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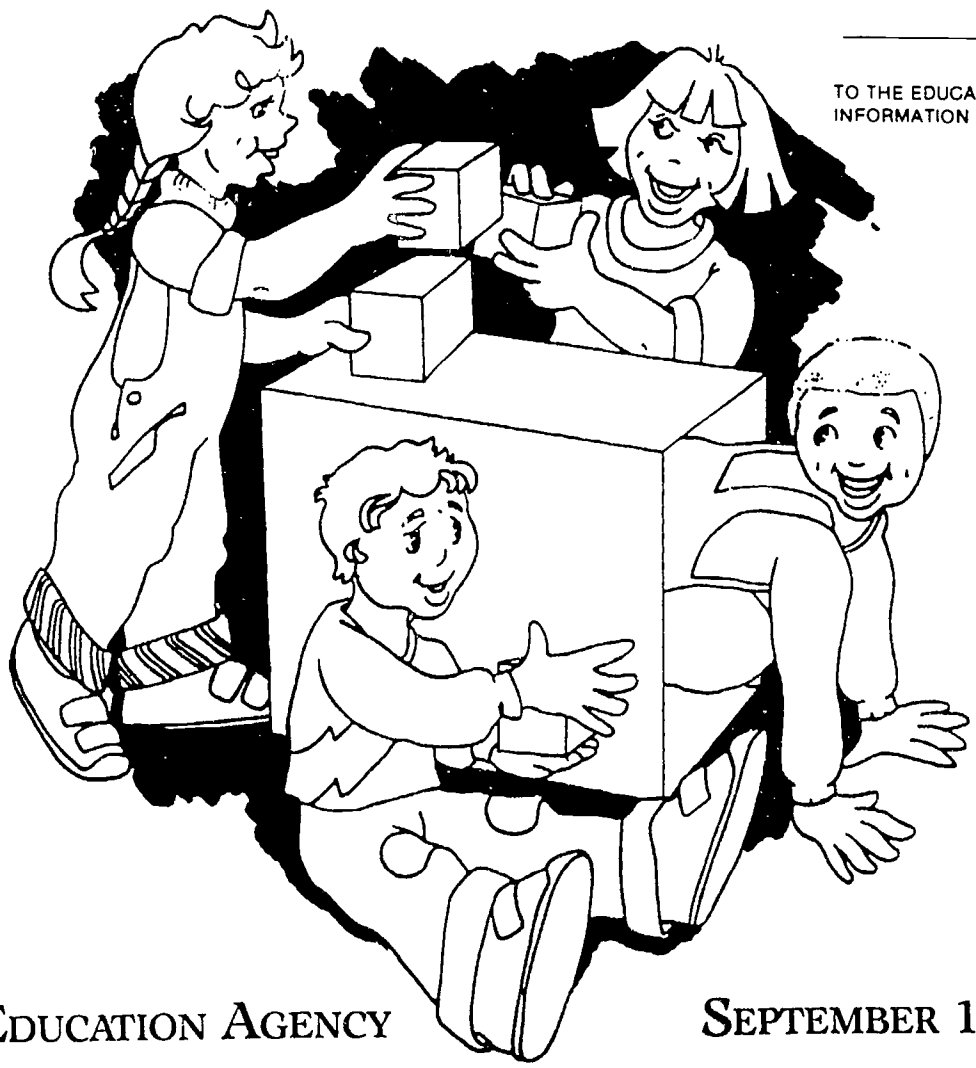
ABSTRACT

This report presents preliminary findings of a 5-year study evaluating the effectiveness of state-funded prekindergarten programs in Texas. The two components of the study included in this report are (1) a statewide survey of 507 school districts, focusing on prekindergarten program characteristics, implementation, and parents' perceptions of the programs, and (2) a case study of 10 schools providing prekindergarten programs. Results from the third component, a longitudinal study of 2,000 students enrolled in prekindergarten during the 1989-90 school year through 1993-94, were not included in this report. The report is divided into eight chapters, each of which focuses on a recurrent theme found in the data analysis. Chapter topics include: (1) program implementation; (2) program framework; (3) limited English proficient students; (4) prekindergarten environment; (5) prekindergarten staff; (6) coordination of services; (7) parents and the prekindergarten program; and (8) student assessment and program evaluation. Each chapter includes relevant criteria established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, findings summarizing the data, findings by data source from the statewide survey and case study, if applicable, and preliminary recommendations based on the findings. Appendixes contain a literature review on early childhood developmentally appropriate programing; district and campus statewide survey instruments; a list of districts and campuses participating in the case study; and the case study instrument. (MM)

TEXAS EVALUATION STUDY OF PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS



TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

SEPTEMBER 1992

Texas Evaluation Study of Prekindergarten Programs

Preliminary Findings

Texas Education Agency
Division of Policy Planning and Evaluation
Austin, Texas

September 1992

State Board of Education
(State Board for Vocational Education)

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This report was prepared by the Texas Education Agency's Division of Policy Planning and Evaluation in an effort to provide preliminary information about the effectiveness of prekindergarten programs for four-year-old children in the state.

The Texas Education Agency appreciates the efforts of the many local school district administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and students who participated in the data collection for the study.

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Project Staff
Division of Policy Planning and Evaluation

MARIA D. WHITSETT, Ph.D.
Project Manager

REBECCA K. EDMIASTON, Ph.D.
Project Director

LYNN M. TRENT
Systems Analyst

Interim recommendations for policy adoptions in this report are ideas obtained during the course of the study. Some of these ideas and recommended actions may not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of the Texas Education Agency or the State Board of Education. Preliminary recommendations in this report are based upon data collected for the study, discussions with program staff within the Texas Education Agency, and input from participating school districts.

Contents

Within the past decade, progressively increasing awareness of the value of preschool intervention has resulted in the commitment of public education resources to prekindergarten education. The growth of state-funded prekindergarten education programs has been whirlwind in relationship to the historical time period of public education. Texans have felt the impact of this heightened interest.

In special session during the summer of 1984, the Texas Legislature passed major educational reform legislation directed at assisting at-risk students. Among the reforms was House Bill 72, which mandated prekindergarten education in Texas public schools for four-year-old children who were limited English proficient or from a low-income family. Participation in the prekindergarten program has dramatically increased since its inception. Over 500 Texas school districts are currently providing prekindergarten programs to four-year-old children.

A study of the general state of prekindergarten education in Texas, from both an implementation and outcome point of view, has not been conducted before now. The need exists to answer the questions, "What are we doing?" and "Is what we are doing effective?" To address these questions a five-year study of prekindergarten programs for four-year-old children was initiated in 1989.

Components of the Study

1) A **statewide survey** of districts and campuses focusing upon prekindergarten program characteristics, implementation, and parents' perceptions of the programs

2) A **case study** of ten schools providing prekindergarten programs to study assessment of students and use of developmentally appropriate practices

3) A **longitudinal study** of 2000 students enrolled in prekindergarten during the 1989-90 school year, in relation to a comparison group, through the 1993-94 school year

Findings from the Statewide Survey and Year 1 of the Case Study are included in this report. It is anticipated that preliminary findings of Component Three, the Longitudinal Study, will be available in January 1993.

Evaluation Strategy

	Year 1 (1989-90)	Year 2 (1990-91)	Year 3 (1991-92)	Year 4 (1992-93)	Year 5 (1993-94)
Statewide Survey:					
District and Campuses with Pre-K Programs	→				
Statewide Parent Survey (500[s] districts)	→	→			
Case Study (Ten elementary schools)					
Site Visits and Interviews	→	→	→	→	→
Longitudinal Study (2600 students to third grade)					
Collect Baseline Data on Pre-K Group	→				
Collect Data on Pre-K and Comparison Groups (20 districts)	→	→	→	→	→

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE STUDY?

The overall purpose of this five-year study is to evaluate effectiveness of prekindergarten programs for four-year-old children in Texas for the first time since the statewide inception of such programs in 1986. This study addresses the initial evaluation phase which identifies features that may contribute to program effectiveness. A variety of factors, such as staff qualifications, materials, and/or administrative support, can complement or undermine successful program outcomes. Therefore, the question of what we are doing must always be addressed before program effectiveness can be determined or understood. The first two components in the evaluation strategy are directed toward gaining a better understanding of practice.

Understanding how children change is critical to program accountability. For educators of young children this presents certain challenges that must be addressed. First, reliable and valid outcome instruments are rare for young children. Second, the real test of prekindergarten program effectiveness is achievement and personal success in later grades, so program outcomes must be assessed over time. The ultimate effects of prekindergarten on student achievement will be addressed through the longitudinal component of this study.

How was the study conducted?

Statewide Survey

District and campus questionnaires were developed focusing on program characteristics such as enrollment, instructional arrangements, staffing, teacher qualifications, instructional approaches and a number of general issues related to the types of prekindergarten programs currently in operation in Texas.

Questionnaires were sent to 507 school districts identified by the Public Education Information Management System as providing prekindergarten programs on 1,417 campuses. Response to both the district and campus questionnaires was quite high (93%).

Case Study

The case study was conducted as a cooperative effort between the Texas Education Agency (Agency), Division of Program Evaluation and INter-REActive Learning (INREAL) Outreach Education Center, at the University of Colorado, a contractor selected through the Request for Proposal process. The primary foci of the case study were 1) to collect information regarding the assessment of prekindergarten students and 2) to assess developmentally appropriate practices. Ten school districts participated in the study. One campus from each district was jointly selected by the district and the Agency so that a range of instructional approaches was represented. Site visits were made to 21 classrooms to collect data through:

- observations of prekindergarten classrooms
- questionnaires regarding staff qualifications and information specific to the campus, and
- tape recorded interviews with administrators, prekindergarten staff, kindergarten teachers, and parents of children participating in the prekindergarten program.

What are "developmentally appropriate practices"?

Prekindergarten programs generally are implemented with the goal of reducing the probability of school failure for at-risk children. However, the prekindergarten movement came about at such an accelerated pace that curriculum alignment has often followed the so-called "push-down" model. Elements of first grade are pushed down to kindergarten, and elements of kindergarten (and perhaps even first grade) are pushed down to prekindergarten. This tendency to emphasize teaching "academic skills" to younger children is based on misconceptions about early learning (Elkind, 1986). In response to the widespread use of inappropriate formal teaching techniques for young children, and the over-emphasis on achievement of narrowly defined academic skills, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) established guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices (1984).

The concept of "developmental appropriateness" as set forth by NAEYC, has two dimensions: 1) age appropriateness and 2) individual appropriateness. The first dimension entails using knowledge of child development to identify a range of meaningful behaviors, activities, and materials for a specific age group. Reference to the second dimension results in classrooms containing materials and activities that correspond to the children's individual interests, strengths, and experiences. To specifically address the diverse backgrounds of Texas prekindergarten children, a third dimension has been added: language and cultural appropriateness. This dimension recognizes the importance of using the child's primary language in the classroom. For the purposes of this study the term, "developmentally appropriate practices" will reflect all three dimensions.

Classrooms with teachers who employ developmentally appropriate practices look like this:

- Children are engaged in active, not passive, learning experiences, many of which are child-initiated, based on activities and materials that are real, concrete, and relevant to the lives of young children.
- Classrooms contain materials and activities for a wide range of developmental interests and abilities.
- Child-initiated, child-directed, teacher-supported play is the most natural way for young children to learn, and is an integral part of the program day.
- Children develop language and communication skills by using language to express needs, insights, excitement, and to solve problems through interaction with adults and peers.
- Children spend most of the time working individually or in small groups.
- Parents and others from the community are involved with the program (NAEYC, 1987).

What is the philosophy/curriculum of prekindergarten programs?

NAEYC CRITERIA

Curriculum should be based on sound theoretical principles of how children learn and develop, but it must also be derived from the needs and interests of the individual children. Staff provides materials and time for children to select their activities during the day. Curriculum emphasizes the development of children's thinking, reasoning, decision-making, and problem-solving abilities. The prevailing worldview reflects a developmental, interactive, constructivist approach to learning where the child is actively involved in learning, primarily through child-initiated play and hands-on activities that are supported by the teacher. The worldview is not limited to the almost exclusively behaviorist approach that permeates curriculum and assessment in this country, where the child is viewed as passive in the learning process which is directed by the teacher and shaped by the environment (NAEYC, 1991, pp. 24, 29-31, 54).

FINDINGS

- Programs generally did not appear to be based upon a well-articulated philosophical or theoretical model.
- Program implementation in observed sites was primarily limited to behaviorist approaches, such as teacher-directed activities requiring patterned responses from the students, rather than engaging them in hands-on, problem-solving, and reasoning experiences. This was true even in sites where the program philosophy was described as child-directed.
- The essential elements defined by the Agency formed the basis of, and in some districts were equated to, the curriculum.
- Curriculum content covered all developmental domains, but focused on academic skills such as letter recognition and sounds, and counting, rather than higher order cognitive skills such as problem-solving.
- Child-initiated activities generally occurred less than a quarter of the day in 87 to 90 percent of the campuses in the study, based on both self-reported information and on observations of practice.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a comprehensive early childhood framework at the state level which identifies quality program standards and practices.
- Develop an early childhood Trainer of Trainers program at the state and regional levels to disseminate information and training regarding developmentally appropriate practices.
- Identify Agency and regional service center staff to provide training and technical assistance to districts in the area of developmentally appropriate practices.
- Identify programs which are demonstrating exemplary developmentally appropriate practices, disseminate these practices to interested districts, and provide opportunities for staff from interested districts to observe these sites.

How is language development facilitated in prekindergarten classrooms?

NAEYC CRITERIA

Language and communication skills grow out of a desire to use language to express needs, insights, excitement, and to solve problems. Children do not learn language or any other concepts by being quiet and listening to an adult (NAEYC, 1987, p. 55). Social interaction with peers, as well as with adults, is essential to the development of real understanding as well as language use. The sounds of a language learning environment should be primarily marked by conversation, spontaneous laughter, and exclamation of excitement. Adult voices should not predominate (NAEYC, 1991, p. 26; 1984, pp. 9, 10).

FINDINGS

- In observed classrooms, children spent about half of the activities primarily responding to adults' directives and questions.
- Only in about 30 percent of the classroom activities were children's talking and interaction spontaneous and functional in the sense of a social interaction.
- During center time, children were frequently asked to be quiet.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide staff training on communication and language development.
- Increase classroom resources, such as experiential materials, enabling staff to provide natural language-learning experiences.
- Establish a resource center at the Agency and regional service centers to provide materials on state-of-the-art early childhood educational issues and practices.

How are prekindergarten classrooms fostering academic development of limited English proficient students?

NAEYC CRITERIA

If academic development of limited English proficient students is the goal, then students must be encouraged to acquire a conceptual foundation in their native language to facilitate the acquisition of English academic skills (NAEYC, 1991, p. 17; Cummins, 1991, p. 49).

FINDINGS

- The provision of classrooms using a bilingual approach to instruction was viewed as the principle means of meeting the needs of linguistically and/or culturally different children.
- 43 percent of the classrooms were identified as classrooms for limited English proficient children.
- Bilingual instruction was the most widely reported instructional approach in prekindergarten classrooms for limited English proficient children (67%).
- Prekindergarten classrooms emphasized the use of English as the language of instruction.
- In half of the classrooms observed, both the teacher and the instructional assistant spoke English for 75 percent or more of the observation period.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase the usage of the students' primary language as the language of instruction.
- Establish and promote resource centers at the Agency and at regional service centers to provide state-of-the-art information and materials on second language acquisition for young children.

What is the prekindergarten environment like?

NAEYC CRITERIA

Indoor and outdoor environments are spacious, safe, clean, attractive, and include soft elements (rug, cushions, rocking chair). Learning materials should be concrete, real, and relevant to the lives of young children. Outdoor areas should include a variety of equipment for riding, climbing, balancing, and individual play (NAEYC, 1984, pp. 25, 27).

FINDINGS

- Classrooms looked "school-like" and were lacking soft elements such as cushions, rocking chairs, and rugs.
- Activity areas were clearly defined and organized by centers.
- Outdoor areas, although spacious in size, lacked equipment for young children.
- Materials normally seen in early childhood programs were present, although quantity of materials was limited in some programs.
- Multicultural materials were sparse.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop guidelines at the state level for facilities providing prekindergarten programs.
- Increase the amount of playground equipment for young children.
- Enrich classrooms with materials that reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of the children in the program.

What are staff qualifications?

NAEYC CRITERIA

Teachers should have, at a minimum, a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education/child development. Teacher assistants, who should implement program activities only under direct supervision of professional staff, should be high school graduates or equivalents at minimum, and should participate in professional development programs (NAEYC, 1984, p. 18).

FINDINGS

- Over 50 percent of the prekindergarten teachers are veteran teachers having six or more years of teaching experience.
- Less than 50 percent of the teachers have early childhood endorsement.
- No training in early childhood development/education was reported for 48 percent of the instructional assistants.
- Over 40 percent of the campuses reported that the prekindergarten teachers and instructional assistants did not attend any inservice sessions related to prekindergarten programs during 1989-90.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop joint staff development opportunities for teachers (prekindergarten through first grade), instructional assistants, and other staff across different early childhood programs.
- Develop an early childhood Trainer of Trainers program at the state and regional levels to disseminate information and training regarding the implementation of prekindergarten programs.
- Designate and train personnel at regional service centers to provide specialized training and technical assistance to prekindergarten administrators and staff.
- Collaborate with early childhood preservice training programs to help meet training needs of teachers and to plan for career development opportunities for instructional assistants.

What are the staffing patterns in prekindergarten classrooms?

NAEYC CRITERIA

An important determinant of program quality is the way in which it is staffed. Research strongly suggests that smaller group sizes and larger numbers of staff to children are related to positive outcomes for children. A group is the number of children assigned to a staff member, a team of staff members occupying an individual classroom or well-defined space within a larger classroom. For four-year-old children the maximum ratio is 1:8 adult-child with a recommended class size of 16 children (NAEYC, 1984, p. 24). In addition to overall group size, it is important to recognize the type of groupings within the whole group that best support children's learning. The most appropriate grouping practice is for children to work individually or in small, informal groups most of the time (NAEYC, 1987, pp. 54, 55).

FINDINGS

- The predominant grouping practice for the majority of classrooms observed was large group (more than 5 children) or whole group (all children) instruction.
- Almost all campuses reported that less than 25 percent of the day was spent in individualized instruction.
- Approximately 75 percent of the campuses had instructional assistants; the remainder did not have instructional assistants which resulted in a class size of one teacher to 22 students.
- Over 50 percent of the campuses reported that the instructional assistant spent less than 25 percent of the day in the classroom.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATION

Lower the adult/student class size ratio to 2 adults per 16 children.

How does prekindergarten coordinate with other programs for young children?

NAEYC CRITERIA

Continuity of educational experiences is critical to supporting development. Such continuity results from communication both horizontally in the child's life during a year and vertically as the child moves to a new program (NAEYC, 1987, p. 12). In addition, *Texas Education Code* §16.003 requires the investigation of coordination between prekindergarten and other government-funded early childhood programs and existing child care program sites.

FINDINGS

- There was no formal or official process for prekindergarten teachers to share information with the receiving kindergarten teachers, but information was shared informally when it was logistically feasible.
- Coordinated activities with other agencies occurred on a limited basis. (See figure below.)
- Screening/referral was the most widely identified coordinated service, reported by 34.1 percent of the districts.
- The least widely reported types of coordinated services involved the actual delivery of educational programs, with only 73 campuses (5.7%) sharing facilities and only 69 campuses (5.3%) sharing classroom instruction.
- Less than 10 percent of the districts offered extended care options for prekindergarten students.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop mechanisms at the local district level to coordinate transition from prekindergarten to kindergarten.
- Encourage districts to explore coordinated delivery of services with other agencies or child care sites.

Coordinated Services With Other Agencies/Organizations Reported by Districts

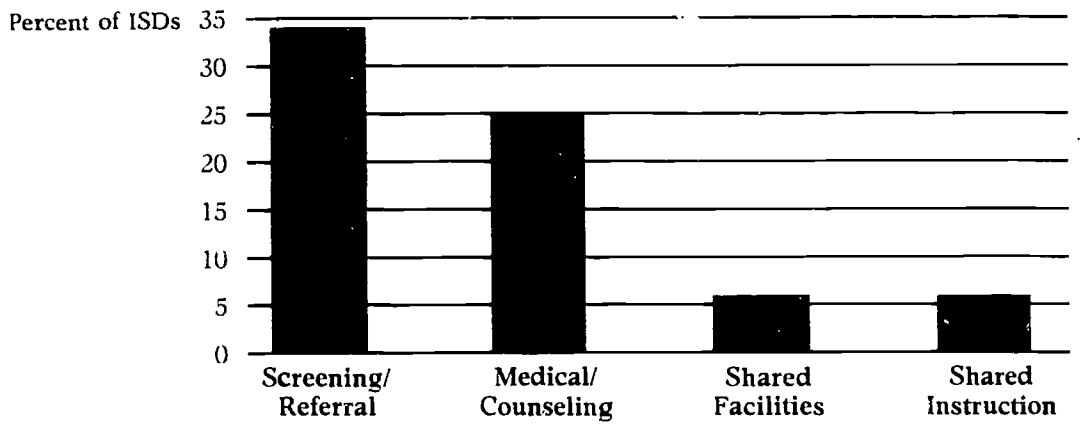

Figure 1

What is the relationship between parents and prekindergarten programs?

NAEYC CRITERIA

Teachers share child development knowledge, insights, and resources as part of regular communication and conferences with family members (NAEYC, 1987, p. 12). Parents and other family members are encouraged to be involved in the program in various ways, taking into consideration working parents and those with little spare time (NAEYC, 1984, p. 17).

FINDINGS

- Prekindergarten staff followed traditional means of communicating with parents such as telephone calls, parent/teacher conferences, and report cards. Home visits were not a part of the routine communication between parents and educators.
- About 67 percent of the campuses reported that less than 25 percent of the parents of limited English proficient children participated in parent-teacher conferences.
- Parent involvement in prekindergarten classrooms appeared to be limited, particularly in classrooms for limited English proficient children, with 86 percent of the campuses reporting that parent participation in classroom activities was less than 25 percent.
- Parent involvement only minimally reflected home-school collaborative partnerships.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop innovative ways of sharing information with parents.
- Provide flexibility in staff hours to share information with parents.
- Increase involvement of parents in decision-making about their own child and about the prekindergarten program.

How are students assessed?

NAEYC CRITERIA

Developmental assessment and observations are used to identify children who have special needs and/or who are at risk and to plan appropriate curriculum for them. Decisions that have a major impact on children such as enrollment, retention, or placement are not made on the basis of a single developmental assessment or screening device but consider other relevant information, particularly observations by teachers and parents (NAEYC, 1987, p. 13).

FINDINGS

- Placement decisions for limited English proficient children appeared to be made primarily from standardized language instruments, with the Language Assessment Scales (Pre-LAS) being the most widely used instrument.
- Although most programs felt that the language assessment instrument was adequate, concern was expressed that the state-mandated time frame for administration led to inaccurate findings and mislabeling.
- Student progress was determined from a variety of data sources, with teacher observations reported to be the most widely used method for documenting student progress.
- 31 percent of the campuses that responded were using teacher-made paper/pencil tests with prekindergarten children.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue support at the state and local level for authentic assessment (assessment activities that resemble actual classroom and life tasks) of student progress.
- Provide training to prekindergarten administrators, teachers, and staff on recent strategies for conducting authentic assessment.
- Review the assessment process used to determine children's proficiency in English, to address concerns about mislabeling.

Comments and Conclusions

The call for developmentally appropriate programs stems from the growing recognition that schools must become more responsive to the unique needs of young children, rather than forcing young children to conform to traditional and often inappropriate expectations and practices. Knowledge of how young children develop is essential in designing prekindergarten programs.

The NAEYC has identified three conditions that must be met in educational programs for young children. First, teachers of early childhood programs must receive specialized preparation in early childhood development/education. Second, teachers must have practical experience teaching this age group. Third, the adult/student ratio should not exceed 2:16.

Although administrators and teachers in prekindergarten programs in Texas are receptive to the concept of developmentally appropriate practices, little evidence of their implementation was apparent. Several barriers currently impede the implementation of these practices. First, prekindergarten programs did not appear to be grounded upon sound beliefs/theories about how young children learn, nor did a framework exist at the state level to identify program quality standards. Second, staff typically did not receive the training in early childhood development/education that is necessary to implement developmentally appropriate programs. In programs with teacher assistants, training for them in early childhood was minimal or nonexistent. Third, in many classrooms the adult-child ratio of 1:22, which exceeded the NAEYC recommended 1:8 adult-child ratio, did not support individualized instruction and adequate supervision of children. Fourth, the programs for limited English proficient students appeared to focus on moving children into English, rather than ensuring that children first had a strong foundation in their native language. Finally, parents, although strongly supportive of prekindergarten, did not appear to have a partnership relationship with the districts.

To address the barriers impeding implementation of developmentally appropriate practices, preliminary recommendations in the following broad areas were made: 1) staff development at both the preservice and inservice level; 2) lowering the mandated class size; and 3) the development of an early childhood education framework, including identification of program quality standards, by the Agency.

INTRODUCTION

Within the past decade progressively increasing awareness of the value of preschool intervention has resulted in the commitment of public education resources to prekindergarten education. Research suggests that later school failure for certain high-risk students can be prevented by building a solid foundation of school successes through quality early childhood education programs. In particular, research about the critical importance of early intervention to low-income and educationally disadvantaged children shows that high quality early childhood programs can improve the lives of children and their families and, at the same time, yield a payoff for society.

Texas has long recognized the importance of early childhood education and has a history of promoting preschool services for special populations. In special session during the summer of 1984, the Texas Legislature passed major educational reform legislation, in part directed at assisting at-risk students. The major vehicle for reform, House Bill 72, mandated prekindergarten education for high-risk four-year-old children in Texas public schools. Legislation passed in the 71st (1989) Legislature permitted the Texas Education Agency (Agency) to develop a pilot prekindergarten program for limited English proficient three-year-olds or those from a low-income family. Commitment to early childhood education was further demonstrated by the expansion of programs for high-risk three-year-olds in the spring of 1991 by Senate Bill 351, which provided foundation school funding for these programs.

Prekindergarten legislation was codified in the *Texas Education Code* §21.136. This enabled prekindergarten programs to provide services for four-year-old children who were limited English proficient or from low income families. Districts with at least 15 such children were required to offer the program by the 1985-86 school year.

Over 500 Texas school districts are currently providing prekindergarten programs for four-year-old children. Prekindergarten programs are to be designed to develop skills necessary for success in the regular public school curriculum.

Subsequent legislation amended *Texas Education Code* §21.136 and resulted in *Texas Education Code* §16.003 which required the commissioner of education and the commissioner of human services to monitor and evaluate the developmental appropriateness of prekindergarten programs. It also called for an investigation of the potential for coordination of state-funded prekindergarten programs with other government-funded early childhood programs and with existing child care program sites. Clearly prekindergarten has become a vital part of the Texas education system.

Program Definition

For the purposes of this evaluation report, prekindergarten refers to state-funded programs for eligible four-year-old children as defined in *Texas Education Code* §21.136 who are limited English proficient or who are from a family whose income is at or below subsistence level. Districts with at least 15 such children are required to offer the program. The program is a voluntary program for students to be operated on a half-day basis. Districts may provide a full day program, however, no additional funding is provided. Once districts serve all eligible children they may allow other children to participate. Transportation services are not required, but if districts provide them, they are included for funding purposes as part of the district's regular transportation system.

Any information contained in this report pertaining to state-funded prekindergarten programs for three-year-old children will be identified as such.

Need for the Study

The growth of state-funded prekindergarten education programs has been whirlwind in relationship to the historical time period of public education. Support for educational programs for preschool-aged children, particularly four-year-old children, has not been limited to any one sector but has emerged from local, state, and federal levels, as well as from the private, civic, and community sectors. Texans have felt the impact of this heightened interest. Participation in the prekindergarten program has dramatically increased since its inception, and the legislature has recently funded prekindergarten programs for at-risk three-year-olds.

A study of the general state of prekindergarten education in Texas, from both an implementation and outcome point of view, has not been conducted. The need exists to answer the questions, "What are we doing?" and "Is what we are doing effective?" To address these questions a five-year study of prekindergarten programs was initiated in 1989. This study attempts to provide a statewide overview of: 1) program characteristics in general, and more specifically in the areas of developmentally appropriate practices and student assessment; and 2) the effects of prekindergarten experience upon subsequent achievement.

Components of the Study

The overall purpose of this five-year study is to evaluate effectiveness of prekindergarten programs in Texas for the first time since the statewide inception of such programs in 1986. The following three components are included in the study:

1) a **statewide survey** of districts and campuses focusing upon prekindergarten program characteristics, implementation, and parents' perceptions of the programs;

2) a **case study** of ten schools that are providing prekindergarten programs to study in-depth assessment of students and developmentally appropriate practices; and,

3) a **longitudinal study** of approximately 2000 students who were enrolled in the prekindergarten program during the 1989-90 school year.

Findings from Component One, the statewide survey, and Component Three, Year 1 of the case study, are included in this report. It is anticipated that preliminary findings of Component Two, the longitudinal study from 1989-90 through 1991-92, will be available in January 1993.

Limitations of the Study

The overall purpose of this five-year study is to evaluate effectiveness of prekindergarten programs for four-year-old children in Texas for the first time since the statewide inception of such programs in 1986. This study addresses the initial evaluation phase which identifies features that may contribute to program effectiveness. A variety of factors, such as staff qualifications, materials, and/or administrative support, can complement or undermine successful program outcomes. Therefore, the question of what we are doing must always be addressed before program effectiveness can be determined or understood. The first two components in the evaluation strategy are directed toward gaining a better understanding of practice.

Understanding how children change is critical to program accountability. For educators of young children this presents certain challenges that must be addressed. First, reliable and valid outcome instruments are rare for young children. Second, the real test of prekindergarten program effectiveness is achievement and personal success in later grades, so that program outcomes must be assessed over time. The longitudinal component of this study will address the ultimate effects of prekindergarten on student achievement.

Contracted Evaluation Services

This evaluation was conducted as a cooperative effort between the Agency, Division of Policy Planning and Evaluation, and a contractor selected through the standardized Request For Proposal (RFP) process. After the RFP was issued in January, 1991, and proposals were reviewed by agency staff in April, 1991, the Inter-REActive Learning (INREAL) Outreach Education Center, at the University of Colorado, Boulder, was selected as the contractor to assist in this study. Staff from the Division of Policy Planning and Evaluation were solely responsible for the statewide survey. The case study was a cooperative effort between the contractor and agency staff in the Division of Policy Planning and Evaluation.

Review of the Literature: Developmentally Appropriate Practices

To familiarize Agency staff with current research, an initial review of literature on prekindergarten education was compiled by the Texas Center for Educational Research. INREAL was requested to provide an update of the literature on developmentally appropriate practices for early childhood programs which is presented in Appendix A. A brief discussion of the term "developmentally appropriate practices" is warranted before proceeding with the report.

Prekindergarten programs generally are implemented with the goal of reducing the probability of school failure for at-risk children. The prekindergarten movement came about at such an accelerated pace that programs often reflect an adaptation of early elementary practices, rather than practices appropriate for four-year-old children. Curriculum alignment in public school early childhood education has often followed the so-called "push-down" model.

Elements of first grade are pushed down to kindergarten, and elements of kindergarten (and perhaps even first grade) are pushed down to prekindergarten. This tendency to emphasize teaching "academic skills" to younger children is based on misconceptions about early learning (Elkind, 1986). In response to the widespread use of inappropriate formal teaching techniques for young children, and the overemphasis on achievement of narrowly defined academic skills, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) established guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices (1984).

The concept of "developmental appropriateness" has two dimensions: 1) age appropriateness and 2) individual appropriateness. The first dimension entails using knowledge of child development to identify a range of meaningful behaviors, activities, and materials for a specific age group. Reference to the second dimension results in classrooms containing materials and activities that correspond to the children's individual interests, strengths, and experiences.

A recent report presented by the Agency in consultation with the Texas Department of Human Services to the 72nd Texas Legislature recommended that the NAEYC definition of developmental appropriateness be accepted, with the addition of a third dimension:

> Those early childhood programs that demonstrate practices that are personally meaningful to each child within the context of the child's culture, primary language, and family display cultural and language appropriateness.

For the purposes of this study the term "developmentally appropriate practices" will reflect the three dimensions defined above.

According to NAEYC, classrooms with teachers who employ developmentally appropriate practices look like this:

- Children are engaged in active, not passive, learning experiences, much of which are child-initiated, based on activities and materials that are real, concrete, and relevant to the lives of young children.
- Classrooms contain materials and activities for a wide range of developmental interests and abilities.
- Child-initiated, child-directed, teacher-supported play is the most natural way for young children to learn, and is an integral part of the program day.
- Children develop language and communication skills by using language to express needs, insights, excitement, and to solve problems through interaction with adults and peers.
- Children spend most of the time working individually or in small groups.
- Parents and others from the community are involved with the program (NAEYC, 1987).

Instrumentation and Procedures

Statewide Survey

The goal of Component One was to ascertain how prekindergarten programs are being implemented across the state. District and campus level questionnaires were developed by the Agency focusing on program characteristics such as enrollment, instructional arrangements, staffing, teacher qualifications, instructional approaches, transportation issues, and a number of general issues related to the types of prekindergarten programs currently in operation in Texas. In designing the questionnaires a variety of sources were consulted. These included Agency program staff as well as selected district program and evaluation staff.

In December 1990 district and campus questionnaires were sent to 507 school districts identified by the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) as providing prekindergarten programs on 1,417 campuses. A district contact person for prekindergarten programs was requested to complete the district level questionnaire and to distribute the campus level questionnaire(s) to all campuses providing a prekindergarten program. The campus level questionnaire was to be completed by the person most familiar with the implementation of the prekindergarten program on the campus. Copies of the questionnaires and instructions for completion are included in Appendix B.

Response to both the district and campus questionnaires was quite high. Numbers and percentages of questionnaires returned are provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Questionnaire Response Rate

Questionnaire	Number	Return Rate
District	472	93.1%
Campus	1324	93.4%

Case Study

A case study approach was chosen to provide in-depth information on selected aspects of prekindergarten programs. Rather than the traditional approach of "studying people," a case study is a means of "learning from people." The primary foci of the case study were 1) to collect information regarding the assessment of prekindergarten students and 2) to assess developmentally appropriate practices. Ten school districts participated in the case study. Geographical location and size were the primary determinants in this selection. One campus from each district was jointly selected by the district and the Agency to participate in the case study. To the extent possible, a campus was selected that provided the following three types of prekindergarten classes: 1) classrooms for limited

English proficient students using a bilingual approach to instruction, 2) classrooms for limited English proficient students using an English as a second language (ESL) approach to instruction, and 3) classrooms for children from economically disadvantaged families. A total of 21 classrooms participated in the case study. Classrooms were observed for a complete half-day session. A list of districts participating in the case study is provided in Appendix C.

Ethnographic procedures were used to collect case study data. Ethnography in its purest form is the work of describing a culture (Spradley, 1980), i.e., the sub-culture of prekindergarten programs in Texas. Learning about a culture requires attention to four fundamental components: What people do; what people know; what people value (believe); and what resources people use. Data reflective of these four areas of inquiry were collected through the following means: 1) observations, 2) questionnaires, and 3) tape recorded interviews.

Observations

Site visits were made to each district. Classroom observations were conducted by two teams that were balanced for gender and language, each with one woman and one man. Both men were Hispanic and bilingual. Nonparticipant observation was used within twenty-one (21) classrooms, each for a full class session. Classroom observation scales, covering all program areas, were developed by the contractor in accordance with the NAEYC standards for quality and developmentally appropriate practices. The interrater reliability of all team members was measured prior to beginning the study, and was again examined as part of the study. At both points interrater reliability was high, with the rate of agreement among observation team members equaling approximately 85 percent. The data collected were of three kinds: 1) descriptive, 2) behavioral, and 3) anecdotal.

Staff Questionnaires

A questionnaire was used to gather background information on prekindergarten program staff from the 21 classrooms participating in the case study. The data collected included staff qualifications and experience, staff participation in training activities, and demographic information, including English and non-English language proficiency. All administrators, teachers, and instructional assistants involved in the prekindergarten program at the campus sites, were asked to complete this questionnaire.

Case Study Campus Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was designed to describe the demographics of the school campus. It identified such things as school policies, parent involvement, overall attendance rates, physical plant, grade levels, and district philosophy on education. The principal of each campus was requested to complete this instrument.

Interviews

Structured interviews were employed to learn from the study participants what was not apparent from observations, or not available through questionnaires. Interviews were tape recorded, and provided

an opportunity for new questions to be examined. An interview protocol was developed that contained a core set of questions. The interview was the means of revealing the participants' tacit knowledge and shared values about the program.

At each site, team members interviewed prekindergarten program administrators, teachers, and instructional assistants who worked in or with the selected classes. Kindergarten teachers in the district were also interviewed to account for transition activities. From each class observed, at least two parents (one who spoke English and one non-English-speaking) were interviewed. A total of 80 parents from the ten districts were interviewed. Children were randomly selected from each class and were also interviewed. A total of 55 children participated. The specific intentions of these interviews focused on the following areas:

- perceived purpose of the program
- philosophy and curriculum
- description of program administration
- perceived effects of the program
- parent involvement
- description of program evaluation process
- parent satisfaction with the program

Copies of the classroom observation scales, staff questionnaire, campus data collection instrument, and interview protocols are contained in Appendix D.

Data Analysis

Statewide Survey Data

Both statistical and qualitative assessments of the data obtained from the statewide survey were made by Agency staff. Quantitative analyses from the district and campus questionnaires consisted primarily of frequency tables. Qualitative analyses from the questionnaires were performed by grouping the written comments solicited at the end of the instruments into the major themes, which evolved from examination of all data sources.

Case Study Data

Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were employed. Qualitative analyses were performed on data from the classroom observation scales, interviews with all participants, staff questionnaires, and the campus data collection instruments. In an ethnographic approach, the formal tasks of qualitative analysis are 1) perceiving; 2) comparing, contrasting, aggregating, ordering; and 3) establishing linkages and relationships.

Quantitative analyses consisting primarily of descriptive statistics were performed on the classroom observation scales, teacher-staff qualifications questionnaire, and the piloted parent satisfaction questionnaire. The results of the quantitative analyses were synthesized with the qualitative analyses to respond to the questions about the nature and effectiveness of prekindergarten programs and practices in Texas.

Review of the data by the Agency and contractor staff identified eight recurrent themes in the various data sources. The themes which emerged from the data are the following:

- description of program implementation
- framework/models of the program
- limited English proficient students
- environment
- prekindergarten staff
- coordination
- parents
- assessment/evaluation of students and programs

All quantitative analyses performed at the Agency were completed using the statistical package SAS on the Agency mainframe computer; qualitative analyses were supported with the software package, "The Ethnograph," on a DOS-run personal computer.

Findings

To facilitate discussion of the results of this evaluation, responses from the statewide survey and the case study were grouped according to the eight themes listed in the previous section. Each chapter in the "findings" section addresses one of these categories. Although the eight categories are interrelated, they are presented in different chapters to structure the reporting of a large amount of information.

Chapter One will provide a description of program implementation. Findings in this chapter were primarily derived from the statewide survey of districts and campuses. Criteria from the NAEYC guidelines on developmentally appropriate practices guided the collection of data presented in Chapters Two through Eight. The following format will be used in each chapter:

1) the NAEYC criteria
2) findings summarizing the data presented in each section
3) the findings by data source from the statewide survey followed by the case study, as applicable

Each chapter will conclude with a discussion of the findings presented in that chapter and preliminary recommendations regarding the findings.

CHAPTER ONE: DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter One is specific to program implementation and is divided into sections concerning 1) program characteristics, 2) student attributes, and 3) services to three-year-old children. Unless otherwise noted all information in this chapter was derived from the district and campus questionnaires distributed in the statewide survey effort.

Program Characteristics

Service Delivery Models

Services to preschool-aged children were offered by Texas school districts as early as 1965. However, 55.5 percent of the programs currently providing prekindergarten began in the 1985-86 and 1986-87 school years. Although a half-day program is mandated, some districts have opted to provide a full-day program. Classes are typically labeled as 1) those for children from economically disadvantaged families; 2) those for limited English proficient children using a bilingual approach to instruction; and, 3) those for limited English proficient children using an English as a second language (ESL) approach to instruction.

TABLE 2
Prekindergarten Classrooms by Type of Session

Type of Classroom	Half Day	Full Day
Economically Disadvantaged	2,707 (50.7%)	322 (6.0%)
Bilingual	1,447 (27.1%)	89 (1.7%)
English as a Second Language	716 (13.4%)	53 (0.9%)
TOTAL	4,870 (91.3%)	464 (8.7%)

Table 2 indicates that 43.1% of prekindergarten classes are for children with limited English proficiency. The half-day program is the predominant service delivery model.

Program Services

Services, other than educational instruction, provided by prekindergarten programs include transportation, nutrition, counseling, and clothing. A total of 284 (60.2%) districts provided transportation to approximately 29,290 students. Many districts indicated that the provision of transportation had increased enrollment in the program and helped insure student attendance. Nutrition and health services were also viewed as an important part of the prekindergarten program. Concern was expressed by campus staff that some children came to school hungry. School lunch, breakfast, and/or snacks were provided for 37,348 students participating in the program. Other services offered were student counseling, the provision of clothing, and vision and hearing screening.

Expenditures

Start-up costs to implement the program included capital outlay for additional buildings and classroom/playground equipment. Capital outlay figures for additional buildings ranged from zero to $2,250,000. Of the districts that reported, 86 percent spent $50,000 or less on buildings. However a total of $31,781,928 was spent for additional buildings needed specifically to implement the prekindergarten program.

Start-up costs for classroom and playground equipment ranged from zero to $475,000. Of the districts that responded, 87.6 percent spent $25,000 or less.

Annual expenditures on materials ordered specifically for the program ranged from zero to $115,000. Based upon the districts that responded the average annual expenditure for materials per child equaled about $36.

Student Attributes

Student demographic data are presented in Table 3. As shown in the table, Hispanic students comprise 59 percent of the population served. Approximately 88 percent of the children qualified as economically disadvantaged. Nearly 40 percent of the population was identified as being limited English proficient. Over 50 different languages were reported as being the primary language of individual students.

TABLE 3
Students Demographic Characteristics as Reported by Districts

Characteristic:	Number of Students	*Percent of Students
ETHNICITY:		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	79	0.12
Asian or Pacific Islander	1,908	2.8
Black, not Hispanic	13,583	19.9
Hispanic	40,193	59.0
White, not Hispanic	12,399	18.2
SEX:		
Male	34,734	51.0
Female	33,428	49.0
FREE/REDUCED PRICE LUNCH	59,768	87.9
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT	26,262	38.5

*Percents may not add to 100 due to rounding or duplicated counts.

Services to Three-Year-Old Children

According to respondents, prekindergarten for three-year-old children was provided for 1,514 children by 64 districts. Revenue for these programs stemmed primarily from the federally funded Chapter 1 Migrant Program, with additional funds supplied by districts and state-funded pilot programs. Half of the programs occurred in the child's home. The remaining half were located in a school facility, with two programs housed in community facilities and two at a contracting agency's site. Ten districts contracted with private for-profit preschools to provide the program. Only one-fourth of the districts provided transportation. Of the 445 districts that responded, 185 planned to provide prekindergarten for three-year-old children in 1991-92.

CHAPTER TWO: PROGRAM FRAMEWORK/MODEL

Although quality of an early childhood program may be affected by many variables, the primary determinant of quality is the degree to which the program is developmentally appropriate (NAEYC, 1987). Developmentally appropriate practices are based on knowledge of how young children learn. The framework/model of educational programs must be grounded in sound philosophical and theoretical concepts. Research suggests that the practices of early childhood teachers strongly reflect their beliefs about children and learning (Spodek, 1988). Findings regarding the framework/model of the prekindergarten programs will be organized into the following categories: 1) philosophy, 2) curriculum, 3) language development, and 4) academic development of limited English proficient students.

PHILOSOPHY

NAEYC CRITERIA

The curriculum should be planned to reflect the program's philosophy about how children learn (NAEYC, 1984, p. 11).

Curriculum should be based on sound theoretical principles of how children learn and develop, but it must also be derived from the needs and interests of the individual children. Staff provides materials and time for children to select their activities during the day. Curriculum emphasizes the development of children's thinking, reasoning, decision-making, and problem-solving abilities. The prevailing world view reflects a developmental, interactive, constructivist approach to learning where the child is actively involved in learning primarily through child-initiated play and hands-on activities that are supported by the teacher. The world view is **not** limited to the almost exclusively behaviorist approach that permeates curriculum and assessment in this country, where the child is viewed as passive in the learning process which is directed by the teacher and shaped by the environment (NAEYC, 1991, pp. 24, 29-31, 54).

FINDINGS

Programs generally did not appear to be based upon a well-articulated philosophical or theoretical model. Program implementation in observed sites was primarily limited to behaviorist approaches, such as teacher-directed activities requiring patterned responses from the students, rather than engaging them in hands-on, problem-solving, and reasoning experiences. This was true even in sites where the program philosophy was described as child-directed.

Statewide Survey

Open-ended comments indicated that the majority of programs were not based upon a particular program model or method of instruction. A typical comment was, "The program is based on the essential elements in Chapter 75." State-adopted texts and essential elements were frequently given as the basis of the program. Districts and campuses that did identify specific approaches primarily noted the whole language approach, Montessori, Head Start, and an eclectic approach.

Case Study

Two of the districts' program administrators articulated a philosophical or theoretical basis for their programs. However, most prekindergarten staff described program foci or processes, such as oral language, or developmentally appropriate curriculum, but did not describe theoretical and philosophical bases for how children learn. The instructional practices observed in classrooms from eight of the ten districts generally were considered to be behaviorist in nature; hence it can be deduced that the teachers' theoretical beliefs were based in behaviorist learning theory. Even in districts where administrators described programs as Piagetian-based (2), observed practices were primarily behaviorist in nature. These observations and interviews indicated that, in general, administrators and staff are unclear and/or uninformed about the succinct research on early learning. Repeatedly staff members stated their philosophy as "All children can learn," which primarily serves to positively motivate their efforts, rather than to inform them about optimal practice.

CURRICULUM

NAEYC CRITERIA

Curriculum content is designed to achieve long-range goals for children in all domains—social, emotional, cognitive, and physical—and to prepare children to function as fully contributing members of a democratic society. Curriculum content reflects and is generated by the needs and interests of individual children within the group. Curriculum emphasizes the development of children's thinking, reasoning, decision-making, and problem-solving abilities (NAEYC, 1991, pp. 29-31).

Children are provided many opportunities to see how reading and writing are useful before they are instructed in letter names, sounds, and word identification. Basic skills develop when they are meaningful to children (NAEYC, 1987, p. 55).

FINDINGS

The essential elements defined by the Agency formed the basis of, and in some districts were equated to, the curriculum. Curriculum content covered all developmental domains, but focused on academic skills such as letter recognition and sounds, and counting, rather than higher order cognitive skills such as problem solving.

Statewide Survey

Districts were asked to rank five identified sources that were used in writing developmentally appropriate curriculum for the prekindergarten program. The result of this ranking follows, with the most widely used source listed first and least used source listed last: 1) agency essential elements; 2) parent and community input; 3) NAEYC guidelines; 4) guidelines from other programs such as Head Start; and 5) other, such as local curriculum, university input, and so on.

In open-ended comments, districts cited the essential elements, state-adopted texts, and guidelines provided in *Priority '86: A guide for prekindergarten education* (1986) as the most frequently used curriculum for the program. The skills of letter recognition and sounds, number recognition, and counting were emphasized.

Case Study

The prekindergarten staff saw the language and social domains as the primary targets of the prekindergarten programs. In the majority of the programs, curriculum content was observed being delivered across all developmental domains, with the physical domain being the least well represented. Most districts did not have curricula designed for early childhood, although prekindergarten staff in four districts reported that they were beginning to design curricula specifically for the prekindergarten program. However, one district had done extensive work in curriculum development. At least three programs used materials such as Work Shop Way, but this is an approach for classroom management, not a curriculum.

The majority of the activities observed were teacher-initiated and children's interests were not sought. The data on adult-child interactions revealed that most of the adult talking was directive or contained questions with very little discursive talking with the children. Children were expected to generate answers that the adults expected, rather than to engage in problem solving or thinking through real issues. The majority of the content in activities consisted of pre-academic skills, i.e., letter recognition, identification of letter sound (phonemes), number recognition, counting, etcetera. In classrooms with writing centers, some children did have the opportunity to explore materials that supported the development of written language. However, in general, teaching of written language was approached as a skill-based process. Overall the focus was on preparation for kindergarten. A teacher summarized by saying, "Our kids need to be ready for kindergarten if they want to be successful in school."

The data from observations and interviews suggested that the curriculum base for the prekindergarten programs is pre-academic and does not encourage child-initiated, child-directed learning. In at least two districts the curriculum orientation is practical, based on real, concrete experiences that encourage some degree of problem solving from the children.

CHILD CHOICE/ACTIVE LEARNING

NAEYC CRITERIA
Staff provides materials and time for children to select their own activities during the day. Children may choose from among several activities which the teacher has planned or the children may initiate activities. Learning activities should be concrete, real, and relevant to the lives of young children. Teachers prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration (NAEYC, 1984, pp. 13, 26).

FINDINGS
Child-initiated activities generally occurred less than 25% of the day in 87 to 90 percent of the campuses providing prekindergarten programs, based on self-reported information and on observation of practice.

Statewide Survey

Of the 93 percent of the responding campuses, in prekindergarten programs for "economically disadvantaged" children, 86.9 percent said they spend less than 25% of the prekindergarten session in child-initiated activities. In programs for limited English proficient children, 94 percent of the campuses reportedly spend less than 25 percent of the day in child-initiated activities.

Case Study

Six classrooms demonstrated an activity structure which provided opportunities for children to choose (initiate) their own activities. Of all of the observed activities among the 21 classrooms, only about 5.2 percent were child-initiated in nature. The majority of the observed activities (88.0%) were teacher-directed in nature. The remaining 6.8 percent of the activities were cooperative activities. The amount of time children were actively involved in play was minimal, primarily occurring during center time for free play.

The context of the activities was generally viewed as being academic in nature, rather than concretely meaningful to the children. During small groups, children answered specific questions related to lessons. In some classes, children were required to go over their homework with the teacher each day after their arrival.

In only two of the observed classrooms did teachers seem committed to developing autonomy and creativity in the children by having them use problem solving skills. In general the focus of the majority of the programs was on teaching specific concepts, controlling behavior, improving compliance, and genuine sense of play, fun, and exploration. Some teachers sensed the need for learning to be fun genuine sense of play, fun, and exploration. Some teachers senssed the need for learning to be fun when they commented: "The classroom has got to be fun." However, the majority of the teachers expressed a sense of urgency in "getting these children caught up."

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

NAEYC CRITERIA

Language and communication skills grow out of a desire to use language to express needs, insights, excitement, and to solve problems. Children do not learn language or any other concepts by being quiet and listening to an adult. Listening experiences, when they are meaningful, enrich language, but are not the basis of learning language. Therefore, adults must provide many varied opportunities for children to communicate. Additionally, teachers of young children move among small groups and individuals to facilitate the children's involvement with materials by asking genuine questions, offering suggestions, and adding more complex materials or ideas to the situation. Teachers accept that there is more than one right answer. And, that children learn best from self-directed problem solving and experimentation (NAEYC, 1987, p. 55).

Language development is fundamental to learning and language development requires social interaction. Social interaction with peers, as well as with adults, is essential to the development of real understanding as well as language use. The sounds of a language learning environment should be primarily marked by conversation, spontaneous laughter, and exclamation of excitement. Adult voices should not predominate (NAEYC, 1991, p. 26; 1984, pp. 9, 10).

FINDINGS

In observed classrooms, children spent about half of the activities primarily responding to adults' directives and questions. Only in about 30 percent of the classroom activities were children's talking and interaction spontaneous and functional in the sense of a social interaction. During center time, children were frequently asked to be quiet.

Case Study

Initial interviews with personnel in each district indicated that the purpose of the program was to provide language and social experience for the children. It is within the interactions among and between children and adults, and children with children, that language and social learning occurs. In classrooms on average, 88 percent of the activities were adult-directed, either by the teachers or the instructional assistants. Out of the remaining time, about 12 percent of all activities were either child-initiated or cooperatively initiated by an adult child. The predominance of adult-directed learning activities influenced the style of adult-child interactions and communication.

Teachers and instructional assistants generally talked with the children in three ways over the entire class period. The most common way of talking to the children consisted of telling them what to do and how to do it. On average, teachers used this style in almost 60 percent of classroom activities and instructional assistants used it in about 50 percent of them. The second most common way of interacting with the children was through questioning. Teachers and assistants interacted with children primarily by asking questions in about 28 percent of the activities. The use of conversation with children was the least common way of interacting. The instructional assistants were observed using conversation more frequently than the teacher (21.2 percent of activities versus 15.5 percent of activities, respectively).

More detailed observations of the interaction practices were done in a timed situation. The interaction patterns were consistent, but conversation was used when teachers worked individually with children or in small groups. In addition to observing the adult interaction styles, the children's talking was observed. In classrooms on the average, during about half of the activities (48.9%) children talked primarily with adults. Except in one class, all this talking was spent with children responding to adults' directives and questions. Children talked to each other, on the average, during about one-quarter of the activities (26.7%). The remainder of the activities (24.3%) were spent in adult-child interactions. Only in about 30 percent of the classroom activities were children's talking and interaction spontaneous, functional and conversational. Much of the time children were asked to be quiet and listen as the adults talked to them. Most of the listening time was spent in large or whole group activities. The child-to-child interactions and communication were typically observed at the free time activity centers as small numbers of children worked together. Generally, adults did not interact with the children at the center-based activities. During the center activities, children were frequently asked to be quiet.

Discussion and Preliminary Recommendations

According to NAEYC (1987), the primary indicator of quality for early childhood education programs is the degree to which staff understand and apply the latest knowledge of child development, that is, the degree to which the program is *developmentally appropriate*. Although prekindergarten administrators and staff were enthusiastic and supportive of the prekindergarten program and demonstrated a genuine desire to provide quality programs, limited implementation of developmentally appropriate practices was observed across components of prekindergarten programs. The lack of a well-articulated philosophical or theoretical framework impeded the implementation of developmentally appropriate practices. In that no framework for early childhood education exists at the state level, programs have received little support in moving toward developmentally appropriate practices. Observations of prekindergarten classrooms also indicated that a lack of understanding of how young children develop language and communication existed. Classroom language opportunities primarily followed a question/response mode.

Staff who have been trained in early childhood education/child development are essential for the implementation of developmentally appropriate practices. Limited implementation of developmentally appropriate practices may be directly linked to the percentage of prekindergarten staff who do not have this training. To address the charge of implementing developmentally appropriate practices, the following preliminary recommendations are being made:

- Develop a comprehensive early childhood framework at the state level which identifies quality program standards and practices.
- Develop an early childhood Trainer of Trainers program at the state and regional levels to disseminate information and training regarding developmentally appropriate practices.
- Identify and train Agency and regional service center staff to provide training and technical assistance to districts in the area of developmentally appropriate practices.
- Provide staff training on communication and language development.
- Identify public school programs and NAEYC-accredited private programs which are demonstrating exemplary developmentally appropriate practices, disseminate these practices to interested districts, and provide opportunities for staff from interested districts to observe these sites.
- Increase classroom resources such as experiential materials, enabling staff to provide natural language-learning experiences.
- Establish a resource center at the Agency and regional service centers to provide materials on state-of-the-art early childhood educational issues and practices.

CHAPTER THREE: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS

Findings in Chapter Three focus upon the facilitation of academic growth of limited English proficient children. The large number of children from diverse backgrounds in the schools has important implications for prekindergarten programs. Some children arrive at school without any knowledge, or limited knowledge, of English. The attitude and knowledge of program administrators and teachers are crucial in creating a climate of acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity. Children with limited English proficiency require an educational program that provides instruction in their primary language(s) until they can acquire sufficient English skills to function academically in English and their native language(s). Developmentally appropriate instructional practices advocated by NAEYC are applicable to second language learners as well. Findings in this area are presented in the following two areas: 1) cultural diversity and 2) the bilingual development process.

Cultural Diversity

NAEYC CRITERIA

Curriculum respects and supports individual, cultural, and linguistic diversity (NAEYC, 1991, p. 30).

FINDINGS

The provision of classrooms using a bilingual approach, and classroom activities related to cultural pluralism, were viewed as the principal means of meeting the needs of linguistically and/or culturally different children.

Case Study

In the interview with administrators, one of the questions was: "What are you doing administratively to meet the needs of linguistically and/or culturally different children and families?" Table 4 summarizes the most commonly received responses.

TABLE 4
Ways Prekindergarten Programs Address Needs of Linguistically and/or Culturally Different Children and Families

Comments	Number of District Administrators
We provide a bilingual education in the prekindergarten programs.	6
We provide classroom activities related to cultural pluralism.	5
We provide Spanish-speaking/Hispanic assistants in the classroom.	3
We communicate with the parents in Spanish.	3

Other comments included:

- We have a parent advisory committee which qualifies students for bilingual education.
- We provide special speakers, like Henry Cisneros.
- Parents are allowed to sell breakfast tacos.
- We provide Spanish books in the library.
- We have a Cinco De Mayo Celebration.
- The curriculum is being restructured.
- Teachers encourage Hispanic parents to take classes.
- Notes and newsletters are sent home in Spanish.
- We administer bilingual achievement tests.
- We meet with parents at the beginning of the year.

One administrator said, "There's just a bond there."

The responses suggested that providing instruction in Spanish and communicating with the parents of children in Spanish were the primary means of addressing the needs of linguistically and/or culturally different children and their families.

The Bilingual Development Process

Due to limited NAEYC criteria related to bilingual development processes, criteria were also derived from research on academic achievement in a second language as documented in *Empowering Minority Students*, 1989, by Jim Cummins. These are identified when appropriate in each pertinent textbox.

NAEYC CRITERIA

If academic development of minority students is the goal, then students must be encouraged to acquire a conceptual foundation in their native language to facilitate the acquisition of English academic skills (Cummins, 1989, p. 49).

Non-English speaking (NES) or limited English proficient students (LEP) instructed through a minority language for all or part of the school day perform, over time (5-7 years), at least as well in the majority language (English) as students instructed exclusively through the majority language (Cummins, 1989, p. 37).

Hispanic (Spanish speaking) children enrolled in a Spanish only preschool learn more English and develop considerably more academic readiness skills than comparable children enrolled in a bilingual preschool where the emphasis is on promoting English proficiency (Cummins, 1989, p. 39).

FINDINGS

Bilingual instruction was the most widely reported instructional approach in prekindergarten classrooms for limited English proficient children (67%). Prekindergarten programs emphasize the use of English as the language of instruction. In half of the classrooms observed, both the teacher and the instructional assistants spoke primarily English for 75 percent or more of the observation period.

Case Study

Of the ten school district sites involved in this case study, nine had NES and/or LEP children enrolled in the prekindergarten programs. Two sites utilized a bilingual education (use of both languages) approach. Transitional education (emphasis on English) was implemented by four districts. Immersion, the complete use of English with no use of the native language, was demonstrated in two sites.

Of the 21 classrooms that were observed, 14 were composed primarily of limited English proficient children. Table 5 delineates the frequency of language(s) spoken by the teacher and teacher assistant in those 14 classrooms.

TABLE 5
Instructional Language Used by Classroom Teachers and Assistants in 14 Classrooms for Limited English Proficient Students

	Number of Teachers Who:	Number of Teacher Assistants Who:
Spoke primarily English almost all of the time (>90% of observations)	7	5
Spoke primarily English more than 75% of the time, and spoke a mixture of English and Spanish the remaining time	3	2
Spoke primarily English more than 67% of the time, and spoke a mixture of English and Spanish the remaining time.	2	–
Spoke a mixture of English and Spanish most of the time.	1	4
Spoke primarily in Spanish all of the time (100% of observations)	1	1

The findings presented in the above table indicate that in classrooms for limited English proficient students, English is primarily spoken by 50% of the teachers and 42% of the instructional assistants. Also, in seven of the 14 classrooms, both the teacher and instructional assistants spoke primarily in English for 75% or more of the observation period including three classrooms in which teachers and teacher assistants spoke primarily in English for the entire observation period.

Discussion and Preliminary Recommendations

Developmentally appropriate programs recognize and are responsive to linguistic and cultural diversity. Current research suggests that the acquisition of a conceptual foundation in the native language of limited English proficient students facilitates their future academic growth. Interviews indicated that providing instruction in Spanish and communicating with the parents of children in Spanish were viewed as the primary means of addressing the needs of linguistically and/or culturally different children and their families. However, observation indicated that prekindergarten classrooms emphasized the use of English as the language of instruction rather than the students' primary language. To address the dichotomy between beliefs and practice the following preliminary recommendations are made:

- Increase the usage of the students' primary language as the language of instruction.
- Establish and promote resource centers at the Agency and at regional service centers to provide state-of-the-art information and materials on second language acquisition for young children.

CHAPTER FOUR: ENVIRONMENT OF THE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Learning in the early years is directly linked to the classroom environment. Active exploration of the environment through play experiences with hands-on materials is necessary for the cognitive development of children in the preschool years. Classroom arrangement and materials encourage exploration and problem solving as well as interactions with peers. Guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices regarding the physical environment examine the following: 1) physical environment, 2) materials/equipment, and 3) spatial arrangements.

Physical Environment

NAEYC CRITERIA

Indoor and outdoor environments are spacious, safe, clean, attractive, and include soft elements (rug, cushions, rocking chair) (NAEYC, 1984, pp. 25, 27).

FINDINGS

Classrooms looked "school like" and were lacking soft elements such as cushions, rocking chairs, and rugs. Outdoor areas were sufficient in size.

Case Study

The classrooms ranged from small, cluttered, and inadequate to large, spacious, and well organized. Overall the classrooms looked "school like" and were lacking in space, soft accessories, and a "home like" atmosphere. Other than minimal "cubbies" or some places for hanging clothes, there were no observed private spaces for children's things. Outdoor areas were sufficient in size.

Materials/Equipment

NAEYC CRITERIA

Learning materials should be concrete, real, relevant to the lives of young children. Outdoor areas should include a variety of equipment for riding, climbing, balancing, and individual play (NAEYC, 1984, pp. 4, 27).

FINDINGS

Materials and equipment normally seen in early childhood programs were present, although the quantity of materials was limited in some programs. Multicultural materials were sparse. Outdoor areas lacked equipment for young children.

Case Study

Classrooms generally reflected materials and equipment normally seen in early childhood programs. Multicultural materials were evident but sparse. Seldom observed were books in a language other than English. Although developmentally appropriate materials were present, numerous classrooms did not make these accessible to the children. Items such as blocks, dramatic play clothes, sand and water toys were minimal. Especially lacking were drawing and writing utensils.

Outdoor areas, although sufficient in size, did not have sufficient equipment and materials tailored to younger children's needs and curiosities. The outdoor areas of the observed classrooms typically consisted of conventional playground equipment often seen on elementary school grounds or in public parks. Outdoor areas, especially when the classrooms were in elementary schools, included equipment for much older children. Areas tended to be flat with a variety of equipment such as swings, slides and some climbing apparatus. Seldom was specific equipment for preschoolers observed. Children had limited access to tricycles, trucks, pails for digging, or equipment taken outside especially for them, unless a teacher-directed activity was planned.

Spatial Arrangements

NAEYC CRITERIA

Activity areas are defined clearly by spatial arrangements for individual, small group, and large group activities, and appropriate pathways are provided. Space is arranged to facilitate a variety of activities (blockbuilding, art, sociodramatic play, etc.) (NAEYC, 1984, p. 25).

FINDINGS

Activity areas were clearly defined and organized by centers.

Case Study

In almost all of the classrooms observed, areas were divided and organized by center, and the centers often doubled for multiple purposes. When children and adults were present in the classes, there often wasn't sufficient space. When children were in centers and small groups, areas appeared more adequate. Large groups had some difficulty fitting into the available area, especially when parents or additional adults were present. In the majority of the classrooms visited, there was virtually no space where children could leave their block constructions or working materials and then come back to them at a later time. All classes observed included center work areas (learning centers) in which children could work. The center work areas which were provided by at least 75 percent of the classrooms were: Paint/Art (100%), Housekeeping (95.2%), Library (95.2%), Manipulative (90.5%), and Blocks (85.7%).

DISCUSSION AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Indoor and outdoor areas of prekindergarten programs reflected some aspects of developmentally appropriate practices. In prekindergarten classrooms activity areas were clearly defined and organized by centers. Materials appeared to be developmentally appropriate. However, in outdoor areas equipment for young children was lacking. In some prekindergarten classrooms the amount of materials was insufficient. Children had limited access to equipment both indoors and outdoors. Multicultural materials were sparse. As the environment sets the stage for learning in prekindergarten, the following preliminary recommendations are made:

- Develop guidelines at the state level for facilities providing prekindergarten programs.
- Increase the amount of playground equipment for young children.
- Enrich classrooms with materials that reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of the children in the program.

CHAPTER FIVE: PREKINDERGARTEN STAFF

Chapter Five focuses upon staff who are providing direct services to children enrolled in prekindergarten. Since endorsement in early childhood educational programs was not required at the onset of the prekindergarten program, it is necessary to examine not only staff qualifications but also staff development opportunities. In addition, staffing patterns, or the way in which programs are staffed, are another important indicator of program quality. This chapter is divided into these three areas: 1) qualifications, 2) staff development opportunities, and 3) staffing patterns.

Staff Qualifications

NAEYC CRITERIA

Teachers should have, at a minimum, a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education/child development. Teacher assistants, who should implement program activities only under direct supervision of professional staff, should be high school graduates or equivalents at minimum, and should participate in professional development programs (NAEYC, 1984, p. 18).

FINDINGS

Over 50 percent of the prekindergarten teachers have six or more years of experience. However, less than 50 percent have early childhood endorsement. No training in early childhood development/education was reported for 48 percent of the instructional assistants.

Statewide Survey

Districts and campuses reported that over 50 percent of the prekindergarten teachers are veteran teachers having six or more years of teaching experience. However, less than 50 percent have received endorsements in early childhood education. Approximately 15 percent have advanced degrees (Master's/doctorate) in early childhood development or early childhood education. However, no training in early childhood development/education was reported for 12 percent of the teachers and for 47.9 percent of the instructional assistants in prekindergarten classrooms.

Case Study

One of the most powerful observations of this case study was the positive, caring attitude of all prekindergarten staff toward the children. In the majority of the classrooms (nineteen out of twenty-one), the adults expressed and exhibited enjoyment working with the children. The feeling on the part of most children was reciprocal: they cared about their teachers. Mutual caring was exhibited through hugs, touching, smiles, and kind words. The children appeared to feel safe and comfortable.

Of the 28 teachers responding to the staff survey, 30 percent had completed a Master's degree. Fewer than half (39.3%) were endorsed for early childhood education. Of those teachers without an early childhood education endorsement, the majority were endorsed at the kindergarten level. All instructional assistants had completed high school, including one who had completed a bachelor's degree.

Of the twenty-eight responding teachers, eight were endorsed to teach bilingual classes and three were endorsed to teach ESL classrooms. These numbers included one teacher who had endorsement in both bilingual and ESL education. All the bilingual teachers indicated having native proficiency in speaking and comprehending the Spanish language. One had intermediate skill in reading Spanish and two had intermediate skill in writing Spanish. Of the three ESL-endorsed teachers, one indicated having no proficiency in the Spanish language, one had beginning proficiency, and one had intermediate-native proficiency.

Staff Development

NAEYC CRITERIA

Research has found that staff training in child development and/or early childhood education is related to positive outcomes for children such as increased social interaction with adults, development of prosocial behaviors, and improved language and cognitive development (NAEYC, 1984, p. 18).

FINDINGS

Over 40 percent of the campuses reported that the prekindergarten teachers and instructional assistants did not attend any inservice sessions related to prekindergarten programs during 1989-90. In districts where training was offered, prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers were trained together. Some districts provided prekindergarten staff with released time and/or paid personal time to attend staff development programs.

Statewide Survey

Over 40 percent of the campuses reported that the prekindergarten teachers and instructional assistants did not attend any inservice sessions related to prekindergarten programs during the 1989-90 school year. On approximately one-third of the campuses, an average of one such inservice session was attended by prekindergarten staff (teachers and assistants). However, 306 districts reported that prekindergarten faculty members were given released time or paid personal time to engage in staff development programs specifically for early childhood education.

Workshops were named as the primary type of staff development activity attended by prekindergarten faculty and staff during the 1989-90 school year, followed by seminars and professional courses. Training sessions were attended by both prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers. In some instances first grade teachers also were included. Staff development training topics most frequently offered were whole language instruction, child-centered activities, and developmentally appropriate instruction.

Case Study

Teachers did have the opportunity to attend training sessions on early childhood education, and all but three said that they had attended at least one full day of training during the past year. One-third of instructional assistants had not attended any early childhood training sessions during the past year, and one-quarter had attended only one half-day session.

Staffing Patterns

NAEYC CRITERIA

An important determinant of program quality is the way in which it is staffed. Research strongly suggests that smaller group sizes and larger numbers of staff to children are related to positive outcomes for children. A group is the number of children assigned to a staff member, a team of staff members occupying an individual classroom or well-defined space within a larger classroom. For four-year-old children the maximum ratio is 1:8 adult-child with a recommended class size of 16 children (NAEYC, 1984, p. 24). In addition to overall group size, it is important to recognize the type of groupings within the whole group that best support children's learning. The most appropriate grouping practice is for children to work individually or in small, informal groups most of the time. Children need many opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperating, helping, negotiating, and talking. Teachers facilitate the development of these skills as children are working in small groups (NAEYC, 1987, pp. 54, 55).

FINDINGS

The predominant grouping practice for the majority of classrooms observed was large group (more than 5 children) or whole group (all children) instruction. Almost all campuses reported that less than 25 percent of the day was spent in individualized instruction. Approximately 75 percent of the campuses had instructional assistants; the remainder did not have instructional assistants which resulted in a class size of one teacher to 22 students. Over 50 percent of the campuses reported that the instructional assistant spent less than 25 percent of the day in the classroom.

Statewide Survey

By district and campus self-report, classroom activities were generally spent in large group (more than 5 children) and/or small groups (less than 5 children). Approximately 75 percent of the campuses had instructional assistants. However, over 50 percent of the campuses reported that the instructional assistant spent less than 25 percent of the day in the classroom. On campuses with instructional assistants, the primary duty of the instructional assistant was to work with children on an individual basis and provide small group instruction. About 50 percent of the campuses reported that less that 25 percent of the day was spent in learning centers.

Case Study

The mandated class size for the prekindergarten classes is no more than 22 children. Usually each class was staffed with a teacher and an instructional assistant, for an average adult-child ratio of 1:11.

Observation in 21 classrooms revealed that, on average, teachers and instructional assistants managed class activities through large or whole group instruction almost 60 percent of the time. During these large group times, one of the adults may also have been monitoring small groups or working with individual children. In at least three classrooms, however, only whole group instruction was observed. In contrast, staff in two classrooms never worked with the children in the large or whole group. The predominant grouping practice for the majority of classrooms, however, was large or whole group instruction. One prekindergarten teacher commented, "This year we have added a half-time teacher and that has made a whale of a difference."

Discussion and Preliminary Recommendations

Quality of the staff is one of the most important determinants of the quality of an early childhood program (NAEYC, 1991). Adaptation of early elementary practices has been a pervasive problem in the implementation of prekindergarten programs. Knowledge of child development is essential to the implementation of developmentally appropriate early childhood programs. Teachers and staff in prekindergarten must have a background that includes coursework in early childhood development (NAEYC, 1991).

Although over 50 percent of the prekindergarten teachers in Texas were identified as veteran teachers having six or more years of teaching experience, less than 50 percent had endorsement in early childhood education. In addition, 40 percent had not attended any inservice sessions in early childhood development/education in the last year. This problem is compounded by the lack of training in early childhood development of instructional assistants who provide direct services to children either individually or through supervision of small groups. Approximately 75 percent of the campuses had instructional assistants; however, over 50 percent of the campuses reported that the instructional assistant spent less than 25 percent of the day in the classroom. Districts reported that 47.9 percent of the instructional assistants had received no training in early childhood development/education.

The NAEYC has strongly recommended that policy-making groups consider the need for specialized preparation in early childhood education/child development when implementing early childhood programs. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP, 1990) recommends that teachers hold proper state certification, have backgrounds that include coursework in child development, demonstrate proficiency in understanding how young children learn, and have broad expertise in instructional and management strategies specific to early childhood classrooms. Opportunities for staff development at both the preservice and inservice level are needed in Texas. This need may, in fact, increase dramatically as districts begin to coordinate with other government-funded early childhood programs and existing child care program sites. Specific preliminary recommendations addressing this need are listed below:

- Develop joint staff development opportunities for teachers (prekindergarten through first grade), instructional assistants, and other staff across different early childhood programs.
- Develop an early childhood Trainer of Trainers program at the state and regional levels to disseminate information and training regarding the implementation of prekindergarten programs.
- Designate and train personnel at regional education service centers to provide specialized training and technical assistance to prekindergarten administrators and staff.
- Lower the teacher/student class size ratio of one teacher to 22 children to two adults to sixteen children.

CHAPTER SIX: COORDINATION OF SERVICES

The formation of partnerships with other early childhood programs and community agencies can assist programs in serving young children and their families more effectively. Collaborative efforts also facilitate continuity in services for children. In addition, transitions from prekindergarten to kindergarten must be carefully considered to ensure their success. Collaborative relationships and services in prekindergarten programs as well as transition procedures from prekindergarten to kindergarten are described in this chapter.

Coordination of Services

NAEYC CRITERIA

Continuity of educational experiences is critical to supporting development. Such continuity results from communication both horizontally in the child's life during a year and vertically as the child moves to a new program (NAEYC, 1987, p. 12). In addition, Texas Education Code §16.003 requires the investigation of coordination between prekindergarten and other government-funded early childhood programs and existing child care program sites.

FINDINGS

There was no formal or official process for sharing information with the receiving kindergarten teachers, but information was shared informally when it was logistically feasible. Coordinated activities with other agencies occurred on a limited basis. Screening/referral was the most widely identified coordinated service. The least widely reported types of coordinated services involved the actual delivery of educational programs. Less than 10 percent of the districts offered extended care options for prekindergarten students.

Statewide Survey

Information regarding agencies or organizations engaged in cooperative arrangements with schools, and the nature of these relationships, was collected at both the district and campus levels. Table 6 indicates agencies/organizations having coordinated activities with districts offering prekindergarten programs.

TABLE 6
Percent of School Districts Engaged in Coordinated Services With Other Agencies/Organizations

Agency/Organization	Percent of Districts Engaged in Coordinated Services
Head Start	28.6%
Texas Department of Human Services	30.3%
Health Services (Local, County, State)	5.3%
Civic Organizations	4.0%
Other School Districts	17.6%

Districts identified a variety of cooperative activities, as noted in Figure 1, that are being conducted with other agencies or organizations. Screening/referral was the most widely identified coordinated service, reported by 34.1 percent districts, followed by cooperative arrangements with medical/counseling services (25.4%). The least widely reported types of coordinated services involved the actual delivery of educational programs. Findings from the campus survey indicated that only 75 campuses (5.7%) shared facilities with other agencies and only 69 campuses (5.3%) reported the sharing of classroom instruction.

Coordinated Services With Other Agencies/Organizations Reported by Districts

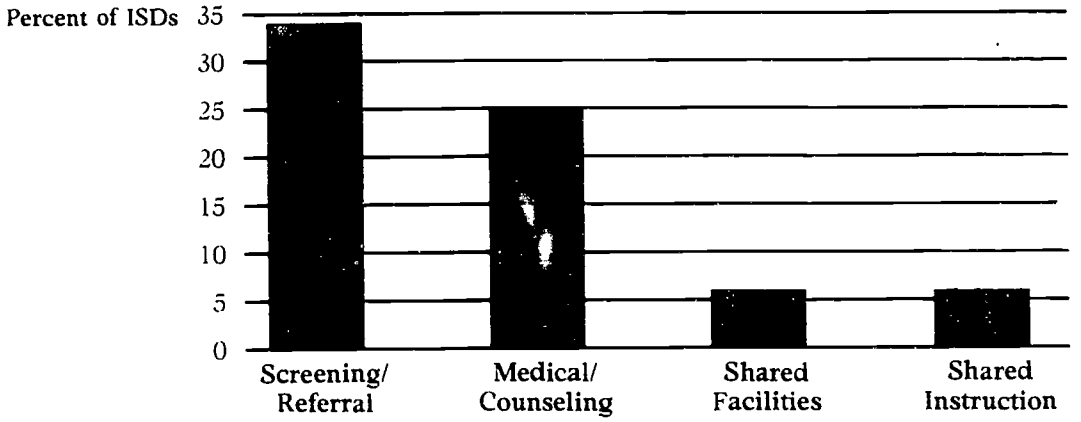

Figure 1

An additional facet of coordinated services was the provision of extended care for prekindergarten students before and/or after the prekindergarten program. Only 2.5 percent of the districts reported that they offered an extended care program. Another 7.0 percent of the districts had made arrangements with another agency(s) to provide extended care for prekindergarten students before and/or after the prekindergarten program. Thus, less than ten percent of the districts providing prekindergarten offered extended care options for prekindergarten students.

Cooperative arrangements also occurred in local communities through program instructional activities. Campuses reported taking over 4000 field trips during the school year, and having over 2900 guest speakers visit the prekindergarten classrooms.

Transition from Prekindergarten to Kindergarten

NAEYC CRITERIA

Transitions for preschoolers should be given special consideration to help ensure their success. Programs should continue to provide developmentally appropriate curriculum; communication and cooperation should be on-going among all staff; children should be prepared for changes; and families should be involved in the process (NAEYC, 1987, pp. 60-61).

FINDINGS

There was no formal or official process for prekindergarten teachers to share information with the receiving kindergarten teachers, but information was shared when it was logistically feasible.

Case Study

There was no formal or official process for sharing information with the receiving kindergarten teachers, but information was shared informally when it was logistically feasible. Receiving teachers often knew prekindergarten teachers' opinions from informal sharing. Access to cumulative files, report cards, checklist sheets, and test scores was available by teacher request, but seldom was utilized. As one administrator stated, "What do you mean? They just start kindergarten."

DISCUSSION AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

The development of coordinated services requires time to identify those services applicable to young children and to establish relationships between agencies. Coordination between prekindergarten and other goverment-funded early childhood programs and existing child care program sites occurred on a limited basis. As might be expected coordinated activities center upon screening/referral of students. Transition activities within programs also occurred on a limited basis. To facilitate coordination of prekindergarten programs with other programs/agencies the following preliminary recommendations are made:

- Develop mechanisms at the local district level to coordinate transition from prekindergarten to kindergarten.
- Encourage districts to explore coordinated delivery of services with other agencies or child care sites.

CHAPTER SEVEN: PARENTS AND THE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

The need for parental involvement in educational programs has been well documented. Developmentally appropriate programs actively involve and support parents as partners in the development of their children. Partnerships with parents are reciprocal relationships in which both parents and professionals exchange information. Within this relationship, parents are viewed with respect and perceived as valued members of the educational team. The relationship between prekindergarten and parents was examined in two areas: 1) communication with parents and 2) parent involvement.

Family-School Communication

NAEYC CRITERIA

Teachers share child development knowledge, insights, and resources as part of regular communication and conferences with family members (NAEYC, 1987, p. 12).

FINDINGS

The prekindergarten staff followed traditional means of communicating with parents such as telephone calls, parent-teacher conferences, and report cards. Home visits were not a part of the routine communication process between parents and educators. About 67 percent of the campuses reported that less than 25 percent of the parents of limited English proficient children participated in parent-teacher conferences.

Statewide Survey

Districts reported traditional means of sharing information about student progress with parents. Of the 87.3 percent of campuses that reported data in this area, 100 percent conducted parent-teacher conferences, issued report cards, and made informal telephone calls. Home visits generally were not used as a means of communicating with parents. Only 10 percent of the campuses communicated with parents through home visits.

However, 40 percent of the campuses reported that less than 25 percent of the parents with children in classrooms for the economically disadvantaged participated in parent-teacher conferences. The lack of parent participation in parent-teacher conferences was significantly higher in classrooms for limited English proficient children. Approximately 67 percent of the districts reported that less than 25 percent of the parents of children in bilingual classrooms attended parent-teacher conferences; nearly 84 percent of the districts indicated that less than 25 percent of the parents of children in ESL classrooms attended parent-teacher conferences.

Case Study

During the interviews, parents stated that the school shared student assessment information through: notes sent home on a regular or daily basis; informal communication when in the classroom; progress report cards; and, parent-teacher conferences. Parents felt that the information shared by the school had been useful information.

Parent Involvement

NAEYC CRITERIA

Parents are welcome visitors in the center at all times. Parents and other family members are encouraged to be involved in the program in various ways, taking into consideration working parents and those with little spare time (NAEYC, 1984, p. 17).

FINDINGS

Parental involvement only minimally reflected home-school collaborative partnerships. Parent involvement in prekindergarten classrooms appeared to be limited, particularly in classrooms for limited English proficient children, with 86 percent of the campuses reporting that parent participation in classroom activities was less than 25 percent.

Statewide Survey

Parent involvement in prekindergarten programs appeared to be limited, particularly in bilingual and ESL classrooms. Nearly 70 percent of the campuses reported that less than 25 percent of the parents, whose children were in classrooms for economically disadvantaged families, participated in classroom activities. In classrooms for bilingual children, 86 percent of the campuses indicated that parent participation in classrooms was less than 25 percent. Less than 25 percent parent participation was reported in 93 percent of campuses with ESL classrooms.

Case Study

During the interview sessions, parents indicated that they participated in the prekindergarten program by visiting/working in the classroom, helping with field trips/parties, being available to program staff, helping children at home, and joining the Parent Teacher Association.

Discussion and Preliminary Recommendations

Although programs recognized the need for parental involvement, parent involvement in prekindergarten only minimally reflected home-school collaborative partnerships. Programs followed traditional means of communicating with parents. Participation in parent-teacher conferences and classroom involvement was particularly limited for parents of limited English proficient students. Clearly the process of obtaining increased parent involvement must be carefully considered. The following preliminary recommendations are made toward this goal:

- Develop innovative ways of sharing information with parents.
- Provide flexibility in staff hours to share information with parents.
- Increase involvement of parents in decision-making about their own child and the prekindergarten program.

CHAPTER EIGHT: ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

Assessment and evaluation are essential ingredients in determining program effectiveness. Developmental assessment of children's progress and achievement is used to adapt curriculum to match the developmental needs of children, to communicate with the child's family, and to evaluate the program's effectiveness (Meisels, 1985). Historically child-change data has been the primary focus of evaluating the effectiveness of programs. To better capture the comprehensive nature of program effects, particularly for young children and their families, expanding the range of sources for documenting program benefits is important. This chapter will identify common practices and instruments used in the assessment of children and the evaluation of the prekindergarten program.

Student Assessment

NAEYC CRITERIA

Developmental assessment and observations are used to identify children who have special needs and/or who are at risk and to plan appropriate curriculum for them. Decisions that have a major impact on children such as enrollment, retention, or placement are not made on the basis of a single developmental assessment or screening device but consider other relevant information, particularly observations by teachers and parents (NAEYC, 1987, p. 13).

FINDINGS

Placement decisions for limited English proficient children appeared to be made primarily from standardized language instruments with the Language Assessment Scales (Pre-LAS) being the most widely used instrument. Although most programs felt that the language assessment instrument was adequate, concern was expressed that the state mandated time frame for administration led to inaccurate findings and mislabeling. Student progress was determined from a variety of data sources with teacher observations reported to be the most widely used method for documenting student progress. However, 30.7 percent of the campuses that responded were using teacher-made paper/pencil tests with prekindergarten children.

Statewide Survey

As would be expected given the age of the children and the emphasis of the program on language development, assessment of language is the most prevalent type of student assessment. Of the responding campuses 71.2 percent formally assess students' language. For students enrolled in the bilingual or ESL programs, language assessment was conducted both in English and the student's primary language. The Pre-LAS was the most widely used instrument for assessing language.

When queried at the campus level about the adequacy of the language assessment being utilized, most districts agreed that the instrument was adequate. However, concern was expressed regarding the required time frame for administering the test. One campus shared:

> Yes, the language assessment instrument is adequate for assessing language proficiency of preK students. The preK teacher feels that the test is administered too early in the year, and that since it is administered by a stranger, it is difficult to get a truly accurate assessment from many of the children.

Other campuses expressed concern that mislabeling occurred because of the time the test was administered. Another campus shared, "...I feel because it is given at the very beginning or before school starts, the children are reluctant to talk or respond to us. As a result, the children are labeled as LEP because of failure to answer."

Other types of assessment reported by campuses included teacher-made pencil/paper tests (30.7%), tests of abilities (20.4%), screening for gifted/talented (10.4%), and achievement testing (10.0%).

Student progress was determined from a variety of data sources. Campuses were asked to rank four sources for determining progress on a four-point scale, with 1 representing "always used" and 4 representing "never used." Responses indicated that teacher observation was the most widely used means of documenting student progress. The rank order of the information sources was as follows: 1) teacher observations (mean rating = 1.1); 2) grade or in-class conduct/performance (mean rating = 1.7); 3) parent conferences (mean rating = 2.5); and, 4) test scores (mean rating = 3.2).

Case Study

When interviewed about the assessment process, administrators and prekindergarten staff agreed that children were selected for the program based on three major factors: 1) limited English proficiency, 2) eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch programs, and 3) the age requirement that four-year-olds be eligible for kindergarten the following year. Home language surveys and demographic information by parent report provided information used in determining eligibility for the program. In addition pre-testing, primarily using the Pre-LAS, was used to determine actual classroom placement.

The most consistent form of ongoing assessment reported in the interviews was teacher observations. This was documented in a variety of ways, either formally or informally. Checklists most frequently were used to monitor progress; other, more informal checklists were used to measure skill mastery in relation to the Texas essential elements. A comment heard often was, "We do a lot of informal record keeping."

The formal testing instruments mentioned included, but may not be limited to, Pre-LAS, Philadelphia Preschool Inventory, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Brigance Test, Montessori Checklist, and Chicago Early Test. Several districts were pre- and post-testing children, other districts selected specific children for post-testing, but the majority did not report doing post-testing. Staff commented that overall, "We're not big on testing young children." Several interviewees also said they felt that this was an area that needed to be further addressed in their districts.

Program Evaluation

NAEYC CRITERIA

On-going and systematic evaluation is essential to improving and maintaining the quality of an early childhood program. Evaluation efforts are based on program goals, assessment of needs, and identification of program strengths and weaknesses. At least annually parents, staff, and other professionals are involved in evaluating the program's effectiveness. Written descriptions of children's development must be compiled as a basis for planning and for communicating with parents (NAEYC, 1984, p. 37).

FINDINGS

Formal evaluation of the prekindergarten program is minimal. Informal evaluation focused on individual child progress. Programs identified language development as one of the most successful facets of prekindergarten.

Statewide Survey

There was significant variation in the response rate to questions regarding program evaluation. Almost half of the 87.3 percent of the campuses that responded indicated that a formal evaluation of the program occurred. However, of 215 districts that responded to a similar question on the district questionnaire, only 25 (11.6%) of those districts indicated that the prekindergarten program was evaluated.

When asked if developmental appropriateness was evaluated, 161 districts responded "yes." The areas most frequently evaluated included program theoretical framework, student-teacher interactions, physical environment, parent involvement, and materials.

Districts did identify the strengths and needs of the programs in open-ended comments on the questionnaires. Districts noted the following as the most effective aspects of their programs: the use of instructional assistants to lower the teacher/student ratio, language development of students, and high quality staff. The most frequently noted needs of the programs included an increase in parent involvement, the addition of instructional assistants, larger facilities, and an increase in the number and type of classroom materials.

Case Study

In general program evaluation for the prekindergarten programs at the district level was nonexistent. Evaluation focused more on individual child progress through report cards, checklists, and pre- and post-testing. One district was working on its own longitudinal study. One administrator said, "Evaluation is an area we need to expand on."

Although no districts conducted a formal program evaluation of prekindergarten, each district's prekindergarten staff and parents had made comprehensive, informal observations of the program effects. These observations were apparent through the case study interview process. For example, teachers were asked to reflect back and describe the children when they initially came into the program. The teachers described the children as: "afraid," "shy," "lacking confidence," "having low self-esteem," "displaying disruptive behavior," and "not having the ability to communicate." Other descriptors included: "limited," "immature," "quiet," "neglected," "non-risk takers," "nervous," "in shock," and "without a foundation for learning." That the children were intelligent and complex was mentioned by one teacher.

When teachers were asked to describe these same children at the end of the program, the children were most often described as confident. Other descriptors included, but were not limited to: more social, more verbal with improved language skills, proud, independent, positive, happy, comfortable, mature, intelligent, improved self-esteem, improved motor and listening skills. Teachers also mentioned a "bonding" that happened between themselves and the children. One teacher summarized her observations in the following comment: "I always take their pictures at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year. Those two pictures told everything that had happened in prekindergarten that year."

Eight districts identified improved language development as the biggest success of their programs. Districts also observed that the children grew in social, emotional and cognitive areas.

Children were interviewed by the site visit teams in the study. When asked what they were learning, they described 1) basic pre-academic skills (counting, numbers), 2) activities (painting, singing, going to the zoo), and 3) rules (how to listen and take turns).

Parents believed their children were learning academic skills and socialization. Parents were very pleased with the program and wanted to see it supported. Parents enthusiastically wanted their children to finish college, or at least to go as far as the children wanted to in the school system. Graduation from high school was a must. Parents, regardless of their ethnic origin, unanimously wanted their children to be bilingual, primarily in English and Spanish. When asked about learning two languages, some parents made the following comments: "Yes, I would love it;" "It would be fabulous;" "If they don't learn it now, they won't learn it later;" and "I wish I were bilingual."

Concerns regarding the program centered on lack of program availability to all children, poor parent involvement, inadequate facilities and space, and a need for increased staff training, especially for instructional assistants. Other less frequently mentioned concerns were related to: program evaluation, adult-to-child ratio, and lack of voice in making statewide program decisions.

Discussion and Preliminary Recommendations

Assessment in early childhood programs should provide information that will help educators, parents, and caregivers better understand and respond to the growth, development, and unique characteristics of each child in their care (Leavitt & Eheart, 1991). Assessment is essential for planning and implementing educational programs. Standardized assessment can be a part of a complete assessment for young children, but should not be used exclusively (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1982). However, since young children are not experienced test takers, paper and pencil tests rarely yield valid and meaningful results (NASBE, 1988). Assessment should always be based on reliable, valid instruments (NAEYC, 1987; NASBE, 1988). Because such instruments are rare for young children, multiple means of assessment must be conducted.

Narrow-based evaluation and accountability can be directly linked to the implementation of developmentally inappropriate curricula through the downward shift of academic information and materials to younger and younger children (Meisels, 1989; Shepherd, 1989). Young children should be assessed through observation and recording of their developmental progress. Observations and descriptive recording must be well founded on the knowledge of child development (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1982; Edmiaston, 1988).

Traditionally, child change data (student assessment) has provided the primary information for determining program effectiveness. In order to capture the comprehensive nature of program effects, the range of sources for documenting program benefits must be expanded. Staff quality, community involvement, and parent satisfaction supply important information regarding the effectiveness and benefits of early childhood programs.

Assessment in prekindergarten is aimed toward student placement and reporting of student progress. Although placement decisions for limited English proficient children appeared to be made primarily from a standardized instrument, teacher observations were the primary means of assessing student progress. The use of authentic assessment should be encouraged and supported. Formal evaluation of the prekindergarten program is minimal and appeared to consist solely of child change data although some overlap existed between program needs identified by districts in open-ended comments on the questionnaires and the needs identified through this evaluation. Programs should to be encouraged to develop accountability practices that will document benefits across a wide range of sources. The recommendations below address these goals:

- Continue support at the state and local level for authentic assessment (assessment activities that resemble actual classroom and life tasks) of student progress.
- Provide training to prekindergarten administrators, teachers, and staff on recent strategies for conducting authentic assessment.
- Review the assessment process used to determine children's proficiency in English, to address concerns about mislabeling.
- Provide staff development training to district program administrators, staff, and evaluation personnel on the evaluation of early childhood education programs.
- Continue the statewide study conducted by the Division of Policy Planning and Evaluation.

COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The call for developmentally appropriate programs stems from a growing recognition that schools must become more responsive to the unique needs of young children, rather than forcing young children to conform to traditional and often inappropriate expectations and practices. Quality early childhood educational programs must be tailored to meet the needs of young children.

> At the heart of the educational process lies the child. No advances in policy, no acquisitions of new equipment have their desired effect unless they are in harmony with the nature of the child, unless they are fundamentally acceptable to him.
>
> Knowledge of the manner in which children develop, therefore, is of prime importance, both in avoiding educationally harmful practices and in introducing effective ones (The Plowden Report, Children and Their Primary Schools, Vol I. 1966).

In order to implement these guidelines the NAEYC has identified three key elements that must be met. First, teachers of early childhood programs must receive specialized preparation in early childhood development/education. Second, teachers must have practical experience teaching this age group. Third, the adult/student ratio should not exceed 1:8.

Although administrators and teachers in prekindergarten programs in Texas are receptive to the concept of developmentally appropriate practices, little evidence of their implementation was apparent. Several barriers currently impede the implementation of these practices.

- First, prekindergarten programs did not appear to be grounded upon sound beliefs/theories about how young children learn, nor does a framework exist at the state level to identify program quality standards.
- Second, staff typically have not received the training in early childhood development/education that is necessary to implement developmentally appropriate programs. When state resources were allocated for program implementation, no monies were designated for staff training. In addition, state legislation as defined in Texas Education Code §16.052 provides districts with only a minimal number of days for in-service training for all staff. District in-service training did not necessarily include specialized early childhood training. In programs where assistants are available, training for them in early childhood education is minimal or nonexistent.
- Third, the teacher/child ratio of 1:22 exceeds a group size that allows for individualized instruction and adequate supervision of young children.
- Fourth, the programs for limited English proficient students appeared to focus on moving children into English, rather than ensuring that children first had a strong foundation in their native language.
- Finally, parents, although strongly supportive of prekindergarten, did not appear to have a partnership relationship with the districts.

To address the barriers impeding implementation of developmentally appropriate practices, recommendations in the following broad areas were made: 1) providing staff development at both the preservice and inservice level; 2) lowering the mandated class size; and 3) developing an early childhood education framework, including identification of program quality standards, by the Agency.

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APPENDIX A
Contractor Review of Published Literature

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PROGRAMMING

INTRODUCTION

Due to progressively increasing awareness of the value of preschool interventions (e.g., Perry Preschool Project Report), as well as the desire to offset observed risk factors which impinge upon children's later success in school, public education has begun to commit its resources to prekindergarten education, especially for four-year-old children. The intent of this commitment is sincere and real. The growth for prekindergarten advocacy has, indeed, been whirlwind, relative to the historical time period of public education. This support for preschool education has not been limited to any one sector but has emerged from local, state, and federal levels, as well as from the private, civic, and community sectors. However, this movement has come about at such an accelerated pace that advocacy organizations, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), have only recently established guidelines for quality, developmentally appropriate practices. As a result, many preschool programs, while fully committed to child development, have not yet received sufficient support to implement training in quality, developmentally appropriate practices.

Currently, most practices reflect an adaptation of early elementary practices rather than practices appropriate for four-year-old children. It has only been in the past five to six years that these elementary school practices with preschool children have been questioned. Elkind (1986) was one of the first to question formal academic instruction with young children. The growing body of research that has recently emerged affirms that young children learn most effectively through concrete, self-initiated, play-oriented approaches. Between 1987 and 1990 the NAEYC, recognizing the need for early education standards, responded to the research, social, political, and economic forces by writing positions and criteria for implementing developmentally appropriate educational programs for all children from birth through eight years of age. These criteria for developmentally appropriate practices describe the minimal standards for quality early education. Our challenge now is to accelerate the implementation of such practices so that they may become commensurate with the current commitment to preschool education and exceed the minimal standards.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices With Preschool-Age Children

The quality of an early childhood program may be affected by many variables, but the primary determinant of quality is the extent to which staff understand and apply the latest knowledge of child development in program practices—the degree that the program is developmentally appropriate.

The concept of "developmental appropriateness," according to NAEYC, has two dimensions: age appropriateness and individual appropriateness.

1. **Age Appropriateness.** Human development research indicates that there are universal, predictable sequences of growth and change that occur in children during the first eight years of life. These predictable changes occur in all domains of development—physical, emotional, social (language), and cognitive. Knowledge of typical development of children within the age span served by the program provides a framework from which teachers prepare the learning environment and plan appropriate experiences.

2. **Individual Appropriateness.** Each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as individual personality, learning style, and family background. Both the curriculum and adults' interactions with children should be responsive to individual differences. Learning in young children is the result of interaction between the child's thoughts and experiences with materials, ideas, and people. These experiences should match the child's developing abilities, while also challenging the child's interest and understanding (NAEYC, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children Birth Through Age 8*, p. 2, 1987).

Informed educators use knowledge of child development to identify the range of meaningful behaviors, activities, and materials needed for a specific age group. This information in relation to children's individual differences in growth, interests, strengths, and experiences is used to design the most appropriate learning environment.

The primary indicator of children's developmental level is their play. Through play, children from birth through eight years of age move through the developmental sequences from sensorimotor intelligence to preoperational thought in the preschool years to concrete operational thinking typical of primary-age children (Beard, 1969; Fein, 1979; Fromberg, 1986; Piaget, 1952, 1976; Pulaski, 1980). Play is also critical in children's development of emotional, social, language, and physical development (Bettelheim, 1987; Bretherton, Fritz & Ridgeway, 1986; Carroll & McCune-Nicolich, 1981; Cartwright, 1988; Gardner, Shotwell, & Wolf, 1980; Herron & Sutton-Smith, 1974; Leach, 1983; Shepard & Smith, 1988; Van der Kooije & Vrijhof, 1981; Westby, 1988; Williams & Kamii, 1986; Wolfgang & Sander, 1981). This being the case, child-initiated, child-directed, teacher-supported play is the essential component of developmentally appropriate practice (Bereiter, 1986; Elkind, 1986; Fein & Rivkin, 1986; Kamii, 1986; Schweinhart, Weikart & Larner, 1986; Stebbins, St. Pierre, Proper, Anderson, & Cerva, 1987).

Assessment

The purpose of assessment in early childhood programs is to help educators, parents, and caregivers better understand, appreciate, and respond to the growth, development, and unique characteristics of each child in their care (Leavitt & Eheart, 1991). Assessment of individual children's development and learning is essential for program planning and implementation of developmentally appropriate programs, but should be used with caution to prevent discrimination against individuals and to ensure accuracy (NAEYC, 1987).

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The process of assessment in this age group relies heavily on observations and descriptive data to identify children who have special needs and/or who are at risk and to plan curriculum (Meisels, 1985). Observations and descriptive recording must be well founded on the knowledge of child development as well as a belief in the value of individual differences and uniqueness of each child (Edmiaston, 1988; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1982; Heublein & Bate, 1988). Parents need to be regarded as partners in the assessment process of their children. The use of multi-observations and parent interviews is particularly critical when assessing limited English proficient children (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1982). There must be an awareness that the different mores and linguistic behaviors of these children require input from a multi-disciplinary team in both native and English languages if the assessment is to be accurate (Adler, 1991). Critical thought must be taken in determining the purpose of assessment tools with young children, particularly when they speak a language other than English because there are few, if any, standardized measures that can provide a completely valid and nonbiased evaluation of linguistically and culturally diverse populations (Adler, 1991; Vaugh-Cooke, 1983).

The screening process helps determine developmental levels and possible needs for further evaluation. When using standardized testing to assess children's "functioning levels," tests must be both reliable and valid (Meisels, 1985). Standardized instruments for testing young children can be a part of a complete assessment, but should not be used exclusively. Consideration should always be given to the uniqueness of each child, including his/her culture and language. Other relevant information, such as socioeconomic level of the family, family education, and expectations must also be gathered to make the best placement decisions. Observations from a variety of sources, such as home and playgroup, provide a comprehensive picture. Observations should include both spontaneous and planned episodes (Leavitte & Eheart, 1991). No placement should be made on the basis of a single screening assessment, diagnostic evaluation, or observation. On-going observations done routinely and systematically should be used to monitor children's needs. Any comparisons of developmental expectations should be in relationship to normative information, but also matched with gender, culture, and socioeconomic similarities (Hilliard, 1986; Meisels, 1985).

Assessment affects not only children, but families and programs. School systems must examine closely their motives for assessment and placement. A strong and developmentally appropriate philosophy regarding assessment and evaluation should be a component of any educational program (NAEYC, 1987; *Code of Fair Testing Practices*, 1988).

Staff Qualifications

The quality of the staff is the most important determinant of the quality of an early childhood program (NAEYC, *Accreditation, Criteria and Procedures*, 1990). Research indicates a significant relationship between staff training in child development and/or early childhood education (ECE) and positive outcomes for children, such as increased social interaction with adults, development of prosocial behaviors, and improved language and cognitive development. These positive outcomes have not been systematically observed when formal education, degrees, or certificates are not related to child development or early childhood education (Berk, 1985; Prescott, 1972; Ruopp, Travers, Glantz, & Coelen, 1979).

Staff knowledge of child development is considered essential for achieving developmentally appropriate early childhood programs (Almy, 1982; Feeney & Chun, 1985). In its 1990 edition of guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices, the NAEYC strongly recommends that policy-making groups consider the need for specialized preparation in early childhood education (ECE)/child development when implementing ECE programs.

The NAEYC stresses that teachers must understand child development before they can implement a program based on child development principles. Additionally, the NAEYC believes that, regardless of credentialed status, early childhood teachers should be encouraged and supported to maintain current knowledge of child development and its application to early educational practice.

Program Philosophy/Theoretical Framework

Educational policies, regardless of the age level, must be grounded in sound philosophical and theoretical concepts. Theories are belief systems about how children learn. Informed belief systems about how children learn help teachers understand why they design and use a particular curriculum and activities. For example, the belief system of an educator who has all the children wait while each child talks is quite different from an educator who facilitates conversation among small groups of children.

The learning theories of Piaget (1952, 1973), Vygotsky (1978), and Erikson (1963) are comprehensive and explanatory of early learning. It is these theories that provide the foundation for NAEYC quality standards and criteria. Piaget explains that children learn best by manipulating and exploring real world situations that are meaningful and purposeful from the child's point of view. It is the interaction of these physical explorations with the internal, mental constructions, not just the objects themselves, that allow the child to make sense of the world. As the child "works" in this experiential way in social contexts, conventional knowledge such as days of the week, holidays, or numbers, are learned (Kamii, 1990). Piaget (1952) described the development of knowledge as a horizontal decolage of schema which through assimilation and accommodation, is the foundation for future learning. Too frequently educators view learning as a vertical, rather than a horizontal, process. This view (belief) tends to perpetuate the teaching and learning of rote skills, rather than support the natural development of conceptual knowledge.

Vygotsky (1978), too, explains that the nature of knowledge acquisition, i.e., learning, is dependent upon the child's direct self-discovery. He understands that children construct concepts of reality from the direct experience without need of adult direction. Only a part of the child's knowledge results from direct adult instruction. This is specific cultural knowledge from past generations. Vygotsky emphasizes the need for sound learning to occur in social contexts that are child-initiated. These social contexts occur through child play in a materials-rich, child-accessible environment. It is certainly true that children learn much from adults and how adults allow children to learn will determine the breadth and depth of the foundation for learning laid down during the early years.

These theoretical concepts recognize that the child's mind is not a blank slate, nor a miniature model of an adult mind. Children are naturally motivated to make sense of the world by acting on it and organizing their experiences both socially and physically. All children come equipped to construct their own knowledge through experiences with things and interactions with people (Hawkins, 1972, 1974; Piaget, 1952).

Language

Communication is the medium for learning and language is the vehicle. Language is integral to all learning, particularly in classrooms. Language skills are critical to thinking and acquiring information. Speech, too, has been found to play a significant role in mediating and facilitating cognitive activity and problem solving. Language and communication are the processes by which information and meaning are accessed (Berk, 1986; Halwes, 1971; King, 1984; Portes, 1985; Shuy, 1984; Skinner, 1985; Strickland, 1983; Weiss, 1981; Wells & Wells, 1986; Westby, 1985).

The issues of language and communication in the classroom are multifaceted and complex, but research has identified several critical areas: 1) conversation, 2) functions of language and communication, 3) mediation, 4) wait-time or latency, and 5) oral and written language.

Conversation

The structure of genuine, natural conversation allows the full use of functional communication categories and devices to regulate discourse. Using conversation as the primary instructional methodology across all curriculum areas has been found to be effective for facilitating language and learning in educationally at-risk children (Edmiaston & Heublein, 1987; Grice, 1975; Heublein, 1985; Snow, Midkiff-Borunda, Small & Proctor, 1984; Weiss, 1981; Wells, 1981).

Functions of Language and Communication

Research on classroom discourse has criticized teachers' typical verbal behavior because it constrains the opportunity for children to employ the full range of language functions (Goodlad, 1984; Heublein & Coulter, 1987; Mehan, 1976). Successful communicators use five basic functional categories: assertives, requestives, expressives, performatives, and commissives (Searle, 1984). Functions of communication determine how language will be expressed, i.e , the words and structures that will be used (Bates & MacWhinney, 1979; Givon, 1984). In addition, successful communicators use devices to regulate the flow of communication. These strategies assist people in being understood, in repairing miscommunication and in stopping or starting conversation. Most classroom time for children, however, is typically spent answering one word-questions or quietly listening to the teacher.

Recent theory and research in language development has shown that children can best build their communication and language skills, oral and written, by using a wide variety of social purposes or functions (Bates & MacWhinney, 1979; Berk, 1986; Wells & Wells, 1986). Teachers must provide ample opportunities for children to use language in a variety of settings for a variety of purposes (Graves, 1983; Hall & Cole, 1978; Halliday, 1975; Heublein, 1986; Lucking, 1985; Mehan, 1976; Shuy, 1984; Wells, 1981; Wells & Wells, 1986; Westby, 1985).

Mediation of Learning

Research has demonstrated that the teacher's use of particular kinds of verbal strategies facilitates the learning of educationally at-risk children. These strategies, used in a developmental and contextually-relevant manner, allow children to use information provided by the teacher in relation

to their own immediate thoughts, ideas, and language. Because the teachers' information is immediately relevant to the child and at the child's level of understanding, the information is well-integrated into the child's knowledge repertoire. Thus, carry-over is increased to other contexts in life situations (Weiss, 1981; Weiss & Heublein, 1984).

The shift to active thinking in children happens most effectively when integrated with appropriate materials of learning; an interaction style that nurtures productive thinking about the content to be learned is needed. Fostering creative thought leads to children having creativity as a versatile tool for use in all learning (Adamson, 1985; Duck, 1985; Joyce, 1985).

Wait Time

For over twenty years studies have indicated that when teachers wait three seconds, rather than the customary .08 seconds, before calling on a student after making a statement or asking a question, significant differences occur in student behaviors (Pearson, 1980; Rowe, 1986). By increasing the wait time both before and after the student's response, the student's behavior changes markedly in several areas: a) increased length of responses (increased 300-700 percent), b) increased number of appropriate responses, c) increased inference and speculative thinking, d) increased number of questions asked by the student, e) increased student-to-student interactions, and f) decreased disciplinary problems.

Oral and Written Language

The most recent research indicates that oral and written language develop in a parallel rather than a sequential manner (Goodman, 1978; Goodman, 1984; Graves, 1983; Mills & Clyde, 1991; Rhodes, 1983; Westby, 1985). Teachers typically are unaware of this relationship in development, and therefore 1) waste time providing direct instruction for skills which would develop naturally, and 2) retard the natural development of both oral and written language by failing to provide enriched opportunities where both can develop simultaneously (Atkins, 1984; Berk, 1986; Christie, 1990; Dyson, 1988; Goodman, 1984; Hubbard, 1988; Mandell, 1988; Mills & Clyde, 1991; Newman, 1983; Sower, 1982; Walton, 1989).

Research has shown that language proficiency is essential to the development of thinking. Language, speech and creative thinking are best learned when children are encouraged to express their ideas and interact with the ideas of others in a social environment. All children are biologically predisposed to learn most effectively by actively exploring and discussing real situations and problems (King, 1984; Shuy, 1984; Weiss, 1981; Wells & Wells, 1984).

The success of facilitating language development with children depends on the adult's conscious awareness of how to use conversation as the primary instructional method. To use conversation in a conscious manner for facilitating learning, adults must observe, develop, and analyze their own communicative actions and understand the impact of their behavior on children's learning. These discoveries are the basis of how teachers and parents become aware that they can empower children to be responsible for their own learning.

Bilingual Development

Throughout the current century, the question of whether languages other than English should be given any viable attention in the education realm has been a heated one. This debate has been further embroiled as a result of the passage of the Bilingual Education Act in 1968. A commonly accepted theory in the first half of the century was that the brain could only "hold" so much language, and therefore, if English were to be learned by non-English speaking immigrants, we had to "make room" in the brain for English capacity by getting rid of the native language. This theory became very congruent with another popular concept of that time; namely, the "melting pot" concept. This held that all new immigrants to the United States, in order to "make it," had to give up their old ways and "melt" into the American mainstream. Currently, opponents of bilingual education still postulate that the melting pot worked well for previous generations of immigrants who "made it" without crutches, and current immigrants could also make it if they tried. Cummins (1989, p 8), a noted socio-linguist, provided the following explanation of this mindset:

> This attitude shows a profound ignorance of American educational history. The groups that currently tend to experience the most educational difficulty (Black, Hispanic and Native American) were never given the opportunity to "melt" into the American mainstream. Unlike immigrant groups, these three groups have had the status of "internal colonies": in that they have been conquered, subjugated, and regarded as inherently inferior for generations by members of the dominant Anglo group.
>
> In fact, from a historical point of view, the concerns about bilingual education being against American traditions and a potential catalyst for Hispanic separatist tendencies are somewhat ironic in view of the fact that the education of Mexican-Americans in the Southwest was openly dedicated until the late 1960's to separating Mexican-American students from the mainstream of American society by means of segregated schooling (conducted exclusively in English).

While there is general agreement currently that the development of English proficiency is in the best interest of everyone, there exists a clear demarcation on how and when to develop English proficiency. One viewpoint, opposed to bilingual education, argues that if English is to be developed, then it simply stands to reason that non-English speaking (NES) and limited English proficient (LEP) children should be immersed in English instruction from the onset. A variation of this position is that a brief transition is in order, whereby a child's native language is utilized for a brief period (e.g., one year) in order to provide some bridging from the native language to English.

Another viewpoint contends that a bilingual education approach, which takes socio-historical determinants of minority students' school failure into consideration, is more effective and successful for NES and LEP children; it not only supports them to develop biliteracy skills, but enables them to develop, over time, more English proficiency than the same type of children who are enrolled in English immersion programs.

Inasmuch as there is a frequent claim that research data on bilingual education are lacking, "virtually all the evaluation findings from bilingual education programs in North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia support the interdependence principle" (Cummins, 1987, p. 32). This principle means that in a Spanish-English bilingual program, Spanish instruction that develops Spanish reading and writing

skills is not just developing Spanish skills, it is also developing a deeper conceptual and linguistic proficiency that is strongly related to the development of literacy in the majority language (English) (Cummins 1989). A.C. Willig (1985) has found evidence in favor of bilingual education programs. Most pertinent was her finding that the better the research methodology used in the studies, the greater was the effect in favor of bilingual programs (Hakuta & Gould, 1987).

The following review of the literature will respond to three factors which are germane to the bilingual development process: 1) the effects of native language instruction on cognitive/academic competencies, 2) the transferability of cognitive/academic competencies from the native language to English, and 3) the effects of English as a second language instruction.

The Effects of Native Language (non-English) Instruction on Cognitive/Academic Competencies.

A commonly stated concern regarding the English immersion of a NES or LEP child is that the formative period of concept formation is sacrificed for the development of English proficiency. That is, while majority language children are privileged with an environment which abounds with conceptual stimulation, minority language children become relegated to an educational confinement of drills, and vocabulary and syntax development.

Stanford Research Associates (SRA) Technologies conducted a Department of Education funded study, comparing students in immersion programs with students in transitional (early-exit) bilingual programs, and children in maintenance (late-exit) bilingual programs. Crawford (1986) reported that in the first year of a four-year study, the results showed that students in bilingual programs with greater native-language instruction did considerably better on tests in reading, language arts, and mathematics. Contrary to the expectations of the researchers conducting the study, the third group, which had the least exposure to English, made the greatest progress in both Spanish and English (Hakuta & Gould, 1987).

Some studies have suggested that the development of bilingualism can have positive effects on thinking skills. Specifically, where the native language is maintained, rather than replaced, a number of studies have shown that bilingual children may gain some measure of cognitive flexibility (Bain & Yu, 1980; Hakuta & Diaz, 1984; Peal & Lambert, 1962).

The Transferability of Cognitive/Academic Competencies from the Native Language to English

Until quite recently, people have tended to think of language, as a single, simple capacity that can easily be measured. However, recent research indicates that language is a complex configuration of abilities. For example, Cummins (1984) has found evidence that while children may pick up oral proficiency in as little as two years, it may take five to seven years to acquire the decontextualized (academic) language skills necessary to function successfully in an all-English classroom (Hakuta & Gould, 1987). Academic language proficiency refers to both reading and writing abilities and to content areas where students are required to use their language abilities for learning (i.e., science,

social studies, etc.). Snow (1986), stated that "bilingual programs should concentrate on providing literacy skills in the home language, especially for those children whose parents have little education and poor literacy skills. Once the basic principles of reading are mastered in the home language, reading skills transfer quickly and easily to a second language" (Hakuta & Gould, 1987). Cummins (1989) provides a significant qualifier regarding this issue:

> "It is emphasized . . . that the distinction between conversational and academic aspects of language proficiency does not imply that academic skills should be developed through decontextualized instruction. On the contrary, high levels of literacy and critical thinking can be promoted effectively only by interactive/experiential instruction that encourages students' oral and written expression."

In a less recent, but similar study,

> Skutnab-Kangas and Tuokoma (1976, 1977) found that Finnish children who had been permitted to acquire the first six years of their education in their native language were far better able to continue their education later in Swedish (their second language) than those who had been placed in a Swedish speaking environment in their earlier years of schooling. According to Troike (1978), anecdotal evidence seems to suggest a parallel phenomenon among Mexican-American youngsters from Mexico who emigrated to the U.S. (Steinberg, Blinde & Chan, 1982).

In yet other studies,

> . . . Campos and Keatings (1988), for example, reported that Hispanic children enrolled in a Spanish-only preschool program learned more English and developed considerable more academic readiness skills than comparable children enrolled in a Head Start bilingual preschool where the emphasis was on promoting English proficiency. Krashen and Biber (1987) have also recently reviewed the results of several bilingual programs in California in which minority students approach grade norms during the elementary school years and surpass the performance of similar students in English-only programs (Cummins, 1989).

The Effects of English as a Second Language (ESL) Instruction.

A term of common usage in second language acquisition research is "comprehensible input." This is derived from the "input" hypothesis, which postulates that language is acquired by understanding input containing structures a bit beyond the acquirer's current level. We acquire structure by understanding messages and not focusing on the form of the input or analyzing it (Krashen, 1982). Thus, the central function of second language instruction should be on meaningful communication, not rote learning (or extrinsic motivation); the focus is on language function, not grammatical form (California State Department of Education, 1987).

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

Curriculum is a cultural construction (Grundy, 1987). It is a way of organizing educational practices. A curriculum needs to be concerned with the experiences people have as a consequence of the existence of the curriculum, rather than with the various aspects that make it up. Curriculum is in the environments, minds, and actions of the people who engage in educating, curriculum process rather than product. A curriculum does not exist apart from human interaction. Curriculum does not exist apart from the beliefs educators have about people and the ways in which they learn about the world.

A framework for making sense out of curriculum practices is provided by Habermas (1972). This theory describes the fundamental human interests that influence how knowledge is constructed. Interests, in general, are fundamental orientations of the human species. He identifies three basic cognitive interests: technical, practical, and emancipatory, each of which is grounded in the need of the species to survive and reproduce itself and those aspects of human society deemed worthy.

The Technical Interest

The technical interest is grounded in the basic need to control and manage the environment. This view describes knowledge in the empirical-analytical sciences which is governed by an interest in explaining. Explanations provide the basis for predictions and predictions provide the basis for controlling the environment.

Technical interests give rise to instrumental action which is governed by technical rules based on empirical knowledge (Habermas, 1971, p. 91). This is the premise behind much educational research. If we discover the "laws" of how children learn through observation and experimentation, we can presumably structure a set of rules which, if followed, will promote learning; hence, the application of positive reinforcements for learning math or reading skills.

A curriculum in the objective model is designed by technical cognitive interests and is done with the intention of controlling child learning so that, at the end of the teaching process, the product will conform to the idea expressed in the original objectives.

The Practical Interest

The basic orientation of the practical interest is toward understanding. It is an interest in understanding the environment to be able to interact with it. It is grounded in the need of the species to live in and as part of the world, not in competition with the environment for survival.

A curriculum informed by a practical interest is not a means-ends curriculum by which an educational outcome is produced through the action of a teacher upon a group of objectified students. Rather, curriculum design regards learning as a process through which children and teachers interact in order to make meaning in the world. This is a process model of curriculum that "rests on teacher judgment rather than teacher direction" (Steinhouse, 1975, p. 96).

The Emancipatory Interest

The emancipation interest is identified with autonomy and responsibility. It is only through the act of self-reflection that emancipation is possible. Emancipation is inextricably linked with ideas of justice and quality.

While the previous two interests are concerned with control and understanding respectively, the emancipatory interest is concerned with empowerment. This is the ability of people and groups to take control of their lives in autonomous and responsible ways. The emancipatory cognitive interest could be defined as follows: "a fundamental interest in emancipation and empowerment to engage in autonomous action arising out of authentic, critical insights into the social construction of human society" (Grundy, 1987, p. 19). These fundamental human interests as the basis of curriculum each imply different outcomes.

If one of our objectives in providing early education to children at-risk of educational failure is to facilitate their autonomy and responsibility, curriculum based on the technical interest alone will fall short because it is in the interest of control, i.e., the children are told what to learn and do not discover and construct their own knowledge. Presently, the technical interest is expressed in the pervasive use of behavioral learning theory. This may facilitate independence for some, but not true autonomy; most will remain controlled and dependent. Neither does the practical interest alone facilitate autonomy and responsibility. Because the practical interest is grounded in understanding through consensus and debate, or interaction, there is no action or application of the understanding to ourselves. Thus, meaning in relation to the world may not be fully achieved in an autonomous sense. At the real-world level, an emancipatory curriculum will involve the teacher and the children in actions that reduce constraints on freedom. An emancipatory curriculum is a reciprocal relationship between self-reflection and action, i.e., understanding and responsibility. The emancipating interest is compatible with the practical interest, but not with the technical interest.

Curriculum Praxis

Curriculum praxis is a concept originated by Paulo Freire (1972). The concept of praxis is complex. First, praxis is a reflexive relationship between theory and practice, where one builds upon the other. It is not the traditional linear relationship between theory and practice. Praxis happens in the real, not the imaginary or symbolic world. The starting point for education must be the present with concrete situations that present problems to solve, not just with intellectual responses, but with action responses. Praxis means doing real things in the world with people, not with the symbols of these people. Praxis is the act of constructing and reconstructing the social world. It assumes a process of meaning-making. Freire's ideas about curriculum provide a way to understand the emancipatory interest.

"Education," Freire (1972, p. 45) said, "is suffering from narration sickness, placing the student as a passive recipient of the educational process." An emancipatory interest, however, engages the student, not only as an active rather than a passive receiver of knowledge, but as an active creator of knowledge along with the teacher. "Liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information" (Freire, 1972, p. 53). In this curricular model for young children, one can no longer only speak of teaching, for it is the reciprocity of learning between teacher and child that is meaningful and viable.

An important American value is personal autonomy, possessing the inner resources to function as a contributing member of a free society. The long-term goal is not only to help children develop personal integrity and fulfillment, but also to enable them to think, reason, and make decisions necessary to be fully responsible as citizens of a participatory democracy (Dewey, 1899, 1916).

Environment

The physical environment in which we live affects our behavior and our development, for children and adults alike. It is well documented through the work of Piaget that children need to be actively involved in their play to learn. This means they must have a variety of adequate space in which

to work (Hohmann, Banet & Weikart, 1979). For children to learn to be social beings, adults must take great care in setting up an environment that facilitates interactions; adults create and control those settings for better or worse (Bos, 1983). Staff ratio in settings with four- and five-year olds should range from 1 adult per 8, 9, or 10 children depending on the qualifications of the staff present (NAEYC, 1984). What is important is that staff be adequate to provide frequent personal contact and be available to support children's immediate needs and safety. The number of qualified adults present should take into account possible emergencies and be maintained according to the NAEYC recommended levels as a minimum.

Materials and equipment need to be non-graded, interesting and engaging to children and it must be accessible to them (Elkind, 1989). Children need to know they have some control of their environment. They need to use their natural curiosity and motivation to explore within safe surroundings. Children learn best in a stimulating, but organized space where their discoveries and choices are supported (Hawkins, 1974). The arrangement of the physical space and the furnishings, both in materials and social attitude, affects how children learn (Bos, 1983).

Classroom space should be well thought out in relation to the children's interests and developmental levels. Ongoing observations and reflections are needed to know how well the space is working. Children can be included and consulted in setting up rooms as they see things differently from the adults. Consideration should always be given to the health and safety of the children, but also importantly to ownership. Whose class is this? What works best for children may not always meet adults' expectations. Classrooms for young children that have been divided into distinct play areas, leaving adequate room for moving and larger group activities or projects, has been one effective method for setting up the environment (Elkind, 1989; Hohmann, Banet & Weikart, 1979). Well organized and appealing space invites desired behaviors, and facilitates positive interaction between people and materials. Whenever possible, indoors can be extended so outdoors can also become a part of the classroom (NAEYC, 1987).

A classroom environment should attempt to parallel a home environment (Elkind, 1986). NAEYC's recommendation for size is a minimum of 35 square feet of usable space for indoor play. Individual space for personal items as well as private space should be available to each member of the class. A classroom should mirror the outside world in exhibiting soft elements, some living things as well as a variety of materials, both commercial and natural. Personal items of interest, such as art work, photographs, and music, can accentuate the ambiance of a group, depending on the children's and adults' interests. Individual tastes of children and adults add to the aesthetic beauty of a room, but also represent the group as a whole.

Materials and equipment should be stimulating and challenging to children without overwhelming them (Elkind, 1986). Toys and activities that promote problem solving and develop creative solutions often hold preschoolers' interest better than one solution or easily mastered repetitive materials. Unique materials of personal interest to specific children should also be present in their classrooms. Materials and equipment should be of sufficient quantity to be adequately shared or used to stimulate or expand themes or activities. Materials should be arranged to promote independence and include a range of abilities within the age group of the class members. Teachers should refrain from providing

children the expected model for how things should be used or made (Elkind, 1986). Ditto sheets and close-ended materials are not appropriate in early childhood classrooms. Materials that foster cooperative learning and situations requiring negotiation must be encouraged.

Outside space should include a variety of surfaces as well as equipment and materials. Playgrounds must be danger-free and large enough for children to experience movement and equipment restricted by the inside space. Equipment and materials that promote movement such as climbing, jumping, riding, balancing should all be available (NAEYC, 1987). Outdoor space recommended by NAEYC guidelines is a minimum of 75 square feet per child.

The physical environment represents an attitude which the staff hold about children (Elkind, 1989). The space reflects beliefs and philosophies adults have about how children learn and what they should be learning. Classrooms that are tightly controlled by the adults tell us the adults may not trust children to make choices and decisions for themselves. Materials which must always be handed out by the adults tell us that children may not be valued for being independent and autonomous beings.

Environments set the stage for all learning; cognitive, language, motoric and social. Early childhood education staff must pay close attention to the importance of the environment in children's learning.

Family-School Partnership

Over the last twenty years, commissions, organizations, agencies, and most recently, corporations are clamoring for a new concept in education. . .a concept commonly referred to as **partners in education**. The impetus of this concept has been influenced by empirical and practical evidence across the country. The tenet behind this concept is basic: "Education (of our children) is everyone's business." Typical of recommendations made in reports for establishing a partnership among the community, the schools and the families is represented below:

> All groups must learn to communicate better with each other. . .The parents who testified before us share a commitment to quality education for all children, but they often work in isolation or confine their work to one particular issue. We urge all groups to form coalitions, in local communities, develop a common agenda for children, and combine advocacy and political skills to secure that agenda. (*Barriers to Excellence: Our Children At Risk*. 1985, p. 93).

The relevant research on working with parents and families encompasses several areas: support of families, the nature of partnerships, and the nature of the role and involvement of parents.

Support To Families

- Regardless of how parent involvement was organized in 29 preschool programs for disadvantaged children, various parent-training features had a successful effort on short- and long-term gains in achievement (Goodson & Hess, 1975).
- A longitudinal study of Project HOPE (Home Oriented Preschool Education) showed that children ages 3-5 whose parents were trained (by paraprofessionals in the home) to augment daily lessons broadcast on TV, showed consistently higher achievement through the first few years of their school careers than children who received only TV lessons (Gotts, 1980).

- An intensive, family-oriented early childhood intervention program featuring home visits and neighborhood-based parent support groups produced positive effects in student achievement when the children entered public school, especially for children from two-parent families and for children from low-income families (Cochran & Henderson, Jr, 1986).
- Where low-income parents were trained to work with their children, there was a significant improvement in how well children used language skills, performed on tests, and behaved in schools. Parent training also helped parents to develop more positive attitudes about school, about school staff, etc. (Becher, 1984).

Partnerships

- In a large nationwide study, parent involvement was found to be the critical factor in the achievement and aspirations of high school students. Concluding recommendations were made that principals need to take the initiative in tailoring school to the character of the community, to solicit parent participation, and to help parents understand what kind of contribution they can make (McDill, Rigsby, & Meyers, 1969).
- In an exploration of family-school relationships, it's pointed out that, without continuity between home and school, children find it very difficult to integrate the separate experiences (Sinclair, Davies, Fantini, Ghory, Lightfoot, & Tyler, 1980).
- A long-term program to change the governance and organization of two inner-city New Haven schools, partly by including substantial parent involvement, resulted in significant, lasting gains in student achievement (Comer, 1980).
- In this continuation of their 1982 study, the authors found that students in private and Catholic high schools perform better than students from comparable background in public schools, and they speculated that the critical difference lies in the relationship of schools to the communities they serve (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987).
- From 1986-1988, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) sought to identify and describe the characteristics of "promising parent involvement programs" in their five-state region. Through surveys and review of program evaluations, SEDL found seven elements common to all promising programs:
  - written policies (legitimizing parent involvement)
  - administrative support
  - training for staff and parents
  - partnership approach
  - two-way communication
  - networking
  - evaluation

Role/Involvement

- An analysis of several studies of different education intervention programs for disadvantaged children showed that parent intervention acts as kind of a fixative, stabilizing the effects produced by other processes, and that it is effective only when the target is neither the child nor the parent, but the child/parent system (Bronfenbrenner, 1974).
- Coleman found that family background is of critical importance in school achievement, and that attitudes, including self-concept and a sense of control over one's environments, which are formed largely at home, are highly related to achievement in school (Coleman, 1966).
- Parents who use simple, learning-at-home techniques to tutor their children can help to raise their children's achievement. One study found that the experimental group achieved statistically higher scores in reading than the control group. The predominantly black experimental classes scored significantly higher on both reading and math (Rich, 1976).
- Low SES children who have high parental inputs (encouraging hobbies, participating in organized activities, having dinner together, doing things on weekends) and who attend low-income schools do better than low SES children who attend higher-income schools but have low parental inputs (Benson, Buckley, & Medrich, 1980).
- In surveying research on parental involvement and student achievement, one author states that there is consistent evidence that parents' encouragement, activities, interest at home and their participation at school affect their children's achievement, even after the students' ability and family SES is taken into account. The researcher stated that students gain in personal and academic development if their families emphasize schooling, let their children know that they do, and do so continually over the school years (Epstein, 1987).
- Students in grades 1-6, whose parents and teachers responded intensively to a city-wide program helping parents create academic support conditions in the home, gained .5 to .6 grade equivalents in reading comprehension over students less intensively involved. The program stipulated that participating parents would: 1) provide a special place in the home for study; 2) encourage the child daily by discussion; 3) attend to the student's progress in school and compliment the child on such gains; and 4) cooperate with the teacher in providing all of these things properly (Walberg, Bole, & Waxman, 1980).
- Researchers concluded from approximately 6500 questionnaires collected from six high schools in the San Francisco area that parenting style is a more powerful predictor of student achievement than parent education, ethnicity, or family structure (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987)

"Schools that relate well to their communities have student bodies that out-perform other schools" (Henderson, 1987). The overall findings show that schools that are committed to active parent involvement, and that establish ongoing well-designed parent programs, have more successful students than schools that don't. Likewise, children whose parents are actively involved in their education do better in school than children whose parents are not involved.

Program Evaluation

In the past 20 years, the downward shift of academic information and materials to younger and younger children can be directly linked to narrow-based evaluation and accountability in early childhood (Meisels, 1989; Shepherd, 1989). Traditional evaluation procedures seriously hamper the implementation of developmentally appropriate curricula. The usual type of testing done for evaluation affects what is taught as well as how it is taught. It has shaped curricula by identifying the pre-academic rote skills in identifying letters, numbers, shapes, colors, and fine motor skills as valued outcomes because these are the most easily measured. These outcomes define instruction that supports the use of nonexperiential, teacher-made materials such as ditto sheets, cut and paste and "right-wrong" answer activities in large groups. Whether it is conscious or not, district personnel have designed and implemented early education programs that "teach" to the test (Meisels, 1989; Shepherd, 1989). The belief implied by most current evaluation practice, that learning happens by the accumulation of bits of information, is uninformed learning theory (Meisels, 1989).

Another way that traditional evaluation has affected early childhood is by the singularity of focus: only the children's performance is examined. Learning happens in social contexts; and it is, therefore, logical that the influence of teachers and the family should be described as a part of the child's educational process. This has not been done because it cannot be accomplished through usual testing methods.

Finally, the effects of past evaluation procedures have proved to be virtually useless in helping students, educators, and parents improve local educational programs because the usual test scores are not descriptive of the complexity of learning, nor do they provide functional information to support students. In addition, decisions about the evaluation measures and process are almost always externally imposed. The teachers, the children, and their parents usually have no part in deciding what and how a program is to be evaluated. Consequently, there is little ownership or understanding by teachers, parents, or children because they see no benefits. Therefore, the contributions that an evaluation process could provide for program improvements are lost.

If education, at all levels, is to meet the demands of our changing culture, it is amply clear that educational evaluation procedures and processes must be reassessed, moving from product-oriented to process-oriented learning.

The most recent thinking about the purposes of evaluation processes includes: 1) helping students learn to evaluate themselves, and 2) expanding the range and variety of techniques for describing effects (Brandt, 1989; Brown, 1989; Costa, 1989; Heublein, 1987; Meisels, 1989).

Student Self-Evaluation

One dimension of children's self-worth (self-esteem) refers specifically to their own self-evaluations, i.e., their judgments about themselves. The ultimate purpose of evaluation is to support students in evaluating themselves (Costa, 1989). Self-esteem develops in part from being able to perceive ourselves as competent (Marshall, 1989). Perceived competence reflects beliefs one holds about the ability to succeed at particular tasks. Feelings of competence result from being able to act effectively and to master one's environment (Elkind, 1986; White, 1959).

Self-esteem and feelings of competence are related to acquiring a sense of "personal control" (Harter, 1983). This sense of personal control is often referred to as internal locus of control. As children gain competence in gradually widening their sphere, and become aware of that power, they begin to see themselves as causal agents. Perceiving themselves as causal agents, they gain the confidence necessary to maintain the internal locus of control or personal power needed to be a successful learner (Marshall, 1989).

The component of learner self-evaluation as part of the educational program evaluation has far too long been overlooked as a means of accounting for program effects (NAEYC, 1991).

Expanding the Range and Variety of Techniques for Describing Program Effects

Expanding the range of sources for documenting program benefits is important if program evaluation is to better capture the comprehensive nature of program effects. If early childhood programs meet the quality standards as set forth in NAEYC guidelines and criteria, the families, staff, and community, as well as the children, will be affected. Accounting for the benefits to families is an important component in understanding the long term power of intervention programs because when families benefit, children will continue to benefit long after they leave the particular program.

Staff quality is a critical factor in understanding program effectiveness. Unless program accountability includes staff change and growth as a program evaluation component, it is not possible to determine why a program may or may not be effective. Learning to implement developmentally appropriate programs requires on-going staff training. Staff growth in knowledge and practices can be documented and used to define program strengths and needs.

Additionally, an untapped source of program effectiveness data is within the community. Positive change in interagency understanding and support for quality early childhood programs will impact on the sustainability of resources for effective early education programs.

Expanding the range of techniques for describing program effects is a new challenge for early childhood education. Long-term methods of determining the benefits of early learning programs are reliable. In addition to all of the caveats about standardized testing with young children, such as examiner unfamiliarity with the children, unfamiliarity with testing procedures, and cultural biases, the predictability of short-term testing is not reliable. Understanding the real program effects necessitates implementing longitudinal program evaluation. Long-term methods are viable for accounting for family, staff, and community changes as well as child changes.

An alternative to standardized testing of children for program evaluation is portfolio assessment (Heublein, 1987; Wolf, 1989). This is the process of systematically collecting weekly or monthly samples of a child's work over time. This assessment process serves a dual purpose. By reviewing the accumulated work samples in the portfolio on a routine monthly basis, the students are allowed to become thoughtful respondents to, and judges of, their own work (Wolf, 1989). (Some examples of work samples would be: paintings, photographs of children's block structures or play dough creations, pictures they have drawn or cut, attempts at writing, notes on their favorite stories and games

they like to play, pictures of things they bring from home to share.) They begin to learn that evaluation comes from within, that it is a personal responsibility. They learn to gain a comprehensive picture of their intuitions and knowledge and that learning is a process that goes through many drafts. They begin to learn how to question, investigate, think, compare, and express what they are learning (Reif, 1990).

The second purpose served by portfolio assessment is that the teacher has objective data about how and what children have learned. These data have integrity and validity because it is the cumulative result of the students' efforts over time. Teachers can write year-end reports about the students' growth with confidence that the child is realistically represented. After review of the portfolio contents at the end of the year, the teachers and the students jointly determine what they want to send on to the child's next teacher.

The portfolio assessment becomes part of the learning context for the child and the teacher and also serves as a valid measure of child change. As part of the learning-teaching process, evaluation is continually providing useful information.

Another expansion of program evaluation techniques is an assessment of the learning environment. This provides teachers, assistants, and administrators with information about their early childhood learning environment. There is a choice of several different learning environment assessment tools, which can be used to describe changes and growth in understanding how to create good early childhood learning environments. The portfolio evaluation process also allows teachers and assistants to look at their own skills and development.

Expanding evaluation techniques of parent/family involvement and satisfaction can be accomplished in two ways: 1) identification of family strengths and needs, and 2) identification of parent expectations of the program and of themselves as part of the program for their children and for themselves. The identification of parent/family strengths and needs can be gathered through a questionnaire administered during the home visit by school personnel. During these interviews the nature and extent of other community service and agency involvement with the family can also be documented. The identification of parent/family expectations of the program and of themselves as part of the program is a way of facilitating immediate and long-term cooperation between the school and the family. The identification of parent/family satisfaction can be accomplished through a questionnaire administered at year's end. The questions can be derived from the expectations that parents initially identified.

These measures of parent/family involvement and satisfaction are functional to the program for ongoing operation and as a way of projecting future program direction in relation to parents and families.

The nature and extent of community and multi-agency involvement can be derived from two sources. During home visits, information regarding community and agency services can be documented. Specifically, the information generated will include the agencies currently involved with the family, new services generated during the program year and parent satisfaction with program services. In addition, a questionnaire can be completed by each program site delineating its relationship with other agency/community services and the extent of involvement with each of these services.

Issues in Implementing Quality Early Learning Programs

The review of the literature suggests several issues that need to be addressed when implementing quality early learning programs. These issues relate to the program, staff, parent participation, and program effects.

Curriculum Push-Down

Observations in almost any kindergarten program around the United States will reveal that what is now the kindergarten curriculum used to be first grade curriculum ten years ago. Kindergartens are rarely places where children become oriented to the school culture and expand their construction of meaning through play. Whether it is developmentally appropriate or not, children in kindergarten are expected to participate in formal academic learning including reading and math skills. This "push-down" phenomenon has created the untenable situation of many children experiencing failure in kindergarten.

For at least two reasons this kindergarten curriculum shuffle is adversely affecting preschool education in the public schools. First, when public schools began preschool programs, there were no quality guidelines, so the kindergarten programs became the preschool program models. This has been particularly true in public systems that have not employed teachers specifically certified in early childhood education. Teachers with credentials in early elementary education have typically become the preschool staff. Their teacher education training has usually not included developmental information on early learning. Hence, public preschool programs tend to look much like kindergarten programs where formal instruction of skills outweighs child-directed, exploratory play.

A second reason for curriculum push-down is the mistaken belief that formal educational processes "get children ready" for the next grade level: "kindergarten must get children 'ready' for first grade, so preschool must get children 'ready' for kindergarten." In many situations children are repeating in kindergarten what they previously experienced in preschool, all of it developmentally inappropriate. It is imperative that early learning programs become informed about how young children learn and how their learning differs from children in the elementary grades.

Child Burn-Out

Several years ago David Elkind reported on an educational phenomenon that has serious implications for the quality of early childhood programs. In his book, *The Hurried Child*, he describes how exposing children to developmentally inappropriate teaching practices, over time, extinguishes children's natural curiosity and motivation to learn. Formal instruction, according to Elkind (1986), puts excessive demands on preschool-aged children because it is at odds with their natural mode of learning. Additionally, separation from parents, unfamiliar places and adults, and new rules for conduct all add stress to young children's lives. Elkind is concerned that when adults intrude in young children's self-directed learning, insisting on their own priorities, children may be learning to become dependent on adult direction and not trust their own initiative. Sound early education encourages children to feel good about themselves as a consequence of their own achievement, not for performing on adult-directed agendas.

Goodlad (1984, 1986) has indicated that the dominant pattern of teaching within the classroom is teacher-directed with the teacher providing information to passive learners. Teachers need to support the development of active thinking in children, fostering skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation rather than emphasizing memorization of information that often has little relevance to the construction of knowledge (Pooler & Perry, 1985).

Bilingual Development Process

There have been, historically, and continue to be, many empirical and political issues related to second language learning/acquisition and bilingual education. The following is a sample of some typical issues, but it certainly does not cover the wide spectrum of issues on bilingual education.

- Why do second language learners fail in school at such a high rate?

  "A major contributor to early school failure is submersion of nonEnglish-speaking children into classrooms where the children's own culture and language background are neither incorporated or valued." (NAEYC, 1990, p. 24).

- Does bilingual education retard or confuse the second language learner?

  "Both theory and empirical research tells us that proper bilingual education need not retard the development of second language competence and should, in fact, promote it. Classes taught in the first language help children grow in subject matter knowledge and stimulate cognitive development." (Krashen, 1982, p. 76).

  "There exists a persistent belief that for minority children, bilingualism confuses the mind and retards cognitive development. This belief has it roots in some early attempts to explain why immigrants from southern and eastern Europe were performing poorly on IQ tests. However, research now shows that there is no such thing as retardation caused by bilingualism; if anything, the development of a second language can have positive effects on thinking skills." (Hakuta & Gould, 1987, p. 41).

- Are English immersion programs better for second language learners?

  "Obviously children in immersion programs have more exposure to English, but they do not necessarily have more comprehensible input; it is comprehensible input, not merely 'hear' language, that makes language acquisition happen. Thus, (immersion) classes, at worst, may be providing children only with noise. The results of this are darkly tragic: Children will fall behind in subject matter and will not acquire the second language." (Krashen, 1982, p. 76).

  Snow and Hoefoangle-Hohle (1977, 1978) have stated that there are no factual bases to the beliefs that young children are fast and effortless language learners, and that if children have not mastered the second language by early school years, they never will.

  "...the rates at which children learn a second language vary widely; the process is not necessarily swift or painless. No evidence, however, supports the common sense of urgency about introducing children to English early and mainstreaming them as soon as possible thereafter. It is more important to offer basic literacy skills to children in their home language." (Hakuta & Gould, 1987, p. 42).

- What can be done to improve second language learners' self-esteem?

  Inn (1983) demonstrated that bilingual education can upgrade the status of previously stigmatized languages and cultures, if those languages are used in the schools and if teachers and administrators from that ethnic background are hired.

- What can be done to improve second language learners' educational success in school?

  Power and status relations between minority and majority groups appear to exert a major influence on school performance (Cummins, 1984; Ogbu, 1978). A number of studies, internationally, have indicated that minority groups that tend to experience academic difficulty appear to have developed an insecurity and ambivalence about the value of their own cultural identity as a result of their interactions with the dominant culture (Cummins, 1986; Epstein, 1977; Ogbu & Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Skutnabb-Kangas & Toukomaa, 1976). Minority students will succeed educationally to the extent that the patterns of interaction in school reverse those in the society at large. Cummins (1989) poses four institutional characteristics of schools which may reverse the educational disabling of minority students:

  1. minority students' language and culture are incorporated into the school program;
  2. minority community participation is encouraged as an integral component of children's education;
  3. the pedagogy promotes intrinsic motivation on the part of students to use language actively in order to generate their own knowledge; and
  4. professionals involved in assessment become advocates for minority students by focusing primarily on the ways in which students' academic difficulty is a function of interactions within the school context rather than legitimizing the location of the "problem" with students.

Program Effectiveness

Longitudinal benefits for early childhood programs have been difficult to document. The Perry Preschool Project in Ypsilanti, Michigan, identified several major aspects of benefit for the participants in that early childhood program. The benefits were that preschool participation had apparently increased the percentages of persons, who at age 19, were literate, employed, and enrolled in postsecondary education, whereas it had reduced the percentages who were school dropouts, labeled mentally retarded, and on welfare. Research to support the benefits of early childhood intervention for children diagnosed with handicapping conditions has clearly been effective especially when families are actively involved with the intervention program. Initial data from the Head Start programs showed that the early effects of a "headstart" were only evident into the third grade. On the anniversary of Head Start's 25th anniversary this year, more current data and research is needed to truly understand its long term effects.

More research is needed to look not only at early childhood programs, but at their quality and methods of intervention to determine what programs do, in fact, show the most positive and lasting long term effects.

Parent Participation/Family-School Partnership

Society today is more complex than ever. Because of this, social and economic adversities impinge upon families in more dramatic ways than before. As a result, collaborations, communications, and cooperation between school and families are critical for the educational success of young children, especially young children at-risk. The following issues, though not all inclusive, represent typical concerns of educators and parents.

The issue of providing structure for the parent who wishes to become involved may, at first glance, seem the easiest to resolve. However, research shows that even the most enthusiastic, concerned parent will lose interest if assignments are not meaningful. Involvement is lower when parents feel less able to influence their school system. To sustain interest, programs must be well-planned, comprehensive and long-lasting. The parent who feels he/she has some responsibility, who feels he/she is making, if not a difference, at least a contribution, is more likely to continue a higher rate of involvement.

A family room or coffee area for parents in school helps to create a welcome and accepting environment. The room or area should contain handouts and books for parents and materials for parents to check out. Some schools also provide a book, toy, and game lending library.

The attitude of school personnel toward parent involvement is of the utmost importance. School personnel may benefit from inservice training on certain aspects of school-home interactions.

- What are some considerations for involving disenfranchised families such as language minority families?

  "Involving hard-to-reach parents in activities at school requires extra effort, e.g., planning activities that involve the whole family, making transportation available, providing babysitting, and personal invitations and telephone calls conveying the message that they are truly wanted. Reaching hard-to-reach parents may also call for going to parents—spending time in neighborhoods and homes in order to better understand the special needs of students and their parents." (Blendinger & Jones, 1988).

  "Teachers who do not live in the neighborhood have no idea what kind of environment their students come from. It is important for school staffs to tour and get to know the neighborhoods in which their students live." (Blendigner & Jones, 1988).

Many professionals believe that the overwhelming majority of parents, regardless of their success and educational backgrounds, possess the basic strengths and abilities to help their children achieve (National Clearinghouse, 1984). The key must be starting with what the family has, instead of worrying about what it doesn't have. Family situations must dictate when, how, and in what areas to begin working with parents. Consider a process similar to writing an individual educational plan; work with parents to assess the family situation, select specific objectives, provide a strategy, then evaluate the results (Bricker & Casuso, 1979).

- What do parents and families want from schools?

When interviewed, parents prefer more regular, informal contacts by teachers through less time-consuming phone calls or notes (if students are reliable in delivering them). Also, limited conference time (10 minutes—with other parents waiting in line) conveys to parents that teachers do not have time to find out, or are not interested in finding out, what the parent can share about the child or answer any questions the parent may have.

Not all parents want or need the same degree of involvement. In fact, there is some evidence that what professionals are offering frequently isn't what parents want. For example, only 20% to 40% of a potential population will attend skill-training parent groups at any given time. While this appears to be a preferred method for professionals to use, it often is not what parents want (Kroth, 1980).

Teachers who visit the homes of students find they make progress in getting families involved in the education of their children. Home visits are a popular and effective approach for preschool programs and should be considered for all grade levels. They provide an especially effective method of involving low-income families who tend to have the greatest difficulty getting involved in the schools. Home visits prove most successful when they are planned and records are kept (Wolf & Stephens, 1989).

- What should schools know about shared governance between schools and families?

The process is two-fold: 1) to have parents identify five expectations they have of the educators and five expectations they have of themselves in relation to their children's educational program, and 2) to have educators identify five expectations they have of themselves in relation to the child's educational program and five expectations they have of the parents in relation to the child's educational program. These expectations are written out individually and then shared. This part of the process is critical. Writing the expectations for both the educator and the parent provides some time to think, it is less risky, and there is more responsibility in writing it, and then talking about it.

After sharing the written expectations, the parent and the educator, or the group, reaches consensus on the expectations for parents and the expectations for educators in implementing the child(ren)'s educational program.

This process has been dramatically effective in demonstrating the respect needed to create partnerships and at the same time clearly reveal the expected responsibilities of each group. From this information, goals for parent involvement at both the individual and program level are revealed. Additionally, the information needed to design parent and educator satisfaction survey for evaluation is completed (Heublein, 1988).

"The (educational) approaches with the most potential are those where parents play a variety of roles, including decision-making, and where there is a structured program of training, for both parents and school personnel." (Leler, 1983).

Class Size

Research in early childhood programs has demonstrated that limited class size is related to positive outcomes for children. However, qualifications of the staff must be considered in providing the best possible intervention and should be based on a strong understanding of child development and how staff's philosophical beliefs, about how children learn, interacts with their knowledge base.

Staff Development

Lillian Katz (1990), a leader in the field of early childhood education, has stated that the younger the child, the more skilled the educator must be. Therefore, staff development is a critical factor in the successful implementation of any early childhood program.

Another difficulty with staff development has been that there are no clearly defined guidelines for initial staff qualifications as programs are being implemented. Establishment of qualifications is generally at the discretion of the local programs. Inservice training programs for staff have been minimal and pre-service training has often not addressed the current research in how children learn. Because the area of accountability in early childhood programs is relatively new, more information must be gathered to determine who the best possible program staff are and what staff objectives are optimal for the long term effects that are in the best interests of children.

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APPENDIX B
District and Campus Statewide Survey Instruments

An Evaluation of Prekindergarten Programs In Texas
1990-91

TO:	District Contact Person for Prekindergarten Programs
FROM:	Division of Program Evaluation, Texas Education Agency
SUBJECT:	An Evaluation of Prekindergarten Programs in Texas
DUE DATE:	January 25, 1991
QUESTIONS:	Call the Division of Program Evaluation at the Texas Education Agency at (512) 463-9524

The Texas Education Agency (Agency) is conducting a study of prekindergarten education programs for three- and four-year-old students in Texas. The purpose of this data collection is to assess the implementation of prekindergarten programs statewide at both the district and campus levels.

This green data collection instrument (enclosed) requests information about the implementation of the prekindergarten program at the **DISTRICT** level and has two parts. **PART I REQUESTS INFORMATION FROM THE 1990-91 SCHOOL YEAR. PART II REQUESTS INFORMATION FROM THE 1989-90 SCHOOL YEAR.**

The blue data collection instrument(s) (enclosed) requests information about the implementation of the prekindergarten program at the CAMPUS level. This instrument(s) is to be distributed to **EACH** campus in your school district offering a prekindergarten program. It is to be completed by the staff or faculty member most familiar with the program on each campus.

Data collected during the 1990-91 school year will be the basis of a report to the State Board of Education (SBOE). Once the report has been presented to the SBOE, your school district will be provided a copy. All data will be aggregated so that no one district, campus, or staff can be identified. None of the data collected will be used for compliance or accreditation purposes.

While there is a considerable amount of information requested, it is essential to the statewide assessment of the prekindergarten program. Please make a reasonable effort to provide as complete and accurate information as possible.

As the district's contact person, your responsibilities include:

1. Completing the enclosed **DISTRICT** level data collection instrument (green form) and returning it to the Agency no later than January 25, 1991. This instrument requests information regarding the overall administration of the prekindergarten program in your school district.

2. Distributing the enclosed **CAMPUS** level data collection instrument(s) (blue form) to **EACH** elementary school listed on the attached list. If a campus does not offer a prekindergarten program, please indicate that no program is offered on the cover of the campus data collection instrument and return the data collection instrument to the Agency.

3. Collecting the completed campus level data collection instrument(s) from each campus and reviewing them to verify the accuracy of the information provided. Once the campus data collection instrument(s) has been collected and verified, please return both the district level data collection instrument and the campus level data collection instrument(s) to the following address no later than January 25, 1991.

Texas Education Agency
Division of Program Evaluation (Prekindergarten)
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494

District Name

County-District Number

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY
Division of Program Evaluation

District Report for Prekindergarten Programs

1990-91

Authority for Data Collection: Texas Education Code 11.63(a)(3).

Planned Use of the Data: Report of statewide evaluation of prekindergarten programs.

Instructions: The data collection instrument contains information related to implementation of the prekindergarten program. Each school district contact person will complete a district-level data collection instrument and distribute a campus-level data collection instrument to each campus in the district offering a prekindergarten program. The program coordinator will then return both the district-level data collection instrument and the campus-level data collection instrument(s) to the Texas Education Agency. For answers to questions regarding the data collection instrument, contact the Division of Program Evaluation at (512) 463-9524.

Typed Name of District Contact Person	Date	Telephone No.

Please submit one copy of the district-level data collection instrument by January 25, 1991.
DATE

Texas Education Agency
Division of Program Evaluation (Prekindergarten)
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494

Thank you for your cooperation.

Prekindergarten Study
School District Data Collection Instrument

1990-91

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PERSON MOST FAMILIAR WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM IN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT.

PART I

PLEASE RESPOND TO QUESTIONS 1-27, AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 1990.

1. **Enter** the school year in which the prekindergarten program was first implemented at your school district. 19 _____

2. **Enter** the total number of nonhandicapped students enrolled in the prekindergarten program as of November 30, 1990, in the blanks below "Number Served."

	Number Served	
	Males	**Females**
a. American Indian or Alaskan Native	_____	_____
b. Asian or Pacific Islander	_____	_____
c. Black, Not Hispanic	_____	_____
d. Hispanic	_____	_____
e. White, Not Hispanic	_____	_____

3. **Enter** the number of students enrolled in the prekindergarten program from families whose income is at or below subsistence level. Use the criteria for the Free/Reduced Price Lunch Program as the basis for calculating this number of students. _____

4. **Enter** the number of prekindergarten students who are limited English proficient. _____

5. **Enter** the approximate percentage of **eligible** children enrolled in the prekindergarten program in your district. _____%

6. **Enter** a "1" for "yes" or a "2" for "no" in the blank if transportation is provided by your school district for prekindergarten students. _____

7. **Enter** a "1" in the blank next to the names of other agencies or organizations cooperating with your school to provide services for prekindergarten students.

   a. Head Start Program _____
   b. Texas Department of Human Services _____
   c. Cooperation with other school districts _____
   d. Other agencies or organizations (list) _____ _____
   e. _____ _____
   f. _____ _____

8. **Enter** a "1" in the blank next to the type of cooperative prekindergarten activities your school district conducts with other agencies and organizations.

   Type of Activity

   a. Coordinated screening/referral _____
   b. Cooperative planning _____
   c. Shared instruction (prekindergarten teacher also teaches in Head Start or vice-versa) _____
   d. Shared facilities _____
   e. Cooperative transportation arrangements _____
   f. Cooperative arrangements with medical, counseling services _____
   g. Other cooperative activities (specify) _____ _____

9. **Enter** the number of **certified** or **endorsed** prekindergarten teachers that are currently providing instruction for prekindergarten students in your school district by number of years of experience.

Number of Years Teaching	Number of Teachers
a. 1 to 2 years	_____
b. 3 to 5 years	_____
c. 6 or more years	_____

10. **Enter** the number of prekindergarten faculty or staff members who have received the level of training described.

Level of Training	Number of Teachers	Number of Instructional Assistants
a. Master's/doctorate in early childhood development/education	_____	_____
b. Bachelor's degree in early childhood development/education	_____	_____
c. Early childhood endorsement	_____	_____
d. Bilingual endorsement	_____	_____
e. ESL endorsement	_____	_____
f. Child development associate credentials (CDA)	_____	_____
g. Some early childhood education courses	_____	_____
h. No training in early childhood development/education	_____	_____

	Certified	Non-Certified
11. **Enter** the number of **certified** and **non-certified** prekindergarten teachers currently employed.	_____	_____

	Certified	Non-Certified
12. **Enter** the number of **certified** and **non-certified** prekindergarten teacher aides and instructional assistants currently employed.	_____	_____

13. **Enter** the estimated amount of capital outlay for additional buildings needed specifically as a result of the implementation of the prekindergarten program. $ _____

14. **Enter** the estimated amount of capital outlay for equipment (e.g. sand table, playground) needed specifically for the implementation of the prekindergarten program. $ _____

15. **Enter** the estimated annual expenditure for materials ordered specifically for the prekindergarten program. $ _____

SERVICES TO THREE-YEAR-OLD STUDENTS

For questions 16-18 ENTER a "1" for "yes" or a "2" for "no" in the blank to the right of each question.

16. Does your district serve nonhandicapped three-year-old students? _____

IF YOUR RESPONSE TO QUESTION 16 WAS NO, SKIP TO QUESTION 26.

17. Are three- and four-year-old students served in the same class? _____

18. Is transportation provided for nonhandicapped three-year-old students? _____

19. **Enter** the number of campuses in your district that are providing services to nonhandicapped three-year-old students. _____

20. **Enter** the number of nonhandicapped three-year-old students in your district who are being served. _____

21. **Enter** the number of three-year-old students from families whose income is at or below subsistence level. Use the criteria for the Free/Reduced Price Lunch program as the basis for calculating this number of students. _____

22. **Enter** the number of nonhandicapped three-year-old students receiving services who are limited English proficient. _____

23. **Enter** a "1" in the blank next to each source of revenue utilized in providing services to nonhandicapped three-year-old students.
    a. Chapter 1 _____
    b. Migrant Program _____
    c. State Funded Pilot Projects _____
    d. District Funds _____
    e. Other (please specify) _____ _____

24. **Enter** a "1" in the blank next to each agency that the district is contracting with to provide services for nonhandicapped three-year-old students.
    a. Head Start _____
    b. Private Profit Preschool _____
    c. Private Non-Profit Preschool _____
    d. Private Profit Day Care Center _____
    e. Private Non-Profit Day Care Center _____
    f. Church Preschool _____
    g. Church Day Care _____
    h. Other (please specify) _____ _____

25. **Enter** a "1" in the blank next to the facility where programs for nonhandicapped three year olds are provided.

    a. School Facility _____

    b. Community Facility _____

    c. Contracting Agency's Facility _____ _____
    (Please describe)

    d. Child's Home _____

    e. Combination of above _____ _____
    (Please describe)

26. **Enter** a "1" for "yes" or a "2" for "no" if your district plans to serve nonhandicapped three-year-old students in the 1991-92 school year if state funds for this purpose are available. _____

27. **Enter** a "1" for "yes" or a "2" for "no" if your district plans to serve nonhandicapped three-year-old students in the 1991-92 school year if state funds for this purpose are **not** available. _____

PART II

PLEASE RESPOND TO QUESTIONS 28-33, ACCORDING TO THE *1989-90* PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM.

28. Indicate the types and the number of times during the **1989-90** school year each of the following methods were used to inform parents of the availability of prekindergarten education programs by **entering** the appropriate number in the blanks under "Times Per Year." Include all that apply. If a method was not used, do not enter a number in the blank.

Method	**Times Per Year**
a. Local newspaper	_____
b. School or school district newsletter	_____
c. Special bulletin	_____
d. Parent-teacher organization	_____
e. Flyer/brochure	_____
f. Television	_____
g. Radio	_____
h. Other (please specify) _____	_____

For questions 29-31 ENTER a "1" for "yes" or a "2" for "no" in the blank to the right of each question.

29. In addition to staff development activities required for all teachers during **1989-90**, did your school district provide prekindergarten faculty members with released time or paid personal time to engage in staff development programs specifically for early childhood education? _____

30. Did prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers attend the same training sessions during **1989-90**? _____

31. Were first grade teachers also included in the training sessions for prekindergarten teachers during **1989-90**? _____

32. **Enter** a "1" in the blank to the right of each type of staff development activity attended by prekindergarten faculty and staff during the **1989-90** school year.

a. Workshops	_____
b. Seminars	_____
c. Professional conferences	_____
d. University courses	_____
e. Other (specify) _____	_____

33. In the blank to the right of each topic, **enter** the number of times each topic was offered by your school district to prekindergarten faculty members. Include all topics offered during the **1989-90** school year.

Topic	**Times Offered During School Year**
a. Child-centered activities	_____
b. Managing learning centers	_____
c. Montessori methods	_____
d. Assessment techniques	_____
e. Children's cognitive development	_____
f. Developmentally appropriate instruction	_____
g. Cooperative Learning	_____
h. Whole Language	_____
i. Other topics _____	_____
j. _____	_____
k. _____	_____
l. _____	_____

For questions 34-38, attach additional sheets if necessary.

34. Is the prekindergarten program in your district based upon a particular program model or method of instruction such as Montessori, High Scope, etc.? Please describe the approach or approaches the program is based upon.

35. What are those aspects of the prekindergarten programs that are most effective in your district?

36. What are the program areas that need improvement?

37. Are adequate resources available to all campuses offering a prekindergarten program? If not, what resources would most benefit the program?

38. Are there additional comments that you would like to share?

SUPPLEMENTAL DATA REQUIRED BY SENATE BILL #1

Senate Bill 1, §3.08 requires that information be collected to investigate the potential of coordination between the prekindergarten program and government-funded early childhood care and education programs for the purpose of providing quality cost-effective care for children during the full work day. A summary of the responses is scheduled to be presented to the State Board of Education in February 1991. Please respond to questions 1-7 below for the **1990-91** school year as completely and accurately as possible.

1. **Enter** a "1" for "yes" or a "2" for "no" if your school district provides adult-supervised extended care for prekindergarten students before/after the prekindergarten program so that eight or more hours of care, including the time spent in the prekindergarten program, is available. _____

1a. If your response was "yes," **enter** the approximate percentage of prekindergarten students receiving this service. Leave blank if no prekindergarten students are receiving this service. _____%

2. **Enter** a "1" for "yes" or a "2" for "no" if your school district has made arrangements with another agency(s) to provide adult-supervised extended care for prekindergarten students before/after the prekindergarten program. _____

2a. If your response was "yes," **enter** the approximate percentage of prekindergarten students receiving this service. Leave blank if no prekindergarten students are receiving this service. _____%

3. **Estimate** the approximate percentage of students who are eligible for the prekindergarten program but **do not** attend because full day child care is unavailable. _____%

4. **Enter** in the blanks below any other non-school district agency(s)/organization(s) (nonprofit, public, or private) in your service area that could provide sites for prekindergarten programs.

a. _____ d. _____

b. _____ e. _____

c. _____ f. _____

5. **Rank order** from 1 to 5, with 1 being the highest rank, the sources used for writing developmentally appropriate curricula:
   a. Parent and community input _____
   b. National Association for Education of Young Children guidelines _____
   c. TEA essential elements _____
   d. Guidelines from other programs such as Headstart, Chapter 44 of the Human Resources Code _____
   e. Other (please identify) _____ _____

6. **Enter** a "1" for "yes" or a "2" for "no" if a formal evaluation of the prekindergarten program is conducted by your school district. _____

7. **Enter** a "1" for "yes" or a "2" for "no" if your school district evaluates the **developmental appropriateness** of the prekindergarten program. _____

7a. If your response was "yes," **enter** a "1" next to the following areas included as part of the evaluation.
   a. Theoretical Framework _____
   b. Curriculum Goals _____
   c. Student-Teacher Interactions _____
   d. Physical Environment _____
   e. Materials _____
   f. Parent Involvement _____
   g. Staffing _____
   h. Other (Please describe) _____ _____

7b. If additional components of the prekindergarten program are being evaluated, please describe in the space below.

An Evaluation of Prekindergarten Programs In Texas

1990-91

TO:	Campus Contact Person for Prekindergarten Programs
FROM:	Division of Program Evaluation, Texas Education Agency
SUBJECT:	An Evaluation of Prekindergarten Programs in Texas
DUE DATE:	As Provided by the District Contact Person
QUESTIONS:	Call the Division of Program Evaluation at the Texas Education Agency at (512) 463-9524

The Texas Education Agency (Agency) is conducting a study of prekindergarten education programs for three- and four-year-old students in Texas. The purpose of this data collection is to assess the implementation of prekindergarten programs statewide at both the district and campus levels.

This data collection instrument requests information about the implementation of prekindergarten programs on school campuses and has two parts. **PART I REQUESTS INFORMATION FROM THE 1990-91 SCHOOL YEAR. PART II REQUESTS INFORMATION FROM THE 1989-90 SCHOOL YEAR.**

Data collected during the 1990-91 school year will be the basis of a report to the State Board of Education (SBOE). Once the report has been presented to the SBOE, your school district will be provided a copy. All data will be aggregated so that no one district, campus, or staff can be identified. None of these data will be used for compliance or accreditation purposes.

While there is a considerable amount of information requested, it is essential to the statewide assessment of the prekindergarten program. Please make a reasonable effort to provide as complete and accurate information as possible.

As the campus contact person for this data collection effort, your responsibilities include:

- completing the attached campus level data collection instrument, and
- returning the attached campus data collection instrument to the school district contact person. This instrument requests information regarding the overall administration of the prekindergarten program on your campus.

Thank you for your cooperation.

County-District-Campus Number

___ ___ ___ - ___ ___ ___ - ___ ___ ___

District Name

Campus Name

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY
Division of Program Evaluation

Campus Report for Prekindergarten Programs

1990-91

Authority for Data Collection: Texas Education Code 11.63(a)(3).

Planned Use of the Data: Report of statewide evaluation of prekindergarten programs.

Instructions: The data collection instrument contains information related to implementation of the prekindergarten program. Each school district contact person will distribute a campus-level data collection instrument to EACH campus in the district offering a prekindergarten program. This instrument(s) is to be completed by the person most familiar with the implementation of the prekindergarten program on the campus and returned to the district contact person. The district contact person will then return both the district-level data collection instrument and the campus-level data collection instrument(s) to the Texas Education Agency. For answers to questions regarding the data collection instrument, contact the Division of Program Evaluation at (512) 463-9524.

ONCE COMPLETED, THIS DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT SHOULD BE RETURNED TO YOUR DISTRICT CONTACT PERSON.

PLEASE DO NOT RETURN THIS INSTRUMENT TO THE TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY.

Typed Name of Campus Contact Person	Date	Telephone No.

Prekindergarten Study
Campus Data Collection Instrument

ALL 58 QUESTIONS ARE TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PERSON MOST FAMILIAR WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM ON THIS CAMPUS.

PART I

PLEASE RESPOND TO QUESTIONS 1-34 AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 1990, IN TERMS OF THIS SCHOOL ONLY.

1. **Enter** the number of classrooms in each category of the prekindergarten program at your school in the blanks to the right. "Bilingual" refers to programs that make use of the student's primary language for instruction. "ESL" refers to emphasis on oral language development using English as a second language methodology.

Type of Program	Number of Classrooms
a. Half-day Pre-k	_____
b. Half-day Pre-k (bilingual)	_____
c. Half-day Pre-k (ESL)	_____
d. 2 half-day Pre-k sessions: different students in each session	_____
e. 2 half-day Pre-k sessions (bilingual): different students in each session	_____
f. 2 half-day Pre-k sessions (ESL): different students in each session	_____
g. Full-day Pre-k: Same students all day	_____
h. Full-day Pre-k (bilingual): Same students all day	_____
i. Full-day Pre-k (ESL): Same students all day	_____
j. Summer eight-week bilingual Pre-k	_____
k. Other type of program (please describe) _____	_____

2. **Enter** the school year in which the prekindergarten program was first implemented at your school. 19_____

3. **Enter** the total number of students enrolled in the prekindergarten program on this campus as of Novernber 30, 1990, in the blanks below "Number Served."

	Number Served	
	Males	**Females**
a. American Indian or Alaskan Native	_____	_____
b. Asian or Pacific Islander	_____	_____
c. Black, Not Hispanic	_____	_____
d. Hispanic	_____	_____
e. White, Not Hispanic	_____	_____

4. **Estimate** the number of students provided the following services in the blanks to the right.

a. Counseling _____

b. Clothing _____

c. Nutrition _____

d. Health _____

e. Other (please specify) _____ _____

f. Other (please specify) _____ _____

5. **Enter** the number of limited English proficient students who use each of the following languages as their primary language in the blanks under "Number of Students."

Language	Number of Students	Language	Number of Students
a. Spanish	_____	g. Laotian	_____
b. Chinese	_____	h. Japanese	_____
c. French	_____	i. Thai	_____
d. Vietnamese	_____	j. Cambodian	_____
e. Korean	_____	k. Arabic	_____
f. German	_____	l. Farsi	_____

Other Languages	Number of Students	Other Languages	Number of Students
m. _____	_____	o. _____	_____
n. _____	_____	p. _____	_____

For questions 6-17 ENTER your response(s) in the blank(s) to the right of each question.

6. **Enter** the number of **certified** or **endorsed** prekindergarten teachers that are currently providing instruction for prekindergarten students by number of years of experience in the blanks to the right.

Number of Years Teaching	Number of Teachers
a. 1 to 2 years	_____
b. 3 to 5 years	_____
c. 6 or more years	_____

7 **Enter** the number of prekindergarten faculty and staff members who have received the level of training described.

Level of Training	Number of Teachers	Number of Instructional Assistants
a. Master's/doctorate in early childhood development/education	_____	_____
b. Bachelor's degree in early childhood development/education	_____	_____
c. Early childhood endorsement	_____	_____
d. Bilingual endorsement	_____	_____
e. ESL endorsement	_____	_____
f. Child development associate credentials (CDA)	_____	_____
g. Some early childhood education courses	_____	_____
h. No training in early childhood development/education	_____	_____

8. **Enter** the number of prekindergarten teachers that are on SPECIAL PERMITS (emergency teaching/special assignments/vocational permits). _____

9. **Enter** the average time a prekindergarten teacher at this school spends on team planning per week, when they are on duty, but not in contact with children. _____ minutes/week

10. **Enter** the average time spent per week by a prekindergarten teacher on discussion/planning/coordination between prekindergarten and kindergarten curricula. _____ minutes/week

11. **Enter** a "1" next to the description of the instructional assistants' **primary** role in the prekindergarten classrooms at your school. **Enter a "1" in only one blank.** Leave blank if there is no assistant in the prekindergarten classroom.

    a. Assist the teacher in preparing classroom materials (cutting, pasting, etc.) _____

    b. Assist the teacher in working with the children on an individual basis _____

    c. Provide small group instruction while the teacher provides individual instruction _____

    d. Other primary role (describe) _____ _____

    _____

12. **Enter** the approximate percentage of **eligible** children in your attendance area are enrolled in the prekindergarten program on this campus. _____%

13. **Enter** the number of prekindergarten students from families whose income is at or below subsistence level. Use the criteria for the Free/Reduced Price Lunch program as the basis for calculating the number of students. _____

14. **Enter** the number of prekindergarten students enrolled on this campus who are limited English proficient. _____

15. **Enter** the number of prekindergarten students provided transportation. _____

16. **Enter** a "1" in the blank next to the names of other agencies or organizations cooperating with your school to provide services for prekindergarten students.

    a. Head Start Program _____

    b. Texas Department of Human Services _____

    c. Cooperation with other school districts _____

    d. Other agencies or organizations (list) _____ _____

    e. _____ _____

    f. _____ _____

17. **Enter** a "1" in the blank next to each type of activity conducted in cooperation with other agencies.

    Type of Activity

    a. Coordinated screening/referral _____

    b. Cooperative planning _____

    c. Shared instruction (prekindergarten teacher also teaches in Head Start or vice-versa) _____

    d. Shared facilities _____

    e. Cooperative transportation arrangements _____

    f. Cooperative arrangements with medical, counseling services _____

    g. Other cooperative activities (specify) _____ _____

For questions 18-26 ENTER a "1" for "yes" and "2" for "no" in the blank to the right of each question.

18. Are prekindergarten faculty members at your school required to make home visits? _____

19. Is screening for gifted/talented four-year-old students a part of your prekindergarten program? _____

20. Is a formal evaluation of the prekindergarten program conducted at this school? _____

21. Does your school have an outdoor playground for students' recreational activities? _____

22. If an outdoor playground is available, is it adequate for the prekindergarten program's needs? _____

23. Does your prekindergarten serve nonhandicapped three-year-old students? _____

If your response to *Question* 23 is "no," skip to Question 27.

24. Are three- and four-year-old students served in the same class? _____

25. Is transportation provided for three-year-old students? _____

26. Are migrant students enrolled in the prekindergarten program for three-year-old students? _____

27. **Enter** a "1" in the blank next to the type of tests used to assess students in the prekindergarten program. Include as many as apply. If no tests are used, leave blank.

    a. Readiness testing for mathematics, reading _____
    b. Language assessment _____
    c. Abilities testing _____
    d. Achievement testing _____
    e. Screening for gifted and talented students _____
    f. Testing with teacher-made pencil/paper tests _____
    g. Inventory of physical development _____
    h. Other _____ _____

28. For students enrolled in the bilingual or ESL program, **ENTER** a "1" in the blank next to the type of tests used to assess limited English proficient students in their primary language. **ENTER** a "2" if students are assessed in English. **ENTER** a "3" if students are tested in **both** languages. If no tests are used, leave blank.

	Bilingual PreK	ESL PreK
a. Readiness testing for mathematics, reading	_____	_____
b. Language assessment	_____	_____
c. Abilities testing	_____	_____
d. Achievement testing	_____	_____
e. Screening for gifted and talented students	_____	_____
f. Testing with teacher-made pencil/paper tests	_____	_____
g. Inventory of physical development	_____	_____
h. Other _____	_____	_____

29. **Enter** a "1" in the blank next to each oral language assessment instrument used for measuring students' language proficiency.

a. Language Assessment Scales (Pre-LAS) _____
b. Bilingual Syntax Measure (BSM) _____
c. IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT, Pre-IPT) _____
d. Maculaitis Assessment Program _____
e. Basic Inventory of Natural Language (BINL) _____
f. Language Assessment Battery (LAB) _____
g. Other instruments _____ _____

30. **Enter** a "1" in the blank next to the types of centers in use at your school for the prekindergarten program. Include as many as are applicable.

a. Home living and creative dramatics _____
b. Block _____
c. Manipulative _____
d. Science _____
e. Listening _____
f. Art _____
g. Library _____
h. Language Arts _____
i. Woodworking _____
j. Sand/water _____
k. Other types of learning centers _____ _____
l. _____ _____
m. _____ _____

For questions 31-34, please enter a response for each type of program on your campus in the blanks to the right of each question.

31. **Enter** the percentage of the prekindergarten day a student spends in the following types of instruction	PreK	Bilingual PreK	ESL PreK
a. Direct instruction (teacher-initiated activities)	_____%	_____%	_____%
b. Child-initiated activities	_____%	_____%	_____%
c Large group activities involving most students	_____%	_____%	_____%
d. Small group activities	_____%	_____%	_____%
e. Teacher-student individual instructior	_____%	_____%	_____%
f. Learning center activities	_____%	_____%	_____%
g. Other types of instruction. List _____.	_____%	_____%	_____%
h. _____	_____%	_____%	_____%
i. _____	_____%	_____%	_____%
j. _____	_____%	_____%	_____%

	PreK	Bilingual PreK	ESL PreK
32. **Enter** the percentage of the school day allocated for outdoor activities.	_____%	_____%	_____%

	PreK	Bilingual PreK	ESL PreK
33. **Enter** the average student/teacher ratio for your prekindergarten program (not including teacher aides or instructional assistants, e.g., enter 15:1 for fifteen students per teacher ratio).	___:___	___:___	___:___

	PreK	Bilingual PreK	ESL PreK
34. **Enter** the percentage of the day an instructional assistant spends in the prekindergarten classroom. Leave blank if there is no assistant in the prekindergarten classroom.	_____%	_____%	_____%

PART II

PLEASE RESPOND TO QUESTIONS 35-52, ACCORDING TO THE *1989-90* PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM IN TERMS OF YOUR SCHOOL ONLY.

For questions 35-39 please enter a response for each type of program on your campus in the blanks to the right of each question.

	PreK	Bilingual PreK	ESL PreK
35. **Enter** the approximate percentage of prekindergarten students' parents who participated in parent-teacher conferences at the school, during the **1989-90** school year.	_____%	_____%	_____%
36. **Enter** the approximate percentage of prekindergarten students' parents who participated in parent-teacher organizations at your school during the **1989-90** school year.	_____%	_____%	_____%
37. **Enter** the approximate percentage of prekindergarten students' parents who participated in classroom activities in **1989-90**.	_____%	_____%	_____%
38. **Enter** the approximate percentage of students in the prekindergarten program whose teacher made one or more home visits during the **1989-90** school year. Do not enter a number if no home visits were made.	_____%	_____%	_____%
39. **Enter** the approximate NUMBER of prekindergarten students at this school who were retained at the end of the **1989-90** school year.	_____	_____	_____

40. **Enter** a "1" in the blank to the right of each type of staff development activity attended by prekindergarten teachers and instructional assistants during the **1989-90** school year. Include all that apply.

	Teachers	Instructional Assistants
a. Workshops	_____	_____
b. Seminars	_____	_____
c. Professional conferences	_____	_____
d. Graduate courses	_____	_____
e. Other (specify)_____	_____	_____

41. **Enter** the number of times each staff development training topic was offered on this campus during the **1989-90** school year. Include all topics offered.

Topic	Times Offered During School Year
a. Child-centered activities	_____
b. Managing learning centers	_____
c. Montessori methods	_____
d. Assessment techniques	_____
e. Children's cognitive development	_____
f. Developmentally appropriate instruction	_____
g. Cooperative Learning	_____
h. Whole Language	_____
i. Other topics _____	_____
j. _____	_____
k. _____	_____
l. _____	_____

42. **Enter** the average number of inservice sessions related to prekindergarten programs attended by members of this school's prekindergarten teachers during the **1989-90** school year only. _____

43. **Enter** the average number of inservice sessions related to prekindergarten programs attended by members of this school's prekindergarten instructional assistants during the **1989-90** school year only. _____

44. **Enter** a "1" in the blank next to each classroom activity in which parents participated during the 1989-90 school year.

a. Preparation of materials for the classroom teacher	_____
b. Reading to a group of students	_____
c. Working individually with students on tutorial basis	_____
d. Supervision of regular school activities	_____
e. Other activities (describe) _____	_____
f. _____	_____
g. _____	_____

For questions 45-47 ENTER a "1" for "yes" and "2" for "no" in the blank to the right of each question.

45. Did your school provide prekindergarten faculty members with released time or paid personal time to engage in staff development programs? _____

46. Did prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers attend the same types of training sessions? _____

47. Were first grade teachers also included in the training sessions for prekindergarten teachers? _____

48. Using the scale below, rank the following student assessment criteria on the importance placed on each in determining student progress *(circle your response)*.

1 = Always Used **2 = Used Frequently** **3 = Used Occasionally** **4 = Never Used**

a. Teacher observations	1	2	3	4
b. Grades or in-class conduct/performance	1	2	3	4
c. Parent conferences	1	2	3	4
d. Test scores	1	2	3	4

49. **Enter** a "1" in the blank to the right for each method used to inform parents of the educational and developmental progress of the prekindergarten student. Include as many as applied.

a. Parent-teacher conferences _____

b. Written reports _____

d. Report cards _____

d. Telephone calls _____

e. Progress is not reported formally _____

f. Other methods. Describe _____ _____

g. _____ _____

h. _____ _____

50. **Enter** the number of field trips taken by prekindergarten students in the **1989-1990** school year. _____

51. **Enter** the number of times during the **1989-90** school year that special guests or speakers visited prekindergarten classrooms. _____

52. **Enter** the number of prekindergarten students referred for individual testing during the **1989-90** school year (include referrals for clinical testing such as abilities/intelligence, speech, hearing. Do not include required language assessment). _____

For questions 53-58, attach additional sheets if necessary.

53. Is the prekindergarten program on this campus based upon a particular program model or method of instruction such as Montessori, High Scope, etc.? Please describe the approach or approaches the program is based upon.

54. Do you feel that the language assessment instrument you are currently using is adequate for assessing language proficiency of prekindergarten students? If not, please explain.

55. What are those aspects of the prekindergarten programs that were most effective on this campus?

56. What are the program areas that most needed improvement?

57. Are adequate resources available? If not, what resources would most benefit the program?

58. Do you have other comments that you would like to share?

APPENDIX C

List of Participating Districts and Campuses in the Case Study

List of Independent School Districts and Campuses Participating in the Case Study

N = 10
1990-1991

Independent School District	Campus
Austin	Travis Heights Elementary
Dallas	Harllee Elementary
El Paso	Robert E. Lee Elementary
Fort Worth	Morningside Elementary
Huntsville	Prekindergarten Center
Lubbock	McWhorter Elementary
Marble Falls	Marble Falls Primary
Pharr-San Juan-Alamo	Bowie Elementary
San Antonio	J.T. Brackenridge Elementary
Weslaco	Horton Elementary

APPENDIX D

Case Study Instrumentation

District _____

Site _____

_____ ESL, _____ LI, _____ BL

Date _____

Observer _____

INREAL CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCALE/QUANTITATIVE

in accordance with

National Association for the Education of Young Children Performance Standards

Time:	Activities Observed:	I. IS T	I. IS IA	II. DS T	II. DS IA	III. MG T	III. MG IA	IV. CT	V. OA T	V. OA IA	VI. CSE T	VI. CSE IA
	Arrival											
	Opening											
	Planning											
	Circle											
	Show n' Tell											
	Snack											
	Free Time											
	Bathroom											
	Self-help (coats,etc.)											
	Outdoor/Recess											
	Recall											
	Ending											
	Transitions											
	Other											
	a)											
	b)											
	c)											
	d)											

Cues/Notes:

Greetings? Parents? _____

Group Size? _____

How? _____

_____

Children _____

Scheduled or Child Choice _____

_____

Scheduled or Child Choice _____

_____

_____

Children in Group _____

_____

Language Learning Opportunities? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

CODES:

I. INTERACTION STYLE & LANGUAGE
- C = conversational/lang
- D = directive/lang.
- Q = questioning/lang.

II. DISCIPLINE STYLE
- C = constructivist
- S = social learning
- B = behaviorist

III. MANAGEMENT
- C = constructivist
- S = social learning
- B = behaviorist

IV. CHILD TALK
- F = functional
- R = responsive
- PS = private speech
- Cc = child to child
- Ca = child to adult

V. ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVITIES
- Number of children
- I = individual
- S = small group
- L = large group
- W = whole group
- Structure
- C = cooperative
- T = teacher directed
- Ch = child initiated

VI. CHILD SELF-EVALUATION
- E = encouraged
- D = discouraged

VII. ENVIRONMENT
- D = developmental quality
  - Ap = appropriate
  - Ip = inappropriate
- Q = quantity
  - Ad = adequate
  - Id = inadequate

VIII. MATERIALS
- Co = commercial
- Ch = child made
- A = adult made
- E = environmental
- Cr = culturally relevant
- Lr = linguistically relevant
- Gr = gender relevant

IX. LANGUAGES
- E = English only
- S = Spanish only
- E = English about 90% of time
- S = Spanish about 90% of time
- E/S = English & Spanish (English predominant)
- S/E = Spanish & English (Spanish predominant)

X. OTHER
- O = not observed
- X = not present
- ✓ = present
- — = neutral

District
Site
Date
Observer

INREAL CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCALE/QUANTITATIVE

Center Work Areas:	I. IS T	I. IS IA	II. DS T	II. DS IA	III. MG T	III. MG IA	IV. CT	V. OA T	V. OA IA	VI. CSE T	VI. CSE IA	Cues/Notes:	VII. ENV D	VII. ENV Q	Co	Ch	A	VIII. MAT E	Cr	Lr	Gr	Notes
a) Books																						
b) Housekeeping																						
c) Paint/Art																						
d) Science/Living																						
e) Dramatic Play																						
f) Library																						
g) Quiet Area																						
h) Writing																						
i) Manipulative																						
j) Construction																						
k) Music/Movement																						
l) Sand/Water																						
m) Themes/Special																						
n) Outdoor																						
o) Other																						

CODES.

I INTERACTION STYLE & LANGUAGE
- C = conversational/lang
- D = directive/lang
- Q = questioning/lang

II DISCIPLINE STYLE
- C = constructivist
- S = social learning
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- R = responsive
- PS = private speech
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- S = small group
- L = large group
- W = whole group
- Structure
- C = cooperative
- T = teacher directed
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- E = English about 90% of time
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- E/S = English & Spanish (English predominant)
- S/E = Spanish & English (Spanish predominant)

X OTHER
- O = not observed
- X = not present
- ✓ = present
- – = neutral

District
Site
Date
Observer

Teacher/Child Ratio
Staff/Child Ratio
Adult/Child Ratio

INREAL CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCALE/QUANTITATIVE

FIVE MINUTE SAMPLE OF VERBAL INTERACTION STRATEGIES:
Activities observed should be as similar as possible, i.e., work or center times.
Description of Verbal Strategies on Page 4 of Classroom Observation Scale Definitions.

TEACHER OBSERVATION

Activity Type

Descriptors:	Tally/E or /S	Total	Comments
TQ			
GQ			
M ST PT			
RE E			
S D			
L(WT)			
S O U L			
MIR			
NV			

INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT OBSERVATION

Activity: Time

Descriptors:	Tally/E or /S	TOTAL	Comments
TQ			
GQ			
M. ST. PT			
RE. E			
S. D			
L(WT)			
S O U L			
MIR			
NV			

STAFF AND OTHERS (Present During Observation)

	Name	Title	Describe Role Observed	Comments
Staff				
Staff				
Staff				
Other				
Other				
Other				
Other				
Other				
Other				

CODE ■ = English
● = Spanish
✓ = Combination of English and Spanish

Site
Date
Observer

SUMMARY

INREAL CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCALE/QUANTITATIVE

CHILDREN		ENVIRONMENT		CURRICULUM/THEORETICAL MODEL	
Child/Child Interaction	Demographics	Physical	Outside Area	Philosophy	Problem Solving
		Size/Space			
Integration	Active Learning	Material Accessibility			
		Private Space		Play/Social Studies/Arts	Math/Science
		Soft/Natural			
Evaluation	Language	Choices		Bilingual/ESL (Model or Approach)	
		Ambiance			
LANGUAGE & LITERACY INTEGRATIONS		**PARENT PARTNERSHIPS**		**APPARENT GOALS**	
English		"Inviting" Efforts			
Other		Communications (Examples)			
TEACHER/CHILD INTERACTION		**FEELING/TONE (CARINO) OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**		**COMMENTS**	
Language					
Developmental Expectation					
Respect					

Classroom Observation Scale Definitions

I. Interaction Style and Language (IS)

Conversational (C): Children and adults are talking together, using natural and spontaneous interactions. Intention is to communicate and to share information in a reciprocal way. Children change and initiate topics more than or equal to adults.

Directive (D): Adult is primarily relating to the child(ren) using authoritarian and specific instructive methods. The initiation is usually by the adult.

Questioning (Q): The adult's mode of interaction focuses on the use of questions to elicit responses or solicit information from the child. The intention most times is to test the child's level of knowledge or understanding and often lacks sincerity.

II. Discipline Style (DS)

Constructivist Theory (C):

The adult is an active listener in a trusting relationship with the child.

The child is responsible for his/her behavior.

The child constructs his/her social/moral development.

The adult is a partner with the child in learning.

The goal focuses on children as individual social, learners.
(Gordon's TET/PET, Values Clarification)

Social Learning Theory (S):

The adult interacts with children, using confrontation and contracts.

The focus of control can be intrinsic and/or extrinsic.

The child is viewed as a combination of blank slate and constructor of his/her social/moral development.

The adult is sometimes an authority and sometimes a partner in the child's learning.

The goal focuses on the child as learner of group norms and social responsibilities.
(Social Discipline, Reality Therapy)

Behavioristic Theory (B):

The adult interacts with the child using rewards, reinforcements, and punishment.
The adult attempts to control the behavior of the child.
The child is viewed as a blank slate.
The adult is the authority.
The goal focuses on the correct way to meet the needs of adults.
(Assertive Discipline, Behavior Modification, Behaviorism/Punishment)

III. **Management (MG)**

Same definitions as II.

IV. **Child Talk (CT)**

HOW:

Functional (F): Children spontaneously initiate and participate as equals in communication with adults and peers by using a variety of conversational strategies. Children are using either illocutionary or discourse communicative acts that arise from personal intention.

Responsive (R): Children provide information solicited by adults or other children. The intention of the child is to meet another's intention or expectation. The communicative act is not based on personal intention.

Private Speech (PS): Talking out loud to oneself without any intention to communication with another.

WHO:

(Cc): Children interact with each other.

(Ca): Children interact with adults.

V. **Organization of Activities (OA)**

Number of Children:

Individual (I): Children are pursuing activities of their choice. They may be working independently or with other children. The key is that they have made their own choices as to what activity to pursue.

Small Group (S): Children are working in groups of five or fewer in activities selected by the teachers. Each group is pursuing a different activity.

Large Group (L): More than five children (but not the whole class) are working at the same teacher-selected activity. This includes situations where children are at different tables or centers, but are all working on the same activity.

Whole Group (W): All children are doing the **same** activity at the same time. They may be together in one group or spaced throughout the classroom.

Structure:

Cooperative (C): Children are working together to solve a problem or build a construction. The project may be child-initiated or teacher-directed, small or large group. The key is that they are all contributing to a final outcome.

Teacher-directed (T): An adult directs the children to an activity, and the children are given limited or no choice. The adult may or may not be actively engaged in the activity with the children. The key is who selected the activity.

Child-initiated (Ch): The idea for the activity has come from the child, and the adult follows the child's lead(s).

VI. Child Self-Evaluation (CSE)

Encourage (E): The adult's intention is to genuinely nurture the child(ren)'s ability to be self-reflective of their own growth and development.

Discouraged (D): The adult's intention is to consciously ignore or redirect the child's behavior based on their own interpretations and expectations of the child or the child's behavior.

VII. Environment (ENV)

The physical setting is arranged for preschool children by creating a variety of learning areas and equipping each area with materials.

Developmental Quality (D)

Appropriate (Ap): The area and the materials within the area are age-appropriate (e.g., in the dramatic play area the materials include dress-up clothes, hats, shoes, etc.)

Inappropriate (Ip): The area and the materials within the area are inappropriate (e.g., in the manipulative area all the toys are geared more toward a toddler's level: stacking rings, pull toys, etc.)

Quantity (Q)

Adequate (Ad): The materials within each area are plentiful, so that children's social interaction is supported. The materials have enough variety so that cognitive exploration is supported.

Inadequate (Id): The materials within each area are lacking in amount, so that the social involvement of play is affected (e.g., not enough blacks available to facilitate cooperative play). The materials are lacking for the cognitive level of the children's learning.

VII. **Materials (MAT)**

Commerical (Co): Materials produced for the masses (e.g., Fischer-Price, commerical wall charts).

Child Made (Ch): Materials or artifacts made by the children (e.g., wooden sculpture, signs, books).

Adult Made (A): Materials or artifacts made by adult(s) (e.g., puppets, calendars, furniture, playground equipment, pre-made art projects).

Environmental (E): Materials from the natural settings (e.g., sand, grains, flowers, sea shells, nests, rocks, plants, pets).

Culturally Relevant (Cr): Materials and artifacts reflect, at minimum, culture(s) represented by the children in the room.

Linguistically Relevant (Lr): Written or oral language materials reflect the children's indigenous communication contexts, appropriate to children's developmental levels.

Gender Relevant (Gr): Materials and artifacts reflect a balance between male and female interests.

IX. **Languages**

English Only (E): English was the **only** language observed being spoken.

Spanish Only (S): Spanish was the **only** language observed being spoken.

Predominantly English (E): English was spoken about 90% of the time.

Predominantly Spanish (S): Spanish was spoken about 90% of the time.

English & Spanish (E/S): Both languages were spoken, but English is spoken more often.

Spanish & English (S/E): Both languages were spoken, but Spanish is spoken more often.

X. **Other**

Not Observed (O): A situation or behavior does not present itself during an aspect of the observation.

Not Present (X): A particular individual or scenario was not seen by the observer(s) during a certain aspect of the observation.

Present (✓): Was observed.

Neutral (–): Not affected one way or the other.

VERBAL INTERACTION STRATEGIES:

Test Questions (TQ): Open-ended: The intention of the person asking the question is to get information they already know. For example, asking a child: "What did we do on our field trip yesterday?" or Cloz-ended: The intention of the person asking the question is to get information they already know in a one-word response. For example: "Is this water wet?"

Genuine Question (GQ): Open-ended: The intention of the person asking the question is to get the information they really want to know allowing the child to elaborate spontaneously. For example: "What did you think of this story?" or Cloz-ended: The intention of the person asking the question is to get specific information they really want to know, in a short response. For example: "What is your favorite story?"

Modelling (M): Maintaining or expanding the other person's topic without using the other person's words.

Self-Talk (ST): Verbalizing one's own actions, thoughts, or feelings with the intention of being in an interaction.

Parallel Talk (PT): Verbalizing the actions, thoughts, or feelings of another person.

Reflecting (RE): Verbally imitating or restating what another person has said.

Expansion (E): Verbalizing some of the words the other person said and elaborating on them.

Suggestive (S): Verbally inducing a thought, idea, or action in the other person without directly requesting.

Directive (D): Verbalization which expects or demands action (physical or verbal) from the other person.

Latency L(WT): Teacher waits at least 3 seconds before responding to a child's statement.

S.O.U.L. (S.O.U.L.): Silence, Observation, Understanding, Listening.

Mirroring (MIR): Joining and reflecting other person's nonverbal expressive behaviors through genuine conversation.

Non-Verbal (NV): a communicative turn is taken with non-verbal behavior (e.g., gesture, groan)

CODES:

I. Interaction Style & Language

C = conversational/language
D = directive/language
Q = questioning/language

II. Discipline Style

C = constructivist
S = social learning
B = behaviorist

III. Management

C = constructivist
S = social learning
B = behaviorist

IV. Child Talk

F = functional
R = responsive
PS = private speech
Cc = child to child
Ca = child to adult (child-initiated)

V. Organization of Activities

Number of Children
I = individual
S = small group
L = large group
W = whole group

Structure
C = cooperative
T = teacher directed
Ch = child initiated

VI. Child Self-Evaluation

E = encouraged
D = discouraged

VII. Environment

D = developmental quality
Ap = appropriate
Ip = inappropriate
Q = quantity
Ad = adequate
Id = inadequate

VIII. Materials

Co = commercial
Ch = child made
A = adult made
E = environmental
Cr = culturally relevant
Lr = linguistically relevant
Gr = gender relevant

IX. Languages

E = English Only
S = Spanish Only
E = English about 90% of time
S = Spanish about 90% of time
E/S = English & Spanish (English predominant)
S/E = Spanish & English (Spanish predominant)

X. Other

O = not observed
X = not present
✓ = present
– = neutral

District Name _____ Campus _____

A Statewide Study of Prekindergarten Programs
Prekindergarten Case Study

Campus Information Survey

Spring 1991

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AS OF THE END OF THE 1990-91 SCHOOL YEAR.

1. **Enter** the number of classrooms per grade level on this campus.
   a. prekindergarten _____
   b. kindergarten _____
   c. first grade _____
   d. second grade _____
   e. third grade _____
   f. fourth grade _____
   g. fifth grade _____
   h. sixth grade _____
   i. other (please specify) _____ _____
   j. other (please specify) _____ _____

2. **Enter** the average class size on this campus for the following grades.
   a. prekindergarten _____
   b. kindergarten _____
   c. first grade _____
   d. second grade _____
   e. third grade _____
   f. fourth grade _____
   g. fifth grade _____
   h. sixth grade _____
   i. other (please specify) _____ _____
   j. other (please specify) _____ _____

3. **Enter** the number of classroom teachers/administrators on this campus who speak, read, and write Spanish regardless of whether or not certified bilingual. _____

4. Is an extended day care program available at this campus? _____

5. **Enter** the number of prekindergarten teachers who will not be returning to teach in the prekindergarten program in 1991-92. _____

6. **Enter** the approximate percentage of student turnover on this campus. _____

7. Briefly describe the community/neighborhood served by this campus.

8. Briefly describe any pilot/special programs that are in operation on this campus.

9. Briefly describe any awards or honors presented to this campus during the 1990-91 school year.

10. Briefly describe the strengths of this campus.

11. Briefly describe the needs of this campus.

Prekindergarten Staff Survey

Name _____

Site/District _____

Position:
Administrator _____ (please specify)
_____
Teacher _____
Assistant _____

Date of Birth _____

I. Demographics

A. SEX
____ Male
____ Female

B. ETHNICITY
____ Native American/Alaskan Native
____ Asian/Pacific Islander
____ White, Not Hispanic
____ Black, Not Hispanic
____ Hispanic

II. Language Background

A. ENGLISH

Please indicate your level of performance in each area:

	Beginning	Approaching Native Language Proficiency	Native Language Proficiency
Comprehension	_____	_____	_____
Speaking	_____	_____	_____
Reading	_____	_____	_____
Writing	_____	_____	_____

B. OTHER LANGUAGE (please specify) _____

Please indicate your level of performance in each area:

	Beginning	Approaching Native Language Proficiency	Native Language Proficiency
Comprehension	_____	_____	_____
Speaking	_____	_____	_____
Reading	_____	_____	_____
Writing	_____	_____	_____

C. OTHER LANGUAGE (please specify) _____

Please indicate your level of performance in each area:

	Beginning	Approaching Native Language Proficiency	Native Language Proficiency
Comprehension	_____	_____	_____
Speaking	_____	_____	_____
Reading	_____	_____	_____
Writing	_____	_____	_____

III. **How do you spend your time:**

____ Total hours per week employed

____ Total hours per week you are with children in the classroom

____ Total hours per week in contact with parents/guardians

____ Total hours per week spent planning

____ Number of classes you serve

____ Total hours per week playground/lunchroom supervision

____ Total hours per week spent for class preparation

____ Total hours per week that you volunteer to the program

____ Total number of years of professional experience working with children

IV. **Education**

Indicate highest level of education by entering year completed:

Year		Year	
_____	Less than 12 years of high school	_____	Bachelor's degree
_____	High school graduate	_____	Master's degree
_____	Junior college degree	_____	Doctorate

V. **Do you plan to continue working in early childhood education?**

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Not sure

VI. **Certification**

A. PLEASE CHECK THE CERTIFICATION(S) HELD

____ Teacher of Young Children

____ Elementary

____ All Levels

____ School Nurse

____ Vocational Home Economics

____ Secondary

____ Speech and Hearing Therapy

____ Other (please specify) _____

B. PLEASE CHECK THE ENDORSEMENT(S) HELD

____ Bilingual
____ Early Childhood Education
____ Early Childhood for the Handicapped
____ ESL
____ Kindergarten
____ Other (please specify) _____

VII. **Enter the number of early childhood training sessions attended from June 1, 1990 through June 1, 1991:**

_____ ½ day
_____ full day
_____ 2 day
_____ 3 day
_____ 4 days or more

VIII. **Personal-Professional Information**

1. Describe how you think children learn best.

2. Do you want children to be able to speak, to read, and to write in two languages?

_____ Yes _____ No Comments:

3. As an educator, what do you believe about bilingual education for children in the prekindergarten program?

Interview Questions to Prekindergarten Teachers and Instructional Assistants
(about 3-5 minutes per question)

1. **Prekindergarten Program**

   a. In your opinion, what is the purpose of the prekindergarten program?

   b. How are children selected for the program?

   c. Describe how children are assigned to groups, teachers, etc.

   d. What is the theoretical or philosophical model of your program?

   e. What practices in the classroom support your theoretical framework?

   f. How do you assure that children's developmental needs are met?

   g. What methods are used routinely to assess children's progress, both formally and informally?

   h. Describe the transition procedures between prekindergarten and kindergarten.

   i. Describe coordination between your program and other programs/grades on this campus.

   j. Describe coordination between your program and other agencies.

   k. What features of the program help you to achieve or not achieve program goals?

2. **Children**

   a. What descriptors come to mind when you think about what the children are like when they enter the program?

   b. What descriptors come to mind when you think about what the children are like at the end of the year?

3. **Parent**

   a. Identify the expectations you have of yourselves and of the parents regarding the child's education.

   b. What percentage of parents participate, and how?

   c. What descriptors come to mind when you think about parents' strengths and needs?

SUMMARY

- Identify ways in which you need support to be more effective as faculty and staff?

- Is there anything else you would like us, the readers of this report, the State Board of Education, or the Legislature to know about you or your program?

Interview Questions to Parents
(about 5 minutes per question)

1. **Parents' Knowledge of Program**

   a. In your opinion, what is the purpose of the prekindergarten program?

   b. Why did you enroll your child in this program?

   c. What do you want your child to learn in this program?

   d. What do you think your child is learning in this program?

   e. Do you want your child to learn to speak, to read, and to write in two languages?

   f. Describe how you and your child's teacher(s) communicate?

   g. What assessment information has been shared with you?

   h. Has this information been useful to you as a parent?

   i. How has this program benefitted your family.

   j. What do you know about the kindergarten program?

   k. How far do you want your child to go in school?

2. **Parent Involvement**

   a. Describe how you participate in the program?

   b. In what ways can the program support you as families?

SUMMARY

- Is there anything else you would like us, the readers of this report, the State Board of Education, or the Legislature to know about you, your child(ren), or the program?

- Do you have any successes you would like to share about your child in the prekindergarten program?

Interview Questions to Kindergarten Teachers
(about 5 minutes per question)

1. In your opinion, what is the purpose of the prekindergarten program?

2. Describe the transition procedures between prekindergarten and kindergarten.

3. Describe the type of assessment information that you received on children who participated in the prekindergarten program.

4. Describe the philosophy and learning activities of the kindergarten programs.

Questions to Children

1. What do you like to do best in class?

2. What don't you like to do in class?

3. What do you want to learn in school?

4. What have you learned in school?

Interview Questions to Administrators
(about 3-5 minutes per question)

1. Prekindergarten Program Operation

   a. In your opinion, what is the purpose of the prekindergarten program?

   b. Describe how the prekindergarten program is managed in this district.

   c. How are children selected for the program?

   d. Describe the underlying theoretical model or philosophy of your program.

   e. How do you assure that children's developmental needs are met?

   f. What methods are used routinely to assess children's progress, both formally and informally?

   g. Please share your impressions of the adequacy of resources for this program.

   h. Describe how children from prekindergarten enter kindergarten.

   i. What policies and procedures are in place for evaluating the program?

   j. What aspects of your program are most successful?

   k. What aspects of your program concern you?

2. **Staff Information**

   a. What do you see as the collective strengths of your staff?

   b. In what areas would you like to see staff improve?

   c. What do you do to support the effectiveness of your staff?

   d. If you were able to add staff, what positions would you add?

   e. Describe coordination within and across early childhood classes on this campus.

   f. Describe coordination between the prekindergarten program and other agencies.

3. **Family Information**

   a. Identify the expectations you have of yourselves and of the parents regarding the child's education.

   b. What percentage of the prekindergarten parents participate, and how?

   c. Describe the relationship between the staff and the children's parents.

   d. What are you doing administratively to meet the needs of linguistically and/or culturally different children and families?

   e. What are the barriers in meeting the needs of linguistically and/or culturally different children and families?

SUMMARY

- Is there anything else you would like us, the readers of this report, the State Board of Education, or the Legislature, to know about you or your program?

Compliance Statement

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

(1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;

(2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a non-segregated basis;

(3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;

(4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;

(5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;

(6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and

(7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 AS AMENDED; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; TITLE IX, EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED; AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990; AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1991.

The Texas Education Agency shall comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all Federal and State laws and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any educational programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, or veteran status or a disability requiring accommodation (except where age, sex, or handicap constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.

Texas Education Agency
Austin, Texas
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