in the expectations that are placed on Latino children at home and at school; and better prepare the children to make the transition into formal schooling.

Research Questions

This study examined the opinions of Latino parents and kindergarten teachers concerning requisite skills for children prior to kindergarten entry. Comparisons were made among the following groups: mothers and fathers, kindergarten teachers and mothers, and kindergarten teachers and fathers. Four research questions were addressed: (a) Are there statistically significant differences between mothers', fathers', and kindergarten teachers' perceptions of what **parents can do** to prepare children for kindergarten?; (b) Are there statistically significant differences in the **priorities** that mothers, fathers, and kindergarten teachers hold for requisite kindergarten entry skills?; (c) Are there statistically significant differences between mothers', fathers', and kindergarten teachers' **rankings** of the importance of specified skills to be emphasized in kindergarten?; (d) Are there statistically significant differences between teachers' **expectations** of kindergarten children who speak English as a second language and kindergarten children who speak English as a first language? In addition to these research questions, two areas consider parent and teacher perceptions about kindergarten.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Latino Families

Although the Latino population tends to be lumped into one category, Latinos are comprised of ethnically diverse individuals. The term “Latino” includes people belonging to different cultural, economic, ethnic, linguistic, national-origin, racial, religious, and social backgrounds. Two-hundred thousand Latinos immigrate legally to the U.S. every year. Latinos are Mexican, Puerto Rican, Spanish, Cuban, Central American, or South American (Espinosa, 1995; Fisher, 1998). In Utah, 68% of the Latino population are Mexican, 2.5% are Puerto Rican, and 0.6% are Cuban. The remaining 28% are from other various Spanish-speaking countries (Utah Office of Planning and Budget, 1996).

Many Latino families have lived in the U.S. for centuries, while others have recently migrated. Furthermore, there are important differences in the socialization processes of U.S.-born Latinos and those born and raised in Latin American countries (Garcia, 1997). It is important to recognize that the Latino culture is made up of various populations with a tremendous range of different historical, political, economic, and social backgrounds. Thus, educators must avoid making gross generalizations about the Latino population (Fisher, 1998; Garcia, 1997).

The Latino family plays a critical role in Utah communities and schools. The Utah Office of Planning and Budget (1996) has estimated Latino buying power in Utah at \$1.39 billion each year and this rate continues to rise as the Latino population increases. Within

the Latino population, youth (ages 0-19) are the fastest growing age group (United States Census Bureau, 1998, 2000). Locally, similar trends are taking place. The governor's office reported a growth rate of over 200% in the Cache County Latino population between 1980-1990. It is estimated that the Latino youth population in Cache County is 1,376 (Measures of Child Well-Being in Utah, 1999). However, according to local school authorities these numbers are greatly underestimated. High mobility rates, illegal residential status, and rapid population growth make it difficult to report accurate estimates.

With the growth of the Latino population, it is essential to consider the well-being of the children who come from these families. Historically, however, Latinos have held a pattern of continuous underachievement (Garcia, 1997). Currently, Latino families have significantly higher rates of both poverty and being headed by single parents (Cosden et al., 1995; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Espinosa, 1995; Goldenberg et al., 1992; Mendoza, 1994). Latino families are twice as likely to live below the poverty line as non-Latino families (Garcia, 1997). In 1992, 26.2% of Latino families lived in poverty as compared to 10.4% of non-Latino White families (Garcia, 1997). The adverse outcomes for children living in poverty include poor nutrition, less health care, and a higher probability of underachievement in the school system (Mendoza, 1994).

Latino children fall behind in academic skills at a very young age and tend to stay behind their peers throughout their school years (Cosden et al., 1995; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Espinosa, 1995; Goldenberg et al., 1992; Mendoza, 1994). Thirty-eight percent of Latino elementary students are held back at least one grade level and nearly half of the

Latino student population drop out of school prior to high school graduation (Fisher, 1998; Garcia, 1997). In Utah, 15% of high school dropouts are Latino (Utah State Office of Education, 1999). Because Latino children are significantly below national norms on academic achievement tests in reading, math, science, social science, and writing (Garcia, 1997), there is a need to address issues about Latino children's early schooling in order to enable them to achieve academically (Cosden et al., 1995).

The Kindergarten Experience

The word kindergarten literally means "children's garden." Friedrich Froebel started the first kindergarten in Germany in 1837. He developed a philosophy of education for young children that has profoundly impacted curriculum planning in early childhood programs (Bryant & Clifford, 1992; Entwisle, Alexander, Cadigan, & Pallas, 1987). Froebel emphasized the importance of children's learning through movement, creativity, independence, spontaneity, music, outdoor experiences, and play (De Cos, 1997; Schultz & Lombardi, 1989).

In the past, kindergarten was the child's first exposure to the school experience (Nurss, 1987). Today this is not the case for a majority of children. Many parents are placing children in day care, pre-kindergarten, or preschool settings. In 1997, 24 million American children were enrolled in a pre-primary education program (UNESCO, 1999). Statistics for 1970 show that only six million children were enrolled in these programs (UNESCO). Because of this shift, the role of the kindergarten program has changed. Kindergarten has now become an integral part of the elementary school curriculum. More

kindergartens are teaching concepts of reading, writing, mathematics, and science that used to be taught in first grade while preschool is increasingly becoming what kindergarten used to be (Hatch & Freeman, 1988; McGill-Franzen, 1993; NAEYC, 1990; Nurss, 1987; Shepard, 1997; Smyser, 1990; Warger, 1998). Because of the move towards increased numbers of children attending programs earlier in life, many children are inappropriately expected to perform at levels higher than their abilities allow (De Cos, 1997; Nurss, 1987).

Ninety-four percent of 5-year-old Latino children are entering kindergarten each year (National Council of La Raza, 1999). However, many are experiencing care outside the home for the first time (Fisher, 1998). Unlike children in non-Latino homes, Latino children are more likely to be nurtured by extended family during the preschool years. Relatives such as aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, and godparents aid parents in caring for the children (Fuller, Eggerspiero, Holloway, Liang, & Rambaud, 1996). “Among four-year-olds in 1996, only one in five Latinos (22.1%) was enrolled in a pre-primary program, compared to two in five Whites and Blacks (39.6% and 40.5% respectively)” (National Council of La Raza, 1999, p. 3). This enrollment gap reverses, however, upon kindergarten entry. “Among five-year-olds in 1996, 94% of Latinos were enrolled in kindergarten, in comparison to 88.8% of Whites” (National Council of La Raza, 1999, p. 3). These statistics show that over three fourths of Latino children are entering kindergarten without prior school experience, which raises concerns about their readiness for school upon kindergarten entry (Early et al., 1999).

The Concept of Kindergarten Readiness

The concept of school readiness is often poorly defined and has been debated for over a century (Diamond, Reagan, & Bandyk, 2000; Katz, 1991; May & Kundert, 1997; National Education Goals Panel, 1997). Opinions about readiness fluctuate between people, among cultures, and across time (National Education Goals Panel). Ambiguity in defining readiness makes it difficult to ascertain what skills are necessary for kindergarten preparation.

Literature about school readiness is generally divided into two areas. The first is the maturationalist perspective. This theory suggests that the responsibility of readiness lies with the child (De Cos, 1997; Diamond et al., 2000; Katz, 1991; May & Kundert, 1997). From this perspective, school success depends on the child's maturity level. The second position of school readiness places responsibility on the school system being ready for children (Katz, 1991). "To help children make the transition to school, schools should offer a curriculum based on the principles of early childhood education programs" (Mangione & Speth, 1998, p. 383). This perspective acknowledges the contribution of heredity, yet emphasizes the importance of the learning environments (De Cos, 1997; Diamond et al., 2000; May & Kundert, 1997).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) position statement on school readiness (1990) suggests that families, schools, and communities take part in preparing children for the transition into formal schooling. This helps not only the child be ready for the school, but the school be ready for the child

(Katz, 1991). In order to accomplish this goal, NAEYC suggests that schools and communities need to become more responsive to individual and family needs (NAEYC, 1990). They need to encourage the establishment of comprehensive services to families prior to school entry as well as teacher training programs for developmentally appropriate practice. Through these services, families and teachers will better understand normative child development and be able to plan child-initiated learning experiences that will enhance children's learning capabilities (NAEYC, 1990).

In 1997, the National Education Goals Panel suggested five areas that would enhance children's preparation for school. The first area incorporated health and physical development. The panel stated that children who were active, alert, and robust were better able to succeed in the school life experience (National Education Goals Panel, 1997). The second area that improved school preparation was emotional well-being and social competence. "A solid base of emotional security and social competence enables children to participate fully in learning experiences and form good relationships with teachers and peers" (National Education Goals Panel, 1997, p. 3). The third area included approaches to learning. Children who were motivated and had a positive attitude about learning were more likely to succeed in their academic endeavors. The fourth area involved communication skills. Language proficiency and communication competence were essential in order to understand the academic concepts and form relationships with teachers and peers. The final suggestion to enhance children's readiness for school was general knowledge and cognition. Children learned best when they were able to incorporate new learning situations with existing knowledge and acquired experiences

(National Education Goals Panel, 1997). These five dimensions of readiness were not expected to be fully developed upon kindergarten entry, but are concepts that should be nurtured and enhanced by families, educators, and communities to better prepare children to be ready to learn (National Education Goals Panel, 1997).

Assessing Kindergarten Readiness

Standardized screening tests are commonly used to assess children's readiness prior to kindergarten entrance. These tests have been criticized for their lack of reliability and validity (Shepard, 1997). While it is important to assess the child's level of readiness, standardized readiness tests are often misused as criteria for determining school entrance (Dever & Barta, in press; Gredler, 1997; NAEYC, 1990; Shepard, 1997).

In 1997, Utah legislators approved a bill that mandates kindergarten readiness screening. It is designed to present kindergarten teachers, administrators, and state inservice teachers with information to enhance curriculum planning (Dever & Barta, in press). Regardless of their purported purpose, standardized tests are still criticized for being developmentally inappropriate for kindergarten children (NAEYC, 1990; National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education, 1987). Moreover, the varying levels of children's developmental capabilities at this age decrease the likelihood of obtaining accurate results from such measures (NAEYC, 1988; National Education Goals Panel, 1997).

When expectations for school readiness are confined to a narrow list of skills, the complexity of the child's development is ignored. Often very normal children are judged

inadequately and fail to meet standards placed by the testing measure (NAEYC, 1990).

“This does not mean that the acquisition of basic skills is unimportant; rather, focusing solely on isolated skills deprives children of the meaningful context that promotes effective learning” (NAEYC, 1990, p. 22).

Studies show that assessment measures are ineffective and tend to screen out the children who are most likely to benefit from the kindergarten experience (Egertson, 1989; Katz, 1991; NAEYC, 1988, 1990; Shepard, 1997). Furthermore, the removal of “less-ready” children contributes to the increasing demands of kindergarten curriculum and carries the curriculum further and further away from developmentally appropriate expectations for kindergarten children (Diamond et al., 2000; NAEYC, 1990; Shepard, 1997).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children has stressed the inappropriateness of testing children between the ages of 3 and 8. They have stated that this type of testing leads to inappropriate teaching practices. Because teachers are pressured into preparing children for tests, they do not spend the necessary time teaching children how to develop problem-solving abilities (NAEYC, 1988).

The Southeastern Regional Vision for Education (1995) has suggested using alternative assessments to ascertain how well children can think, analyze, and solve problems. They include items such as portfolios, journals, demonstrations, parental conferences, or other “real-life” tasks that will more closely demonstrate a child’s capabilities (SERVE, 1995).

Defining Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP), first articulated in the mid-1980s, focuses on children's cognitive, social, physical, and emotional development, along with cultural and family background, to create a child-centered learning atmosphere (NAEYC, 1986). DAP was primarily derived from Piaget's cognitive development theory and Vygotsky's social-historical theory (Crain, 1992). Piaget's theory suggests that learning takes place through a series of developmental stages. Individuals progress through the stages at different rates (Crain, 1992). Vygotsky's theory focuses on the importance of assisting learning through a process called "scaffolding" (Crain, 1992). The combination of these theories of development demonstrates that learning is a process derived from complex interactions between the child's own development and the outside world (NAEYC, 1986).

DAP suggests that children in their early elementary years learn best through active exploration of their environment (Bryant & Clifford, 1992; Schultz & Lombardi, 1989; Stoops, Horowitz, Kalkowski, Shaughnessy, & Hernandez, 1991). DAP further asserts that children should "respond to their natural curiosity, reaffirm a sense of self, promote positive disposition towards learning, and help build increasingly complex skills in the use of language, problem solving, and cooperation" (Lombardi, 1992, p. 2). The aim of DAP classrooms is not only to maximize quantifiable knowledge and skills, but also to encourage each child to expand his or her own knowledge through active exploration (De Cos, 1997; Egertson, 1989; Nurss, 1987; Paulus, 1997; Stoops et al., 1991). DAP also

advocates helping minority children understand the world through their language, culture, home, school, and community environments. Children come to school with some knowledge about their world and integrate it through learning experiences and interactions in the classroom (Garcia, 1997).

The High/Scope Preschool Curriculum Comparison Study examined the longitudinal effects of three preschool curriculum models on 68 disadvantaged children in Ypsilanti, Michigan (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1997). The project began in 1967 to compare direct instruction, traditional nursery school, and High/Scope, the latter two of which have subsequently been defined as developmentally appropriate programs. The participating children were randomly assigned to the different programs (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1997). After 20 years of comparison, a significantly higher percentage of the group that received the High/Scope had fewer special education placements, fewer grade retentions, and were more likely to graduate from high school (Stoops et al., 1991). Long-term effects also included higher employment levels after graduation and fewer arrests (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1997; Stoops et al., 1991). Findings from other studies indicate that the implementation of DAP in preschool and kindergarten classrooms decreases stress-related behaviors (Burts, Hart, Charlesworth, & Kirk, 1990; Burts et al., 1992; Hart et al., 1998); increases motivation to pursue and complete tasks (Hirsch-Pasek, 1991); enhances academic achievement (Burts et al., 1993); and promotes positive behavioral outcomes for children from various ethnic and family backgrounds (Burts et al., 1993; Hart et al., 1998; Jambunathan, Burts, & Pierce, 1999).

Multicultural Education

The number of children entering the public school system with little or no English experience is dramatically increasing. The 2000 census data indicate that 14% of all U.S. residents age 5 and older speak a language other than English at home and over 17 million Americans report speaking Spanish in the home (United States Census Bureau, 2000). There was a 41% increase in nonnative English-speaking children who entered the public school system from 1980-1990 nationwide (National Council of La Raza, 1999). This trend is continuing, yet most teachers have limited knowledge about cultural and linguistic groups. Relatively few teachers have received training in multicultural education (Avery & Walker, 1993; Byrnes & Kiger, 1997; Garcia, 1997).

Falconer (1998) studied beliefs, attitudes, and practices with regard to culturally diverse education. Her research was derived from a case study in a rural K-2 school in Utah. She interviewed teachers, administrators, and parents from this school, and found that the majority of teachers and administrators in the school wanted ESL (English as a second language) children to learn English quickly. Communication barriers hindered teachers' ability to understand the background of the Latino families in their community. They held the belief that Latino families may not value education. In the classroom, they were also less responsive to nonnative English-speaking children than to native English-speaking children. On the other hand, teachers with special training in ESL, who were aware of cultural and linguistic diversity, were more responsive to the needs of the nonnative English-speaking children in their classrooms. They were culturally sensitive to

their students, implemented more developmentally appropriate principles, modified instructional techniques, and made connections between home and school that fostered diverse learning experiences for both nonnative English-speaking children and native English-speaking children.

Byrnes and Kiger (1997) also studied teachers' attitudes about language diversity and linguistically diverse students. They examined the beliefs of 191 teachers in Arizona, Utah, and Virginia. Using the "Language Attitudes of Teachers Scale," relationships were examined between attitudes about cultural diversity and the multicultural education of the teacher. Teachers who had received training in multicultural education had more positive attitudes about teaching culturally diverse students (Byrnes & Kiger, 1997).

In order to foster DAP for culturally diverse students, "teachers must be given the opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge, and positive attitudes necessary to be effective educators of culturally diverse students" (Falconer, 1998, p. 195). Banks (1992) suggested enhancing teachers' multicultural knowledge through curriculum enhancement programs in the school district, teaching-style workshops, or through certification from a university.

For the optimal development and learning of all children, educators must accept the legitimacy of children's home language, respect (hold high in regard) and value (esteem, appreciate) the home culture, and promote and encourage the active involvement and support of all families, including extended and non-traditional family units. (NAEYC, 1996, p. 5)

These suggestions, along with experience in teaching linguistically diverse students, will better prepare teachers for their expanding role as multicultural educators; enhance their

understanding of the children's family and cultural backgrounds; and improve their ability to meet the children's educational needs (Byrnes & Kiger, 1997).

Bridging Home and School

Continuity between home and school facilitates the transition into kindergarten (Early et al., 1999; Mangione & Speth, 1998; Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 1999). With continuity, families and children are able to form relationships with teachers and the school system which build connections for a whole learning experience (Mangione & Speth, 1998). In order to provide continuity between home and school, parents and teachers need to communicate. It is important to understand the relationship between home and school, especially incongruities between them, in order to enhance learning and achievement (Garcia, 1997; Lombardi, 1992). If parents and teachers have similar beliefs, expectations, and attitudes of readiness, the children will more readily make the transition into kindergarten (Harradine & Clifford, 1996; Morisset, 1994; West, 1993).

A great challenge of educating Latino children today lies in understanding their diverse sociocultural backgrounds and integrating this diversity into the academic system to promote continuity (Bernhard, Lefebvre, Kilbride, Chud, & Lange, 1998; Garcia, 1997; Lombardi, 1992; NAEYC, 1996). NAEYC's position statement on cultural diversity states that "early childhood educators can best help linguistically and culturally diverse children and their families by acknowledging and responding to the importance of the child's home language and culture" (1996, p. 12). Many educators are unfamiliar with Latino family traditions, the attitudes Latino parents have about education, and are unable

to communicate with parents in order to foster continuity (Bernhard et al., 1998; Pappas, 1997).

Mangione and Speth (1998) studied continuity in early childhood programs. Interviews and focus group conversations were recorded to create a framework of appropriate elements that define continuity in early childhood programs. The authors established 36 focus groups in 18 different states. Each focus group consisted of educators, parents, and community members from that school district. The participants in each focus group met to discuss matters of continuity and to collaborate efforts to enhance continuity between programs. Structured interviews were also conducted with members of the focus groups to better understand their opinions about continuity. The collaborative groups defined eight main elements that promote positive transitions: families as partners in education; shared leadership between home, school, and community; comprehensive health, education, and social services provided for individual children and families; provision of services that are consistent with home culture and language; open communication between home, school, and community partners; continual development of knowledge and skills through the use of home and community networks; provision of developmentally appropriate care and education; and continuous evaluation of the partnership to improve policies, programs, and practices (Mangione & Speth, 1998). This framework helps schools prepare to be responsive to a wide variety of family experiences and backgrounds, and to be able to promote continuity between home and school (Johnson, Gallagher, Cook, & Wong, 1995; Morisset, 1994; Nurss, 1987).

Latino parents have consistently demonstrated low rates of involvement in schools (Bauch, 1992; Espinosa, 1995; Garcia, 1997; Goldenberg et al., 1992; Inger, 1992; Nicolau & Ramos, 1990). Much of this is attributed to differences in cultural socialization patterns, and differing expectations of teachers and parents (Espinosa, 1995; Garcia, 1997; Inger, 1992). Literature suggests that Latino parents have demonstrated desires to become involved in their child's education, but many cultural and linguistic barriers hinder their ability to do so (Bernhard et al., 1998; Lombardi, 1992; Pappas, 1997). Parents may feel embarrassed about their English skills and because of this, they may appear shy or noncommunicative (Pappas, 1997). There are also differing cultural views about educational roles of parents and teachers.

In the traditional U.S. school system, parents are expected to take responsibility for their children's educational success by preparing them for school, teaching basic skills and reinforcing what goes on in the classroom after children reach school age. Most low-income Latino immigrants and migrant parents are unfamiliar with this role. Less acculturated Latino parents believe it is their duty to instill respect and proper behavior in their children and it is the school's job to instill knowledge. (Pappas, 1997, pp. 2-3)

Moreover, Latino parents may feel intimidated by the complex educational system of the U.S., and may feel inadequate in the formal school setting (Pappas, 1997). These differences in socialization may hinder the development of continuity between the home and the school (Espinosa, 1995; Garcia, 1997; Inger, 1992; Lombardi, 1992; Pappas, 1997).

Although Latino parents are less likely to participate in their child's education, research has shown that efforts on the part of educators has helped them become more

involved (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Inger, 1992; Jones & Velez, 1997; Pappas, 1997). The “Hispanic Development Project” was instituted to examine parental relationships with the school (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990). Forty-two projects were developed throughout the country. Over a period of 3 years, each project explored a wide variety of activities designed to recruit Latino parents and retain their involvement (Nicolau & Ramos). Some activities were very successful and others were not. Although many of the activities failed, valuable insights were gained from both the successes and the failures. The study showed that impersonal efforts such as flyers, notes, or announcements were highly ineffective. Parents were much more likely to participate when personal, face-to-face contacts were made in their primary language (Nicolau & Ramos).

Garcia (1997) suggested three steps to help educators bridge the home and school environments of Latino families: understand the culture of the child’s family; learn small phrases in the child’s original language to show children and families your willingness to understand; and incorporate cultural activities into the curriculum (Garcia). Greater efforts are needed to provide all families with accessibility to the school system and assure that kindergarten curricula are designed to enable all children to be successful in their educational endeavors (Cosden et al., 1995; Garcia, 1997; Jones & Velez, 1997; Pappas, 1997).

Parental Expectations of Kindergarten Readiness

Parental perceptions of a child’s performance abilities and the expectations that they place upon them greatly impact the child’s success and adjustment into the school

system (Early et al., 1999). Beliefs held by parents profoundly influence the ways in which a child communicates, cooperates, and learns (West, 1993). Parental expectations about school readiness influence the timing of kindergarten entry; the level of parental participation in the transition; and the amount of time spent in preparation for kindergarten (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Early et al., 1999; Seefeldt, Denton, & Younoszai, 1998; West, 1993).

Research indicates that parents tend to stress the importance of academic achievement of their kindergarten-aged children and fathers tend to place even greater emphasis on these intellectual abilities than do mothers (Esparza, 1998; Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989; West, 1993). Most parents feel that emphasis on academic skills, such as counting and alphabet recognition, are necessary for school readiness (West, 1993). It is important to note, however, that parents also rank socioemotional development as an integral factor for kindergarten readiness (Esparza, 1998; Harradine & Clifford, 1996; Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989; West, 1993).

In a recent study, Diamond et al. (2000) compared Hispanic, African-American and Caucasian parent's perceptions of kindergarten. They found that non-Caucasian parents had significantly more concerns about their child entering school than Caucasian parents. There is also considerable evidence that parents from lower socioeconomic levels and those who have less educational background are more likely to place higher importance on academic structure in kindergarten (Bernhard et al., 1998; Stipeck & Byler, 1997; West, 1993). West (1993) found that these parents were the most likely to place greater emphasis on "observable and concrete skills of self-sufficiency and independence

than upon the more abstract development in the emotional and receptive language domains” (p. 4). Parents from low-income families are likely to have less formal schooling, which may hinder their access to information about school readiness and impact the expectations they place on their own children (Early et al., 1999).

Kindergarten Teachers’ Expectations of Kindergarten Readiness

Teachers’ expectations of children, their interactions with them, and attitudes about them are associated with classroom adjustment and performance (De Cos, 1997; Early et al., 1999; Hains, Fowler, Schwartz, Kottwitz, & Rosenkoetter, 1987; Pianta & Nimetz, 1991). Teachers who are committed to their students and understand their backgrounds are better able to communicate, help children participate, and facilitate learning in their bilingual students (Garcia, 1997).

The majority of kindergarten teachers are aware of the importance of developmentally appropriate learning (Early et al., 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 1993; West, 1993). In a national, representative study by the U.S. Department of Education (1993), kindergarten teachers’ views on children’s readiness for school were examined. A sample of 860 schools was randomly selected to participate in the study. Lists of kindergarten teachers were obtained from these schools, and survey questionnaires were mailed to the teachers. Ninety-five percent of the teachers responded. The most important aspect of readiness reported by these teachers was that the child is “physically healthy, well-rested, and well-nourished” (U. S. Department of Education, 1993, p. 5). The second most important requisite skill for children was the ability to

communicate verbally with others. Also of great importance were positive social skills and an enthusiasm for learning. Of least importance to teachers were academic skills such as problem-solving, counting, and alphabet recognition (U.S. Department of Education). Likewise, the finding that teachers place greatest emphasis on good physical health, communication, and social skills, with least emphasis on academic skills has emerged in numerous other studies (Esparza, 1998; Hains et al., 1987; Harradine & Clifford, 1996; Johnson et al., 1995; Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989; Nurss, 1987; Paulus, 1997).

The national, representative kindergarten teacher study (U.S. Department of Education, 1993) also examined teachers' perceptions of the parental role in preparing children for school. Nearly all of these teachers mentioned that parents could best prepare children for kindergarten by reading to their children (99%) and playing counting games at home with them (99%).

Stipeck and Byler (1997) also examined teachers' beliefs. They evaluated 60 preschool, kindergarten, and first grade teachers' beliefs, goals, and practices in early childhood education classrooms. Direct observation and questionnaires were used to understand the teachers' beliefs, goals, and practices. They found that kindergarten teachers believed in developmentally appropriate practices, but had difficulty implementing them. This was attributed to parental pressure, curriculum constraints, and administrator regulations (Stipeck & Byler, 1997). Because of the incongruity of parental and teacher beliefs, continuity from home to school is more difficult to achieve (West, 1993). There needs to be better communication between teachers and parents about requisite

kindergarten entry skills to foster continuity and improve school readiness (Garcia, 1997; Lombardi, 1992; Mangione & Speth, 1998).

Comparisons Between Teacher and Parental Expectations of Kindergarten Readiness

If parents and teachers have similar beliefs and attitudes about their expectations, children will find more continuity and make the natural transition into kindergarten more readily (Harradine & Clifford, 1996; Morisset, 1994; West, 1993). The literature indicates, however, that parents place more emphasis on academic performance than do teachers (Esparza, 1998; Harradine & Clifford, 1996; Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989; Poresky & Morris, 1993).

Parents and teachers have been found to differ significantly in their beliefs and expectations regarding requisite kindergarten entry skills (Esparza, 1998; Harradine & Clifford, 1996; Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989; West, 1993). Knudsen-Lindauer and Harris (1989) assessed parental and teacher beliefs about kindergarten entry skills. Their study examined the beliefs of 146 kindergarten teachers and 436 parents of kindergarten children from two school districts in the Western United States. The opinions of fathers, mothers, and teachers were examined and compared. They found that fathers placed a higher priority on counting, reading, and writing than did mothers, but both parents rated intellectual skills significantly higher than the teachers (Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989).

When asked what parents could do to prepare their child for kindergarten, inconsistencies also appear. Esparza (1998) examined mothers' ($n = 143$), fathers' ($n = 143$), preschool teachers' ($n = 101$), and kindergarten teachers' ($n = 103$) perceptions about the parental role in kindergarten preparation. Teachers more frequently mentioned reading to children, communication, and developing self-help skills as ways parents could better prepare their children for kindergarten, while parents mentioned emotional development more often. Fathers were more likely than both mothers and teachers to mention the importance of parents teaching math concepts to their children. Although teachers placed greater emphasis on reading to children than mothers and fathers, all groups recognized it as an important aspect of the parental role in kindergarten preparation.

A study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (West, 1993) also compared parental and teacher beliefs concerning kindergarten readiness issues. The data were obtained through two nationally representative surveys: the 1993 National Household Education Survey and the Survey of Kindergarten Teachers on Student Readiness. The household survey used random-digit-dial telephone interviews to obtain parental opinions about kindergarten readiness ($N = 12,905$). Kindergarten teacher opinions were obtained from 860 randomly selected schools. The kindergarten teachers in these schools received questionnaires through the mail ($N = 1,416$). The study showed that 80% of parents place great emphasis on sitting still and paying attention, while only 42% of kindergarten teachers consider this an important skill. Parents were also three times more likely to emphasize the importance of using pencils or paint brushes for

kindergarten readiness (West, 1993). Literature in this area consistently shows inconsistencies between parental and teacher expectations (Bernhard et al., 1998; Harradine & Clifford, 1996; Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989).

With differing views between parental and teacher expectations, it is important to make parents aware of child development patterns and age-appropriate growth to provide them with continuity in their transition into the school system (Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989). Effective communication patterns between parents and teachers need to be established to provide information for parents in order to foster the requisite skills children need to enter kindergarten (Esparza, 1998; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Goldenberg et al., 1992). More effort needs to be made to enhance congruence between the educational beliefs of parents and teachers (NAEYC, 1990).

Synthesis of Literature

Present literature on kindergarten readiness focuses primarily on parental and teacher expectations of Caucasian children. Very little research has been conducted on teacher expectations of Spanish-speaking children. Moreover, few investigations have examined parental and cultural expectations of Latinos' interactions with the school system (Cosden et al., 1995; Espinosa, 1995).

How kindergarten readiness is interpreted may be compounded by children's cultural and language diversity (De Cos, 1997). As stated earlier, the teachers' second most important requisite skill for kindergarten children involves the ability to communicate verbally with others (U.S. Department of Education, 1993).

The language diversity in schools complicates the issue of readiness for kindergarten, often making it difficult for teachers and children to communicate with one another. A child may be developmentally ready to begin school; however, it may be difficult to ascertain his or her readiness if the child is unable to communicate his or her abilities to the teacher. (De Cos, 1997 , p. 12)

These factors may inhibit a child from entering or progressing in kindergarten.

Because Latino children are a significant part of America's future, research needs to be conducted examining the expectations placed upon them (Fisher, 1998). Similarities and differences in parental and teacher expectations of children need to be assessed in order to enhance parent-teacher communication, encourage the development of a family-friendly school, and cultivate a learning atmosphere. In doing this, administrators, educators, and parents may foster the academic readiness of the largest minority and fastest growing population of children in America (Garcia, 1997). This study seeks to address these concerns by comparing the opinions of Latino parents and kindergarten teachers about kindergarten readiness issues.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Sample

A correlational design was implemented in this study. Comparisons were made between the beliefs of kindergarten teachers, Latino fathers, and Latino mothers about the following: (a) the role of parents in preparing the child to enter kindergarten, (b) the priorities placed upon requisite skills needed to enter kindergarten, and (c) the importance of skills that are emphasized in kindergarten. Moreover, comparisons were made between kindergarten teachers' expectations of nonnative English-speaking and native English-speaking kindergarten children.

Parent Participants

This study used a purposive sample of Latino families. Attempts were made to contact parents in the Cache and Logan school districts. However, the Logan school district would not allow any research during, or prior to the first month of the school year (see Appendix A). Because the focus of this study was the opinions of parents before school entry and Cache school district was willing to facilitate this, the parental data were collected only from a sample of parents in the Cache school district. Families were first identified through Cache school district's ESL specialists, and the researcher then contacted the families by phone in their native language. Forty-three families were contacted, and only 3 declined the offer to participate. The first 40 families that agreed to

participate were given questionnaires. Of the 40 who originally agreed to participate, 90% ($N = 35$) completed and returned their questionnaires.

The demographic information for mothers and fathers is shown in Tables 1 and 2. As seen in Table 1, parents were very similar in age, level of education, and number of children. It is interesting to note that parent's average education level was very low ($M = 9.21$). The completed education level ranged from 0-18 years; however, most were in three categories: 17% completed their schooling at 6th grade, 20% at 9th grade, and 21% finished their education with high school (12th grade). Several parents (6%) had never attended school.

Table 2 illustrates parents' SES levels, which were calculated using Hollingshead's (1975) Four Factor Index of Social Position. The four factors were calculated using mother's and father's level of education and occupation, which is then weighted and results in a score for the couple. Overall SES ratings ranged from 4 to 55 ($M = 23.01$).

Table 1

Mean Parental Ages, Years of Education, and Number of Children

Statistic	Age			Years of education			Number of children		
	Moms	Dads	Both	Moms	Dads	Both	Moms	Dads	Both
<u>n</u>	27	32	59	35	35	70	35	35	70
Range	21-50	25-49	21-50	0-18	0-15	0-18	2-6	2-6	2-6
Mean	30.52	32.66	31.68	9.03	9.40	9.21	3.29	3.34	3.31
<u>SD</u>	6.20	5.58	5.92	3.83	3.80	3.79	1.13	1.11	3.31

Table 2

Parent's SES Based on Hollingshead's (1975) Four Factor Index of Social Position

Group	Couples (n)	Range of rating	Mean rating
1	1	55 — 66	55.0
2	3	40 — 54	43.3
3	6	30 — 39	34.0
4	9	20 — 29	24.4
5	13	8 — 19	14.4
Unemployed	2	0 — 8	4.0
Total (overall)	34	0 — 55	23.3

Note. Demographic information was not obtained from one couple.

Group 1 (55-66) is classified as major business and professional; group 2 (40-54) as medium business, minor professional, and technical; group 3 (30-39) is skilled crafts, clerical, and sales workers; group 4 (20-29) is machine operators, semi-skilled workers; and group 5 (8-19) is classified as unskilled laborers, menial service workers. The unemployed (0-8) are also listed.

Teacher Participants

The teacher population consisted of all the kindergarten teachers in Cache and Logan school districts ($N = 37$). Because Logan school district prohibited research during the first month of school, the teacher data were collected from both districts 6 weeks following the beginning of the school year. Following district and individual principal approval, teachers were personally given a questionnaire by the researcher to return in the

mail. Thirty-six teachers returned their questionnaires, but only 33 questionnaires had complete responses to all questions. Table 3 illustrates the demographic characteristics of participating kindergarten teachers. Included in this table are age, education level, and total years of teaching experience. It is interesting to note that over half the sample (57%) had completed or were in the process of completing a master's degree. It is also important to consider that 36% of the teacher sample had completed courses in ESL training.

Measurement

The Kindergarten Parent Questionnaire and the Kindergarten Teacher

Questionnaire were the two instruments that were used in this study. They were first developed in 1989 by Knudsen-Lindauer and Harris, and were simplified by Esparza (1998). This study used Esparza's simplified version to enhance clarity and brevity. The Kindergarten Teacher Questionnaire was slightly altered for the current study in order to compare beliefs placed on children who are nonnative English-speaking and native-English speaking. Also, several open-ended and demographic questions were added to address ESL issues.

The questionnaires are formatted to assess the priorities that teachers and parents hold for requisite kindergarten entry skills. The instruments also assess the role of parents in preparing children to enter kindergarten. The questionnaires are relatively short in nature and can be completed in about 15 minutes. Likert-type scales, rank ordering, as well as open-ended questions are utilized in the instruments to provide a variety of

Table 3

Demographics of Kindergarten Teachers

Variable	Description	Number
Age	<u>N</u>	27
	Range	23- 58
	Mean	41.59
	<u>SD</u>	12.55
	Number of years taught	
	<u>N</u>	32
	Range	0-30
	Mean	11.75
	<u>SD</u>	7.84
	Education level	
	<u>N</u>	33
	BA/BS in ECE or El. Ed.	4
	BA/BS dual ECE and El. Ed.	10
	BA/BS in ECE/ El. Ed. plus 1-15 grad. credits	0
	BA/BS in ECE/ El. Ed. plus 16-30 grad. credits	11
	BA/BS in ECE/ El. Ed. plus 31+ grad. credits	3
	Master`s degree	5
	Completed courses in ESL	12

opportunities to express opinions. In addition, the questionnaires include demographic and biographical questions.

Both the Kindergarten Parent Questionnaire (see Appendices B-C) and Kindergarten Teacher Questionnaire (see Appendices D-E) contain five sections. Section I addresses the parental role in kindergarten readiness. The respondents on both questionnaires are asked to indicate to what extent they agree or disagree, on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with the statement, “Parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten.” This section also asks respondents to list four things that parents could do that would help children prepare for kindergarten. In the parent questionnaire, parents are also asked to list four things that they have done to prepare their child for kindergarten.

Section II asks participants to respond to the statement, “When a child enters kindergarten the most important thing to know is...” The following 13 skills are then listed, and respondents are asked to choose 5 of them as most important and 5 of them as least important: sharing with other children, listening, counting, reading, waiting one’s turn, following directions, being independent, sitting still, being curious, solving problems, writing, raising one’s hand, and feeling confident. Unique to the Kindergarten Teacher Questionnaire, respondents are asked to rank the items for children who speak English as a first language, then repeat the section for children who speak English as a second language.

Section III of both questionnaires asks respondents to rank the importance of emphasizing the following 10 skills in kindergarten on a scale of 1 (not important) to 7

(very important): art appreciation, intellectual concepts, large muscle, listening, problem solving, self-help, small muscle, social, speaking, and confidence. The Kindergarten Teacher Questionnaire also asks respondents to rank both the importance of skills to be emphasized for kindergarten children who speak English as a first language and for children who speak English as a second language.

Section IV of the parent questionnaire asks parents to list any concerns they have as their child enters kindergarten. This section of the teacher questionnaire contains two open-ended questions: “What are the three most important challenges you face in having ESL children in your class?” and “What do you believe (if anything) schools could do to help prepare ESL children and families for kindergarten entry?” Finally, Section V asks respondents to answer demographic questions pertaining to their jobs, family, and educational attainment.

Two versions of the Kindergarten Teacher Questionnaire were used. One version had teachers first respond to Section II and III questions for children who speak English as a first language, then respond to questions for children who speak English as a second language. In the second version, the order was reversed. Teachers first responded to questions for children who speak English as a second language, then responded to questions for children who speak English as a first language. Half of the teachers received each version. This counterbalancing was done to reduce an order effect.

The sections of the measure asking participants to answer questions in an open-ended manner were content analyzed and coded into domains (see Chapter 4). Interrater reliability was established for these questions. After the domains were coded, a second

rater recoded 25% of the previously coded data. The percentage of agreement between the two raters was 94.

Content and face validity of the original measure has been established (Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989). Pilot tests of the original measures were conducted in Denver, Colorado; Corvallis, Oregon; and Salt Lake City, Utah. The final revision was approved by the Oregon State University Survey Research Institute. The measure used in the current study was piloted in Logan, Utah, and Kaysville, Utah. Both the original measure and the measure used for the current study were analyzed and critiqued by experts in early childhood education, who suggested revisions and subsequent pilot tests. The measures were deemed readable and understandable and were documented at a fourth-grade reading level (Knudsen-Lindhauer & Harris, 1989).

In the current study, 20% of parents and teachers were randomly selected to complete a second questionnaire one month after the first questionnaire was returned. Paired t tests were run to compare the responses on the original and retest questionnaires. No significant differences were found between participants' first responses and retest responses, showing that these participants were consistent in their answers when retested.

For this study, the parent questionnaires, letters of explanation, and informed consents were translated into Spanish (see Appendices C, H, and J). A second translator used the Spanish versions and translated them back into English. Discrepancies between the original English and back-translated versions were carefully examined by both translators to ensure that the Spanish version was an accurate translation. Once translated

into Spanish, the reading levels of the questionnaires were reassessed to assure simplicity for participants with low literacy levels and to increase the likelihood of responses.

Data Collection Procedures

Data Collection Procedure for Parents

District administrators from each school district were contacted with information about the study. Each district was given a copy of the thesis proposal. As previously mentioned, parental data were only received from Cache school district because the timeline for the study was not satisfactory to Logan district. Administrators in Cache district eagerly agreed to participate in the study and offered exceptional assistance in supplying the researcher with names and phone numbers of Latino families in the community (see Appendix A). ESL specialists identified families in their district that met the following criteria: (a) had a child entering kindergarten in the fall of 2000, (b) declared Spanish as the primary language spoken in the home, and (c) had both mother and father living in the household.

Approximately 4 weeks before the 2000-2001 school year began, the researcher telephoned the families. Over the phone, the researcher briefly explained the study in Spanish, and set up an appointment to bring the questionnaires into their home. Appointments were scheduled at times when both parents would be present. According to Espinosa (1995), Latino parents are more likely to participate in a study if they are personally contacted in their primary language. Therefore, personal contact was made to increase the response rate.

The researcher personally visited each home at the set time. During the visit parents were each given a letter of explanation and two copies of the informed consent letter (see Appendices G & H). The informed consent letter ensured confidentiality and offered them the option to receive a copy of the results upon completion of the study. After signing the consent forms, the parents were each given a questionnaire. Parents completed the questionnaires separately. The researcher read the letters and questionnaires to those participants who were illiterate (mothers = 17%, fathers = 11%).

Although every effort was made to visit the parents together in the home, only 53% of the couples completed and returned their questionnaires while the researcher was in the home. Thirty-two percent of the parents were visited together in their homes; however, because of family time constraints, they asked to return their questionnaires by mail. These couples were personally given letters of explanation, informed consent sheets, and self-addressed, postage-paid envelopes. They were asked to return the questionnaires within a week. Of these 13 couples, only 3 did not return their information. Fifteen percent of the appointments were met by only one parent. In these cases, the researcher collected the data from the parent who was present and left the above-mentioned packet for the absent parent to return by mail. These families also received reminder letters after a week. Of the six couples in this category, two did not respond.

Postcards were sent to all 40 couples one week after their appointment. The card thanked the participants who had completed and returned the questionnaires and reminded those who had not to return their questionnaires (see Appendix J). Three weeks later,

second reminder letters were sent to the nonrespondents along with a second copy of the questionnaire. The total return rate for parents was 90%.

Data Collection Procedures for

Kindergarten Teachers

Each school district research administrator was given a copy of the research proposal to explain the purpose of the study. Following approval by the administrators, individual principals were contacted with information about the study, shown proof of approval from district headquarters, and given a copy of the teacher questionnaire (see Appendices A & F). Appointments were made through the principals to visit each school and deliver questionnaires to the kindergarten teachers. To comply with Logan school district's timeline, teacher data were obtained in the month following the beginning of school.

Each of the 37 kindergarten teachers in Cache and Logan school districts was personally handed a research packet. The packet included two copies of the teacher informed consent form (see Appendix I), the teacher questionnaire (see Appendices D & E), and a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope. The informed consent letters ensured confidentiality and offered teachers the opportunity to receive a copy of the results upon completion.

Teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire within one week and return it, along with one of the copies of the informed consent form. Return rates were maximized, following Dillman's (1978) suggestions for surveys. Reminder letters were sent one

week after the visit with the teachers (see Appendix K). The letter thanked the teachers who had already sent their packets and reminded those who had not to return their questionnaires. Teachers who did not respond after three weeks were sent another questionnaire packet to emphasize the importance of the study, and to increase the response rate (Dillman, 1978). Thirty-six of the 37 teachers returned the packets, resulting in a 97% return rate for teachers.

Ethical Considerations

Teachers and parents were informed of all procedures and signed informed consent forms. All data obtained are completely confidential. The data received are locked in a drawer in a locked office to insure protection. Participants have been assured that their names will not be disclosed in any way. These procedures were presented and approved by the IRB to ensure ethical protection of all participants (see Appendix A).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In addition to analyses for research questions, analyses were also undertaken to compare responses of the following groups: parents who returned their questionnaires by mail to parents who completed their questionnaire in the presence of the researcher, literate parents to illiterate parents, parents whose kindergarten child was firstborn to those parents who have older children in the school, parents with a lower SES to those with higher SES, teachers with more than 10 years of experience to those with less than 10 years of experience, and teachers with training in ESL to teachers with no ESL training. These analyses were performed in order to clarify intergroup responses. Few statistical differences emerged. Those that did will be addressed in the appropriate section.

Parental Role in Kindergarten Preparation

Question 1: Are there statistically significant differences between mothers', fathers', and kindergarten teachers' perceptions of what parents can do to prepare children for kindergarten?

There were seven subhypotheses that addressed Question 1. Because hypotheses a through c were similar, results addressing them are reported and discussed together. Similarly, results examining hypotheses d through g are reported and discussed together.

Null Hypotheses 1a-1c

Null hypothesis 1a. **There will be no statistically significant differences between Latino mothers' and Latino fathers' response to the statement, "Parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten."**

Null hypothesis 1b. **There will be no statistically significant differences between Latino mothers' and kindergarten teachers' response to the statement, "Parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten."**

Null hypothesis 1c. **There will be no statistically significant differences between Latino fathers' and kindergarten teachers' response to the statement, "Parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten."**

Mothers, fathers, and teachers responded to this statement in an ordinal manner. They marked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Table 4 shows the means and standard deviations from the responses to this question. Because all of the responses were between

Table 4

Mothers', Fathers', and Teachers' Responses to "Parents Could Do More to Prepare Children for Kindergarten"

Statistic	Mothers	Fathers	Teachers	Total
<u>n</u>	34	33	20	87
Range	4-5	4-5	3-5	3-5
Mean	4.68	4.64	4.50	4.62
<u>SD</u>	0.47	0.49	0.69	0.53

3 and 5 ($M= 4.62$), the lack of variability precluded performance of further statistical analyses.

Data Reduction for Null Hypotheses 1d - 1g

Null hypothesis 1d. **There will be no statistically significant differences between Latino mothers' and Latino fathers' indications of what parents could do to prepare their child for kindergarten.**

Null hypothesis 1e. **There will be no statistically significant differences between Latino mothers' and kindergarten teachers' indications of what parents could do to prepare their child for kindergarten.**

Null hypothesis 1f. **There will be no statistically significant differences between Latino fathers' and kindergarten teachers' indications of what parents could do to prepare their child for kindergarten.**

Null hypothesis 1g. **There will be no statistically significant differences between Latino mothers' and Latino fathers' indications of what they have done to prepare their child for kindergarten.**

Initially, descriptive analyses were undertaken to examine the open-ended responses of the mothers, fathers, and teachers to the questions: "What could parents do that would help children prepare for kindergarten?" and "What have you done to help your child prepare for kindergarten?". Each response was assigned to one of the 21 categorical domains shown in Tables 5 and 6. Percentages were calculated to determine the most frequently mentioned domains for mothers, fathers, and teachers.

Table 5

Percentages of Domains Mentioned by Mothers, Fathers, and Teachers When Asked:“What Could Parents Do to Help Children Prepare for Kindergarten?”

Domains	Mothers ($n = 30$)	Fathers ($n = 30$)	Teachers ($n = 33$)	Significance ($p =$)	
Read to child	25.0	18.8	97.0	.00 ^a	.00 ^b
Numbers and math	21.9	25.0	9.1		
Reading and writing	28.1	18.8	24.2		
Writing name	3.1	6.3	12.1		
Knowing the alphabet or sounds	21.9	15.6	12.1		
Social development	25.0	18.8	24.2		
Enriching environment	6.3	9.4	30.3	.01 ^a	.04 ^b
Emotional support	21.9	18.8	0.0	.00 ^a	.01 ^b
Knowing shapes, colors and sizes	18.8	9.4	9.1		
General cognitive (how to learn, how to be a good student)	18.8	9.4	15.2		
Communication	12.5	21.9	54.5		.00 ^b
Listening/paying attention	6.3	12.5	12.1		
Small motor skills	3.1	3.1	21.2		.03 ^b
Self-help	9.4	12.5	30.3		
Involvement with or discussion about school	25.0	18.8	3.0	.01 ^a	.05 ^b
Working hard	18.8	18.8	12.1		
Obedience/ following rules	9.4	9.4	6.1		
Spending time with children	9.4	6.3	24.2		.04 ^b
Creative	3.1	6.3	6.1		
Other	6.3	15.6	0.0		

^a Significant difference between teachers and mothers

^b Significant difference between teachers and fathers

Table 6

Percentages of Domains Mentioned by Mothers and Fathers When Asked: “What Have You Done to Prepare Your Child for Kindergarten?”

Domains	Mothers ($n = 30$)	Fathers ($n = 30$)	Signif. ($p =$)
Read to child	31.3	18.2	
Numbers and math	28.1	24.2	
Reading and writing	12.5	15.2	
Writing name	18.8	9.1	
Knowing the alphabet or sounds	18.8	12.1	
Social development	25.0	18.2	
Enriching environment	3.1	3.0	
Emotional support	25.0	24.2	
Knowing shapes, colors and sizes	21.9	9.1	
General cognitive (how to learn, how to be a good student)	15.6	12.1	
Communication	21.9	9.1	
Listening/ paying attention	3.1	15.2	.05 ^a
Small motor skills	3.1	3.0	
Self-help	3.1	6.1	
Involvement with or discussion about school	31.3	6.1	.01 ^a
Working hard	3.1	9.1	
Obedience/ following rules	9.4	12.1	
Spending time with children	15.6	3.0	
Creative	3.1	6.1	
Done nothing	6.3	9.1	
Other	6.3	3.0	

^a Significant difference between parents

Further analyses were completed to analyze the differences between responses. The Wilcoxon signed ranks test was calculated to measure parental differences and chi-square analyses were run to measure differences between parents and teachers. The Wilcoxon test was used to examine mothers' and fathers' responses to the statement: "What could parents do to prepare their child for kindergarten?" This non-parametric test was used because parents are related to one another and therefore their responses may be correlated. No significant differences emerged between the mothers and fathers.

Responses of mothers and teachers as well as fathers and teachers were compared using chi-square analyses. Mothers and fathers were both more likely than teachers to mention emotional support, m versus t: $\chi^2(1, N=65) = 8.09, p = .00$; f versus t: $\chi^2(1, N=65) = 4.45, p = .01$, and involvement with or discussion about school as things parents can do to prepare their child for kindergarten, m versus t: $\chi^2(1, N=65) = 6.57, p = .01$; f versus t: $\chi^2(1, N=65) = 4.18, p = .04$. In contrast, teachers were more likely than both mothers and fathers to specify reading to children, m versus t: $\chi^2(1, N=65) = 35.55, p = .00$; f versus t: $\chi^2(1, N=65) = 40.90, p = .00$], and enriching the child's environment, m versus t: $\chi^2(1, N=65) = 6.24, p = .01$; f versus t: $\chi^2(1, N=65) = 4.45, p = .04$]. Three additional differences emerged between fathers' and teachers' beliefs about what parents could do to prepare their child for kindergarten. Teachers more frequently mentioned communication, $\chi^2(1, N=65) = 7.33, p = .01$; small motor skills, $\chi^2(1, N=65) = 4.92, p = .03$; and spending time with children, $\chi^2(1, N=65) = 4.04, p = .04$, than did fathers.

The Wilcoxon signed ranks test was used to analyze the differences between mothers' and fathers' responses to the statement: "What have you done to prepare your child for kindergarten." Only two differences were found. Fathers were more likely than mothers to mention listening/paying attention, $z = -2.00$, $p = .05$ and mothers were more likely than fathers to mention involvement with or discussion about school, $z = -2.65$, $p = .01$.

Discussion of Null Hypotheses 1a-1g

It was originally hypothesized that mothers, fathers, and teachers would not differ in their responses to the statement, "Parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten." All groups were very similar in their agreement levels, so null hypotheses 1a-1c were not rejected. It appears that mothers, fathers, and teachers all feel that parents can do more to help their children prepare for school entry.

It was also hypothesized that mothers, fathers, and teachers would not differ in their opinions regarding what parents can do to help children prepare for kindergarten. No differences were detected between mothers' and fathers' responses, so null hypothesis 1d was not rejected.

Some statistically significant differences between mothers and teachers as well as fathers and teachers were detected in responses to the question: "What can parents do to prepare their child for kindergarten." Thus, null hypotheses 1e-1f were rejected. These differences are illustrated in Figure 1.

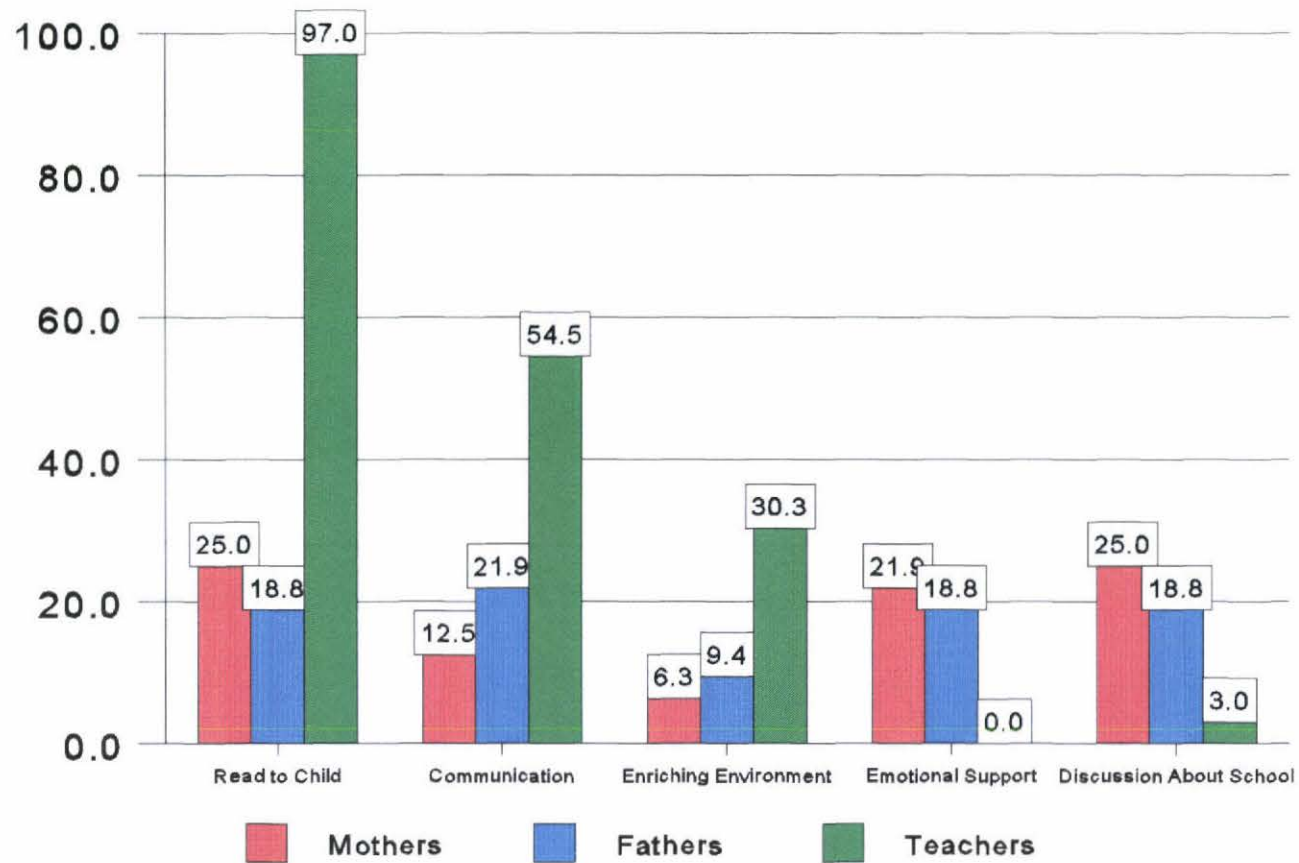


Figure 1. Comparisons of domains mentioned by mothers, fathers and teachers when responding to the question: “What could parents do to help children prepare for kindergarten?”

It is interesting that 97% of the teachers listed reading to children, while only 25% of the mothers and 18% of the fathers mentioned this activity. This difference suggests that parents are less likely than teachers to realize the importance of reading to children. In Esparza's (1998) research, differences were also found among mothers', fathers', and teachers' listing of reading to children as a way parents can prepare their child for kindergarten. However, the responses of Latino parents in this study are dramatically different than the responses of the native English-speaking parents in Esparza's study. In Esparza's research, 60% of the mothers and 45% of the fathers expressed reading to children as an important way for parents to prepare children for kindergarten. In this study, significantly fewer parents mentioned this domain. This suggests that Latino parents, especially fathers, may not have the access to information about the importance of early literacy learning that native English-speaking families do (DeBruin-Parecki, Perkinson, & Ferderer, 2000; McCarthy, 1995; Pappas, 1997).

It is also interesting that, although Esparza's research was conducted in the same area as this study, with many of the same kindergarten teachers, only 73% of the kindergarten teachers in her sample reported reading to children as a way parents can prepare their child for kindergarten entry, while 3 years later, in this study, 97% of the teacher sample reported this domain. The trend in this study for teachers to mention reading to children is very similar to that of the 1993 national, representative study (U.S. Department of Education). This suggests that teachers in Cache County are increasingly becoming aware of the importance of reading to children as a way to promote early literacy learning (DeBruin-Parecki et al., 2000; McCarthy, 1995).

Teachers were also more likely than both mothers and fathers to mention communication and enriching the child's environment as important ways for parents to prepare their child for kindergarten. They mentioned the importance of one-on-one communication between the parents and children as well as constant discussion about the child's environment. Teachers also specifically suggested that parents continually provide learning experiences for their children through computers, literature, nature, and community activities. They specified the importance of discussing these experiences with their child. These teachers' beliefs support DAP that also encourages active exploration throughout the child's life to expand quantifiable knowledge and skills (De Cos, 1997; Egertson, 1989; Nurss, 1987; Paulus, 1997; Stoops et al., 1991).

It is also interesting to note that parents (21.9% mothers, 18.8% fathers) mentioned emotional support as a way parents can prepare children for kindergarten, yet teachers did not mention this domain at all. This is somewhat surprising considering previous research indicating teacher support of physical and emotional well-being (U. S. Department of Education, 1993). Parents were also more likely to mention involvement with or discussion about school (25% mothers, 18.8% fathers) than teachers (3%). Responses under this domain indicated that parents felt they could prepare their child for school by talking to them about school schedules, explaining teacher roles, or showing them around the school they will be attending. Respondents also mentioned that parents could better prepare children for kindergarten by enrolling them in some type of summer program. These views support suggestions from previous research that continuity

between home and school should be facilitated (Early et al., 1999; Mangione & Speth, 1998).

It was also hypothesized that there would be no differences between what fathers and mothers have done to prepare their children for kindergarten. Parents were very similar in their responses. Of the 21 domains, only two statistically significant differences were found. Because of these differences, the null hypothesis was rejected. These differences are illustrated in Figure 2. Interestingly, fathers reported that they have prepared their child for school by teaching them to listen and pay attention (15.2%) more often than mothers did (3.1%), while mothers more often emphasized that they have discussed the importance of school (31.3%) with their children than fathers (6.1%). This may suggest that fathers of the Latino children in this sample are more inclined to instill listening in children whereas mothers seem to be more discussion oriented.

Prioritization of Requisite Kindergarten Entry Skills

Question 2: Are there statistically significant differences in the priorities that mothers, fathers, and kindergarten teachers hold for requisite kindergarten entry skills?

Three hypotheses addressed Question 2. In the questionnaires, parents and teachers responded to the statement, “When a child enters kindergarten the most important thing to know is....” Thirteen skills were listed, and parents marked the five skills they believed to be most important with an “X” and the five least important with an “O”. From these choices, three categories were formed: “High Choice,” the five marked

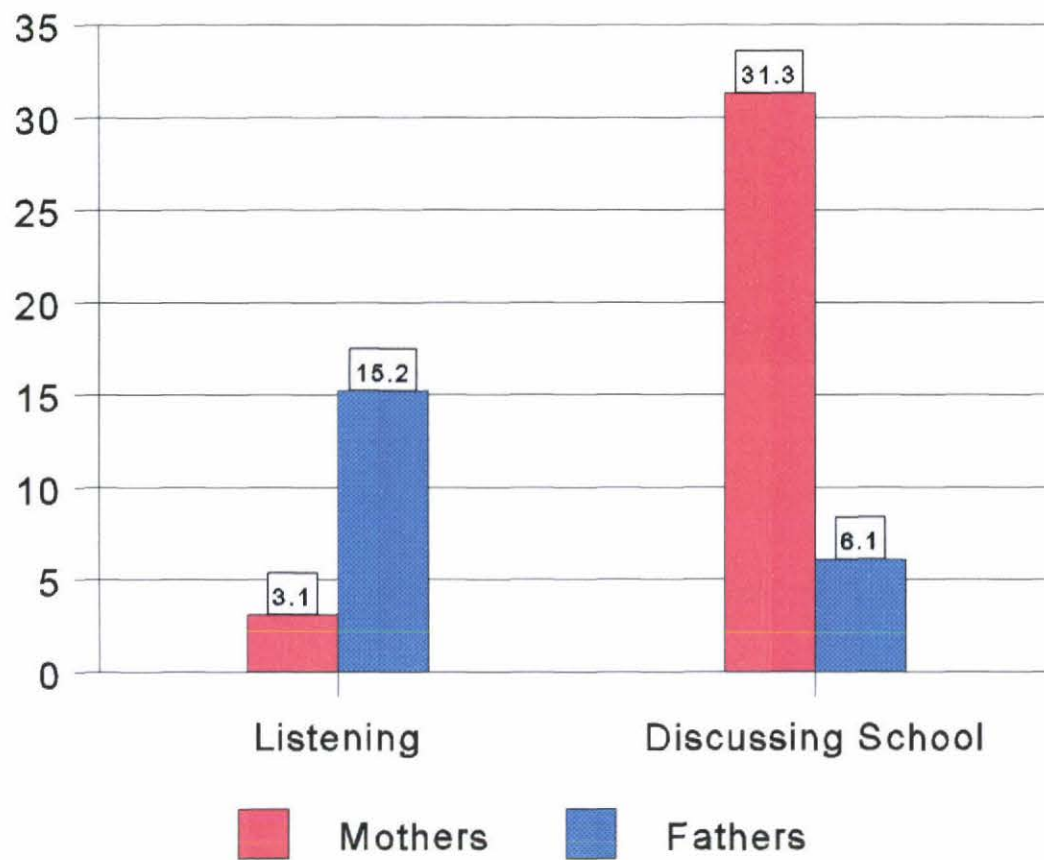


Figure 2. Comparisons of domains mentioned by mothers and fathers when responding to the question: "What have you done to prepare your child for kindergarten?"

with an “X”; “Medium Choice,” the three items that were not chosen; and “Low Choice,” the five responses that were marked with an “O”.

Null Hypothesis 2a. There will be no statistically significant differences between Latino mothers’ and Latino fathers’ priorities for kindergarten entry skills.

Comparisons between mothers and fathers were analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. Statistically significant differences were found in two cases. Fathers were more likely than mothers to place emphasis on “how to be confident”, $z = -2.310$, $p = .02$. Mothers differed from fathers by ranking “how to be independent” as a higher choice, $z = -2.80$, $p = .01$.

Null Hypothesis 2b. There will be no statistically significant differences between Latino mothers’ and kindergarten teachers’ priorities for kindergarten entry skills.

Null Hypothesis 2c. There will be no statistically significant differences between Latino fathers’ and kindergarten teachers’ priorities for kindergarten entry skills.

The responses between mothers’, fathers’, and teachers’ were analyzed descriptively and frequencies were calculated into percentages. All responses were then compared using chi-square analyses. Table 7 shows that parents were more likely than teachers to place emphasis on “how to write,” “how to read,” “how to count,” and “how to raise one’s hand.” Teachers were more likely than both mothers and fathers to rate skills such as “how to be confident,” “how to be curious,” “how to wait one’s turn,” and

Table 7

Percentages of High, Medium, and Low Priorities for Mothers, Fathers, and Teachers When Asked: “When a Child Goes to Kindergarten, The Most Important Thing to Know Is?”

Variable	Mothers ($n = 35$)			Fathers ($n = 35$)			Teachers ($n = 33$)			χ^2 Significance ($p =$)		
	High	Med	Low	High	Med	Low	High	Med	Low	a	b	c
How to share	57.1	28.6	14.3	45.7	37.1	17.1	66.7	27.3	6.1			
How to listen	60.0	11.4	28.6	71.4	5.7	22.9	81.8	12.1	6.1			
How to count	62.9	2.9	34.3	74.3	2.9	22.9	9.1	18.2	72.7	.00	.00	
How to read	40.0	17.1	42.9	57.1	2.9	40.0	0.0	9.1	90.9	.00	.00	
How to wait one's turn	37.1	8.6	54.3	25.7	28.6	45.7	24.2	57.6	18.2	.00	.03	
How to follow directions	48.6	17.1	34.3	48.6	22.9	28.6	51.5	42.4	6.1			
How to be independent	28.6	48.6	22.9	14.3	28.6	57.1	51.5	36.4	12.1		.00	.00
How to sit still	17.1	2.9	80.0	20.0	11.4	68.6	15.2	36.4	48.5	.00	.01	
How to be curious	14.3	22.9	62.9	8.6	22.9	68.6	54.5	18.2	27.3	.00	.00	
How to solve problems	45.7	17.1	37.1	40.0	22.9	37.1	39.4	30.3	30.3			
How to write	48.6	8.6	42.9	65.7	8.6	25.7	3.0	18.2	78.8	.00	.00	
How to raise one's hand	54.3	2.9	42.9	40.0	17.1	42.9	9.1	9.1	81.8	.00	.00	
How to feel confident	31.3	47.1	31.8	40.0	20.0	40.0	90.9	6.1	3.0	.00	.00	.02

^a Significant difference between teachers and mothers ^b Significant difference between teachers and fathers ^c Significant difference between parents

“how to sit still” as higher priorities. Teachers also placed greater emphasis than fathers on “how to be independent.”

Intergroup Analyses

Although not addressed as part of the research questions, analyses were run to compare intergroup characteristics. The statistically significant differences which emerged when comparing these groups’ percentages of high, medium, and low priorities when asked: “When a child goes to kindergarten, the most important thing to know is?” are as follows.

Chi-square analyses were also run to compare responses of parents who returned their questionnaires by mail to those who personally returned them to the researcher and one difference emerged. Parents who returned their questionnaires by mail were more likely to place emphasis on “how to be independent,” $\chi^2 (2, N=70) = 7.39, p = .03$.

To compare responses of parents with low SES (Hollingshead score under 29) to parents with higher SES (Hollingshead score over 30), t tests were run. One statistically significant difference was detected. Parents with higher SES were more likely than parents with lower SES to rate “how to solve problems” as a high choice, $t (66) = -2.69, p = .00$.

Comparisons of teacher responses were made for teachers with more than 10 years of experience to teachers with less than 10 years of experience using t -tests. Teachers with more experience rated “how to write,” $t (32) = -2.60, p = .01$ and “how to solve problems,” $t (32) = -2.13, p = .05$ higher than teachers with less experience.

Discussion of Hypotheses 2a-2c

It was hypothesized that there would be no differences in opinions between the three groups regarding priorities for kindergarten entry skills. Some statistically significant differences were discovered between all groups; therefore null hypotheses 2a-2c were rejected. Figure 3 shows some of these differences.

Consistent with previous research, parents were more likely to emphasize the importance of intellectual concepts, while teachers placed least emphasis on these skills (Bernhard et al., 1998; Esparza, 1998; Harradine & Clifford, 1996; Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989; West, 1993). For instance, 62% of the mothers and 74% of the fathers placed “how to count” as a high choice. Only 9% of the teachers placed emphasis on this skill. In the “how to read” category, nearly half of the parents placed it as a skill of high importance. On the other hand, all of the teachers placed this skill as one of medium or low importance. Parents also ranked “how to write” higher than teachers (48.6% mothers, 65.7% fathers, and 3% teachers). It is important to notice that fathers have consistently ranked these intellectual concepts higher than both teachers and mothers, which also coincides with previous literature (Esparza, 1998; Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989).

Although mothers and fathers were much more likely than teachers to choose “how to raise one’s hand” as a high choice (54.3% mothers, 40% fathers, and 9.1% teachers), it is interesting that 42.9% of both mothers and fathers selected it as a low choice. Very few parents or teachers placed it in the “medium” category. It seems that half of the parents agree with the teachers, and the other half do not.

Figure 3 also shows that teachers have more developmentally appropriate expectations. They placed greater emphasis on skills such as confidence, curiosity, and independence. Ninety percent of the teachers placed confidence as a “high” choice, whereas only 31.3% of the mothers and 40% of the fathers did so. Likewise, 54.5% of the teachers compared to 14.3% of the mothers and 8.6% of the fathers chose “how to be curious” as a skill of high importance. Statistically significant differences also emerged in the “how to be independent” category. Figure 3 shows that 51.1% of the teachers placed it as a high choice while 28.6% of mothers and only 14.3% of fathers placed it in this category. These findings are similar to previous literature that suggests teachers place greater emphasis on developmentally appropriate skills than parents (Bernhard et al., 1998; Esparza, 1998; Harradine & Clifford, 1996; Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989; West, 1993).

Teachers were also more likely than parents to place “how to wait one’s turn” and “how to sit still” as medium choices, whereas mothers and fathers were more likely to place these skills as low choices. Although parents and teachers varied on the placement, all groups seemed to agree that these skills were of low or medium importance for kindergarten entry.

The top three skills mentioned by mothers were “how to count,” “how to listen,” and “how to share.” Fathers also listed “how to count” and “how to listen” as first and second choices, but differed from mothers on their third choice, “how to write.” The three highest skills chosen by teachers were “how to be confident,” “how to listen,” and

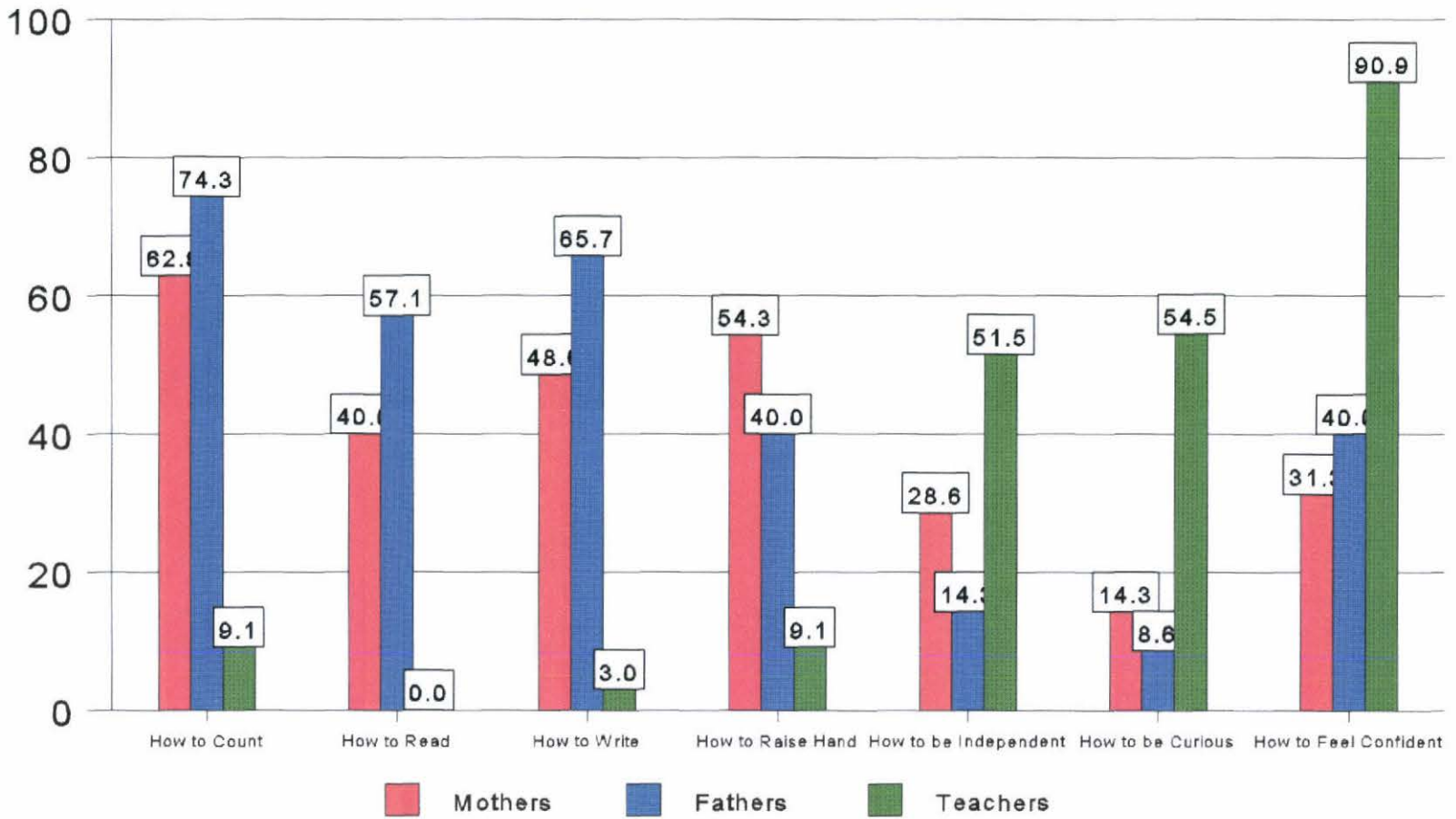


Figure 3. Comparing mothers', fathers' and teachers' high priorities when asked: "When a child enters kindergarten, the most important thing to know is?"

“how to share.” It is interesting that all three groups had “how to listen” as their second choice. In this sample there is a consensus among parents and teachers that listening is an integral part of learning. Mothers and fathers both selected “how to count” as a first choice. Mothers and teachers both placed “how to share” as their third choice, showing their support of social development as a requisite kindergarten entry skill. Although not in the top three choices, fathers also recognized the importance of sharing. These findings support literature indicating that parents tend to emphasize academic principles, yet acknowledge the importance of socioemotional development in their kindergarten children (Esparza, 1998; Harradine & Clifford, 1996; Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989; West, 1993).

Several differences emerged upon intergroup comparisons. One difference was discovered when comparing the responses of parents who returned their questionnaires personally to the researcher to those parents who returned the questionnaires by mail. Parents who returned their questionnaire by mail were more likely to rank “how to be independent” as a medium choice, whereas parents who completed the questionnaire in the home were more likely to rank it as a low choice. When comparing parental responses according to their SES, only one difference emerged. “How to solve problems” was rated higher by parents with higher SES. Also, two differences emerged when comparing teacher responses with their years of experience. Teachers with more experience were more likely to place greater emphasis on “how to write” and “how to solve problems.” These differences should be interpreted cautiously, however, considering the multiple statistical analyses that was undertaken.

Expectations of Kindergarten Curricula

Question 3: Are there statistically significant differences between mothers', fathers', and kindergarten teachers' rankings of the importance of specified skills to be emphasized in kindergarten?

Parents and teachers marked on a scale of 1 (not important) to 7 (very important) how important it was to emphasize the following 10 skills in kindergarten: art appreciation, intellectual concepts, large muscle, listening, problem solving, self-help, small muscle, social, speaking, and confidence.

Null Hypothesis 3a. **There will be no statistically significant differences between Latino mothers' and Latino fathers' rankings of the importance of specified skills to be emphasized in kindergarten.**

Paired t -tests were used to analyze the differences between mothers' and fathers' responses. No significant differences were found between these two groups.

Null Hypothesis 3b. **There will be no statistically significant differences between Latino mothers' and kindergarten teachers' rankings of the importance of specified skills to be emphasized in kindergarten.**

Null Hypothesis 3c. **There will be no statistically significant differences between Latino fathers' and kindergarten teachers' rankings of the importance of specified skills to be emphasized in kindergarten.**

Comparisons between mothers and teachers as well as fathers and teachers were analyzed using t tests. Table 8 shows the means and standard deviations of each group.

Mothers were more likely to place greater emphasis on intelligence than were teachers, m versus t : $t(65) = 2.39$, $p = .02$. Teachers ranked self-help skills significantly higher than both mothers and fathers, m versus t : $t(65) = -2.29$, $p = .04$; f versus t : $t(65) = 2.39$, $p = .02$. No other significant differences emerged.

Intergroup Analyses

Analyses were run to compare intergroup characteristics, apart from the original research questions. A few statistically significant differences arose when comparing these groups' expectations of kindergarten curricula.

To compare opinions of parents whose kindergarten child was firstborn (37%) to those parents who have had previous experience with the American educational system (63%), t tests were run. Three statistically significant differences emerged in their expectations of kindergarten curricula. Parents who have had other children in the school system were more likely to place greater emphasis on art skills, $t(68) = 2.52$, $p = .02$, and intellectual concepts, $t(68) = 2.12$, $p = .04$, whereas parents with firstborn kindergarten children marked self-help skills higher, $t(68) = -2.42$, $p = .02$.

When comparing the responses of teachers with more than 10 years of experience to those teachers who had less than 10 years of experience, one difference emerged. Teachers with less experience were more likely than teachers with more experience to rank small motor skills as an important skill to be emphasized in kindergarten, $t(30) = 2.92$, $p = .00$.

Discussion of Null Hypotheses 3a-3c

It was originally hypothesized that there would be no differences between mothers', fathers', and teachers' rankings of the importance of specified skills to be emphasized in kindergarten. No statistically significant differences were detected between mothers' and fathers' responses, so null hypothesis 3a was retained. Because differences emerged among mothers and teachers as well as fathers and teachers, null hypotheses 3b and 3c were rejected.

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations of Mothers', Fathers' and Teachers' Ratings of Specified Skills to be Emphasized in Kindergarten

Domain	Mothers (n = 35)		Fathers (n = 35)		Teachers (n = 33)	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Art appreciation skills	5.46	1.44	5.14	1.57	5.19	1.94
Intellectual concepts	6.69	0.58	6.51	0.82	6.03	1.45
Large motor skills	5.97	0.95	5.80	0.96	5.91	1.13
Listening skills	6.54	0.82	6.66	0.54	6.70	0.68
Problem solving skills	6.47	0.93	6.34	1.03	6.12	1.19
Self-help skills	6.29	1.27	6.34	1.00	6.79	0.55
Small motor skills	6.46	0.89	6.30	0.92	6.24	1.15
Social skills	6.47	0.86	6.46	0.82	6.69	0.90
Speaking skills	6.50	0.80	6.43	0.88	6.15	1.25
Confidence skills	6.69	0.76	6.69	0.53	6.64	0.82

Interestingly, on a scale of 1-7, the lowest mean rating was 5.19, indicating that the groups considered all the skills at least somewhat important. All three groups seemed to agree on the importance of socioemotional skills. Skills such as confidence, speaking, social and listening were generally rated higher than large motor skills and art appreciation. It is interesting that teachers place greater emphasis on self-help skills ($M = 6.79$, $SD = 0.55$) than do parents (mothers- $M = 6.29$, $SD = 1.27$, fathers- $M = 6.34$, $SD = 1.00$). Perhaps, with increasing numbers of children in classrooms, teachers are in need of children who can take care of their own basic needs. It is important to note, however, that the standard deviation is higher for parents than teachers. These results should be interpreted with caution, considering the lack of consensus on this variable.

It is also interesting that there were differences comparing mothers' and teachers' ratings of intellectual skills (mothers- $M = 6.69$, $SD = 0.58$; teachers- $M = 6.03$, $SD = 1.45$), yet there were no differences between fathers' and teachers' responses (fathers- $M = 6.51$, $SD = 0.82$). Although this difference emerged, there is only a 0.18 discrepancy between the means of mothers' and fathers' answers. When looking at the means, both mothers and fathers rated intellectual skills slightly higher than teachers. This supports previous literature as well as earlier findings reported from this study indicating that parents are more likely to emphasize academic curricula than teachers (Esparza, 1998; Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989; West, 1993). Slightly contradictory to existing research is the tendency for fathers in this study to place more emphasis on intellectual skills than mothers (Esparza, 1998; Harradine & Clifford, 1996; Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989). However, because the difference is so small, the results should be

interpreted with caution. It is also important to realize that the standard deviation of the teachers' ratings of intellectual skills is relatively high, indicating that teachers lacked consensus on the importance of this skill.

Three differences emerged when comparing responses of parents with firstborn children to those parents whose kindergarten child was not their firstborn. Parents who have older children were more likely to place emphasis on art skills and intellectual concepts, whereas parents with firstborn kindergarten children had a tendency to mark self-help skills higher. Also, teachers with less experience placed greater emphasis on small motor skills than teachers with more experience. However, due to the variability in responses it is possible that these differences occurred by chance.

Teachers Expectations of Native English-Speaking and Nonnative English-Speaking Children

Question 4: Are there statistically significant differences between teachers' expectations of kindergarten children who speak English as a second language and kindergarten children who speak English as a first language?

Null Hypothesis 4. There will be no statistically significant differences between kindergarten teachers' expectations of kindergarten children who speak English as a second language and kindergarten children who speak English as a first language.

Teachers responded to questions in Sections II and III of the Kindergarten Teacher Questionnaire for kindergarten children who speak English as a first language and

again for children who speak English as a second language. Comparisons between responses were analyzed using paired t tests. Out of the 23 pairs, only one difference was detected. Teachers were more likely to place greater emphasis on how to follow directions for native English-speaking children than for nonnative English speaking children, $t(32) = -3.14$, $p = .01$.

Intergroup Analyses

Although not addressed in the research question, t -test comparisons were also made between the responses of teachers who had training in ESL to those who did not, and one difference emerged. When asked to rank the importance of skills to be emphasized in kindergarten, teachers with training in ESL ranked speaking skills (in primary language) for nonnative English-speaking children significantly higher than teachers with no ESL training, $t(33) = 14.56$, $p = .00$.

Discussion of Null Hypothesis 4

It was hypothesized that there would be no differences between teacher's expectations of native English-speaking and nonnative English-speaking children. One difference was found, therefore null hypothesis 4 was rejected. Generally, teachers expected similar requisite entry skills and curriculum emphases for all children. The one exception was following directions. Teachers expected native English-speaking children to follow directions more than they expected it from nonnative English-speaking children. This finding suggests that teachers may be aware of the ESL child's limited capacity to understand the directions and consequently expect less from them.

Another difference was detected when comparing the responses of teachers with training in ESL to teachers who did not receive this training. Teachers who had taken courses in multicultural education ranked speaking skills (in primary language) for nonnative English-speaking children significantly higher than teachers who did not have this training.

It seems that teachers in this study who had ESL training were more aware of the importance of incorporating the child's primary language and culture into children's kindergarten curricula. This supports Byrnes and Kiger's (1997) research indicating that training in multicultural education enhances teachers' ability to be sensitive to Latino children's culture and incorporate it into their educational needs. These two differences should be interpreted cautiously, however, as one might expect them to occur by chance given the number of tests performed.

The lack of statistically significant differences may indicate that teachers do not differ in their expectations of nonnative English-speaking children and native English-speaking children. This contradicts Falconer's (1998) findings about teachers being less responsive to nonnative English-speaking children than to native English-speaking children. It may be possible that teachers responded to these questions in a politically correct manner, offering answers that they believed the researcher would want to hear, rather than describing the expectations they truly have for nonnative versus native English-speaking children.

Parental Concerns About Their Child Entering Kindergarten

Parents were asked to list any concerns they have as their child enters kindergarten. Forty-four percent of the parents (51% of the mothers; 37% of the fathers) responded to this statement. Most of the parents who responded to this statement listed only one concern (52%), 25% listed two concerns, and 22% had three concerns. One parent (1%) listed four concerns. The responses were coded into seven categories: language barriers, cognitive development, racism/equality, social, emotional development, cultural differences, and other. Percentages were calculated to determine how frequently the domains were mentioned.

As Table 9 shows, 20.4% of the parents mentioned social concerns. Mothers were twice as likely as fathers to mention this concern. Among these social concerns were cooperating, sharing, and making friends. Many of these parents were also concerned that their child was shy. They expressed their concern that this shyness, compounded with the inability to speak English, would hinder their child's ability to make friends and feel part of the school environment.

Many parents were worried about language barriers (18.4%). The following example illustrates this concern:

Because I don't know how to speak English, I feel like I will not be able to communicate with the teacher about my daughter and that she will also not be able to understand everything. I also worry that she will not be able to communicate with the teacher when something happens to her.

Other parents expressed similar concerns about communication, either between the teacher and the child, or between the teacher and the parent. Another apparent concern

Table 9

Percentages of Domains Mentioned in the Parent Questionnaire When Asked: “What Concerns (If Any) Do You Have as Your Child Enters Kindergarten?”

Domain	Mothers ($\underline{n} = 18$)	Fathers ($\underline{n} = 13$)	Total ($\underline{n} = 31$)
Social	23.6	10.0	20.4
Language barriers	14.7	15.0	18.5
Racism	17.7	10.0	14.8
Cognitive development	14.7	15.0	14.8
Emotional	23.5	15.0	14.8
Cultural differences	2.9	20.0	7.3
Other	2.9	5.0	9.4

(14.8%) was racism or inequality in the schools. The following examples show some of these opinions:

I would like it if all Latino children who are bilingual already were given the opportunity to participate in classes that are not ESL. I believe this way they will be treated more equally. Separating them from other children makes them feel less valued, they feel like they are different, and they are often left with the feeling that other children and teachers have racist feelings toward them.

Will my daughter be treated differently if she is a little behind? I am afraid she won't be treated equally, or that she won't be included in some things because of her race. Will she be treated differently or made to feel like she is less, just because she is Latina? Do Not Put her in ESL! This does not help them. I believe that ESL does not help them. The two languages need to be intermingled to help the children learn, not just English with English and Latinos with Latinos. They learn best when they are together.

These parents' comments support the research on multicultural education which suggest that parents may feel their sociocultural backgrounds are not being integrated into the academic system (Bernhard et al., 1998; Falconer, 1998; Garcia, 1997; Lombardi, 1992; NAEYC, 1996). Several parents (7.3%) also mentioned worries about cultural differences. Among these were concerns about the classroom environment, unknown "American" expectations of children and lack of multicultural awareness. One parent expressed her daughters distaste for American food. This mother suggested serving beans and rice for lunch.

Parents also expressed concerns about cognitive development (14.8%) and the emotional adjustment of their child into the school system (14.8%). Parents showed that they wanted their child to maintain academic motivation; overcome fears and worries; and succeed in school. The following statement shows the concern of one mother:

In general, I do not have one, but this time I know that Erica is very sensitive and that she feels every rejection. I am a little worried of the fear and sensitivity that she has. I have tried to teach her to be very proud of herself, so she can be happy and accept herself as she is.

These worries are further complicated by the minority status of these families (Cosden et al., 1995; Garcia, 1997). The concerns placed in the "other" category included items such as safety, discipline, and motor development.

Importantly, the expression of these concerns show that these parents want to be involved in their child's schooling. Overwhelmingly, parents in this sample conveyed their desire to communicate with the teacher, showed interest in their child's well-being, and expressed a willingness to participate in their child's education. This supports previous

research indicating that Latino parents are concerned about their children's education and want to participate in their learning processes (Bernhard et al., 1998; Lombardi, 1992; Pappas, 1997).

Teachers' Perceptions of Multicultural Education

Teachers responded to two open-ended questions in the Kindergarten Teacher Questionnaire: "What are the three most important challenges you face in having ESL children in your class?" and "What do you believe (if anything) schools could do to help prepare ESL children and families for kindergarten entry?" The responses to these questions were coded into categorical domains and calculated into percentages. Tables 10 and 11 show the domains of each question and their calculated frequencies.

Table 10 shows that the majority of teachers mentioned language barriers as a major challenge in teaching minority children. Some teachers mentioned this domain more than once, and many teachers expressed difficulty in communicating with both children and parents. It is interesting to note that this was also a concern that parents listed. Previous literature has also indicated concern from educators about communication with multicultural families (De Cos, 1997). Prior research suggests that teachers consider communication with children and families to be one of the most important requisite kindergarten entry skills (U.S. Department of Education, 1993). It seems that this communication is greatly hindered by these language barriers (Bernhard et al., 1998; De Cos, 1997; Lombardi, 1992; Pappas, 1997). The opinions of teachers in this study support previous findings.

Table 10

Percentages of Domains Mentioned in the Teacher Questionnaire When Asked: “What Are the Three Most Important Challenges You Face in Having ESL Children in Your Class?”

Domain	Challenge 1 ($n = 33$)	Challenge 2 ($n = 32$)	Challenge 3 ($n = 31$)
Language barriers	66.7	34.4	35.5
Parent involvement	6.1	12.5	9.7
Social	0.0	12.5	19.4
Curriculum implementation	6.1	6.3	12.9
Lack of translators/ ESL trainers	6.1	9.4	3.2
Time	3.0	6.3	0.0
Emotional	3.0	3.1	3.2
Behavioral problems	3.0	0.0	6.4
Cultural	0.0	6.3	3.2
Listening/ following directions	3.0	3.1	0.0
Racism/ prejudice	0.0	3.1	0.0
Other	3.0	3.1	6.4

Table 10 also shows that teachers are concerned about the lack of parental involvement from multicultural families. Several teacher comments express these concerns: “Rarely do parents follow through on daily homework sign off, even when translated”; “Children are not read to at home”; “The children haven’t spent time at home learning numbers or ABC’s”; “They have low book skills and haven’t read together as a family.” Teachers mentioned that many parents have difficulty with these things because

they are illiterate in their native language. Existing research suggests that both parents and teachers have attributed Latino parents' low school involvement with their inability to communicate with teachers (Bernhard et al., 1998; De Cos, 1997; Lombardi, 1992; Pappas, 1997).

Although not expressed as a first concern, many teachers listed social difficulties with ESL students as a challenge. They suggested that native English-speaking and nonnative English-speaking children have a difficult time mixing with each other and feeling comfortable together. Several challenges that were placed in the "other" category are worth mentioning. Long absences of children, transient lifestyles, as well as difficulty involving families in the community, are perceived to complicate the teachers' efforts to bridge the gap between home and school.

In Table 11, domains are shown for teachers' suggestions of what schools can do to help multicultural families. The most frequently mentioned domain was educating parents. Teachers suggested several areas that would better help parents prepare their child for school. Helping parents understand the importance of reading to their children, teaching parents basic requisite kindergarten entry skills prior to the entry of their child into the school system, and introducing parents to the school environment were among the suggestions in this domain. Teachers also recommended that schools offer ESL courses for parents to help them speak English. One teacher who had previous experience with such a program reported its success: "My school in Las Vegas taught ESL classes for the parents of our ESL students. It was wonderful. It made them feel important, included and they worked more at home with their child on school work."

Table 11

Percentages of Domains Mentioned in the Teacher Questionnaire When Asked: “What Do You Believe (If Anything) Schools Could Do to Help Prepare ESL Children and Families for Kindergarten Entry?”

Domain	Suggestion 1 ($n = 33$)	Suggestion 2 ($n = 14$)	Suggestion 3 ($n = 5$)
Educate parents	39.4	17.2	6.1
Improve home/school communication	21.2	9.1	3.0
Earlier education of children	18.2	9.1	3.0
Additional after school/ ESL programs	6.1	6.1	3.0
Social/community unity	6.1	0.0	0.0
Other	9.1	0.0	0.0

The second most frequently mentioned domain was improving home/school communication. This is not surprising, considering that teachers' greatest concern was communicating with parents and children. Here, teachers suggested that having more interpreters to assist teachers with parent conferences and translations of written communication would contribute to the improvement of parent/teacher communication. Previous literature in this area also suggests that effort on the part of the school to communicate with parents will help Latino families become more involved in the school system (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Jones & Velez, 1997; Pappas, 1997). Researchers do mention, however, that impersonal written communication is much less effective than personal, one-on-one contact with Latino parents (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990).

Teachers also suggested that schools better educate ESL children. Twenty-seven percent of the teachers mentioned placing these children in a Head Start or summer program. Twelve percent of the teachers indicated that additional ESL classes and after school programs were needed for children in their school. Comments were also made about the improvement of social/community unity. One teachers suggested having a community liaison who would introduce new parents to the school and assist them throughout the school year with any problems or questions they might have. Comments in the “other” category included promoting ESL back-to-school nights and providing earlier health care for low-income families.

The suggestions from teachers in this area are very consistent with previous literature about home/school continuity. Existing research suggests that educators, families, schools, and communities must take part in the preparation of children for kindergarten (Johnson et al., 1995; Mangione & Speth, 1998; Morisset, 1994; Nurss, 1987). It seems that the teachers in this sample are either very aware of the current literature in this area, or that their beliefs are consistent with empirical research. Teacher suggestions indicate that, although they are aware of the need for more action in this area, little is being done on the part of schools to promote these transitions.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

One purpose of this study was to explore mothers', fathers', and kindergarten teachers' perceptions about what parents could do to prepare their children for kindergarten. This study also analyzed parental and teacher priorities for requisite kindergarten entry skills. Furthermore, an examination was made of the expectations parents and kindergarten teachers have for kindergarten curricula. A final purpose of this study was to investigate the differences in kindergarten expectations that teachers have for native English-speaking and nonnative English-speaking children.

Findings indicated that all groups similarly agreed that parents could do more to help their children prepare for kindergarten. This finding suggests that parents and teachers feel the need for parents to take greater responsibility in preparing their child for their entry into school.

When parents in this sample were asked specifically what they could do to prepare their child for kindergarten, items such as communication; involvement with or discussion about school; enriching the child's environment; reading and writing; numbers and math; reading to children; teaching the alphabet or sounds; teaching shapes, colors, and sizes; and emotionally support of children were among those listed. No differences emerged between the responses of mothers and fathers in this area, showing that parents in this sample generally were in agreement about what could be done to prepare children for kindergarten.

When comparing the responses of teachers to those of parents, however, several differences emerged. It was interesting that nearly all of the teachers mentioned reading to children, while only one fourth of the parents did so. This suggests that these Latino parents may not be aware of the importance of reading to children as a way of fostering literacy learning in preparation for kindergarten (DeBruin-Parecki et al., 2000; McCarthy, 1995). Teachers were also more likely than mothers and fathers to mention communication and enriching the child's environment as ways parents could better prepare their child for kindergarten, showing that the teachers in this sample may have a better understanding of basic DAP principles than parents (De Cos, 1997; Egertson, 1989; Nurss, 1987; Paulus, 1997; Stoops et al., 1991). Mothers and fathers mentioned emotional support more often than teachers. This may be attributed to the supportive, extended family lifestyle apparent in the Latino culture (Fuller et al., 1996). The difference may also be reflective of the apprehensions parents normally experience when a small child must enter a new and challenging environment alone.

When asked what they have done to prepare their child for kindergarten, mothers and fathers did not differ much from the statements they made when responding to the general statement about what parents could do. This suggests that parents were likely to mention things they have personally done to prepare their child for kindergarten as things others parents could also do. It is interesting, however, that more parents mentioned discussion with or involvement about school as something parents in general could do to prepare their child for school, yet mentioned it less often as something they have personally done to prepare their child for kindergarten. This may suggest that parents

have the desire to involve their children in the school prior to kindergarten entry, but may lack the knowledge or resources to do so. It is also intriguing that parents mentioned involvement with or discussion about school more often than teachers. However, later in the questionnaire when teachers were asked what schools could do to better prepare nonnative English-speaking children for school, they mentioned several ways parents and children could become involved with the school system. Therefore, parents and teachers agreed that children could be better prepared for school if they were involved in programs that prepared them for school entry. It seems that parents and teachers are aware of the need for earlier education, but the children are apparently not receiving it. It may be that these programs are not being implemented, or families may be unaware of the programs offered in the community.

Differences did arise between mothers' and fathers' responses about what they have done to prepare their child for kindergarten. Fathers were more likely to mention that they have taught their child to listen and pay attention, whereas mothers mentioned that they have discussed school with their child. This may be attributed to the traditional patriarchal order that generally exists in the Latino family culture, where maternal and paternal roles are very distinct.

The results also suggest some differences do exist between mothers', fathers', and teachers' expectations of requisite kindergarten entry skills. The finding that parents rate counting, reading, and writing significantly higher than teachers is consistent with previous literature which has demonstrated that parents tend to emphasize academic achievement prior to kindergarten entry (Bernhard et al., 1998; Esparza, 1998; Harradine & Clifford,

1996; Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989; West, 1993). Further, supporting previous research, is the finding that teachers rated items such as confidence, curiosity, and independence higher than did parents. Literature has demonstrated that teachers are more likely than parents to emphasize the importance of developmentally appropriate expectations for kindergarten entry (Bernhard et al., 1998; Esparza, 1998; Harradine & Clifford, 1996; Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989; West, 1993). It is also important to note that all groups acknowledged the importance of kindergarten children's socio-emotional development.

When comparing responses of what parents can do to prepare their child for kindergarten and priorities for requisite kindergarten entry skills, it is important to note the difference between the concepts of parents reading to children and children knowing how to read. Teachers clearly believed that parents should read to their child to better prepare them for kindergarten entry. By reading to children parents enhance children's environments helping them feel confident and curious about literacy learning (DeBruin-Parecki et al., 2000; McCarthy, 1995). In contrast many parents expected children to know how to read upon kindergarten entry, which has more academic emphasis than simply being read to.

With regard to the expectation of kindergarten curricula, mothers, fathers, and teachers generally agreed. Differences emerged when respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1-7 the following 10 skills: art appreciation, intellectual concepts, large motor, listening, problem solving, self-help, small motor, social, speaking and confidence. The mean ratings for all skills were fairly high, showing that all groups felt that these skills are

important to emphasize in kindergarten. Consistent with findings in the previous section, parents ranked intellectual skills higher than did teachers, while teachers ranked self-help skills significantly higher than did parents. With increasing numbers of children in classrooms, teachers may be in need of self-sufficient children in their classrooms.

By far, the greatest degree of similarity existed between fathers and mothers for nearly all analyses. The greatest discrepancies were between fathers and teachers.

The only difference detected when comparing the expectations teachers have for native English-speaking and nonnative English-speaking children was how to follow directions. Teachers expected native English-speaking children to know how to follow directions upon kindergarten entry significantly more than they expected it for nonnative English-speaking children. This difference could be attributed to teachers' understanding that nonnative children may not understand the directions given them and therefore their expectations would not be as high for them as the native English-speaking children. From these findings it seems that these teachers in general do not have different expectations for native English-speaking and nonnative English-speaking children. However, it may also be possible that teachers answered the questionnaires according to what they believed the researcher would want to hear, rather than expressing how they truly believe children from different ethnic backgrounds should be treated.

Teachers who had training in multicultural education placed more emphasis on incorporating speaking skills for nonnative English-speaking kindergarten children than did teachers without multicultural training. This suggests that teachers who have background in multicultural education are more aware of the need for the child's culture

and primary language to be incorporated into their learning environment. This finding strongly supports research in multicultural education. Previous literature indicates that teachers who have training in multicultural education are more responsive to the needs of nonnative English-speaking children (Byrnes & Kiger, 1997; Falconer, 1998). Research also indicates that home/school transitions are better facilitated when educators understand the child's language and cultural background (Cosden et al., 1995; Garcia, 1997; Jones & Velez, 1997; Pappas, 1997).

The concrete examples of the concerns, fears, and hopes that nonnative English-speaking families have as their children enter a school setting where communication occurs in their nonnative language provide valuable insights for educators. Likewise, listings of challenges that teachers face having nonnative students in their classroom, as well as their suggestions for improving ESL kindergarten preparation, further promote the importance of communication between schools and families prior to children's kindergarten entry.

Parental concerns about social development, language barriers, and racism were listed most often. Parents were worried that their child would make friends and fit into the kindergarten classroom. They were especially concerned that their minority status would hinder their child's social, emotional, and academic progress. Parents also worried about communication difficulties with the teachers, between both the child and the teacher as well as the parent and the teacher. These parents' concerns support previous literature, which has consistently shown Latino parents' great concern for their children's education (Bernhard et al., 1998; Falconer, 1998; Lombardi, 1992; Pappas, 1997). Their concerns

also coincide with research indicating the hindrance of cultural and linguistic barriers with Latino parents' ability to become involved in their child's education (Bernhard et al., 1998; Lombardi, 1992; Pappas, 1997).

It is notable that many parents mentioned that they did not want their child in the ESL program, yet teachers wanted to implement more programs in this area. Parents felt that their children were being treated unequally by being placed in separate programs from native English-speaking children. These discrepancies further support the need for enhanced communication between schools and families. This communication would help parents understand why their children are being placed in ESL programs and better help them understand how their child will benefit from them. It would also help educators understand the opinions and concerns of multicultural families about these programs.

When teachers were asked about the three greatest challenges they face in having ESL children in their classrooms, they overwhelmingly mentioned language barriers. This shows that both parents and teachers are facing challenges with communication. It seems that parents and teachers have the desire to communicate with one another, but are having trouble doing so. Teachers also mentioned that they face challenges with parental involvement from multicultural families. It is interesting that parents express a desire to become involved in their child's schooling, yet teachers feel that these parents are not participating. Research suggests that problems such as these arise because of the communication barriers that hinder the parents' ability to become involved (Pappas, 1997). It is also possible that the low educational level of these parents may contribute to

their inadequate feelings about a formal school setting (Espinosa, 1995; Garcia, 1997; Inger, 1992; Lombardi, 1992; Pappas, 1997).

Teachers provided valuable insights about what schools could do to prepare ESL children and families for kindergarten entry. Most of their suggestions coincided with previous literature about home/school continuity (Johnson et al., 1995; Mangione & Speth, 1998; Morisset, 1994; Nurss, 1987). Teachers indicated the importance of schools and the community working together to provide the family with more information about kindergarten preparation. They suggested the implementation of programs that would educate parents, increase pre-kindergarten experience, and provide health care for these families. Teachers also discussed the need for more translators to help them communicate with nonnative English-speaking families.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is the homogeneity of the sample. All of the participants lived in a rural Northern Utah county that is primarily Caucasian. Perhaps future studies could be conducted in more urban areas where populations are more culturally diverse. Another limitation of this study has to do with its small sample size. Also, because of the self-selection of the parental sample, it is very likely that participating parents were parents that showed concern and interest in their child's education, thus affecting the given responses. Future studies would benefit by obtaining a larger, randomly selected sample to enhance generalizability. Furthermore, given the number of analyses performed, the differences that did emerge in this study should be interpreted

with caution. Some statistically significant differences can be expected to occur by chance. Finally, it is possible that respondents may have answered questions in a politically correct manner. Answers may have been given according to what respondents felt the researcher was studying, rather than giving the answers they truly believed to be correct.

Implications

Findings from this study indicate that parents and teachers believe enhanced communication between families and schools would better prepare Latino children's transition into formal schooling. This would entail effort on the part of teachers, administrators, and parents. For instance, something as simple as teachers learning small phrases of the child's native language or incorporating the child's cultural background into daily curricula would help children enhance continuity between home and school environments. This could be further developed if teachers had more training in multicultural education and ESL teaching strategies. Administrators could better facilitate school/family communication by providing the funding for more translators and interpreters. They could also implement more programs that would teach parents about their role in kindergarten preparation and prepare them for future school involvement. Parents would need to respond to educators' efforts of enhancing communication by attending parent education programs and meeting all appointments with teachers and translators. School/family communication would also be enhanced if parents learned English.

In this study, parents and teachers agreed that earlier education of Latino children would help them make the transition into an English-speaking school more readily. This implies that more Head Start and summer programs be implemented for these children. It would also be important to make parents aware of these programs in order to increase enrollment in the programs.

Throughout this study, parents placed more emphasis on academics for children's kindergarten entry, while teachers emphasized more developmentally appropriate preparation. Discrepancies between the opinions of parents and teachers further support the notion that parent education programs be implemented in the community to enhance parental knowledge about children's developmental learning. It would be particularly important to increase Latino parents' awareness about the importance of reading to children as a way of fostering literacy learning. Parents could also be taught about ways in which they could provide an enriching environment for their child.

The fact that kindergarten teachers placed little emphasis on academic learning and focused their priorities on developmentally appropriate learning such as reading to children, enriching a child's environment, enhancing curiosity, and encouraging confidence connotes the developmentally inappropriateness of academic kindergarten testing. Many of the academic concepts that are contained in the kindergarten screening tests contradict the expectations teachers have for incoming kindergarten children. Schools and children would benefit more from developmentally appropriate assessment (NAEYC, 1990; SERVE, 1995).

Recommendations for Future Research

Additional research is needed in this area to further enhance communication with parents about Latino children's kindergarten readiness. The first suggestion would be to perform this study on a much larger scale to enhance generalizability. It would also be valuable to evaluate the opinions of the parents and teachers in this sample at the end of the year. It would be interesting to ask them to reevaluate what could have been done to better prepare their children for school, now that their child has experienced kindergarten. These opinions could be compared to the findings obtained from this study examining parental perception at the beginning of the school year. It would also be useful to examine these children's academic success throughout their school years to see if the expectations that have been placed on them truly predict future academic success.

Another recommendation for future research would be to examine the opinions of school administrators about multicultural and ESL education. Perhaps an understanding of administrative expectations would better help educators, families, and communities implement programs that would benefit multicultural diversity in the schools. The implementation and evaluation of nonnative English-speaking parent education programs to examine their effectiveness would also provide valuable information for future research. Finally, research such as this could be conducted with families of a variety of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds to help educators better understand the expectations that are placed on all incoming kindergarten children.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Letters of Approval

Utah State UNIVERSITY

VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH OFFICE
1450 Old Main Hill
Logan UT 84322-1450
Telephone: (435) 797-1180
FAX: (435) 797-1367
INTERNET: lpgerity@champ.usu.edu

June 28, 2000

MEMORANDUM

TO: Shelley Lindauer
Shanda Stephens

FROM: True Rubal, IRB Administrator 

SUBJECT: Latino Children's Kindergarten Entry: Views of Parents and Teachers

Your proposal has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board and is approved under expedite procedure #7.

- There is no more than minimal risk to the subjects.
 There is greater than minimal risk to the subjects.

This approval applies only to the proposal currently on file. Any change affecting human subjects must be approved by the Board prior to implementation. All approved proposals are subject to continuing review at least annually, which may include the examination of records connected with the project. Injuries or any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board.

Prior to involving human subjects, properly executed informed consent must be obtained from each subject or from an authorized representative, and documentation of informed consent must be kept on file for at least three years after the project ends. Each subject must be furnished with a copy of the informed consent document for their personal records.

The research activities listed below are exempt from IRB review based on the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations for the protection of human research subjects, 45 CFR Part 46, as amended to include provisions of the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, June 18, 1991.

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

**Cache County School District**

2063 North 1200 East
North Logan, UT 84341-2007

Phone (435) 752-3925

Fax (435) 753-2168

www.cache.k12.ut.us

July 13, 2000

Shanda Stephens
675 East 700 North #1
Logan, Utah 84321

Dear Ms. Stephens:

We have reviewed and approved your proposal titled: Latino Children's Kindergarten Entry. Our review team is in strong support of the project.

Please let me know if you need any help. I look forward to reading the results of this study.

Sincerely,

Stephen W. Zsiray, Jr. Ed.D.
Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Cc: Dr. Shelley Lindauer



LOGAN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

101 WEST CENTER LOGAN, UTAH 84321-4563

PHONE 435-755-2300

FAX NUMBER 435-755-2311

August 21, 2000

Shanda Stephens
675 East 700 North #1
Logan, UT 84321

Dear Ms. Stephens:

We have received your request to conduct research on "Latino Children's Kindergarten Entry: Views of Parents and Teachers." We have carefully reviewed your proposal and will approve your project with the following modification(s):

1. Research may not be conducted in Logan District the first and last months of the school year. Therefore, the timeline in the methodology chapter will need to be adjusted.

Please work with Susanne Kuresa or Janet Kraft on the specific details of your project and the assistance you require.

Sincerely,

Myra Lynch
Personnel Director

bb

pc Susanne Kuresa
Janet Kraft

ADMINISTRATION Dr. J. Allen Lowe, Superintendent Dr. M. Larry Petersen, ATE Director	Mr. Paul G. Jensen, Business Administrator Ms. Susanne Kuresa, Special Services Director	Dr. Richard J. Jensen, Curriculum Director Ms. Myra Lynch, Personnel Director	Ms. Ann Davidson, Food Service & Adult Ed. Supervisor Mr. Donald J. Jeppesen, Technology Director
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Appendix B. Kindergarten Parent Questionnaire
English Version

Kindergarten Parent Questionnaire

(Over Please)

KINDERGARTEN PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill out this questionnaire following the given directions. All of your responses will remain anonymous and reported in group form only. Because we are interested in the responses of individuals, we ask that mothers and fathers complete their questionnaires without conferring with each other. Thank you for your cooperation!

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement.

Parents could do more to prepare their children for kindergarten.				
Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5

Please fill in the following questions.

<p>What could parents do that would help children prepare for kindergarten?</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>What have <u>you</u> done to help your child prepare for kindergarten?</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p>

For the following 13 skills, please mark the 5 MOST important items for a child to know with an "X" and the 5 LEAST important items with an "0".

When a child enters kindergarten, the most important thing to know is:

<p>_____ How to share with other children</p> <p>_____ How to listen</p> <p>_____ How to count</p> <p>_____ How to read</p> <p>_____ How to wait one's turn</p> <p>_____ How to follow directions</p> <p>_____ How to be independent</p>	<p>_____ How to sit still</p> <p>_____ How to be curious</p> <p>_____ How to solve problems</p> <p>_____ How to write</p> <p>_____ How to raise one's hand</p> <p>_____ How to feel confident</p>
--	---

Please rate the following items according to how important it is for that skill to be emphasized in KINDERGARTENS.

Not Important							Very Important		The development of...
1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		art appreciation skills (music, painting)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		intellectual concepts (numbers, letters)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		large muscle skills (running, balance)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		listening skills	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		problem solving skills (solving why/how problems)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		self-help skills (dressing self, toileting self)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		small muscle skills (cutting, writing)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		social skills (cooperation, making friends)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		speaking skills (in primary language)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		confidence skills	

Please fill in the following question:

What concerns (if any) do you have as your child enters kindergarten?

Please fill out the following information about yourself.

Female Male Age: _____
Are You: Married Divorced Widowed Single
Is this your first marriage? Yes No

How many years have YOU attended school? (Circle)

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

College degrees you have earned? _____

Area of emphasis? _____

Your Occupation? _____

How many years has YOUR SPOUSE attended school? (Circle)

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

College degrees your spouse has earned? _____

Area of spouse's emphasis? _____

Your spouse's occupation? _____

How many children do you have? _____

	Age	Sex		Age	Sex
1.	_____	_____	5.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	6.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	7.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	8.	_____	_____

Did your kindergartner attend preschool (less than 4 hours per day)? Yes No
 If yes, for how long (weeks, months, years)? _____

Did your child attend day care (more than 4 hours per day)? Yes No
 If yes, for how long (weeks, months, years)? _____

Thank you so much for your cooperation !

Appendix C. Kindergarten Parent Questionnaire

Spanish Version

Cuestionario para los Padres del Kindergarten

(Continuar)

CUESTIONARIO PARA LOS PADRES DEL KINDERGARTEN

Por favor llene este cuestionario siguiendo las siguientes instrucciones. Todas sus respuestas se mantendrán anónimas y serán usadas solamente en reportes como grupo. Estamos interesados en respuestas dadas individualmente, por lo tanto sugerimos que el cuestionario sea llenado por lo tanto el padre y la madre por separado. Agradecemos su cooperación!

Por favor indique su agrado o desagrado en las siguientes declaraciones.

Podrían los padres de familia hacer algo más para ayudar a sus niños a estar listos para kindergarten.				
Muy en desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Imparcial	Acuerdo	Muy de acuerdo
1	2	3	4	5

Por favor complete las siguientes preguntas.

Qué podrían hacer los padres de familia que pudiera ayudar sus hijos a prepararse para kindergarten?	
1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____
4.	_____
Qué ha hecho <u>usted</u> para ayudar a su niño a estar preparado para kindergarten?	
1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____
4.	_____

En las siguientes 13 preguntas, por favor marcar con una "X" los cinco puntás que usted considere **MUY** importantes que su hijo conosca antes de ingresa a kindergarten, y "O" a las cinco **MENOS** importantes.

_____ Compartir con otros	_____ Permanecer sentado
_____ Saber escuchar	_____ Ser curioso
_____ Saber leer	_____ Resolver problemas
_____ Saber contar	_____ Saber escribir
_____ Saber esperar su turno	_____ Levantar su mano y preguntar
_____ Seguir instrucciones	_____ Sentirse confiado
_____ Ser independiente	

Por favor considere las siguientes declaraciones de acuerdo a que tan importante puede ser esta habilidad para que sea enseñada en kindergarten.

Sin Importancia							Muy Importante	El desarrollo de.....
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	habilidad en apreciar el arte (música, pintura)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	habilidad en conceptos intelectuales (números, letras)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	desarrollo de los músculos largos (correr, balancearse)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	habilidad en escuchar	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	habilidad en resolver problemas (que envuelven el por qué y el cómo de situaciones)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	ayudarse por si mismo (vestirse, ir al baño)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	desarrollo de los músculos pequeños (cortar, escribir)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	socialización (cooperación, hacer amigos)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	habilidad en hablar (en su lengua primera)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	seguridad en si mismo	

Por favor conteste la siguiente pregunta:

Tiene usted alguna preocupación (si hay alguna) sobre el ingreso de su niño en kindergarten?

Por favor dé la siguiente información sobre usted:

Femenino Masculino Edad: _____
 Es Usted: Casado Divorciado Viudo Soltero
 Es éste su primer matrimonio? Si No

Cuantos años asistió USTED a la escuela? (Círcule)

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

Grado universitario obtenido? _____

Áreas de mayor énfasis? _____

Su ocupación? _____

Cuantos años asistió SU ESPOSA(O) a la escuela? (Círcule)

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

Grado universitario obtenido por su esposo(a)? _____

Áreas de mayor énfasis de su esposa(o)? _____

Su ocupación? _____

Cuantos niños tienen? _____

	Edad	Sexo		Edad	Sexo
1.	_____	_____	5.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	6.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	7.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	8.	_____	_____

Ha asistido su niño el pre-escolar (menos de 4 horas diarias)? Si No
 Si la respuesta es afirmativa, por cuanto tiempo (semanas, meses, años)?

Ha asistido su niño a guardería infantil (más de 4 horas diarias)? Si No
 Si la respuesta es afirmativa, por cuanto tiempo (semanas, meses, años)?

Muchísimas gracias por su cooperación !

Appendix D. Kindergarten Teacher Questionnaire

Version 1

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill out this questionnaire following the given directions. All of your responses will be reported in group form only. Thank you for your cooperation!

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement.

Parents could do more to prepare their children for kindergarten.				
Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5

Please fill in the following question.

<p>What could parents do that would help children prepare for kindergarten?</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p>

For the following question, please mark the 5 MOST important items with an "X" and the 5 LEAST important items with an "0".

When a child who speaks ENGLISH as a FIRST LANGUAGE enters kindergarten, the most important thing to know is.....

<p>_____ How to share with other children</p> <p>_____ How to listen</p> <p>_____ How to count</p> <p>_____ How to read</p> <p>_____ How to wait one's turn</p> <p>_____ How to follow directions</p> <p>_____ How to be independent</p>	<p>_____ How to sit still</p> <p>_____ How to be curious</p> <p>_____ How to solve problems</p> <p>_____ How to write</p> <p>_____ How to raise one's hand</p> <p>_____ How to feel confident</p>
--	---

For the following question, please mark the **5 MOST** important items with an **"X"** and the **5 LEAST** important items with an **"0"**.

When a child who DOES NOT speak ENGLISH as a FIRST LANGUAGE enters kindergarten, the most important thing to know is.....

_____	How to share with other children	_____	How to sit still
_____	How to listen	_____	How to be curious
_____	How to count	_____	How to solve problems
_____	How to read	_____	How to write
_____	How to wait one's turn	_____	How to raise one's hand
_____	How to follow directions	_____	How to feel confident
_____	How to be independent		

Please rate the following items according to how important it is for that skill to be emphasized for KINDERGARTNERS who speak ENGLISH as a FIRST LANGUAGE.

Not Important							Very Important	The development of...
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	art appreciation skills (music, dance)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	intellectual concepts (numbers, letters)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	large muscle skills (running, balance)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	listening skills	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	problem solving skills (solving why/how problems)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	self-help skills (dressing self, toileting self)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	small muscle skills (cutting, writing)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	social skills (cooperation, making friends)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	speaking skills	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	confidence skills	

Please rate the following items according to how important it is for that skill to be emphasized for KINDERGARTNERS who DO NOT speak ENGLISH as a FIRST LANGUAGE.

Not Important							Very Important	The development of...
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	art appreciation skills (music, dance)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	intellectual concepts (numbers, letters)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	large muscle skills (running, balance)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	listening skills	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	problem solving skills (solving why/how problems)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	self-help skills (dressing self, toileting self)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	small muscle skills (cutting, writing)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	social skills (cooperation, making friends)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	speaking skills (in primary language)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	confidence skills	

Please complete the following:

What are the three most important challenges you face in having ESL children in your class?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you believe (if anything) schools could do to help prepare ESL children and families for kindergarten entry?

Please fill out the following information about yourself.

Female Male Age: _____

Do you have any children? Yes No

If yes, please list the ages: _ _ _ _ _

How long have you taught this grade level? _____

Please list any other grade/age levels at which you have taught. Include any teaching experiences with children from birth on, and specify the length of time spent with that level.

Grade/Age Level	Number of Years Experience at this Grade/Age Level

Prior to this year, how many total years have you taught? _____

How many children are in your class(es)? Morning _____ Afternoon _____

How many children in your class(es) do not speak English as a first language?
Morning _____ Afternoon _____

Please specify the number of ESL children in your class who speak the following languages:

Spanish _____ Korean _____ Chinese _____ Farsi _____
Japanese _____ Other (please specify) _____

Have you completed courses or workshops in ESL (English as a Second Language)?

Yes No

If yes, please check all the following that apply.

Credit at a University Course offered within the school district

Other (please specify) _____

Check the response which accurately describes you.

- BA/BS in Early Childhood Education
- BA/BS in Elementary Education
- BA/BS in Early Childhood Education plus 1-15 Graduate Credits in Education
- BA/BS in Elementary Education plus 1-15 Graduate Credits in Education
- BA/BS in Early Childhood Education plus 16-30 Graduate Credits in Education
- BA/BS in Elementary Education plus 16-30 Graduate Credits in Education
- BA/BS in Early Childhood Education plus 31 or more Graduate Credits in Education
- BA/BS in Elementary Education plus 31 or more Graduate Credits in Education

Have you received an endorsement in Early Childhood Education?

- Yes No

Have you completed a Master's Degree?

- Yes No

If yes, in what area? _____

Thank you so much for your cooperation !

Appendix E. Kindergarten Teacher Questionnaire

Version 2

Kindergarten Teacher Questionnaire

(Over Please)

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill out this questionnaire following the given directions. All of your responses will be reported in group form only. Thank you for your cooperation!

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement.

Parents could do more to prepare their children for kindergarten.				
Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5

Please fill in the following question.

<p>What could parents do that would help children prepare for kindergarten?</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p>

For the following question, please mark the **5 MOST** important items with an "X" and the **5 LEAST** important items with an "0".

When a child who DOES NOT speak ENGLISH as a FIRST LANGUAGE enters kindergarten, the most important thing to know is.....

_____ How to share with other children	_____ How to sit still
_____ How to listen	_____ How to be curious
_____ How to count	_____ How to solve problems
_____ How to read	_____ How to write
_____ How to wait one's turn	_____ How to raise one's hand
_____ How to follow directions	_____ How to feel confident
_____ How to be independent	

For the following question, please mark the **5 MOST** important items with an **"X"** and the **5 LEAST** important items with an **"0"**.

When a child who speaks ENGLISH as a FIRST LANGUAGE enters kindergarten, the most important thing to know is.....

- | | | | |
|-------|----------------------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| _____ | How to share with other children | _____ | How to sit still |
| _____ | How to listen | _____ | How to be curious |
| _____ | How to count | _____ | How to solve problems |
| _____ | How to read | _____ | How to write |
| _____ | How to wait one's turn | _____ | How to raise one's hand |
| _____ | How to follow directions | _____ | How to feel confident |
| _____ | How to be independent | | |

Please rate the following items according to how important it is for that skill to be emphasized for KINDERGARTNERS who DO NOT speak ENGLISH as a FIRST LANGUAGE.

Not Important							Very Important	The development of...
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	art appreciation skills (music, dance)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	intellectual concepts (numbers, letters)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	large muscle skills (running, balance)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	listening skills	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	problem solving skills (solving why/how problems)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	self-help skills (dressing self, toileting self)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	small muscle skills (cutting, writing)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	social skills (cooperation, making friends)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	speaking skills	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	confidence skills	

Please rate the following items according to how important it is for that skill to be emphasized for KINDERGARTNERS who speak ENGLISH as a FIRST LANGUAGE.

Not Important						Very Important		The development of...
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	art appreciation skills (music, dance)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	intellectual concepts (numbers, letters)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	large muscle skills (running, balance)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	listening skills	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	problem solving skills (solving why/how problems)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	self-help skills (dressing self, toileting self)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	small muscle skills (cutting, writing)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	social skills (cooperation, making friends)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	speaking skills (in primary language)	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	confidence skills	

Please complete the following:

What are the three most important challenges you face in having ESL children in your class?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What do you believe (if anything) schools could do to help prepare ESL children and families for kindergarten entry?

Please fill out the following information about yourself.

Female Male Age: _____

Do you have any children? Yes No

If yes, please list the ages: _ _ _ _ _

How long have you taught this grade level? _____

Please list any other grade/age levels at which you have taught. Include any teaching experiences with children from birth on, and specify the length of time spent with that level.

Grade/Age Level	Number of Years Experience at this Grade/Age Level

Prior to this year, how many total years have you taught? _____

How many children are in your class(es)? Morning _____ Afternoon _____

How many children in your class(es) do not speak English as a first language?
Morning _____ Afternoon _____

Please specify the number of ESL children in your class who speak the following languages:

Spanish _____ Korean _____ Chinese _____ Farsi _____
Japanese _____ Other (please specify) _____

Have you completed courses or workshops in ESL (English as a Second Language)?

Yes No

If yes, please check all the following that apply.

Credit at a University Course offered within the school district

Other (please specify) _____

Check the response which accurately describes you.

- BA/BS in Early Childhood Education
- BA/BS in Elementary Education
- BA/BS in Early Childhood Education plus 1-15 Graduate Credits in Education
- BA/BS in Elementary Education plus 1-15 Graduate Credits in Education
- BA/BS in Early Childhood Education plus 16-30 Graduate Credits in Education
- BA/BS in Elementary Education plus 16-30 Graduate Credits in Education
- BA/BS in Early Childhood Education plus 31 or more Graduate Credits in Education
- BA/BS in Elementary Education plus 31 or more Graduate Credits in Education

Have you received an endorsement in Early Childhood Education?

- Yes No

Have you completed a Master's Degree?

- Yes No

If yes, in what area? _____

Thank you so much for your cooperation !

Appendix F. Letter of Explanation for Principal



DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
College of Family Life
2905 University Blvd Phone: (801) 797-1501
Logan UT 84322-2905 FAX: (801) 797-3845

September 18, 2000

Dear Elementary School Principals:

I am a graduate student at Utah State University and am working on a project that will examine parental and teacher expectations of kindergarten readiness of Latino children. The perception of kindergarten teachers, fathers and mothers will be analyzed and compared. Comparisons will also be made of the expectations teachers have for Spanish-speaking children and English-speaking children. The study will provide information to enhance communications between the parents and teachers of Latino children, better prepare the children to make the transition in to formal schooling, and enhance congruency between home and kindergarten.

Cache and Logan School Districts have approved the study (see attached sheet). Before school started, I visited Latino parents in the valley and had them fill out their questionnaires. Now I am preparing to give questionnaires to the Kindergarten teachers in the school districts. I will be contacting you next week to schedule an appointment with your school. During this appointment, I will deliver the questionnaires to each kindergarten teacher. I will give each of them a questionnaire with a self-addressed envelope to return to me within a week. Please consider a time that would be appropriate for me to deliver these items to your teachers. I am enclosing an example of the questionnaire for you to review. Upon completion of this study, I will send you the results.

Thank you for your cooperation! Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about the project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shanda Stephens".

Shanda Stephens
750-8997
cell— 757-4017



Appendix G. Kindergarten Parent Informed Consent Letter

English Version



DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
 College of Family Life
 2905 Old Main Hill
 Logan UT 84322-2905
 Phone: (435) 797-1501
 FAX: (435) 797-3845

Page 1 of 2

Informed Consent

Title of Study: Latino Children's Kindergarten Entry: Views of Parents and Teachers

June 21, 2000

Dear Kindergarten Parents:

You play an important role as parents and first teachers in your child's life. You have helped your child develop socially and cognitively in many ways before they had any exposure to school. Many children begin kindergarten well-prepared and developmentally ready for the challenges that kindergarten brings, while others will not.

We are interested in the expectations that you have for the skills that children should possess as they begin kindergarten. This study will compare the views parents and teachers have about Latino children's kindergarten entry. It is hoped that the results of this study will help parents and kindergarten teachers define similar expectations for children as they begin kindergarten so children can be better prepared to start kindergarten.

As a participant in this study, we are asking you to complete the enclosed parent questionnaire and return it to us within ONE WEEK in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. Please note that there are two questionnaires: one for the father and one for the mother. Please complete these separately without conferring with one another. Completing the questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes of your time. All information will remain anonymous, and will be reported in group form only. Results of the study will be available upon completion. There are no risks posed by participating in this study, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. You have been given two copies of this Informed Consent. Please sign both copies and retain one copy for your files.

Your participation is truly appreciated! Please contact me or my advisor, Dr. Shelley Lindauer, if you have any questions. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Shanda Stephens
 M. S. Candidate
 435-750-8997

Shelley L. Knudsen Lindauer, Ph. D.
 Associate Professor
 435-797-1532





DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
College of Family Life
2905 Old Main Hill
Logan UT 84322-2905
Phone: (435) 797-1501
FAX: (435) 797-3845

Page 2 of 2

Informed Consent

Title of Study: Latino Children's Kindergarten Entry: Views of Parents and Teachers

I have read the information about the study and would like to participate. I understand that I will fill out the questionnaire about children's kindergarten entry. This will take no more than ten to fifteen minutes. If I choose to do so, I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please send me the results of this study when completed:

Name : _____

Address: _____



Appendix H. Kindergarten Parent Informed Consent Letter

Spanish Version



DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
 College of Family Life
 2905 Old Main Hill Phone: (435) 797-1501
 Logan UT 84322-2905 FAX: (435) 797-3845

Página 1 de 2

Autorización

Título del Estudio: Ingreso de Niños Latinos a Kindergarten: Punto de Vista de Padres y Maestros

Agosto 22, 2000

Queridos Padres de Kindergarten:

Ustedes juegan un papel muy importante como padres y primeros maestros en la vida de sus hijos. Antes de que su niño haya tenido algún contacto con la escuela, usted le ha ayudado en diferentes formas a su desarrollo social y emocional. Algunos niños que empiezan la escuela están listos y bien preparados para asistir kindergarten mientras que otros no.

Nosotros estamos muy interesadas en conocer que habilidades cree usted que su niño debería tener al ingresar a kindergarten. Este estudio comparará el punto de vista de padres y maestros sobre el ingreso de niños Latinos a kindergarten. Se espera que el resultado de este estudio ayude tanto a padres como maestros a definir el parecido de habilidades que se espera los niños puedan estar mejor preparados al empezar la escuela.

Como un participante de éste estudio, le pidimos que complete el cuestionario adjunto y lo regrese dentro del período de UNA SEMANA en el sobre con estampilla que estamos incluyendo. Por favor note que hay dos cuestionarios: uno para el padre y otro para la madre. Éstos deberán ser completados por separado sin consultarse el uno con el otro. Les tomará 10-15 minutos completar éstos cuestionarios. Toda información será confidencial y se dará a conocer solamente en un reporte de grupo. Garantizamos estricta confidencia en lo que corresponde a sus respuestas del cuestionario. No existe ningún riesgo para los padres que participen en este estudio sin embargo si en determinado momento usted no quiere continuar en éste proyecto puede retirarse libremente. Por favor firme las dos formas de autorización para hacer uso de este informe.

Apreciamos mucho su participación. Si tiene alguna pregunta, por favor contactara mi consejero, Dr. Shelley Lindauer, o conmigo. Gracias por su cooperación.

Shanda Stephens
 Candidato M. S.
 435-750-8997

Shelley L. Knudsen Lindauer, Ph. D.
 Catedrático Asociado
 435-797-1532





DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
 College of Family Life
 2905 Old Main Hill
 Logan UT 84322-2905
 Phone: (435) 797-1501
 FAX: (435) 797-3845

Página 2 de 2

Autorización

Título del Estudio: Ingreso de Niños Latinos al Jardín Infantil:
 Punto de Vista de Padres y Maestros

Yo he leído la información acerca del estudio: Ingreso de Niños Latinos al Jardín Infantil:
 Punto de Vista de Padres y Maestros y me gustaría participar en el estudio. Yo entiendo que llenaré un cuestionario con preguntas sobre mi niño, que esto tomará de 10 a 15 minutos, y que yo acepto hacerlo voluntariamente. Si en determinado momento no quiero continuar en este proyecto puedo hacerlo.

Firma : _____

Fecha: _____

Por mandar los resultados del estudio:

Nombre : _____

Dirección: _____



Appendix I. Kindergarten Teacher Informed Consent Letter



DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
 College of Family Life
 2905 Old Main Hill
 Logan UT 84322-2905
 Phone: (435) 797-1501
 FAX: (435) 797-3845

Page 1 of 2

Informed Consent

Title of Study: Latino Children's Kindergarten Entry: Views of Parents and Teachers

June 21, 2000

Dear Kindergarten Teacher:

You play an important role in many children's lives as their first teacher in a public school setting. You will help them develop socially and cognitively in many ways while they attend your kindergarten class. The children in your class will exhibit a wide range of abilities. Many children will come well-prepared and developmentally ready for the challenges that kindergarten brings, while others will not.

We are interested in the expectations that you have for the skills that children should possess as they begin kindergarten. This study will compare the views parents and teachers have about Latino children's kindergarten entry. It will also compare the priorities teachers hold for children who speak English as a first language and those who are non-native English speaking. It is hoped that the results of this study will clarify any differing opinions that Latino parents and teachers have. It is also hoped that the results of this study will help parents and kindergarten teachers define similar expectations for children as they begin kindergarten so children can be better prepared for kindergarten entry.

As a participant in this study, we are asking you to complete the enclosed kindergarten teacher questionnaire and return it to us within ONE WEEK in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. Completing the questionnaire will take approximately 10-15 minutes of your time. All information will remain anonymous, and will be reported in group form only. Results of the study will be available upon completion. There are no risks posed by participating in this study, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. You have been given two copies of this Informed Consent. Please sign both copies and retain one copy for your files.

Your participation is truly appreciated! Please contact me or my advisor, Dr. Shelley Lindauer, if you have any questions. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Shanda Stephens
 M. S. Candidate
 435-750-8997

Shelley L. Knudsen Lindauer, Ph. D.
 Associate Professor
 435-797-1532





DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
 College of Family Life
 2905 Old Main Hill
 Logan UT 84322-2905
 Phone: (435) 797-1501
 FAX: (435) 797-3845

Page 2 of 2

Informed Consent

Title of Study: Latino Children's Kindergarten Entry: Views of Parents and Teachers

I have read the information about the study and would like to participate. I understand that I will fill out the questionnaire about children's kindergarten entry. This will take no more than ten to fifteen minutes. If I choose to do so, I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please send me the results of this study when completed:

Name : _____

Address: _____



Appendix J. Kindergarten Parent Reminder Letters



DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
College of Family Life
2905 University Blvd
Logan UT 84322-2905
Phone: (801) 797-1501
FAX: (801) 797-3845

Queridos Padres del Kindergarten:

Si ya han completado y mandado los Cuestionarios Para los Padres del Kindergarten, les agradezco su cooperación inmensamente! Sus opiniones son muy importantes.

Si no han completado y enviado los cuestionarios, todavia pueden hacerlo. Por favor, les completen y los regresen en el sobre con estampilla que dejó.

Apricio mucho su participación!

Gracias

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shanda Stephens".

Shanda Stephens
Department of Family and Human Development
Utah State University
Logan, UT

84322-2905

797-1525 (oficina)

750-8997 (casa)



Utah State
UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
College of Family Life

Dear Kindergarten Parents:

If you have already completed and returned your Kindergarten Parent Questionnaire, I truly thank you for your cooperation! Your opinions are very important.

If you have not completed and returned your questionnaire, you may still do so. I have included a new questionnaire for you. You may return it in the self-addressed, postage-paid envelope that is included.

I truly appreciate your participation!

Sincerely,



Shanda Stephens
Department of Family and Human Development
Utah State University
Logan, UT

84322-2905

797-1525 (office)

750-8997 (home)





DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
College of Family Life

Queridos Padres del Kindergarten:

Si ya han completado y mandado los Cuestionarios Para los Padres del Kindergarten, les agradezco su cooperación inmensamente! Sus opiniones son muy importantes.

Si no han completado y enviado los cuestionarios, todavia pueden hacerlo. Les incluí unos nuevos cuestionarios. Por favor, les completen y los regresen en el sobre con estampilla que dejó.

Aprecio mucho su participación!

Gracias

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shanda Stephens".

Shanda Stephens
Department of Family and Human Development
Utah State University
Logan, UT

84322-2905

797-1525 (oficina)
750-8997 (casa)



Appendix K. Kindergarten Teacher Reminder Letters



DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
College of Family Life
2905 Old Main Hill
Logan UT 84322-2905
Phone: (435) 797-1501
FAX: (435) 797-3845

Title of Study: Latino Children's Kindergarten Entry: Views of Parents and Teachers

October, 2000

Dear Principal:

I would like to thank you for your cooperation in distributing the questionnaires in your school. I appreciate your willingness to introduce me to the kindergarten teachers. Your assistance in this study is truly valuable. I am enclosing thank you/ reminder letters for you to distribute to the kindergarten teachers in your school. This letter thanks all of the participants, and reminds the teachers who have not yet mailed the questionnaires to do so. Please distribute them to the teachers. Thanks again for your cooperation!!!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shanda Stephens".

Shanda Stephens
Department of Family and Human Development
Utah State University
Logan, UT 84322-2905
(801) 787-1525



Utah State UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
College of Family Life

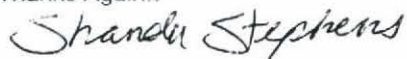
Title of Study: Latino Children's Kindergarten Entry: Views of Parents and Teachers

October, 2000

Dear Kindergarten Teacher:

If you have already completed and returned the kindergarten teacher questionnaire, I sincerely THANK YOU for your participation in this study. Your input and assistance in this study is truly valuable! If you have not yet completed and returned your questionnaire, it is not too late to do so. Please complete the questionnaire and return it in the postage-paid envelope originally provided. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Thanks Again!!



Shanda Stephens
Department of Family and Human Development
Utah State University
Logan, UT 84322-2905
(801) 787-1525

