PARENTAL AND TEACHER PRIORITIES FOR KINDERGARTEN PREPARATION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR KINDERGARTEN CURRICULA

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF SCIENCE in Family and Human Development

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Participants for this investigation were 146 kindergarten teachers and 436 parents of kindergarteners in Davis and Weber School Districts. Self-administered questionnaires were utilized, 1) to determine if teachers, mothers and fathers believe that parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten, 2) to delineate what each group believes parents can do, 3) to investigate what mothers and fathers have done in preparing their children for kindergarten, 4) to explore what skills teachers, mothers and fathers credit as most important for children to possess upon kindergarten entry, and 5) to examine what skills these three groups feel should be emphasized in the kindergarten curricula.

A variety of statistical analyses were used to compare teachers', mothers' and fathers' responses to the above questions. Major findings suggest that teachers differ significantly from do mothers and fathers in believing that parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten. Additional differences were found in the nature of what the three groups felt parents could do, with parents mentioning intellectual skills significantly more often than teachers. Results
also suggest that mothers more than fathers indicate that they take an active role in preparing their children for kindergarten.

Teachers, mothers and fathers generally agree about which skills children should possess when they go to kindergarten. Listening, feeling confident, and following directions were found to be ranked highest in importance with writing and reading skills perceived as least important. All three groups held similar attitudes toward the kindergarten curricula, holding that a wide variety of skills are important and should be emphasized in kindergarten programs. The implications of current findings for parents and teachers are discussed.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Expectations for kindergarten curricula have been a center of controversy over the past century. While some programs have chosen to focus strongly on the development of cognitive skills, others instead have emphasized social and emotional development. Still other programs have sought to incorporate aspects of both these models.

Regardless of the kindergarten program they enter, children exhibit an extreme diversity of skills and knowledge. Many children are well-prepared and developmentally ready to competently perform in their kindergarten programs. Others are not. While individual developmental levels account for many of these differences, some children simply have not had an adequate variety of experiences to help prepare them for the challenges of kindergarten.

Now, more than ever, parents are becoming actively concerned with their child's first year of public education (Gallup, 1978; Mayfield, 1983; Simmons & Brewer, 1985). A growing interest of parents is in children's acquisition of academic skills prior to kindergarten entry. This interest is reflected in the number of popular books for parents which focus on teaching young children academic skills (Doman, 1975, 1979; Fox, 1986; Sparling & Lewis, 1979). Although related research is minimal, it does indicate disagreement between the priorities that kindergarten teachers and parents of kindergarteners hold for pre-kindergarten skills and kindergarten programs. Moreover, virtually no research has examined kindergarten teachers' and parents' perceptions of the role that parental training may play in preparing children for
kindergarten entry. Studies have also not clearly compared maternal, paternal and teacher expectations and attitudes towards children's acquisition of skills in a variety of developmental domains.

The current study sought to examine what kindergarten teachers and mothers and fathers of kindergarteners feel parents can do to adequately prepare children for kindergarten. It, furthermore, investigated what priorities these three groups hold for children's skills upon kindergarten entrance. Finally, this study aimed to determine what expectations teachers, mothers and fathers have concerning the kindergarten curricula.

It is hoped that the results of this investigation will enable kindergarten teachers and parents of kindergarteners to define similar school and developmental goals. Ideally, the results of the study along with current child development research, will aid in educating parents about accurate and appropriate expectations for kindergarten-age children.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

History of the Kindergarten

Interest in early childhood education and ideas on the development of the child can be traced as far back as Plato and Aristotle. This interest, however, was within the realm of these philosopher’s educational theories, and early childhood education was not recognized as a specialty or even as a subcategory until much later. It was Pestalozzi and Froebel in the late 1700s and early 1800s who marked the beginning point for early childhood education and particularly the kindergarten movement.

Pestalozzi represents the inception of early childhood education. His ideas of more formalized thought devoted to the education of young people set the stage for what was to later develop into the kindergarten. In a letter to Heinrich Gessner in 1799, Pestalozzi stated that he heeded it to be "extremely important that men should be encouraged to learn by themselves and allowed to develop freely" (Braun & Edwards, 1972, p. 54). Until Pestalozzi's death in 1827, his life was devoted to human relationships. It was not what he said or wrote but what he did that was his doctrine. His educational doctrine was not an easy one to follow. He had difficulty making his approach clear, and formulating what he believed. Friedrich Froebel, even though he loved and respected Pestalozzi, could not help but criticize him for his inability to explain what he was trying to do educationally. Froebel contended that Pestalozzi could not give any definite account of his idea, plan or intention. Since Froebel could not accept the procedures
of Pestalozzi to be the ideal educational practice for young children, he ventured to find for himself a method more useful and more valid (Braun & Edwards, 1972).

In 1805, Froebel first visited Yverden, West Germany, where Pestalozzi had his Institute. Following his visit to Pestalozzi, Froebel started "The Universal German Educational Institute" of which he was the only teacher and his five nephews the only students. In 1817, the number of students increased and he moved the Institute to Keilhau. After this, Froebel's subsequent experience and reflection deepened his conviction that continuous education was a necessary corollary of continuous development. He, moreover, concluded that the most practical reform was the establishment of schools for children younger than those admitted into the existing schools (Salmon & Hindshaw, 1904). Froebel called his system of schooling for young children "kindergarten," meaning "child's garden," a place for children to grow and develop. This was an institution where children could gather together with peers outside the restraints of the family. Also, the garden-like atmosphere would protect children from the "corrupting influence of society and the dangers of nature" (Shapiro, 1983, p. 22). In the kindergarten the "mental, physical and social faculties of the child could be cultivated, unfolded, and ripened" (Shapiro, 1983, p. 22). In February of 1837, he opened his first "child's garden" in an old flour mill at Blankenburg (Salmon & Hindshaw, 1904).

For many years following Froebel's death in 1852, kindergarten procedures and attitudes toward children followed his idealistic conception of the nature and function of education. He viewed the kindergarten as an essential step in the entire progress of educational
experience, and the early years not merely as preparation for childhood, but as having value in themselves.

One of Froebel's most significant contributions to education was his appreciation of the value of play (Ross, 1976). He saw play as the mode through which the child achieved equilibrium through harmonious development (Salmon & Hindshaw, 1904). Every activity was designed to instruct through giving pleasure. He said play was "not trivial", but rather "highly serious and of deep significance" and was "the highest phase of child development" (Froebel, 1896, p. 54-55). In the curriculum that Froebel developed for the kindergarten, he sought to help the child unfold his abilities by directing his/her playing (Lambert, 1958).

Another critical component of Froebel's theory was the idea that the development of man is continuous, therefore his education must be continuous. He divided the process of early education between birth and age six into discrete stages of physical and mental development—infancy, early childhood and childhood. Froebel devised various educational exercises related to each stage. He believed that his stages were developmental, for each educational task corresponded to an observed mental, physical or spiritual change in the child (Shapiro, 1983).

In all ways, Froebel developed his educational theory and kindergarten under the assumption that each child was creative and productive, not merely receptive. In his kindergarten, learning was through activity. With marked insight, Froebel designed a system for early childhood education that would extend for decades to influence a vast number of theorists, educators and children.
Kindergarten in America

Before his death, Froebel had recognized the potential of America for the growth of his kindergarten. As early as 1826, he wrote that his ideas must emigrate to the country where conditions for the existence of a pure family life, true Christianity, and the spirit of freedom were offered. He believed these were all conditions found in America (Froebel, 1896).

It was Carl and Margarethe Schwiz, Germans who immigrated to America during the German Revolution of 1848, who brought Froebel's ideas to the United States. Margarethe had studied under Frederick Froebel prior to her marriage. Once in America, Margarethe, fearing their German culture would be lost, used her memory of Froebel's lectures to open a small family kindergarten in Watertown, Wisconsin in 1855.

In 1859, while on a trip to Boston, Margarethe met Elizabeth Palmer Peabody. This meeting influenced the direction of the development of the kindergarten in the United States. Peabody was fascinated by Froebel's precepts as explained to her by Margarethe. Peabody continued to study about Froebel's philosophy, and based on what she had heard and read she opened the first English speaking kindergarten in Boston in 1860. Later, Peabody devoted three years to convincing the Boston School Committee and City Council to establish kindergartens in the Boston school system. By 1870, they agreed to open an experimental kindergarten; however, due to lack of funds and interest, it closed in 1879 (Ross, 1976).

In the interim, Peabody had been instrumental in getting Pauline Agassiz Shaw to open charity kindergartens. Shaw financed the opening
of two free kindergartens for children in areas surrounding Boston and when the experimental public school kindergarten class was closed in 1879, she took it over. Shaw continued to open kindergartens until in 1883, she had established a network of 31 free kindergarten classes which were taken into the Boston public school system in 1887.

Elizabeth Peabody joined by Susan Blow (who, when touring Europe in 1871, became intrigued by Froebel's kindergarten system) influenced William Torrey Harris, Superintendent of St. Louis public schools (and later the United States Commissioner of Education) to make kindergarten an integral part of the school system in St. Louis. In September of 1873, the experimental kindergarten at the Des Peres School in St. Louis was launched. It was the first public kindergarten in the United States. Under Susan Blow's direction, 20 children enrolled the first day and soon all 42 available spots were filled (Ross, 1976).

The St. Louis kindergarten experiment continued to be a success. Its growth was astounding. In 1873, there was one kindergarten, one paid assistant, and Susan Blow as a volunteer teacher. By 1879, there were 53 classes and 131 paid teachers.

The fulfillment of expectations in St. Louis was a crucial factor in the extension of kindergartens nationally, for it allayed the fears and warnings of those who had been against such an innovation (Ross, 1976). In later years, those who were working to establish kindergartens in other cities would refer to the St. Louis kindergarten as their model.

Continued efforts to introduce the kindergarten to America spread in several directions. Kindergartens continued to open in both the public and private sectors, and more focus was placed on school boards
and state legislatures in efforts to include kindergartens in a greater number of public schools. Another interest group turned to organizing free kindergarten associations to support charity kindergartens for children of the poor. These people hoped that free kindergartens would offer the "slum child" a chance he would not otherwise have to enable him to "rise above the disadvantages of poverty and neglect" (Ross, 1976, p. 19).

Charity kindergartens in Boston, New York City and San Francisco were models for later undertakings. The first charity kindergarten had been opened in 1877 by Pauline Shaw, and during the next two decades, the movement to establish charity or free kindergartens expanded rapidly. People, feeling a moral, religious or social responsibility turned to the kindergarten as a possible remedy for the "brutalizing effects of poverty on children" (Ross, 1976, p. 30), and as an institution through which to promote moral, social and political aspects of good citizenship.

In 1884, the National Education Association (NEA) established the Department of Kindergarten Education. In 1885, the NEA recommended that kindergarten become a part of all public schools (Osborn, 1975). By the end of the 1890s, the idea of the kindergarten was widely accepted by the American public. School boards in cities such as St. Louis, Indianapolis, Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia, had included kindergartens in their public school systems, and many others were ready to follow suit. By 1914, every major city had municipal kindergartens.

Due to the rapid expansion of the kindergarten, the growth of new notions regarding childhood thought and development from educators such as Dewey, Montessori and Piaget, along with a variety of events
including the launch of Sputnik in 1957, differences in developmental philosophies and kindergarten systems emerged (Osborn, 1975; Ross, 1976; Shapiro, 1983). These differing philosophies have continued throughout the evolution of the kindergarten. By 1965 the major issue had developed between "enrichment vs. instruction." The first type of program emphasized social/emotional development and utilized play, movement, and the dramatic and creative arts as the major parts of the curriculum. The latter type of program was structured and systematic and emphasized cognitive skills (Osborn, 1975). In the early 1970s, both sides began to recognize some value in the position of their critics. Some "enrichment" groups began to introduce cognitive concepts into the curriculum in a more systematic fashion. Some "instruction" groups began to recognize the value of play, realizing that children learn through play and through actual manipulation of materials.

Through the 1970s and now into the 1980s, psychologists, sociologists, educators, parents, and other concerned persons are still in conflict over what focus the kindergarten should take. Some hold that intellectual and cognitive skills should be most important in the development of the kindergarten child, while others are convinced that social and emotional growth surpass all other areas in importance. Although the current kindergarten program is organized to prepare the child emotionally, socially, and mentally to make the most of the learning in the following years of school, some feel this is not enough. They contend that a more structured, quickly paced curriculum in the kindergarten is needed to better prepare children for the increasing complexity of our society.
Kindergarten in Utah

Kindergartens existed in the State of Utah during the years prior to statehood, although they were not considered a part of the regular school organization. As early as 1887, kindergarten classes were being held for children from ages 3 to 10 years of age in some of the larger communities. These kindergartens were privately managed and funded.

The constitution of the State of Utah, adopted in 1896, included kindergartens as part of the public school system. In 1897, the legislature made it possible for boards of education to "establish and maintain kindergartens for children between the ages of four and six years," and to "pay the costs in whole or in part out of the school funds of the district" (Moffitt, 1946, p. 349). By 1905, kindergarten enrollment was limited to children five years of age (Pugmire, 1985).

The kindergarten movement in Utah continued to gain slow, but wide-spread popularity during the years following 1900. It was in 1926 that the "six-week" or summer kindergartens were established, and in 1938 development was underway to make kindergarten a permanent addition to the regular school year.

Today, kindergarten programs can be found in almost every elementary school within the state. Recent statistics show that 38,731 children are enrolled in Utah kindergartens for the current school year (Personal Communication, Utah Office of Education, 1986). Although kindergarten is not mandated by state law, the tradition of kindergarten in Utah seems to hold a great deal of importance, evidenced by the number of educators, legislators, parents and young children interested in, and involved with, Utah kindergartens.
Similar to the trend in American kindergartens, Utah kindergartens have also seen fluctuation in the philosophies of their programs. In the first school report (1896), the superintendent of public instruction was critical of the concept of kindergarten since "no clear philosophy had [been] developed to provide a worthwhile objective for kindergarten education" (Moffitt, 1946, p. 349). As the half-day kindergarten got underway in the 1940s, emphasis was placed on social and emotional development. The 1950s and 1960s saw a move toward a cognitive/intellectual emphasis as Sputnik brought about a "knowledge race." More change was seen in the 1970s as priorities for young children shifted back to physical, social and emotional development, and then once again shifted to intellectual development.

Currently, kindergartens in Utah are incorporating a multidisciplinary approach into their programs. Varying degrees of emphasis are placed upon physical, emotional, social and intellectual development (Utah Early Childhood Education Guide, 1980; Utah Elementary and Secondary Core Curriculum, 1984). It is not surprising that such ambivalence is evident concerning goals and priorities for state kindergartens, considering the most recent guide (1980) is out of print and no new guide has taken its place.

The trend in Utah is definitely in the direction of providing quality opportunities for children prior to their entry into the first grade. However, there is a great need for the priorities of state kindergarten programs to be clearly defined, and for continuity and agreement to develop between administrators, teachers, parents, and others who work with young children.
Kindergarten Programs

Preparation for Kindergarten

Kindergarten may mark either a beginning or a continuation of the school experience for the young child. For many children, kindergarten is the next educational step after preschool or day care. For other children, it is a beginning experience whereby a child must make the transition from home to school. Current statistics show that nationally, 38 percent of three- and four-year-olds are enrolled in preschool or day care programs (Schweinhart, 1985). This statistic illustrates the diversity of experiences children have had when they enter kindergarten.

A very small body of research exists to suggest that children who attend early childhood programs prior to entering kindergarten have a tendency to be better adjusted, show stronger task orientation, display greater goal directedness and leadership, and exhibit greater persistence (Fowler & Kahn, 1974; Harold & Temple, 1960; Lally & Honig, 1977). Unfortunately, little evidence is available examining exactly which skills are being stressed in order to foster these traits. Likewise, there is a lacuna of data regarding parental influences on children's preparation for kindergarten.

Kindergarten Curricula

The history of kindergarten curricula is characterized by the lack of consensus in emphasizing particular goals. There have been varying interpretations of what precisely the kindergarten curriculum should contain. A variety of kindergarten objectives range from establishing
routine habits, meeting organic needs, learning motor and manipulatory
skills, and acquiring self-control and restraint to developing cognitive
and intellectual skills (Dank, 1978; Goulet, 1975; Kean, 1980).

Kindergarten teachers and parents of kindergarteners, two groups
who are often the most concerned with the learning experiences provided
young children, regard a great number of objectives as worthwhile. Yet,
a lack of continuity and clarity of goals is frequently apparent because
many kindergarten teachers have more latitude in determining curricular
objectives than do teachers of older children (Evans, 1971). Due to
limited time and restricted resources, the kindergarten teacher must
often decide which objectives among many can reasonably be achieved or
emphasized within the kindergarten program (Goulet, 1975).

While kindergartens of today tend to view child development much as
Froebel did in 1817, placing emphasis on mental, physical and social
domains of the child (Utah Early Childhood Education Guide, 1980; Utah
Elementary and Secondary Core Curriculum, 1984; Shapiro, 1983), a
tremendous amount of variability regarding curricula still exists
(Evans, 1971). In light of this variability, it is important for
research to investigate which skills teachers and parents believe
kindergarten programs should emphasize.

Parental and Teacher Priorities for
Kindergarten Programs

Kindergarten programs in the past decade have tended to place
increasing emphasis on parental involvement in determining kindergarten
curricula. However, minimal literature can be found addressing parents
expectations of what should be taught in the public kindergarten.
Parents are the most important partners the child and school will have. The involvement, interest, and devotion that parents provide for their kindergarten child is often a key to the child's future educational and creative success in their new school environment (Dickey, 1979). It has been shown that a major factor affecting a child's academic achievement is his parents' understanding and support of the school program (Nash, 1979). Smith (1980) also reports that the closer a parent's expectations are to the teacher's expectations, the stronger the effects of expectations on a child's performance.

However, a major area of debate lies in the basic orientation of the social/emotional vs. the intellectual approach to kindergarten (Cabler, 1974). As the confusion continues concerning social/emotional or academic-based programs, parents are, more than ever, becoming involved in the decisions of what objectives should be achieved and which developmental areas emphasized (Fallon, 1973; Jackson & Stretch, 1976).

Goulet's (1975) study of parental and teacher priorities in selecting goals or skills relevant to kindergarten education, showed a lack of consensus between the two groups. Goulet had each group of respondents (142 parents; 42 kindergarten teachers) rank in importance eight domains as appropriate for kindergarten curricula. The domains included academic, emotional, language, other intellectual, physical, self-concept, sensory perceptual, and social development. Goulet also had the two groups rank specific skills within each of the eight general domains.

This study (Goulet, 1975) indicated that the two responding groups did not agree as to the most important domain to promote in the
kindergarten classroom. Parents selected items from within the social domain most frequently, while kindergarten teachers selected items from other intellectual and self-concept domains respectively. In ranking within each of the eight domains, parents and teachers had the least agreement concerning language and academic goals, but agreed more in ranking physical and social items.

In an investigation conducted by Kean (1980), parents and teachers prioritized aims and objectives of kindergarten programs. Kean sent questionnaires to 89 kindergarten headteachers and 10 percent of the parents of children attending the kindergartens. Respondents were asked to rate six aims in terms of the priority each should have in the kindergarten program. Within each aim there were three specific objectives. The major aims included: personal/emotional, physical, intellectual, social and aesthetic development of the child along with parent contact and involvement.

Results showed that each of the aims was accorded every order of priority. However, a general priority for the aims did emerge. In analyzing all respondent's answers together, personal/emotional development received the highest proportion of first priorities. Social development was second, with intellectual development, parent involvement, physical development, and aesthetic development following, respectively. When these data were analyzed for each group separately, Kean's results indicated, in contrast to Goulet's 1975 study, that parents rated intellectual development higher than teachers and aesthetic development lower than did teachers.

Dank's (1978) research also provides support for differing views between kindergarten teachers and parents of kindergarteners. As in
Kean's (1980) study, teachers and parents were asked to rank a set of prescribed goals. Analyses of the data revealed that, again, parents ranked intellectual goals higher than teachers, and social goals much lower than did the teachers.

These accumulated results follow analogous trends to those found in other studies. Van Cleaf (1979), in his examination of parental preferences for kindergarten teaching methods, found that parents favored cognitively oriented methods and preferred more teacher-directed procedures in the social and intellectual areas of the kindergarten program. Likewise, in her study of parental attitudes regarding teachers of young children, Smith's (1979) results suggest that parents preferred teachers who focused on academic achievement.

In a final related study (Hills, 1984), findings show that mothers endorse authoritarian educational aims and teacher-directed kindergarten programs, while teachers favor more progressive views and active learning modes. This study also suggests that teachers prefer broader parent involvement in children's education while mothers preferred parental cooperation in school-relevant tasks.

Summary

Historically, in the United States and in Utah, the evolution of kindergarten programs has been characterized by rapid growth and change. Since the conception of kindergarten in America, programs have shifted back and forth in their developmental philosophies. Disagreement is still evident between those who feel kindergarten programs should focus on the intellectual development of the child and those who believe that social/emotional skills should receive the major focus.
This disagreement may be stimulated, in part, by the fact that children entering kindergarten already possess, and are in need of, a wide variety of skills. Statistics indicate that a large number of children are involved in kindergarten programs and an increasing percent of these children are attending some kind of preschool program prior to entering kindergarten. This further contributes to the wide range of skills displayed among kindergarten children.

Research also suggests that parents are becoming increasingly interested in preparing their children for the kindergarten experience (Dickey, 1979; Gallup, 1978; Mayfield, 1983). However, research has neglected to examine the beliefs of parents and teachers regarding what parents can do to prepare children for kindergarten. Moreover, perhaps because of the lack of clarity concerning kindergarten objectives, research has not examined parental and teacher expectations of exactly which skills children should possess upon kindergarten entry.

The current literature concerning parents' and teachers' perceptions of what should be emphasized in kindergarten is equivocal. While parents and teachers as groups tend to hold different opinions for kindergarten goals, the specific perceptions of each group need clarification.

It is interesting to note that all research to date has focused on attitudes of "parents and teachers" or "mothers and teachers." No study has examined the possibility that maternal and paternal expectations and priorities may differ for kindergarten preparation, entry skills and curriculum emphases.

Objectives of the Study

The current study sought to fill noted gaps in the existing
literature by addressing five specific questions (see Appendix A, Question I-V). First, do teachers, mothers and fathers feel parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten? Next, what do these three groups perceive parents could do to prepare their children for kindergarten? Thirdly, what have mothers and fathers done to prepare their children for kindergarten? Furthermore, what skills do teachers, mothers and fathers conceive children should possess prior to entering kindergarten? Finally, which skills and developmental areas do mothers, fathers, and teachers think should be emphasized in the kindergarten curriculum?

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis I

Teachers, mothers and fathers will show similar agreement that parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten entrance.

Hypothesis II

a. Teachers will indicate, more than mothers and fathers, that parents could help children prepare for kindergarten by facilitating social and emotional development.

b. Parents, however, will be more likely than teachers to stress intellectual skills.

c. Mothers will be more likely than fathers to view social/emotional skills as important for parents to help children develop before kindergarten entry.

d. By contrast, fathers, more than mothers, will focus on intellectual development.
Hypothesis III

a. Mothers will be more likely than fathers to indicate that they aided children in the acquisition of social/emotional skills prior to kindergarten entrance.

b. Fathers will be more likely than mothers to report they assisted children in enhancing intellectual development.

Hypothesis IV

a. Teachers will place higher priorities on social/emotional domains as skills for children to possess upon entering kindergarten than do mothers and fathers.

b. On the contrary, mothers and fathers will place higher priorities on intellectual skills than do teachers.

c. Mothers will place higher priorities for entering kindergarten children on social/emotional skills than do fathers.

d. Fathers, however, will place higher priorities on intellectual skills than mothers.

Hypothesis V

a. Teachers will place greater importance than mothers and fathers on social/emotional skills as areas to be emphasized in the kindergarten curricula.

b. Mothers and fathers by comparison, will place greater importance than teachers on intellectual skills.

c. Mothers will hold social/emotional skills at greater importance for emphasis in the kindergarten than fathers.

d. By contrast, fathers will view intellectual skills as more important than mothers.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants for this study were kindergarten teachers and parents in Weber and Davis School Districts. The sample was drawn from a population of 154 kindergarten teachers and 668 parents of kindergarteners. This sample included every elementary school (69) and every kindergarten teacher (154) within these two Utah school districts.

Weber and Davis districts were chosen for their representation of both urban and rural areas, the wide range of socio-economic status of residents, and relative ethnic and religious diversity. All kindergarten teachers in both districts were invited to participate in this study. Teachers were also asked to send home a Parent Questionnaire packet with one boy and one girl in their classes. These parents were selected using a systematic numerical procedure. As a means of control, only two parent families were selected for this study.

From this sample, a total of 92 percent (146) of teachers and 67 percent (436) of parents returned questionnaires. Teachers from Davis district returned 100 of the 107 questionnaires distributed (93 percent), while teachers from Weber district returned 46 of the 47 questionnaires distributed (98 percent). Davis parents returned 258 of the 428 questionnaires (61 percent) and Weber parents returned 178 of the 240 questionnaires (74 percent). The return rate was exactly the same for parents of boys and parents of girls (67 percent). For the parent group, only families who returned both the mother and father questionnaires were used in the final sample.
Instruments

Data were collected by self-administration of the Kindergarten Teacher Questionnaire (see Appendix B) and Kindergarten Parent Questionnaire (see Appendix C). These questionnaires, identical in nature with the exception of one question, were designed to assess the attitudes of parents and teachers towards kindergarten programs. Specifically, questions addressed expectations and priorities for kindergarten curricula, opinions on the respective roles of parents and preschools in preparing children for kindergarten, and opinions on children's sequential development of skills.

Measurement procedures in the questionnaires included Likert-type scales, task list checking, prioritizing, ranking, and open-ended descriptive questions. Internal reliability was assured by having respondents rank expectations of prescribed tasks more than once on several types of scales.

Based on previous research (Dank, 1978; Utah Early Childhood Education Guide, 1980; Goulet, 1975; Kean, 1980), ten developmental domains were defined: cognitive-attention/problem solving; cognitive-prereading; cognitive-math; large muscle; small muscle; self-help; emotional; social; expressive language; and receptive language. Frost's Developmental Checklist (1972) and the Developmental Profile Manual (Alpern & Boll, 1972) were used as additional resources in identifying tasks in each domain which were typical of the normative development of a kindergarten child.

The questionnaires also collected demographic and biographical information. Parents were asked to indicate their education and employment status, their ages, the number of children in their family,
their community population, and whether or not their children had been enrolled in preschool or day care prior to kindergarten entry. Socio-economic status was determined using Hollingshead's Four Factor Index of Social Status (1975). Teachers were queried as to their ages, their years of teaching experience, their educational status, and the number of children in their classrooms.

Face validity and readability of the instruments were determined in three ways. Initially, questionnaires were extensively piloted on three occasions with kindergarten teachers and kindergarten parents in Denver, Colorado; Corvallis, Oregon; and Salt Lake City, Utah. Following each pilot administration, revisions were made. Secondly, the questionnaires were read and critiqued by ten university professionals in the field of early childhood education. Again, revisions were undertaken in accordance with suggestions. Lastly, the final copies of the questionnaires were submitted to the Survey Research Institute at Oregon State University for analysis. All three methods confirmed the face validity of the instruments, and assured that the questionnaires were both readable and understandable.

Procedures

Following project approval by the Utah State University Institutional Review Board, initial contacts were made with Weber and Davis School District Superintendents. The investigator was referred to the Weber and Davis District Research Specialists and written requests to conduct research were sent to these individuals (see Appendix D and E). The research specialists provided names of the elementary schools, principals, and kindergarten teachers within each district. Phone
contact was made with each elementary school principal in both Weber and Davis Districts. The project was explained, and cooperation on the part of the principal was requested. These individuals consented to let their respective kindergarten teachers participate, if the teacher so chose.

Prior to distribution, each questionnaire was coded with a district, school and teacher number. For instance, the number 01-001-01 indicates that this teacher was employed in Weber District, at Bates Elementary and was teacher #1. The Parent Questionnaires had an identical number with an additional digit (01-001-01-1) specifying the gender of the kindergarten child (the final digit 1 indicates that this child is a male). The code number was solely for purposes of analyses and was not used for identification. The names of parents, students, and teachers remained anonymous. Prior to coding, consent forms were separated from questionnaires to further guarantee anonymity.

The coded questionnaires were personally delivered to each kindergarten teacher in both districts. If the teacher chose to participate, the teacher questionnaire, letter (see Appendix F) and consent form (see Appendix G) were left with the teacher. If the teacher, after reading the questionnaire, chose not to participate, a blank questionnaire was returned.

In addition, two students—one boy and one girl—from each class were selected to take the Parent Questionnaire home to their parents. These two students were chosen using a systematic numerical procedure specified by the District Research Specialists. For instance, teacher #1 was asked to send questionnaires and a consent form home with the 3rd boy from the bottom and the 3rd girl from the bottom of the class list.
If the specified child did not live with a two-parent family, the teacher was asked to send the questionnaires and consent form home with the next child on the class list. Students from every position on class lists were selected an equal number of times until the total sample was drawn.

The coded Parent Questionnaires (one for each father and mother), a parent letter (see Appendix H) and consent form (see Appendix I) were placed in a manila envelope and left with the teacher. (Having the materials together in a manila envelope assisted the child in getting all materials home to the parents and back again to school. It also aided in ease of organization in delivery and pick up). The teacher was then asked to send the questionnaires home with the indicated students (see Appendix J). If the parents chose to participate, they were asked to individually fill out the questionnaires and consent form and return them to their child's teacher.

Teachers and parents were given an average of one and one-half weeks to fill out the questionnaires. In an attempt to maximize the response rate, teachers were mailed reminder letters two days prior to pick up (see Appendix K) and were given reminder letters to send home to the selected parents (see Appendix L). All questionnaires (parent and teacher) were personally picked up from the kindergarten teachers.

Data on the questionnaires were given numerical values and subsequently coded onto FORTRAN coding forms. To establish inter-rater reliability, all data were coded by a second rater blind to the initial coding. Percentage of agreement equalled 98 percent.
Because of the extensive nature of the instruments used in data collection, this study concentrated on only certain aspects of the questionnaire. A variety of statistical procedures were utilized to analyze teachers', mothers' and fathers' responses to each of five questions. SPSSX was used and run on a VAX/VMS computer (Nie, 1983). Alpha was set at .05 or above on all statistical tests. The results are presented in relation to the specific questions and hypotheses outlined below. Comparisons between teachers and mothers, teachers and fathers, and mothers and fathers are discussed for each question.

### Parental Role in Children's Preparation for Kindergarten

#### Question I

Do teachers, mothers and fathers believe parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten?

#### Hypothesis I

There will be no significant differences between teachers', mothers' and fathers' perceptions regarding the parental role in kindergarten preparation. Specifically, these three groups will show similar agreement that parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten entrance.

Measured on a scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree) the results indicate that mean agreement levels with the
statement "Parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten" for teachers ($\bar{X}=4.1$), mothers ($\bar{X}=4.07$), and fathers ($\bar{X}=4.12$) were all quite high. However, contrary to predictions, a Mann-Whitney U Test (Nie, 1983, p. 825) revealed significant differences between mothers' and teachers' ($U=9937.5$, $p<.0001$) and fathers' and teachers' ($U=10380.0$, $p<.0001$) agreement levels. While both mothers and fathers felt parents could do somewhat more in preparing children for kindergarten, teachers by comparison showed significantly stronger agreement with the statement.

A Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test (Nie, 1983, p. 820-821) comparing mothers' and fathers' responses to the same statement was then conducted. No significant differences were revealed ($Z=-0.9187$, $p=.3583$) with 58 percent of mothers and 54 percent of fathers moderately agreeing that parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten.

**Question II**

What could parents do to prepare children for kindergarten?

**Hypothesis II**

a. Teachers will be significantly more likely than mothers and fathers to indicate that parents could help children prepare for kindergarten by facilitating social and emotional development.

b. Parents, however, will be significantly more likely than teachers to stress intellectual skills.
c. When compared, mothers will be significantly more likely than fathers to view social/emotional skills as important for parents to help children develop before kindergarten entry.

d. On the contrary, fathers will be significantly more likely than mothers to focus on intellectual development.

Teacher and parental responses to the question "What could parents do?" were coded into one of the ten domains listed below.

1. Cognitive-Attention/Problem Solving (i.e.: child attends to an activity 20-30 minutes; listens to directions and follows through; finds original solutions to problems; recognizes colors)

2. Cognitive-Prereading (i.e.: child recognizes and names letters of the alphabet; recognizes own name; knows the sounds that letters make; reads or sounds out words)

3. Cognitive-Math (i.e.: child counts; identifies numerals; matches numerals to sets of objects; completes simple addition and subtraction problems)

4. Large Muscle (i.e.: child skips; runs; jumps; walks on a straight line; throws and catches a ball)

5. Small Muscle (i.e.: child cuts with scissors; holds crayons/pencils appropriately; ties shoes; buttons buttons; zips zippers; writes name)

6. Self-Help (i.e.: child dresses self; blows own nose; takes care of toilet needs; puts belongings away)

7. Emotional (i.e.: child shows satisfaction with accomplishments; expresses frustration in words; has a positive self-concept)
8. Social (i.e.: child cooperates in routines; engages in cooperative play; willingly shares with other children; recognizes needs and feelings of others)

9. Expressive Language (i.e.: child speaks in complete sentences; tells short stories in sequence; shows interest in the meanings of new words; engages in conversation)

10. Receptive Language (i.e.: child listens while others speak, enjoys being read to; remembers story heard four days earlier; identifies and labels "above," "below," "behind")

In terms of what parents could do to prepare children for kindergarten, as depicted in Table 1, the domains mentioned most frequently by teachers were receptive language (66 percent), cognitive-attention/problem solving (51 percent) and small muscle (43 percent). Mothers reported the domains of receptive language (52 percent), social (40 percent), and cognitive-prereading (36 percent) most often. In contrast, fathers more often mentioned cognitive-prereading (35 percent), cognitive-math (35 percent) and social (34 percent) as areas in which parents could undertake activities to help prepare children for kindergarten entrance.

Chi Square analyses were then employed to compare differences between teachers' and mothers' and teachers' and fathers' responses to the question "What could parents do to prepare children for kindergarten?". When mothers and teachers were compared, teachers were significantly more likely than mothers to indicate receptive language ($\chi^2(1)=5.95036, p=.0147$), cognitive-attention/problem solving ($\chi^2(1)=21.69967, p<.0001$), small muscle ($\chi^2(1)=14.92627, p<.0001$),...
Table 1  Percentage of Teachers, Mothers, and Fathers Indicating Each Domain in Response to the Question: "What Could Parents Do To Prepare Children for Kindergarten?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Teachers (n=146)</th>
<th>Mothers (n=218)</th>
<th>Fathers (n=218)</th>
<th>p &lt; .05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rank of %</td>
<td>rank of %</td>
<td>rank of %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptive Language</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive-Attention/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Muscle</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Help</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive Language</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive-Prereading</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive-Math</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Muscle</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Teachers versus mothers

° Teachers versus fathers

* Mothers versus fathers
self-help ($X^2(1) = 8.45085, p = .0036$) and expressive language ($X^2(1) = 4.01057, p = .0452$) skills. In contrast, mothers suggested cognitive-prereading ($X^2(1) = 9.35315, p = .0022$), and cognitive-math ($X^2(1) = 6.09014, p = .0136$) domains significantly more often than did teachers. No significant differences were found between teachers' and mothers' responses in the domains of social ($X^2(1) = 1.93594, p = .1641$), emotional ($X^2(1) = 0.70303, p = .4018$) or large muscle ($X^2(1) = 0.32955, p = .5659$).

These results fail to support Hypothesis IIa. No significant differences were found between teachers' and mothers' response rates for social and emotional domains. However, mothers did indicate intellectual skills significantly more often than teachers, supporting Hypothesis IIb. Interestingly, large muscle skills were cited the least frequently of all domains by both teachers and mothers, with only .5 percent of teachers and .4 percent of mothers mentioning it.

Similar analyses were undertaken to examine differences in teachers' and fathers' responses to the same question concerning what parents could do to prepare children for kindergarten. Comparisons between teachers' and fathers' responses were remarkably similar to comparison patterns between teachers' and mothers' responses. Teachers were significantly more likely than were fathers to mention the domains of receptive language ($X^2(1) = 39.23095, p < .0001$), cognitive-attention/problem solving ($X^2(1) = 39.95393, p < .0001$), small muscle ($X^2(1) = 30.58288, p < .0001$), self-help ($X^2(1) = 11.03566, p = .0009$) and expressive language ($X^2(1) = 16.22441, p < .0001$). Analogous to mothers, fathers were significantly more likely than teachers to indicate cognitive-prereading ($X^2(1) = 8.66141, p = .0032$) and cognitive math
No significant differences were found between teachers' and fathers' responses in social ($\chi^2(1)=0.04833$, $p=0.8260$), emotional ($\chi^2(1)=0.01624$, $p=0.8986$), or large muscle ($\chi^2(1)=0.02444$, $p=0.8758$) areas.

Again, these results fail to support Hypothesis IIa. No significant differences were found between teachers' and fathers' responses for social and emotional skills. Hypothesis IIb is supported with fathers mentioning intellectual areas significantly more often than teachers. As with teachers and mothers, of all domains, fathers mentioned large muscle skills least frequently (.6 percent).

A McNemar Test (Nie, 1983, p. 817-818) was utilized to compare mothers' and fathers' ideas concerning what parents could do to prepare children for kindergarten. Results indicated that mothers were significantly more likely to note receptive language ($\chi^2(1)=22.5488$, $p<0.0001$), and expressive language ($\chi^2(1)=4.4474$, $p=0.0350$) domains than were fathers. While mothers tended to mention cognitive-attention/problem solving more frequently than fathers, this difference only approached significance ($\chi^2(1)=3.8209$, $p=0.0506$). No significant differences between mothers and fathers emerged for small muscle ($\chi^2(1)=3.4091$, $p=0.0648$), social ($\chi^2(1)=1.8778$, $p=0.1706$), self-help ($\chi^2(1)=1.607$, $p=0.6885$), emotional ($\chi^2(1)=1.9726$, $p=0.1602$), cognitive-prereading ($\chi^2(1)=.0111$, $p=0.9161$) or cognitive-math ($\chi^2(1)=1.8228$, $p=0.1770$) domains. These results fail to support Hypotheses IIc and IId. No significant differences were found between mothers' and fathers' response rates for social and emotional skills, nor for intellectual skills.
Further analyses were performed to determine if differences existed in mothers' and fathers' responses to this same question, as a function of socio-economic status (SES). Coded on Hollingshead's Four Factor Index of Social Status (Hollingshead, 1975), parents' SES included group A (major business and professional, 27.8 percent), group B (medium business, minor professional, technical, 37.5 percent), group C (skilled craftsmen, clerical, sales workers, 34.1 percent) and group D (machine operators, semiskilled workers, 6 percent). No respondents were rated as group E (unskilled laborers, menial, service workers).

Chi Square analyses revealed no significant differences in mothers' responses as a function of SES. This held true across all ten domains: cognitive-attention/problem solving ($\chi^2(3) = 2.88926, p = .4090$), cognitive-prereading ($\chi^2(3) = 6.0443, p = .8954$), cognitive-math ($\chi^2(3) = 2.41530, p = .4908$), large muscle ($\chi^2(3) = 3.37583, p = .3372$), small muscle ($\chi^2(3) = 4.13055, p = .2477$), self-help ($\chi^2(3) = 1.78172, p = .6189$), emotional ($\chi^2(3) = 2.77645, p = .4274$), social ($\chi^2(3) = 2.02159, p = .5679$), expressive language ($\chi^2(3) = 3.09315, p = .3775$) and receptive language ($\chi^2(3) = 3.75519, p = .7098$).

However, analyses did show that fathers in the two lower SES groups (Group C: skilled craftsmen, clerical, sales workers; and Group D: machine operators, semiskilled workers) were significantly less likely than all fathers to mention emotional ($\chi^2(3) = 8.65511, p = .0342$) and receptive language ($\chi^2(3) = 13.99315, p = .0029$) as areas parents could emphasize to help prepare children for kindergarten. No significant differences were apparent for paternal SES in cognitive-attention/problem solving ($\chi^2(3) = 3.30101, p = .3475$), cognitive-prereading ($\chi^2(3) = 4.46444, p = .2155$), cognitive-math ($\chi^2(3) = 5.70011, p = .1271$), large
muscle ($\chi^2(3)=6.51051$, $p=.0892$), small muscle ($\chi^2(3)=.66342$, $p=.8818$), self-help ($\chi^2(3)=2.95848$, $p=.3981$), social ($\chi^2(3)=.95864$, $p=.8113$), or expressive language ($\chi^2(3)=5.51468$, $p=.1378$) skills.

Question III (Responded to by mothers and fathers only)

What did you do to prepare your child for kindergarten?

Hypothesis III

a. Mothers will be significantly more likely than fathers to indicate that they aided children in the acquisition of social/emotional skills.

b. Fathers will be significantly more likely than mothers to report that they assisted children in enhancing intellectual development.

Each response to the question "What did you do?" was coded into one of the ten domains outlined previously in Question II. As shown in Table 2, maternal and paternal responses were similar in that the four domains mentioned most frequently by each group were receptive language (mothers, 53 percent; fathers, 34 percent), cognitive-prereading (mothers, 51 percent; fathers, 38 percent), cognitive math (mothers, 48 percent; fathers, 36 percent), and social (mothers, 47 percent; fathers, 34 percent).

While mothers and fathers were similar in their top four responses, Chi Square analyses revealed that mothers were significantly more likely than fathers to report that they had undertaken activities to help
Table 2: Percentage of Mothers and Fathers Indicating Each Domain in Response to the Question: "What Did You Do To Prepare Your Child For Kindergarten?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Mothers (n=218)</th>
<th>Fathers (n=218)</th>
<th>p &lt; .05</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rank of</td>
<td>rank of</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptive Language</td>
<td>53 1</td>
<td>34 3</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive-Prereading</td>
<td>51 2</td>
<td>38 1</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Math</td>
<td>48 3</td>
<td>36 2</td>
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<td>Social</td>
<td>47 4</td>
<td>34 3</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Muscle</td>
<td>31 5</td>
<td>22 5</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive-Attention/Problem Solving</td>
<td>28 6</td>
<td>22 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Help</td>
<td>26 7</td>
<td>13 8</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>26 7</td>
<td>21 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive Language</td>
<td>12 9</td>
<td>7 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Muscle</td>
<td>9 10</td>
<td>10 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Mothers versus fathers
children develop skills in receptive language ($\chi^2(1)=15.5204$, $p<.0001$), cognitive-prereading ($\chi^2(1)=9.6790$, $p=.0019$), cognitive-math ($\chi^2(1)=7.1023$, $p=.0077$), social ($\chi^2(1)=7.5938$, $p=.0059$), small muscle ($\chi^2(1)=17.9775$, $p<.0001$) and self-help ($\chi^2(1)=11.7581$, $p=.0006$) skills. No significant differences between mothers' and fathers' response rates were apparent for cognitive-attention/problem solving ($\chi^2(1)=2.0610$, $p=.1511$), emotional ($\chi^2(1)=1.7286$, $p=.1886$), expressive language ($\chi^2(1)=2.1316$, $p=.1443$) or large muscle ($\chi^2(1)=.0294$, $p=.8638$) domains. These results offer partial support for Hypothesis IIIa. Mothers did indicate they had done more than fathers to promote social skills, yet no differences between mothers and fathers were found for the emotional domain. Hypothesis IIIb fails to be supported by these results. Contrary to prediction, mothers, more frequently than fathers, reported that they had assisted children in acquiring intellectual skills.

Once again, Chi Square analyses were conducted to determine if differences existed in mothers' and fathers' responses to what they had done to prepare children for kindergarten as a function of SES. When examining mothers' SES, analyses disclosed that mothers in Group C (skilled craftsmen, clerical, sales workers) were significantly less likely than were all mothers to indicate emotional skills ($\chi^2(3)=7.88895$, $p=.0484$) as something they had helped children develop prior to kindergarten entrance. No significant differences emerged between mothers of differing SES groups for cognitive-attention/problem solving ($\chi^2(3)=2.88581$, $p=.4096$), cognitive-prereading ($\chi^2(3)=3.28412$, $p=.3499$), cognitive-math ($\chi^2(3)=1.67775$, $p=.6419$), large muscle ($\chi^2(3)=1.23371$, $p=.7449$), small muscle ($\chi^2(3)=2.97671$, $p=.3952$), self-help ($\chi^2(3)=1.13119$, $p=.7696$), social ($\chi^2(3)=5.05694$, $p=.1677$),
expressive language ($X^2(3)=6.96758$, $p=.0729$), or receptive language ($X^2(3)=2.31816$, $p=.5091$) skills.

Analyses further suggested that fathers in the lowest two SES groups (Group C: skilled craftsmen, clerical, sales workers and Group D: machine operators, semiskilled workers) were significantly more likely than all fathers to indicate that they had fostered self-help skills ($X^2(3)=7.84270$, $p=.0494$) in pre-kindergarten children. In contrast, fathers in the lowest SES group were significantly less likely than all fathers to mention receptive language ($X^2(3)=12.11304$, $p=.0070$). No other significant differences were found between fathers of differing SES groups for cognitive-attention/problem solving ($X^2(3)=3.54210$, $p=.3153$), cognitive-prereading ($X^2(3)=1.17695$, $p=.7585$), cognitive-math ($X^2(3)=4.37756$, $p=.2235$), large muscle ($X^2(3)=4.56193$, $p=.2068$), small muscle ($X^2(3)=5.25590$, $p=.5114$), emotional ($X^2(3)=4.06183$, $p=.2549$), social ($X^2(3)=1.42079$, $p=.7007$), or expressive language ($X^2(3)=4.74550$, $p=.1914$) domains.

**Priorities for Children's Skills**

**Upon Kindergarten Entry**

**Question IV**

What skills do teachers, mothers and fathers believe children should possess upon kindergarten entrance?

**Hypothesis IV**

a. Teachers will place significantly higher priorities for entering kindergarten children on social/emotional skills than do mothers and fathers.
b. Mothers and fathers, however, will place significantly higher priorities on intellectual skills than do teachers.

c. When compared, mothers will place significantly higher priorities on social/emotional skills than fathers do.

d. In contrast to mothers, fathers will place significantly higher priorities on intellectual domains as skills for children to possess upon kindergarten entry.

Teachers and parents were asked to respond to the open-ended statement "When a child goes to kindergarten the most important thing to know is..." by prioritizing the following skills ranging from 1 (most important) to 13 (least important).

- a. How to share with other children.
- b. How to listen.
- c. How to count.
- d. How to read.
- e. How to wait one's turn.
- f. How to follow directions.
- g. How to be independent.
- h. How to sit still.
- i. How to be curious.
- j. How to solve problems.
- k. How to write.
- l. How to raise one's hand.
- m. How to feel confident.

Table 3 illustrates the agreement that occurred between teachers, mothers and fathers in selecting the three most important skills:

- listening (teachers' \( \bar{X} \) rank = 2.79, mothers' \( \bar{X} \) rank = 3.19, fathers' \( \bar{X} \)
rank = 3.16), feeling confident (teachers' \( \bar{X} \) rank = 2.98, mothers' \( \bar{X} \) rank = 3.19, fathers' \( \bar{X} \) rank = 3.86), and following directions (teachers' \( \bar{X} \) rank = 4.28, mothers' \( \bar{X} \) rank = 4.26, fathers' \( \bar{X} \) rank = 4.26). Similar agreement occurred for writing (teachers' \( \bar{X} \) rank = 11.13, mothers' \( \bar{X} \) rank = 11.10, fathers' \( \bar{X} \) rank = 9.98) and reading (teachers' \( \bar{X} \) rank = 12.60, mothers' \( \bar{X} \) rank = 11.10, fathers' \( \bar{X} \) rank = 9.98), which were ranked as least important skills for children to possess upon kindergarten entry by all three groups.

A Kendall Coefficient of Concordance Test (Nie, 1983, p. 823) determined significant patterns of agreement within teacher (\( W = .6220, p < .0001 \)), mother (\( W = .3951, p < .0001 \)), and father (\( W = .3154, p < .0001 \)) rankings. In other words, teachers as a group, mothers as a group, and fathers as a group were significantly similar in the way they prioritized the 13 skills.

T-tests were then utilized to compare teachers' and mothers', teachers' and fathers', and mothers' and fathers' priorities for each of the 13 skills. Contrary to predictions, no significant differences were found for feeling confident (\( t(325) = .53, p = .598 \)) and sharing (\( t(320.83) = .63, p = .530 \)). Further, no significant differences were found for following directions (\( t(335) = .09, p = .931 \)), waiting one's turn (\( t(318.88) = .067 \)), sitting still (\( t(334) = .11, p = .909 \)), raising one's hand (\( t(334) = 1.35, p = .177 \)), or problem solving (\( t(334) = 1.60, p = .111 \)). However, consistent with predictions, mothers ranked counting (\( t(317.59) = -7.64, p < .0001 \)), writing (\( t(326.17) = -6.45, p < .0001 \)), and reading (\( t(247.60) = -7.00, p < .0001 \)) significantly higher than did teachers. Being independent (\( t(327.90) = 4.14, p < .0001 \)) and curious (\( t(330.87) = 3.20, p < .002 \)) were ranked significantly higher by teachers.
Table 3: Teachers', Mothers' and Fathers' Rankings of Skills Children Should Possess Upon Kindergarten Entrance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Teachers N=136</th>
<th>Mothers N=201</th>
<th>Fathers N=197</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\bar{x}$ absolute rank</td>
<td>$\bar{x}$ absolute rank</td>
<td>$\bar{x}$ absolute rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to listen</td>
<td>2.79 1</td>
<td>3.19 1</td>
<td>3.16 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to feel confident</td>
<td>2.98 2</td>
<td>3.19 1</td>
<td>3.86 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to follow directions</td>
<td>4.28 3</td>
<td>4.26 3</td>
<td>4.26 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to be independent</td>
<td>4.88 4</td>
<td>6.39 5</td>
<td>7.35 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to share with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other children</td>
<td>5.59 5</td>
<td>5.84 4</td>
<td>5.34 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to be curious</td>
<td>5.94 6</td>
<td>7.04 7</td>
<td>7.26 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to wait one's turn</td>
<td>6.25 7</td>
<td>6.61 6</td>
<td>7.08 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to sit still</td>
<td>7.26 8</td>
<td>7.31 8</td>
<td>8.17 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to raise one's hand</td>
<td>8.39 9</td>
<td>8.84 10</td>
<td>8.47 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to solve problems</td>
<td>8.62 10</td>
<td>9.13 11</td>
<td>8.73 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to count</td>
<td>10.28 11</td>
<td>8.41 9</td>
<td>7.86 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to write</td>
<td>11.13 12</td>
<td>9.59 12</td>
<td>9.48 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to read</td>
<td>12.60 13</td>
<td>11.10 13</td>
<td>9.98 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Teachers versus mothers
+ Teachers versus fathers
* Mothers versus fathers
than by mothers. Listening ($t(335)=1.89, p=.059$) approached significance with teachers tending to rank this domain higher than mothers.

Closely resembling the comparison pattern between teachers and mothers, and again contrary to predictions, no significant differences between teachers and fathers were apparent for sharing ($t(327.36)=-0.91, p=.362$). Moreover, no significant differences were found for listening ($t(326.73)=1.67, p=.096$), following directions ($t(321.44)=-0.14, p=.885$), raising one's hand ($t(317.75)=.53, p=.599$) or problem solving ($t(330)=.28, p=.779$). However, consistent with Hypothesis IV$_a$, teachers did place significantly higher priorities than fathers on feeling confident ($t(325.57)=2.76, p=.006$). Teachers also ranked waiting one's turn ($t(323.78)=3.23, p<.001$) and sitting still ($t(331)=2.86, p=.005$) higher than fathers. In support of Hypothesis IV$_b$, fathers ranked counting ($t(296.46)=9.33, p<.0001$), writing ($t(311.79)=-6.56, p<.0001$), and reading ($t(226.71)=-10.50, p<.0001$) significantly higher than teachers. As in the comparisons between teachers and mothers, teachers ranked being independent ($t(326.60)=6.84, p<.0001$) and curious ($t(327.51)=3.76, p<.0001$) significantly higher than did fathers.

Mothers' and fathers' responses to this same question were compared and the results offer support for Hypothesis IV$_c$. Mothers placed significantly higher priorities than fathers on being confident ($t(184)=-2.27, p=.024$). Further, mothers also ranked being independent ($t(186)=-2.74, p=.007$), and sitting still ($t(185)=-2.64, p=.009$) higher than fathers. In support of Hypothesis IV$_d$, fathers ranked counting ($t(186)=2.01, p=.046$) and reading ($t(186)=3.55, p<.001$) significantly higher than mothers. Although sharing ($t(186)=1.94, p=.054$) was
approaching significance with fathers ranking it higher than mothers, no significant differences were found between mothers' and fathers' rankings for listening ($t(186)=.56$, $p=.577$), following directions ($t(186)=.48$, $p=.630$), being curious ($t(185)=-.57$, $p=.570$), waiting one's turn ($t(185)=-1.39$, $p=.166$), raising one's hand ($t(185)=.95$, $p=.346$), problem solving ($t(184)=1.48$, $p=.141$), or writing ($t(185)=.02$, $p=.984$).

To assess whether teachers' priorities for children's skills upon kindergarten entry were reflective of the number of years spent teaching kindergarten, teachers were categorized into one of four experience groups. Group 1 included teachers who had taught 0-3 years (23.8 percent). Group 2 encompassed teachers with 4-7 years experience (30.1 percent). Teachers whose experience ranged from 8-14 years (24.7 percent) comprised Group 3. Finally, teachers in Group 4 had taught from 15-28 years (21.4 percent).

A Kendall Coefficient of Concordance Test (Nie, 1983, p. 823) detected significantly similar patterns of prioritizing skills within each teacher group ($p<.0001$ for all groups). In other words, each teacher group was significantly similar in the way they ranked each of the 13 skills. Similar patterns of ranking across teacher groups were also evident. Moreover, significant differences in how teachers prioritized any of the 13 skills regardless of the number of years teaching kindergarten, were not apparent.

Expectations of Kindergarten Curricula

Question V

What skills do teachers, mothers and fathers feel should be emphasized in the kindergarten curricula?
Hypothesis V

a. Teachers will place significantly greater importance than mothers and fathers on social/emotional skills in the kindergarten curricula.

b. Mothers and fathers, however, will place significantly greater importance than teachers on intellectual skills.

c. When mothers are compared to fathers, mothers will hold social/emotional skills at significantly greater importance than fathers.

d. Fathers, in contrast, will view intellectual skills as significantly more important than mothers.

For a list of 10 skills, teachers and parents were asked to rate each according to its importance for emphasis in the kindergarten on a scale ranging from 1 (not important) to 7 (very important).

1. Art Appreciation (i.e.: enjoying music, visual arts)
2. Intellectual Concepts (i.e.: numbers, letters)
3. Large Muscle (i.e.: running, skipping)
4. Listening (i.e.: listening while others speak)
5. Problem Solving (i.e.: solving why/how problems)
6. Self-Help (i.e.: dressing self, toileting self)
7. Small Muscle (i.e.: cutting, writing)
8. Social (i.e.: engaging in cooperative play)
9. Speaking (i.e.: engaging in conversation with others)
10. Confidence (i.e.: having a positive self-concept, showing satisfaction with accomplishments)

Table 4 summarizes teachers', mothers' and fathers' responses to the statement "Please rate each item according to how important it is
for that skill to be emphasized in kindergartens." Teachers, mothers and fathers displayed agreement in rating listening (teachers' $\bar{X}$ rating $= 6.96$, mothers' $\bar{X}$ rating $= 6.82$, fathers' $\bar{X}$ rating $= 6.55$) and confidence (teachers' $\bar{X}$ rating $= 6.85$, mothers' $\bar{X}$ rating $= 6.82$, fathers' $\bar{X}$ rating $= 6.59$) as the two most important skills to be emphasized in kindergartens. Teachers rated social skills as the third most important item to be emphasized, ($\bar{X} = 6.79$), while mothers and fathers selected intellectual (mothers' $\bar{X}$ rating $= 6.73$, fathers' $\bar{X}$ rating $= 6.34$) skills. Teachers, mothers and fathers were also similar in rating art appreciation (teachers' $\bar{X}$ rating $= 5.22$, mothers' $\bar{X}$ rating $= 5.44$, fathers' $\bar{X}$ rating $= 5.13$) and self-help (teachers' $\bar{X}$ rating $= 5.01$, mothers' $\bar{X}$ rating $= 5.14$, fathers' $\bar{X}$ rating $= 5.21$) as the two skills least important for emphasis in the kindergarten.

Mann-Whitney U Tests (Nie, 1983, p. 825) offered partial support for Hypothesis $V_a$, indicating that teachers rated social ($U = 12519.5$, $p = .0004$) skills significantly higher than mothers. Teachers also rated listening ($U = 13690$, $p = .0044$), speaking ($U = 13202.5$, $p = .0109$), and large muscle ($U = 11259.5$, $p < .0001$) skills significantly higher than mothers. Contrary to prediction, however, no differences were found between teachers' and mothers' ratings of confidence ($U = 14511.0$, $p = .2820$) and intellectual ($U = 14480.0$, $p = .4426$) skills. Similarly, no significant differences were found in ratings for small muscle ($U = 13997.0$, $p = .2301$), problem solving ($U = 15024.5$, $p = .9457$), art appreciation ($U = 13503.0$, $p = .1247$) or self-help ($U = 14518.0$, $p = .6654$) domains.

Further analyses compared teachers' and fathers' ratings of skills to be emphasized in the kindergarten curricula. In support of Hypothesis $V_a$, Mann-Whitney U tests revealed that teachers did place
Table 4: Teachers', Mothers' and Fathers' Ratings of How Important It Is For Development of Specific Skills to be Emphasized In Kindergarten

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Teachers N=139</th>
<th>Mothers N=218</th>
<th>Fathers N=218</th>
<th>p&lt;.05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X rating order of X</td>
<td>X rating order of X</td>
<td>X rating order of X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening skills</td>
<td>6.96 1</td>
<td>6.82 1</td>
<td>6.55 2</td>
<td>+*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence skills</td>
<td>6.85 2</td>
<td>6.82 1</td>
<td>6.59 1</td>
<td>+*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>6.79 3</td>
<td>6.51 5</td>
<td>6.21 5</td>
<td>+*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking skills</td>
<td>6.75 4</td>
<td>6.56 4</td>
<td>6.30 4</td>
<td>+*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual concepts</td>
<td>6.73 5</td>
<td>6.73 3</td>
<td>6.34 3</td>
<td>+*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small muscle skills</td>
<td>6.58 6</td>
<td>6.45 6</td>
<td>5.98 6</td>
<td>+*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large muscle skills</td>
<td>6.40 7</td>
<td>5.91 8</td>
<td>5.51 8</td>
<td>+*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving skills</td>
<td>6.30 8</td>
<td>6.33 7</td>
<td>5.97 7</td>
<td>+*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art appreciation skills</td>
<td>5.22 9</td>
<td>5.44 9</td>
<td>5.13 10</td>
<td>+*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-help skills</td>
<td>5.01 10</td>
<td>5.14 10</td>
<td>5.21 9</td>
<td>+*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Teachers versus mothers
* Teachers versus fathers
* Mothers versus fathers
greater importance on confidence (U=11674.0, p<.0001) and social
(U=9444.0, p<.0001) skills than did fathers. Moreover, teachers also
placed greater importance than fathers on listening (U=10121.5,
p<.0001), speaking (U=9887.0, p<.0001), small muscle (U=9497.0,
p<.0001), large muscle (U=8043.5, p<.0001) and problem solving skills
(U=11723.0, p<.0002) than did fathers. Contrary to Hypothesis V_a,
teachers also rated intellectual skills (U=10622.0, p<.0001) higher than
fathers. No significant differences between teachers and fathers were
evident for art appreciation (U=14192.0, p=.4806) or self-help
(U=14927.0, p=.9597) skills.

Finally, comparisons of mothers and fathers using Wilcoxon Matched­
Pairs Signed-Ranks Tests revealed similar results to those which emerged
when teachers and fathers were compared. As did teachers, mothers rated
listening (Z=-4.2389, p<.0001), confidence (Z=-3.7330, p=.0002), social
(Z=-3.2585, p=.0011), speaking (Z=-3.3097, p=.0009), intellectual
(Z=-4.8773, p<.0001), small muscle (Z=-4.8304, p<.0001), large muscle
(Z=-3.3753, p=.0007), problem solving (Z=-3.7363, p=.0002), and also art
appreciation (Z=-2.3919, p=.0168) skills significantly higher than did
fathers. These results support Hypothesis V_c, with mothers placing
greater importance on social/emotional skills. Results fail to be
consistent with Hypothesis V_d, since fathers did not rate intellectual
skills higher than mothers. Self-help was the only skill where no
significant differences were apparent between mothers' and fathers'
ratings of importance for emphasis in the kindergarten curricula.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to examine views held by kindergarten teachers and mothers and fathers of kindergarteners concerning the parental role in preparing children for kindergarten. Further, this study sought to investigate which skills teachers, mothers and fathers believe are important for children to possess upon kindergarten entry. Finally, this study examined which skills these three groups hold as important for emphasis in the kindergartens.

Parental Role in Children's Preparation for Kindergarten

Can Parents Do More in Preparing Children for Kindergarten?

It was originally hypothesized that there would be no significant differences between teachers', mothers' and fathers' perceptions regarding the parental role in kindergarten preparation. It was predicted these three groups would show similar agreement that parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten entrance.

The results, however, fail to support this hypothesis. While all three groups did agree that parents could do more, teachers showed significantly stronger agreement than both mothers and fathers that parents could do more in preparing children for kindergarten. Teachers tended to feel very strongly that parents could do more to help their children be adequately prepared to meet the kindergarten challenge. This attitude on the part of teachers may stem from the fact that children are indeed entering kindergarten with an extreme diversity of
knowledge and skills. It may also indicate that many children are going to kindergarten unprepared to meet the challenges of the curriculum. Mothers and fathers, to a lesser degree, also agreed that parents could do more. This suggests that even though parents feel they should be playing an active role in preparing their children for kindergarten, they are perhaps unaware of the effects of their involvement. Further, parents may have uncertainties about what exactly they should do to prepare their children for kindergarten. This may be particularly true if parents have little knowledge of what will be expected of their children in the kindergarten program.

What Can Parents Do To Prepare Children for Kindergarten?

It was initially predicted that teachers would be more likely than mothers and fathers to indicate that parents could help children prepare for kindergarten by facilitating social and emotional development. In contrast, parents would be more likely than teachers to stress intellectual skills. Mothers, when compared with fathers, would be significantly more likely to view social/emotional skills as important for parents to help children develop before kindergarten entry. Fathers would be significantly more likely than mothers to focus on intellectual development.

The results only partially support this hypothesis. Contrary to predictions, there were no significant differences between teachers, mothers or fathers in their responses of social and emotional skills. For all three groups, social skills were in the top four most frequently mentioned skills and emotional skills in the top six.
Findings from this study do, however, support the prediction that mothers and fathers would mention intellectual skills more frequently than teachers. Both mothers and fathers responded that they felt parents could help children with prereading and math skills significantly more than did teachers. These results are supported by previous research (Dank, 1978; Kean, 1980; Van Cleaf, 1979) which shows parents place a higher priority on intellectual skills than do teachers. Such findings may suggest that some parents are unaware or are misinformed about young children's development, believing that early academic skills are essential to future successes. It may also indicate that some parents are still subscribing to the "academic push" which began in the 1950s and continues to be apparent.

Comparisons between mothers' and fathers' perceptions of what parents could do to prepare their children for kindergarten failed to support the prediction that mothers would indicate social/emotional skills more than fathers and fathers would mention intellectual skills more than mothers. Surprisingly, mothers and fathers were in agreement concerning social, emotional, and intellectual skills. Nonetheless, significant differences were found for both expressive and receptive language skills, with mothers mentioning these skills significantly more often than fathers. This may suggest that mothers spend more time than fathers interacting verbally with their preschool-age children.

Although these results suggest a lack of consensus between teachers and parents, it is encouraging to see similarities between mothers' and fathers' views. Similar beliefs between mothers and fathers and contrasting beliefs between teachers and parents are explainable considering that mothers' and fathers' perception are at least partially
dependent on each other. Teachers and parents, on the other hand, are assumed to be much more independent groups. Interestingly, teachers, mothers and fathers were similar in their responses concerning large muscle skills. All three groups indicated large muscle skills less frequently than any other domain. This finding is surprising in light of basic child development principles which suggest that refinement of large muscle skills develops prior to that of small muscle skills (Lugo & Hershey, 1979).

Additional findings indicate that the socio-economic status of fathers had an influence on paternal responses. Specifically, fathers in lower SES groups were significantly less likely to mention emotional and receptive language as areas in which parents could foster development. It may be suggested that men in these two lower SES groups (skilled craftsmen, clerical, sales workers, machine operators, semiskilled workers) have had less formal education and may not be aware of the importance of these specific areas in a child's development. Possibly, these fathers place greater value on a variety of other skills for children than they do feeling good about oneself, listening to others speak and being read stories. No significant effects due to SES were established for mothers.

What Did Parents Do To Prepare Children for Kindergarten?

Initial hypotheses predicted that mothers would be more likely than fathers to indicate that they aided children in the acquisition of social/emotional skills prior to their child entering kindergarten. In contrast, fathers would be more likely than mothers to report that they assisted children in enhancing intellectual development.
Results once again offer only partial support for these hypotheses. While mothers did do more than fathers to enhance children's social development, they also reported that they did more to foster receptive language, prereading, math, small muscle and self-help skills.

It is interesting that while fathers agreed that parents could do more in preparing their children for kindergarten, they reported little involvement in the process of doing so. This may suggest that fathers are taking a relatively inactive role in the areas of child rearing which foster the desired pre-kindergarten skills in their children. These results may also be dependent on the time the father is out of the home as compared to mothers. The reality that 100 percent of fathers and only 33.8 percent of mothers were employed outside the home suggests that mothers may be spending more time with their children than are fathers.

Further analyses looked at the responses of mothers and fathers as a function of SES. Results indicate that mothers in the second lowest SES group (skilled craftsmen, clerical, sales workers) were less likely than all mothers to report that they had engaged in activities to foster emotional skills in their children. Although mothers in this group possess less formal education and may have limited access to educational materials that would inform them on the importance of the development of the emotional domain in children, it is not clear why this tendency was not also apparent for mothers in the lowest SES group.

Fathers in the lower SES group (machine operators, semiskilled workers) less frequently reported receptive language as a skill they had helped their child acquire prior to entering kindergarten. This is consistent with this group of fathers' views towards what parents could
do. Such findings may suggest that lower SES fathers simply do not view receptive language as an important area in which children need to develop skills prior to kindergarten.

Interestingly, the results also demonstrated that fathers in the lowest two SES groups were significantly more likely to report that they had helped their children acquire self-help skills. This may reflect that fathers in lower SES groups hold higher expectations for their children to be independent.

Priorities for Children’s Skills

Upon Kindergarten Entry

What Skills Should Children Possess Upon Kindergarten Entrance?

For this question, it was hypothesized that teachers would place higher priorities for entering kindergarten children on social/emotional skills than would parents. Parents, on the other hand, would place higher priorities on social/emotional skills than would teachers. Comparisons between mothers and fathers would show that mothers place higher priorities on social/emotional skills, and fathers on intellectual domains.

The findings of the current study partially support these predictions. Teachers placed higher priorities on confidence skills than did parents, while parents placed higher priorities on intellectual skills than teachers. However, contrary to hypotheses, there were no significant differences between any of the groups for social skills. As predicted, when mothers and fathers were compared, mothers placed significantly higher priority on confidence skills than did fathers and
fathers placed higher priority on intellectual skills than mothers. These results are quite consistent with previous research (Dank, 1978; Kean, 1980; Van Cleaf, 1979) which suggests that teachers place higher value on social/emotional development than parents do and that parents place higher priority on intellectual skills than do teachers.

It is, moreover, encouraging to note that the three groups were in agreement about the top two most important skills that children should possess upon kindergarten entry (listening and confidence) and the two least important skills (writing and reading). Of notable interest is the fact that the lowest rated skills were so academically oriented. Encouragingly, teachers, mothers and fathers may realize that when compared to other developmental areas, academic skills are not of primary importance.

It is perhaps a logical assumption that a teacher's years of experience may effect his/her attitudes about which skills are the most important for children to possess before they enter kindergarten. Therefore, years of experience teaching kindergarten was included as a variable in the analyses. Overall, teachers were found to have distinctly similar patterns of rankings for skills children should possess prior to kindergarten entrance. Teachers, regardless of experience (0-3 years, 4-7 years, 8-14 years, or 15-28 years), all ranked the skills in generally the same order. This may suggest that teachers have precise and clearly defined expectations for young children's development. Such results are perhaps not surprising, since curriculum guidelines may be set by the school district, resulting in similar expectations for a majority of kindergarten teachers.
What Skills Should be Emphasized In Kindergarten?

Originally, it was hypothesized that teachers would place greater importance than parents on social/emotional skills in the kindergarten curricula, while parents would place greater importance than teachers on intellectual skills. However, when mothers were compared to fathers, mothers would hold social/emotional skills as greater in importance than fathers, and fathers would view intellectual skills as more important than mothers.

Results from this investigation once again offer only partial support for this hypothesis. As predicted, teachers did rate social skills significantly higher than both mothers and fathers, and also rated confidence skills significantly higher than fathers. In contrast to predictions, however, teachers did not rate confidence skills significantly higher than mothers. Also, contrary to the hypothesis, teachers placed similar emphasis on intellectual skills as mothers, and significantly greater emphasis on intellectual skills than fathers.

When mothers and fathers were compared, the hypothesis was supported, as mothers rated social and confidence skills significantly higher than fathers. However, contrary to predictions, mothers also placed greater emphasis on intellectual skills.

It is interesting that although there were some significant differences in the mean ratings of teachers, mothers and fathers on specific skills, the overall order of importance was very similar for the three groups. Listening and confidence skills were given the
highest ratings by all three groups, and art and self-help skills the lowest ratings by all groups. These skills, although rated lowest, were still rated as somewhat important to the kindergarten curricula. The overall attitude across all groups tends to indicate that teachers and parents believe that kindergarten programs should enhance a wide range of development and skills in the child.

The attitudes depicted by the low ratings of self-help skills may actually be misrepresented. Teachers, mothers and fathers, rather than suggesting self-help skills are least important for kindergarten children to learn, may be indicating these skills should be learned prior to kindergarten entrance and need not be a focus of the kindergarten curricula. This seems even more likely considering self-help skills were ranked quite high in Question IV by all three groups as skills children should possess prior to entering kindergarten.

Limitations

The major limitation of the present study concerns the time of year the data were collected. The sample was drawn and data collected in January, which is midway through the school year. Considering a large portion of the study was concerned with pre-kindergarten skills, many of the responses were given in retrospect. This has perhaps stronger ramifications for parents than teachers, since teachers may hold similar views year after year for all children entering kindergarten. Parents' midyear views, however, may be discrepant with their views at the beginning of the school year. This is possibly due to an inability to remember past expectations, or more likely, may be a result of the current kindergarten program on their expectations for young children.
Further investigations would profit from beginning the study prior to the commencement of the school year.

The nature of the sample may also limit generalizability. Although care was taken to include a relatively wide range of subjects within the sample, all participants reside in northern Utah and were connected with kindergartens in Davis or Weber County School Districts. No participants were representative of Hollingshead's lowest SES group, and only a small percentage fell in the second to lowest group. The expansion of a similar study to other areas and possibly to other states including greater religious, racial and SES diversity would make an important contribution to the generalizability of the results.

Finally, parents may have a tendency to view only structured academic activities as things they have done to help their children prepare for kindergarten, overlooking spontaneous, everyday experiences which also enhance children's skills. Further studies may wish to incorporate an instrument which is more focused on such experiences, resulting in a wider range of parental responses.

Implications

Results from this study indicate that parents and teachers are in general agreement about the focus of the kindergarten curricula, and about which skills are the most and least important for children to possess upon kindergarten entry. Greatest disagreement was found in parental and teacher attitudes of "if," and "what," parents can do to prepare their children for kindergarten.

The nature of this discrepancy calls for increased parental and teacher dialogue, along with parent education programs to assist parents
and teachers in defining similar goals. Parents' understanding and support of the school program is an important factor affecting a child's academic achievement (Nash, 1979). Also, the closer a parent's expectations are to the teachers' expectations, the stronger the effects of the expectations on a child's performance (Smith, 1980). Considering these factors, similar and consistent goals between parents and teachers are a vital necessity. Continuity and clarity of goals is essential, not only between parents and teachers, but between mothers and fathers as well. Before continuity can emerge between parents and teachers, however, goals must be set based upon reliable research findings.

Once these goals are set, teachers can use research results as a means of justifying and explaining their curricula to parents. A variety of methods may be utilized to educate both mothers and fathers about accurate expectations for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children. A parental handbook that outlines the development of the child and suggests experiences and activities for the enhancement of a variety of skills would be favorable in producing continuity between the school and home. Other ideas may include, but are not limited to, parental workshops and parent-teacher conferences. It is important, however, that these methods be available to parents prior to the child's anticipated kindergarten entry. A child's development is continuous and it would be most beneficial for parents to be aware of children's growth and development of skills and abilities earlier in the life of their child.

Because these findings suggest that fathers are less likely than mothers to engage in developmental activities with their pre-kindergarten children, education programs would be particularly
beneficial to fathers. Such programs may increase their involvement in, and attitudes toward their children's development prior to kindergarten.

Lower SES parents might also benefit from such an educational program. Results from this study indicate that while these parents are more likely to encourage self-help skills, they may be less likely to help children with receptive language and confidence skills. An educational program could inform these parents regarding important developmental areas in young children and accurate expectations for performance of pre-kindergarteners.

This plan of action is suggested as a way of educating parents about accurate pre-kindergarten and kindergarten expectations and goals for children. As parents' and teachers' expectations and priorities become more similar, it is expected teachers will feel that greater numbers of children are entering kindergarten with skills that help them face the challenges of the curriculum. As children experience more continuity between home and school, it is predicted they will be equipped to meet the more realistic expectations set by these two groups with a higher degree of success.

Conclusions

The major findings of this study were numerous and wide ranging. Kindergarten teachers believe, more than do mothers and fathers, that parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten. Moreover, teachers indicated more frequently than both mothers and fathers that parents could help children with receptive language, cognitive attention/problem solving, small muscle, self-help and expressive language skills prior to their kindergarten entrance. Mothers and
fathers felt that parents could help pre-kindergarten children with
cognitive-prereading and cognitive-math skills. Mothers believed
expressive and receptive language skills were more important to help
children develop prior to school entrance than did fathers.

This investigation also suggests mothers have helped their children
prior to kindergarten entrance more than fathers in receptive language,
cognitive prereading, cognitive math, social, small muscle and self-help
areas. Mothers and fathers are equally likely to have helped their
children in cognitive attention/problem solving, emotional, expressive
language and large muscle areas. Receptive language, prereading, math
and social skills seem to be the top areas in which parents are aiding
their children before kindergarten entry.

Further findings suggest that fathers from lower SES groups are
less likely to view emotional and receptive language as areas in which
parents can help their child develop prior to entering kindergarten.
Mothers in the second lowest SES group were less likely to report that
they had engaged in activities to help foster emotional skills in their
children prior to kindergarten. Lower SES fathers, on the other hand,
were less likely to have aided children in receptive language and more
likely to have helped their children acquire self-help skills.

The results of the current study reveal that teachers, mothers and
fathers are in general agreement about which skills children should have
prior to entering kindergarten. All three groups believe that the most
important competencies children should possess before entering
kindergarten are listening skills, feeling confident, and knowing how to
follow directions. Teachers, mothers and fathers all believe that
writing and reading are the least important skills for children to know upon entering kindergarten.

Finally, teachers, mothers and fathers appear to agree that a wide variety of skills should be emphasized in the kindergarten curricula. Teachers placed significantly greater emphasis on social skills than both mothers and fathers and significantly greater emphasis on confidence and intellectual skills than fathers. Mothers considered social, confidence and intellectual domains to be more important than did fathers.

These findings suggest a need for a greater degree of understanding between teachers and parents concerning accurate expectations for pre-kindergarten children. Increased continuity and clarity of goals between teachers and parents, and further, between mothers and fathers will enable these three groups to more appropriately prepare children for kindergarten entrance.
REFERENCES


Pugmire, J. (August, 1985). Early childhood: Where we have been and where we are going. Paper presented at Interinstitutional Seminar in Childhood Education. Snowbird, UT.


APPENDICES
Appendix A. Kindergarten Teacher and Parent Questions for Analyses: Questions I and II (Teacher), Questions I, II, and III (Parent), Question IV, Question V
Questions I and II - Teacher

For the following question, please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statement.

Parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What could parents do?

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________
4. __________________________________________
5. __________________________________________
Questions I, II, and III - Parent

For the following question, please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statement.

Parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What could parents do?

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________

What have you done to help your child prepare for kindergarten?

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________
Question IV - Teacher and Parent

For the following items, please prioritize them ranging from most important (1) to least important (13).

When a child goes to kindergarten, the most important thing to know is . . .

____ How to share with other children
____ How to listen
____ How to count
____ How to read
____ How to wait one's turn
____ How to follow directions
____ How to be independent
____ How to sit still
____ How to be curious
____ How to solve problems
____ How to write
____ How to raise one's hand
____ How to feel confident
Question V - Teacher and Parent

For the following list, please rate each item according to how important it is for that skill to be emphasized in KINDERGARTENS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>The development of . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>art appreciation skills</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>intellectual concepts</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>large muscle skills</td>
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<td>listening skills</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<td>problem solving skills</td>
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<td>(solving why/how problems)</td>
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<td>self-help skills</td>
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<td>(dressing self, toileting self)</td>
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<td>small muscle skills</td>
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<td>(cutting, writing)</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>social skills</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>speaking skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>confidence skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B. Kindergarten Teacher Questionnaire
KINDERGARTEN TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill out this questionnaire following the given directions. All of your responses will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation!
In order for a child to be adequately "prepared" for kindergarten what should s/he be expected to do? Please check ( ) the tasks that a child should be able to do before s/he enters kindergarten.

- Attends to an activity 20-30 minutes
- Recognizes and names letters of the alphabet
- Counts to 100
- Can skip
- Cuts with scissors on line
- Zips own zipper
- Shows satisfaction with accomplishments
- Learns and cooperates in routines
- Speaks in complete sentences
- Listens while others speak
- Recognizes own name
- Identifies numerals 1-20
- Throws and catches a ball
- Holds crayons/pencils appropriately
- Blows own nose
- Understands others' feelings
- Recognizes needs of others
- Tells short stories in sequence
- Can follow 3 specific instructions in order
- Listens to directions and follows through
- Completes simple addition and subtraction problems
- Walks on a straight line
- Writes name
- Puts belongings away in locker or cubby
- Has a positive self-concept
- Willingly shares with other children
- Engages in conversation with other children
- Identifies and labels above, below, behind, etc.
- Is curious
- Reads or sounds out 50 words
- Balances on one foot
- Ties shoes
- Takes care of toileting needs
- Expresses frustration in words
- Engages in cooperative play
- Is interested in the meanings of new words
- Remembers story heard 4 days before
- Finds original solutions to problems
- Knows the sound each letter makes
- Matches numerals to sets of objects
Using these same tasks, please check ( ) those that a majority of children (at least 50%) have mastered upon kindergarten entrance.

- Attends to an activity 20-30 minutes
- Recognizes and names letters of the alphabet
- Counts to 100
- Can skip
- Cuts with scissors on line
- Zips own zipper
- Shows satisfaction with accomplishments
- Learns and cooperates in routines
- Speaks in complete sentences
- Listens while others speak
- Recognizes own name
- Identifies numerals 1-20
- Throws and catches a ball
- Holds crayons/pencils appropriately
- Blows own nose
- Understands others' feelings
- Recognizes needs of others
- Tells short stories in sequence
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- Identifies and labels above, below, behind, etc.
- Is curious
- Reads or sounds out 50 words
- Balances on one foot
- Ties shoes
- Takes care of toileting needs
- Expresses frustration in words
- Engages in cooperative play
- Is interested in the meanings of new words
- Remembers story heard 4 days before
- Finds original solutions to problems
- Knows the sound each letter makes
- Matches numerals to sets of objects
For the following question, please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statement.

Preschool/daycare teachers could do more to prepare children for kindergarten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What could preschool/daycare teachers do?

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
For the following question, please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statement.

Parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten.

What could parents do?

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
For the following list, please rate each item according to how important it is for that skill to be emphasized in PRESCHOOLS/DAY CARE CENTERS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>The development of...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>large muscle skills (running, balance)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>listening skills</td>
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<td></td>
<td>problem solving skills (solving why/how problems)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>confidence skills</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>confidence skills</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
For the following items, please prioritize them ranging from most important (1) to least important (13).

When a child goes to kindergarten, the most important thing to know is . . .

- How to share with other children
- How to listen
- How to count
- How to read
- How to wait one's turn
- How to follow directions
- How to be independent
- How to sit still
- How to be curious
- How to solve problems
- How to write
- How to raise one's hand
- How to feel confident
These are five specific tasks in CUTTING. Please prioritize them in order from the task a child learns/acquires first (1) to the task a child learns/acquires last (5).

- Prefers using one hand over the other to cut
- Cuts on a zig-zag line
- Cuts freehand designs
- Cuts a two inch circle
- Cuts on a straight line

These are five specific tasks in OBSERVING OBJECTS. Please prioritize them in order from the task a child learns/acquires first (1) to the task a child learns/acquires last (5).

- Can state why objects are alike or different
- Can find 2 or more similarities between objects
- Can identify that some objects are alike or different
- Can categorize objects which are similar
- Can match two objects which are the same

These are five specific tasks in PLAYING BALL. Please prioritize them in order from the task a child learns/acquires first (1) to the task a child learns/acquires last (5).

- Runs to catch ball
- Catches ball with arms while standing still
- Throws overhand
- Throws underhand
- Catches ball with hands while standing still
These are five specific tasks in NAME IDENTIFICATION. Please prioritize them in order from the task a child learns/acquires first (1) to the task a child learns/acquires last (5).

- Can pick own name out of a group of names
- Writes name
- Names individual letters in name
- Recognizes name when seen alone
- Spells name out loud

These are five specific tasks in COUNTING. Please prioritize them in order from the task a child learns/acquires first (1) to the task a child learns/acquires last (5).

- Orders numerals 1-10
- Counts by memory from 1-10
- Writes numerals 1-10
- Matches numeral to correct set of objects
- Recognizes numerals 1-10

These are five specific tasks in DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS. Please prioritize them in order from the task a child learns/acquires first (1) to the task a child learns/acquires last (5).

- Willingly takes turns with other children
- Plays independently of other children
- Willingly shares with other children
- Plays cooperatively with other children
- Recognizes needs of others
Please fill out the following information about yourself.

Male _____ Female _____ Age ______

Do you have children? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please list the ages: ______ ______ ______

At what grade level do you teach? ______

How long have you taught at this grade level? ______

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

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 Years Experience at this Grade/Age Level

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

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 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 completed a Master's Degree? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, in what area? __________________________

Thanks so much for your cooperation.
Appendix C. Kindergarten Parent Questionnaire
KINDERGARTEN PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill out this questionnaire following the given directions. All of your responses will be kept confidential. 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.
In order for a child to be adequately "prepared" for kindergarten what should s/he be expected to do? Please check ( ) the tasks that a child should be able to do before s/he enters kindergarten.

- Attends to an activity 20-30 minutes
- Recognizes and names letters of the alphabet
- Counts to 100
- Can skip
- Cuts with scissors on line
- Zips own zipper
- Shows satisfaction with accomplishments
- Learns and cooperates in routines
- Speaks in complete sentences
- Listens while others speak
- Recognizes own name
- Identifies numerals 1-20
- Throws and catches a ball
- Holds crayons/pencils appropriately
- Blows own nose
- Understands others' feelings
- Recognizes needs of others
- Tells short stories in sequence
- Can follow 3 specific instructions in order
- Listens to directions and follows through
- Completes simple addition and subtraction problems
- Walks on a straight line
- Writes name
- Puts belongings away in locker or cubby
- Has a positive self-concept
- Willingly shares with other children
- Engages in conversation with other children
- Identifies and labels above, below, behind, etc.
- Is curious
- Reads or sounds out 50 words
- Balances on one foot
- Ties shoes
- Takes care of toileting needs
- Expresses frustration in words
- Engages in cooperative play
- Is interested in the meanings of new words
- Remembers story heard 4 days before
- Finds original solutions to problems
- Knows the sound each letter makes
- Matches numerals to sets of objects
For the following question, please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statement.

Preschool/daycare teachers could do more to prepare children for kindergarten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What could preschool/daycare teachers do?

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

If your child attended preschool/day care, what did your child’s teacher do to help him/her prepare for kindergarten?

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
For the following question, please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statement.

Parents could do more to prepare children for kindergarten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What could parents do?

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

What have you done to help your child prepare for kindergarten?

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.
For the following list, please rate each item according to how important it is for that skill to be emphasized in PRESCHOOLS/DAY CARE CENTERS.

<table>
<thead>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>social skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>speaking skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>confidence skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the following items, please prioritize them ranging from most important (1) to least important (13).

When a child goes to kindergarten, the most important thing to know is . . .

___ How to share with other children

___ How to listen

___ How to count

___ How to read

___ How to wait one's turn

___ How to follow directions

___ How to be independent

___ How to sit still

___ How to be curious

___ How to solve problems

___ How to write

___ How to raise one's hand

___ How to feel confident
These are five specific tasks in CUTTING. Please prioritize them in order from the task a child learns/acquires first (1) to the task a child learns/acquires last (5).

- Prefers using one hand over the other to cut
- Cuts on a zig-zag line
- Cuts freehand designs
- Cuts a two inch circle
- Cuts on a straight line

These are five specific tasks in OBSERVING OBJECTS. Please prioritize them in order from the task a child learns/acquires first (1) to the task a child learns/acquires last (5).

- Can state why objects are alike or different
- Can find 2 or more similarities between objects
- Can identify that some objects are alike or different
- Can categorize objects which are similar
- Can match two objects which are the same

These are five specific tasks in PLAYING BALL. Please prioritize them in order from the task a child learns/acquires first (1) to the task a child learns/acquires last (5).

- Runs to catch ball
- Catches ball with arms while standing still
- Throws overhand
- Throws underhand
- Catches ball with hands while standing still
These are five specific tasks in NAME IDENTIFICATION. Please prioritize them in order from the task a child learns/acquires first (1) to the task a child learns/acquires last (5).

- Can pick own name out of a group of names
- Writes name
- Names individual letters in name
- Recognizes name when seen alone
- Spells name out loud

These are five specific tasks in COUNTING. Please prioritize them in order from the task a child learns/acquires first (1) to the task a child learns/acquires last (5).

- Orders numerals 1-10
- Counts by memory from 1-10
- Writes numerals 1-10
- Matches numeral to correct set of objects
- Recognizes numerals 1-10

These are five specific tasks in DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS. Please prioritize them in order from the task a child learns/acquires first (1) to the task a child learns/acquires last (5).

- Willingly takes turns with other children
- Plays independently of other children
- Willingly shares with other children
- Plays cooperatively with other children
- Recognizes needs of others
Please fill out the following information about yourself.

Male ______ Female ______

Age ______


Is this your first marriage? Yes ____ No ____

How many years have you attended school? (circle)

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

Degrees you have earned? __________________________

Area of emphasis? __________________________

Your occupation? __________________________

How many years has your spouse attended school? (circle)

6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 18+

Degrees your spouse has earned? __________________________

Area of spouse's emphasis? __________________________

Your spouse's occupation? __________________________
How many children do you have? ______________________

Please list the age and sex of each child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you participate in your kindergartener's classroom? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, how and how often? ________________________________

Did your kindergartener 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)? ________________________________

Please check the item which best describes where you presently live.

- Unincorporated Town
- Incorporated Town: Less than 1,000 population
- Incorporated Town: 1,000 - 5,000 population
- Incorporated Town: 5,000 - 20,000 population
- Incorporated Town: 20,000 - 50,000 population
- Incorporated Town: more than 50,000 population

Thank so much for your cooperation!
Appendix D. Written Request to Conduct Research (Weber District)
The kindergarten year offers children their first public school exposure. It is an exciting year which is marked by much learning and many new experiences. Recent research has suggested that parents are very interested in the optimal education of their children. These same parents, however, indicate that they have little knowledge concerning the expectations of children who enter kindergarten. Moreover, a recent survey of kindergarten teachers indicates that children entering school exhibit an extreme diversity of skills and knowledge. Many children are well-prepared and developmentally ready to competently perform in kindergarten. Others are not. While individual developmental levels do account for some of these differences, many children are simply not prepared for kindergarten. Teachers feel this wide diversity in performance levels is becoming particularly acute as class sizes increase.

This study is examining what expectations parents and kindergarten teachers hold for beginning kindergarteners. It is hoped that the results of this investigation will enable the parents of kindergarteners and kindergarten teachers to define similar school expectations, thus enabling children to be better prepared for kindergarten entrance.

In an effort to assess teacher and parental expectations concerning children who are entering kindergarten, we would like to use your district to draw our sample of parents and teachers. Enclosed are the questionnaires and cover letters for both parents and teachers.

As we discussed in our phone conversation, upon review of our study, we will need to obtain a list of kindergarten teachers and secure parents for our sample. We look forward to hearing from you in the near future, and thank you for your attention. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of us.

Sincerely,

Shelley L. Knudsen Lindauer, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
750-1532; 750-1544

Kim Harris
Graduate Student
750-1525; 825-9114
Appendix E. Written Request to Conduct Research (Davis District)
Dr. Dallas Workman  
45 East State Street  
Farmington, UT 84025

Dear Dr. Workman:

The kindergarten year offers children their first public school exposure. It is an exciting year which is marked by much learning and many new experiences. Recent research has suggested that parents are very interested in the optimal education of their children. These same parents, however, indicate that they have little knowledge concerning the expectations of children who enter kindergarten. Moreover, a recent survey of kindergarten teachers indicates that children entering school exhibit an extreme diversity of skills and knowledge. Many children are well-prepared and developmentally ready to competently perform in kindergarten. Others are not. While individual developmental levels do account for some of these differences, many children are simply not prepared for kindergarten. Teachers feel this wide diversity in performance levels is becoming particularly acute as class sizes increase.

This study is examining what expectations parents and kindergarten teachers hold for beginning kindergarteners. It is hoped that the results of this investigation will enable the parents of kindergarteners and kindergarten teachers to define similar school expectations, thus enabling children to be better prepared for kindergarten entrance.

In an effort to assess teacher and parental expectations concerning children who are entering kindergarten, we would like to use your district to draw our sample of parents and teachers. Enclosed are the questionnaires and cover letters for both parents and teachers.

As we discussed in our phone conversation, upon review of our study, we will need to obtain a list of kindergarten teachers and secure parents for our sample. We look forward to hearing from you in the near future, and thank you for your attention. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of us.

Sincerely,

Shelley L. Knudsen Lindauer, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
750-1532; 750-1544

Kim Harris  
Graduate Student  
750-1525; 825-9114
Appendix F. Kindergarten Teacher Letter
January 28, 1986

Dear Kindergarten Teacher,

The kindergarten year offers children their first public school exposure. It is an exciting time which is marked by much learning and many new experiences. However, a recent survey of kindergarten teachers indicates that children entering school exhibit an extreme diversity of skills and knowledge. Many children are well-prepared and developmentally ready to competently perform in kindergarten. Others are not. While individual developmental levels account for some of these differences, many children are simply not prepared for kindergarten. Teachers feel this wide diversity in performance levels is becoming particularly acute as class sizes increase.

This study is examining what expectations parents and kindergarten teachers hold for beginning kindergarteners. It is hoped that the results of this investigation will clarify the levels of competence deemed necessary by kindergarten teachers for children entering school. The results of this study will also enable parents, preschool teachers, and kindergarten teachers to define similar kindergarten expectations, helping children to be better prepared for school entrance.

In an effort to assess preschool teachers' expectations concerning children who are entering school, I am asking for your participation in this study. If you choose to participate, simply sign the consent form and fill out the attached questionnaire. Completing the questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes of your time. The questionnaire and consent forms will be picked up on February 13 & 14; please have the questionnaire completed and ready by Thursday, February 13.

All information will be treated confidentially and your anonymity will be protected.

Your participation is truly appreciated! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of us.

Sincerely,

Shelley L. Knudsen Lindauer Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
750-1532; 750-1544

Kim Harris
Graduate Student
750-1525; 825-9114
Appendix G. Kindergarten Teacher Consent Form
I agree to participate in this study investigating kindergarten teachers' expectations for children entering school. I understand that all information will be kept confidential and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ______________

If you would like to receive the results of this study upon completion, please print your name and address below.

Name: _____________________________________

Address: ___________________________________

__________________________________________
Appendix H. Kindergarten Parent Letter
January 28, 1906

Dear Kindergarten Parents:

The kindergarten year offers your child his/her first public school exposure. It is an exciting time which is marked by much learning and many new experiences. Recent research has suggested that parents are very interested in the optimal education of their children. These same parents, however, indicate that they have little knowledge concerning the expectations of children who enter kindergarten.

This study is examining what expectations parents and kindergarten teachers hold for beginning kindergarteners. It is hoped that the results of this investigation will enable these two groups to define similar expectations, thus enabling children to be better prepared for school entrance.

In an effort to assess parental expectations concerning children who are entering kindergarten, I am asking for your participation in this study. If you choose to participate, simply sign the consent form and fill out the attached questionnaire. Completing the questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes of your time. Please note that two questionnaires are enclosed — one for both father and mother. These should be filled out without conferring with one another. Please return both questionnaires and consent forms to your child’s kindergarten teacher in the envelope. We will be coming from Logan to pick these up on February 13. Please have them returned to the teacher by that date.

All information will be treated confidentially and your anonymity will be protected.

Your participation is truly appreciated! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of us.

Sincerely,

Shelley L. Knudsen Lindauer, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
750-1532; 750-1544

Kim Harris
Graduate Student
750-1525; 825-9114

slc

attachments
Appendix I. Kindergarten Parent Consent Form
I agree to participate in this study investigating parental expectations for children entering kindergarten. I understand that all information will be kept confidential and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Signature (mother): ___________________________ Date: ______
Signature (father): ___________________________ Date: ______

If you would like to receive the results of this study upon completion, please print your name and address below.

Name: ______________________________________
Address: ____________________________________
_____________________________________________
Appendix J. Kindergarten Parent Selection Criteria
Dear Teacher:

Please send this home with the BOY 4th from the top on your class list.

*Please make sure this child resides with a two-parent family. If not, send this home with the next BOY on your list.

Thank you,

Dear Teacher:

Please send this home with the GIRL 4th from the top on your class list.

*Please make sure this child resides with a two-parent family. If not, send this home with the next GIRL on your list.

Thank you,

Dear Teacher:

Please send this home with the BOY 4th from the bottom on your class list.

*Please make sure this child resides with a two-parent family. If not, send this home with the next BOY on your list.

Thank you,

Dear Teacher:

Please send this home with the GIRL 4th from the bottom on your class list.

*Please make sure this child resides with a two-parent family. If not, send this home with the next GIRL on your list.

Thank you,
Appendix K. Kindergarten Teacher Reminder Letter
February 10, 1986

Dear Kindergarten Teachers:

A reminder that on Thursday, February 13, I will be coming from Logan to pick up your completed questionnaires.

Please leave all materials (your questionnaires, consent forms, and parent's questionnaires) in the school office by 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 13.

Thank you,

Kim Harris
Appendix L. Kindergarten Parent Reminder Letter
February 12, 1986

Dear Parents:

I will be coming from Logan tomorrow to pick up your completed questionnaires and consent forms. Please return both questionnaires and consent forms to your child's kindergarten teacher tomorrow.

Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

Kim Harris
Graduate Student