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A STUDY INVESTIGATING BEHAVIOR ECONOMICS AND PARENT ENGAGEMENT
TO IMPACT THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

by

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ABSTRACT

The United States is in the bottom quartile of formally enrolled preschoolers in the developed countries. Not every student receives an equitable preschool experience and as a result, kindergarten classrooms contain a wide range of learners. One way to offset the transition time would be to transform enrollment procedures. How schools utilize the data contained on kindergarten enrollment registrations in the spring could help level the playing field for at risk students. Handing a parent a list of ways to get ready for kindergarten is not enough. One method is through the use of behavior economics and technology. This research is important because it could prove that weekly “nudges” or tips on what to expect in kindergarten can increase success in the fall. Our current understanding of the role family engagement plays in the year prior to kindergarten is limited. To support such an intervention, a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to investigate the perceptions of teachers and parents of preschoolers in kindergarten readiness. Qualitative results revealed parents believe socialization is the more important factor of preschool and have little knowledge of Common Core while teachers believe an academic foundation is key. Quantitative data show parents do not have enough time to prepare children for kindergarten yet rate themselves high in their ability to do so. Parents also claim to have little knowledge of the kindergarten curriculum and want local school districts to do more in reaching out to families the year prior to school entry. In addition, the researchers examined technology habits of parents to determine receptivity in receiving supports for their children prior to kindergarten enrollment in the form of nudges. Based on these findings, recommendations for schools and families are provided.

Keywords: *behavioral science; nudge; kindergarten readiness; early childhood*

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Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

-Matthew 7:7

The Danish use the word *hygge* when describing the feeling of organization, coziness, and comfort that a tidy and clean house provides. This environment requires work and consistency and thank you to my co-author, Laura, and dissertation, Chair, Dr. Lesh, for keeping our metaphorical, dissertation house in order. For the countless hours of editing, direction, and inspiration- thank you will never be enough. Thank you to Dr. Richard Jones and Dr. Kristin Shealy for your time and support in making this dissertation come to life. This acknowledgment is dedicated to women everywhere who overcame obstacles, oppression, and due to the nature of this dissertation, mothers and title I school teachers, whose work is difficult but not insignificant; THANK YOU!

First, to all of the mothers, young mothers, stepmothers, single mothers, do-it-all-mothers, and immigrant mothers, research shows you continue to spend an extra ten hours weekly doing unpaid domestic duties on top of working outside the home. I would be remiss without thanking my own three mothers who in various stages of my life have molded, shaped, and sculpted me into the person I am today- thank you. Women are the primary health and education decision makers, and it's women who will most impact their children's futures. Women hold up half the sky with one hand and with the other held umbrellas (and shopping bags.)

Second, the under recognized Title I school kindergarten teachers across America- your work matters! Every year against odds and obstacles you teach little minds great ideas while instilling a love of learning and going to school. It doesn't go unnoticed the extra hours you

spend planning lessons that capture the minds and hearts of students.

-Sarah

I am profoundly grateful to my co-writer, Sarah, who worked relentlessly on this research project and possessed infinite motivation and passion for improving the landscape of education. My sincere thanks to the head of our dissertation chair, Dr. Jennifer Lesh, and to our two readers, Dr. Kristin Shealy and Dr. Richard Jones who provided endless and invaluable insight and knowledge into our work. Dr. Shealy, thank you for believing in me and encouraging me to venture on this journey of pursuing a doctorate in education.

Heartfelt thoughts go to my family and friends for their continuous support, encouragement, and prayers. Thank you for your patience, interest, and listening ear.

I would also like to thank the leaders in education and research who have forged the way in exploring how to prepare children for kindergarten and their lives at large. May the continued work and effort of educators foster a belief in parents, teachers, schools, and children that those lacking certain advantages can indeed succeed. As Abraham Lincoln said, "That some achieve great success, is proof to all that others can achieve it as well."

Last, and most importantly, thank you to our Lord God in heaven who placed it in His will and on my heart to pursue an Ed.D. at Lynn University. Thank you for remaining with me.

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me." – Philippians 4:13

-Laura

Dear elementary principal(s),

Your supervisor may you to focus on grades 3-5. District office wants you to comb through second-grade diagnostic scores and identify the students who can give you the most gain for your upcoming and looming large school grade. There is another alternative to increasing student achievement. Train your school registrars to identify incoming kindergarten students who haven't been to preschool and offer those parents guidance. There are six months between spring and fall. An ounce of prevention with parents, can be a pound of cure for students in school. Transform your annual kindergarten registration round-ups into education events. Identify the children in K and 1st who have little parent support and stick like glue on paper to them through K-3 and you will see your grade improve.

Dear mothers,

Through the work of Barbara Ehrenreich, we have learned it is more expensive to be poor. You may be one car breakdown away from being homeless, living paycheck-to-paycheck often deciding between two viable options of what to spend money on; electric bill or birthday present. To not have reliable transportation, health insurance, steady work, good credit, and a kitchen to prepare food means short term overpayment of necessities that the more affluent take for granted. Where does education fall on a list of high competing priorities? Taking education for granted may be the most expensive cost of all. But we say this: You may not see it next week or even next year, but educating your child is one of the best returns on investments you can make regardless of your financial status. Of all these things, the dishes and laundry can wait. Read and talk to your child to instill the wonder of discovery, the power of reflection, and the joy of learning.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Kindergarten Readiness

Walking into room 152, bright light streams through the windows of a shiny and colorful classroom of a Title 1 school located in the southeastern United States. The teacher is enthusiastic and, after performing the first week assessments, has noticed she has a variety of needs in her kindergarten class, just like the three previous school years. At least seven of the students are considered ready for kindergarten. They can identify, name, and produce sounds for all letters and communicate their needs. For example, these students will say, "I'm finished" soon after receiving seat work. Another seven students are less confident but are eager to learn. This group may know less than a third of the alphabet and how to articulate the sounds. They attempt independent work but require support. There are five children who do not recognize any letters, cannot produce sounds, did not attend preschool, may speak in another language, and struggle to communicate needs. It is apparent to the teacher how different starts in life impact success at school. This group is unable to complete work independently. When the teacher calls families of the unprepared group, she is not able to communicate with some of the caregivers as they either speak another language or contact is limited due to their demanding work schedule. This teacher has downloaded a text messaging application with translating capabilities to better serve the families. Maintaining her strong self-efficacy, this teacher believes she will have a positive impact on all the students in her class. She is also keenly aware that not all students will overcome their previous life history to leave her care meeting benchmark and truly ready for first grade.

Of all the groups, the least prepared students show frustration and struggle to communicate. One student, Alan, who recently arrived from Guatemala frequently appears nervous and refuses to participate in group activities. He often hides under the table and refuses to attend fine arts classes without his teacher. He is unable to write his name or hold a pencil and bursts into tears when asked to try something new. On the other hand, Emily, who is also a Spanish speaker, is resilient and understands social cues having attended school in her native country. When the group meets on the carpet for a mini-lesson, the kindergarten-ready students appear disinterested, the middle group are engaged, and the least prepared students are struggling to comprehend.

This scene is a typical American kindergarten classroom. A variety of needs, educational experiences, familial demographics, and backgrounds results in students entering school with significant variances in readiness aptitudes. When the students work in teacher-led small groups, the kindergarten-ready students begin sight words and sounding out words. They will soon read. The intermediate group will spend two months learning the alphabet and becoming familiar with phonological awareness activities. The teacher will attempt everything in her power to catch them up to the first group and utilize progress monitoring should students struggle. Meanwhile, the third group will begin to learn the alphabet, they will be entered into intervention and progress monitoring often receiving double doses of phonics instruction. The teacher lies awake at night wondering how she can help. She knows she will be held accountable for the success of all students in the class and has a strong desire to give all children an opportunity to succeed. Is it enough? The implementation of Common Core State Standards has made kindergarten more rigorous, and the principal is determined to not fall lower than the “C” school accountability letter grade it barely earned the previous school year.

Unequal Childhoods (Lareau, 2011) demonstrates how class differences influence how parents manage youths' institutional lives and ultimately leads to unequal life outcomes. Studies conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (2015) uncover preschool participation rates are lower for children with lower incomes, low parental education and for minorities. Increased investment in preschool could raise social mobility (Barnett, Belfield, 2006). The United States is in the bottom quartile of enrolled three- to five- year-old children in preschool; meaning most of America's children are not in formal care (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017). If children are not in center care, how are families engaging and investing in children's literacy development while in alternative settings? What detracts from or encourages families to engage in early childhood development? Are caregivers able to disseminate the information necessary to be successful in kindergarten, and do caregivers realize the implications of kindergarten success on lifetime success? Duncan et al. (2007) demonstrate through a meta-analysis of six large longitudinal data sets including ECLS-K Grade 3, NLSY Age 13-14, NICHD SECCYD Grade 5, MLEPS Grade 3, and BCS Age 10 that children's cognitive abilities at school entry are strong predictors of later academic performance. At the national, state, and local level, conversations of kindergarten readiness are occurring and predict later reading success and social, emotional development in later grades (Sabol & Pianta, 2012, p. 295). The research problem is that students arrive at varying levels of readiness which trends downward in children of color and families from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The lobbyist group, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, is so concerned with the state of early childhood education in America it convened in the summer of 2017 to address strengthening the early childhood education pipeline as a means to boost the nation's ability to compete globally (Stevens, 2017, p.1). One paradigm shift in addressing inequities in early

childhood is to engage parents. "To be effective, parent involvement promotion through practice and policy needs to go beyond whether parents are involved; it needs to focus on how they are involved and what happens as a result" (Pelletier & Corter, 2005, p. 89). There is a fracture between rapidly developing early education policy and parent behavior. One way to positively impact parent behavior is through interventions. Studies reveal (Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010) two theoretical models for addressing interventions aimed at families: 1.) The investment model 2.) Family stress model. This study will address the model most concerned with family stress that would align with tools to reduce tension and provide effective parenting education about kindergarten. On a national level, kindergarten readiness is a complex and stratified concept involving variances in readiness levels, curriculum among preschool programs, parent engagement, percentages of students attending preschool, curriculum alignment between kindergarten and preschool, and the provisions that preschools are not considered part of state learning standards; the system lends itself to a fractured system (Clifford et al., 2005). This mixed methods study aims to focus on the strand involving parent perceptions and advocacy and how schools play a role in this support.

On a local level, a large urban school district in the southeast United States recently reported kindergarten readiness rates at 54.7%. One school reported rates as low as 15.9%. The white subgroup showed readiness rates at 73.8% for female and 68% in males. On the other hand, Black and Hispanic demographic rates were considerably lower. Black females reported 51.45%, and black males reported 42.2% ready to begin school. The Hispanic subgroup reported slightly lower than black at 49.8% for females and 41.7% readiness rates for males (Oswald & Howard, 2018).

How can educators combine behavioral science and parent engagement to impact the

transition to kindergarten? One intervention that could prove cost-effective and provide parents education in skills regarding the investment in education is through behavior economics.

Another dimension to consider is how to apply behavioral science interventions with families learning English. Behavioral science is the coupling of economics and psychology (Samson, 2017). This field is essential to the study because it could explain the biases and conflicts of parents who know that reading to their child is beneficial may not do so or be able to. Kahneman and Tversky (1979) pioneers of examining decision making under risk have found that people under weigh outcomes that are uncertain and alternatively put a higher weight on decisions that maximize certainty. The researchers hypothesize that caregivers do not realize the return on investment immediately with at home literacy. Under this umbrella, Kahneman and Tversky (1979) proposed utility theory which provides a framework for the evaluation of choices made by people and institutions. Utility refers to the gratification that each choice bestows to the decision maker. While the researchers do not doubt caregivers want what is best for children, the decision to place higher significance on other tasks may take precedence. On this note, economics has primarily assumed that people, in general, are rational and understand how to make decisions that yield the best outcomes. However, behavior economic scientists take into consideration that people can be irrational and continuously frame decisions into categories of gains and losses (Kahneman, 1979). An already taxed caregiver may interpret reading thirty minutes at night a loss opposed to thirty minutes getting the dishes washed which would be considered a positive gain. The chore completion is tangible while the benefits of reading may not be realized instantly. How can education be merged with behavioral science, more specifically, to increase student outcomes in marginalized populations? Thaler and Sunstein (2009) discuss a concept called “nudge,” a practice not limited to education, that essentially

would put caregivers in a better position to choose what is more suitable for their child. Choice architecture and programs designed to provide information to parents can help alleviate “latent incentive conflicts between advantaged and disadvantaged parents” during decision-making processes, as well as, information avoidance.

Would policymakers and legislatures be well served to incorporate behavioral science for the public and private sector to serve as change agents to strengthen kindergarten readiness skills in marginalized populations? Shifting the social norms (unwritten rules about how to behave) associated with preschool to kindergarten transition would be another approach. Caldini, Kallgren, and Reno (1991) argue that in order to enhance socially beneficial behavior, procedures and directives should take into account social norms. According to McIntyre, Eckert, Fiese, DiGennaro, and Wildenger (2007) "Few published studies have explored family perspectives, behavioral involvement, and investment in the transition preparation and process" (p. 83). This study will focus on strategies to explore and influence parental behaviors using techniques from the field of behavioral science. In a study by Mayer, Kalil, Oreopoulos, and Gallegos (2015), over several decades the public has seen campaigns touting the benefits of reading to children through various literacy organizations hoping to accelerate parental involvement, but little to no impact has been recorded. Why?

Background of the Study

When the 2008 recession hit, educational funding decreased. Since then, funding for early childhood education is on the rise which demonstrates a shift in priorities in America’s early education policy. According to a report from the National Institute for Early Education Research, "During the 2015-2016 school year, state spending on preschool jumped to almost \$7.4 billion, a \$564 million increase from the previous school year" (2017). National funding

has increased as well. "The Every Student Succeeds Act created a \$250 million program jointly managed by the Education Department and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to help states expand or start preschool programs" (Samuels, 2017). While funding is a necessary ingredient in the future success of early childhood education, it is not the only factor contributing to the significant paradigm shift (Concepts, 2013).

The enactment of Every Student Succeeds Act (2015; 114th Congress S. 1177) is bringing more recognition to early childhood education. Samuels explains, "Title 1 programs that operate school-wide are encouraged to create transition programs for children entering kindergarten" (2017). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is putting more emphasis on childhood education than the predecessor, No Child Left Behind, placed on young learners.

Weyer explains,

"When the law goes into effect in August 2017, more attention will focus on the transition from preschool to kindergarten and better coordination among pre-K teachers and school districts. States will be required to report the number and percentage of students enrolled in prekindergarten, and schools are choosing to fund pre-K with Title 1 dollars will be expected to develop and submit implementation plans" (Weyer, 2016, pg.20).

One goal of ESSA is to focus on low- and middle- income access to early childhood education. Samuels confirms this emphasis in literacy, stating, "ESSA directs the Education Department to create a grant program that will help states "Develop or enhance comprehensive literacy instruction plans that ensure high-quality instruction and effective strategies in reading and writing for children from early childhood through grade 12" (Samuels, 2016).

With funding and federal attention on early childhood education, another component to increase the percentage of children entering kindergarten prepared is to increase enrollment of three- to five- year-old preschool programs. According to Hinton, "Enrollment increased nationwide from the previous school year by more than 40,000 for three- to five- year-olds. In

all, nearly 1.5 million children attended state-funded preschool. Of that number, nearly 1.3 million were three- to five- year-olds” (Hinton, 2017). A national survey reports “only 46 percent of students are enrolled in preschool programs” (DeNisco, 2016).

Funding and enrollment for preschool programs have increased. However, the quality of the preschool programs offered is still lacking. Hinton (2017) conjectures that "The United States needs a strong, market-driven system that provides access to high-quality care" (p. 34). Standards for preschool programs were considered during the development of the Every Student Succeeds Act. The National Institute for Early Education Research adopted new quality standards to replace the old ones that were designed to be minimums (Hinton, 2017). Hinton further explains,

Under the new benchmarks, programs are expected to provide comprehensive early learning and development standards that are aligned with child assessment and with kindergarten through third grade and- eventually- college- and career- ready standards and infant and toddler standards. These standards are also required to be culturally sensitive and supported through professional development (Hinton, 2017).

The Florida Department of Education Kindergarten Readiness Screener indicates approximately 30-35% of students arrive in kindergarten classrooms unprepared to learn (FLKRS, 2015). Ideally, the researchers of this study believe it should be around 10-15%. With the newfound attention on early childhood education and the need to prepare children for kindergarten, the researchers held a secure position to promote early learning.

Statement of the Problem

School readiness is not a new topic in education; however, the researchers see the benefit in engaging parents of preschoolers. Weiss, Caspe, and Lopez with the Harvard Family Research Project (2006) state, “Responsibility for learning outcomes refers to an aspect of parenting that involves emphasizing educational activities that promote school success" (p.3).

With variances in preschool curriculum silos, parental engagement, rigor in kindergarten, and percentages of students attending prekindergarten, teachers still see a disproportionate number of students in kindergarten classrooms being referred to special education, early intervention groups, and a large number of children who are just not prepared for the higher demands of kindergarten. A framework for the study was established by researcher and Nobel Prize-winning economist, Jack Heckman (2017), whose Heckman Equation confirms that society also benefits long term with a 13% return on investment from early childhood programs. While districts have been clamoring to define "kindergarten ready," early learning coalitions across the states have yet to communicate a consistent message within their programs and across public and private sectors (2015). While studies on the advantages of preschool have been numerous and define the future success of students regarding overall success in third grade and high school graduation predictors, what is missing from the literature is the parent engagement and education piece. In research by Sabol and Pianta (2012, p.282), "The present study found that the assessment of children across multiple domains before school readiness predicted achievement and socioemotional skills and behaviors in fifth grade." This dissertation in practice will investigate the perception of parents on school readiness. Research findings by Lareau (2011) highlight that families with a low socioeconomic status tend to not abide by concerted cultivation, whereby families intentionally provide opportunities for children to develop skills and aptitudes. Instead, this population tends to align with the *sense of natural accomplishment* where the families do not promote skills that will later benefit them in their academic and professional lives. These low socioeconomic families rely on institutions to provide education and communication skills. Is that too late? Legislatures implemented Common Core State Standards Standards (2010). Governments trained the stakeholders and state boards of education. School Boards and Districts

adopted new curriculums to align with Common Core State Standards Standards.

Prekindergarten classrooms in most states; however, not part of Common Core State Standards Standards legislation, are left out of the equation and so too, are parents. The pre-kindergarten to kindergarten transition is left fragmented without clear learning standards.

Purpose of the Study

The objective of this mixed methods study utilizing a convergent design is to provide families of three- to five- year-old children with the necessary skills, strategies, and approach to learning for a successful transition into kindergarten. The researchers will create a literacy-focused technology application serving families with preschool-aged children. The content is based on the newly updated Early Learning and Developmental Standards for three- to five-year-old children. Through the use of this technology, parents will receive weekly updates informing parents of young children what they can be doing to prepare their children for kindergarten actively. The intent is to close the kindergarten achievement gap. Data analysis from surveys will direct the dissemination of this product.

Significance of the Study

In 2015, the national percentage of three- to five- year-old's enrolled in a full-day preschool program was 49.6%; the remaining students are dispersed between informal and familial care settings. Kindergarten readiness is a precursor to preschool attendance. Colon states in his research, "The students who are walking into a classroom for the first time unprepared to begin learning at the grade level are more likely to remain academically behind through middle school and are three to four times more likely to drop out of high school in later years" (2008, pg.52). This technology will serve families of three- to five- year-old children not attending preschool. Other purposes for this product are to provide another common resource for

current preschool families to remain educated on preschool curriculum and to serve as a scaffold to struggling learners. Schools can also disperse the technology to families identified as needing more support. The curriculum will be aligned with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for three- to five- year-old's and will therefore also be coordinated with Kindergarten Common Core State Standards. The push notifications will be sent via a smartphone app. *Demographics of Mobile Device Ownership and Adoption in the United States* (2019) by Pew report 81% of Americans own a smartphone. This opportunity to educate parents and provide them with the necessary resources to prepare their children for kindergarten is easily accessible. This application is a tool for closing the opportunity gap and counteracts class-based stereotypes. Further, according to Single Point text marketing services, text messages are believed to have a 95% open rate and are read within three minutes of being sent (Text Marketing, n.d.).

The researchers will conduct a mixed methods study using a convergent design (Creswell, 2007). The qualitative data will be obtained from surveys displaying a need for parent engagement in preparing their children for kindergarten. The quantitative data will also be obtained from a survey. Together this will make a mixed methods design.

The theoretical framework for this dissertation is based on the review of the literature on early childhood education and kindergarten readiness. The ultimate purpose is to educate families and promote engagement in preparing their children for the transition into kindergarten. The researchers' aim is to serve as advocates or, cultural guides, in educating parents in the complexities of preparing their children for kindergarten.

Following is the theory that most closely supports this dissertation. According to the social constructivist theory (Holloway, 1997), learning is an act of acquiring new conceptual

knowledge and is the process of being a part of the learning community. This theory is relevant to the researchers' studies because it presents the correlation that young learners benefit from learning experiences.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory claims:

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals (Vygotsky and Cole, 1981).

This is a relevant theory related to the study on kindergarten readiness because it encompasses the need for parents, caregivers, and peers' involvement in a child's academic development. The independent variables are the exposure to academic settings, readiness levels, the amount of parent engagement, and rigor at preschools. The dependent variable is the age (three- to five-year-old's) of the children.

As described in *Unequal Childhoods*, working class and low-income families err away from engagement in institutional settings. The main manner in which the research will contribute is by recognizing the factors that decrease family involvement and then reframing behaviors that promote positive change.

Research Questions

To identify preschool children's parents' perception regarding kindergarten readiness skills and their engagement in preparing their children for kindergarten, the researchers will survey parents of preschool children and kindergarten teachers. Utilizing the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards (2011) that have been revised in 2017, push notifications and online classes will be provided to parents of preschool-aged children. Other literacy-based content will be determined by teacher involvement based on the survey and interviews.

Question 1: How does a parent's self- efficacy rating contribute to kindergarten readiness?

Question 2: What factors inhibit or promote parents' engagement in preparing their children for kindergarten?

Question 3: What motivates parents to make educational decisions?

Question 4: According to kindergarten teachers, what standards/information is important to be dispersed to parents regarding preparing three- to five- year-old children for kindergarten literacy instruction?

The researchers' assumptions are: 1) There will be a discrepancy in how parents perceive their knowledge of kindergarten readiness and what preschool and kindergarten teachers perceive is appropriate. 2.) Improving parent advocacy for kindergarten readiness will alleviate some issues surrounding equity and close gaps in achievement. 3.) Implications of parent engagement may be financial, relative to the level of parents' education, or employment-related. The researchers conjecture that cognitive bias and discount theory may be causing disengagement. For example, parents of rising kindergarten students discount the positive impact preschool or working on kindergarten literacy skills at home can have on their young child. Isaacs (2012) explains the direct effect income has on child development including the lessened access to resources for healthy development. Two facets of this healthy development include an enriched home environment and quality child care setting (p. 5). The Harvard Family Research Project examined family involvement in early childhood education and supported that parent-child activities are culturally influenced (2016)

Definition of Terms

Achievement gap means the significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students (Education Reform, 2013).

At risk means students who are not experiencing success at school and will potentially drop-out of school (Donnelly, 1987).

ELL- English Language Learner or student who is limited English proficient and is unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English. English language learners may require additional interventions and modifications to instruction and assessment (Partnership, 2013).

Head Start is a federally funded program that serves at-risk children ages 3-5 (National Head Start Association, 2012).

Kindergarten readiness means the development of attitudes and attributes about academia in which a child enters kindergarten (West, 1995).

Low-income means working families that earn less than twice the poverty line, which is \$24, 858 for a family of two adults and two children (2017).

Preschool means center-based programs for 4-year-olds that may be fully or partially funded by the state and that is managed in schools or under the direction of state and local education agencies (Clifford et al., 2005).

Limitations

One main limitation to the application the researchers intend to create is the possible lack of technology for the people it intends to serve. Smith reports, "77% of Americans now own a smartphone. 92% of 18- to 29-year old's own one" (Smith, 2017). This cues the researchers that most parents of children entering kindergarten will have access to the kindergarten readiness application. One challenge the researchers may encounter is receiving feedback on their survey

or interview participation. Therefore, the data obtained from the survey and interviews may produce an altered sample. Personal biases of the researchers who are current kindergarten teachers may reflect in the data received. The U.S. Department of Education found that children from low-income families are less likely to be enrolled in preschool than their more affluent peers – 41 percent compared to 61 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). An additional limitation is some parents may not speak English as their primary language and may be in the United States illegally. Therefore, they may be apprehensive about participating in the survey in fear of deportation. A final limitation is the possible technical difficulty of rolling out the technology. Creating an application may prove difficult. The short timeframe to find a developer, create the curriculum, and compose the application may pose problematic.

Delimitations

The objective of the researchers is not to conduct a longitudinal study to collect data on the effectiveness of the application. Rather, the researchers will determine parents' perceptions and analyze this data to determine the need for a technology program. Furthermore, they will not collect data to determine societal subgroups that use the application. Instead, a preliminary investigation will determine the appropriate form of communication to parents of children who statistically do not prepare their children for kindergarten. Nor will the researchers create new standards for the content of the app. The content is based on State-approved Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for three- to five- year-old children. Delimitations of this study exclude public and private school comparisons of kindergarten teachers and parents of three- to five- year-old children. It is not a study focused on the effects of students in special education.

Chapter Summary

Chapter I contains the background of the study, problem, purpose, and significance of the study. The conceptual framework, research questions, and key terms were defined. The first chapter concludes with the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Research shows children who enter kindergarten unprepared tend to perform at lower rates than their peers who entered kindergarten ready to learn (Sabal & Pianta, 2015; Heckman, 2017). This achievement gap demonstrates a need for addressing the need for a parental paradigm shift in kindergarten readiness.

Relevant theories about kindergarten readiness and literature attending to the cause, importance of, and approaches for remediation are addressed in chapter II.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This literature review examines the impact parents' engagement has on kindergarten readiness particularly in the area of literacy. School districts are annually faced with a percentage of children entering school without the skills necessary to be successful. Schools must create innovative methods to identify their kindergartners with limited access and exposure to academic skills in the early stages of kindergarten. The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K) highlights that school-readiness gaps are already present before children enter school and students coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds are one standard deviation behind higher-income students (Reardon, 2014). Chapter I described the short and long-term problems associated with children who are not ready for school. Chapter II will provide the framework for parent engagement as a means to combat the achievement gap in the preschool to kindergarten transition. Since this study will examine theories of behavioral science, it is necessary to investigate cognitive bias. Cognitive bias, or heuristics, are types of mental shortcuts that individuals use to make decisions, evaluations, and judgments. For parenting, decisions made today have payoffs in the future both economically and socially, but parents may discount the future only focusing on present needs or survival which may explain little investment or engagement (Stanovich, West, Toplak 2012). It will also describe the preschool system. Kindergarten student readiness is defined as the development of attitudes and attributes about learning a child enters kindergarten with (West, 1995). The proposed research project is to extend and build the case for increased parent education, involvement, and engagement in the year before to kindergarten. To claim that kindergarten readiness supports a long-term school and adult success, it is pertinent to investigate factors influencing familial behavior and

understand why previous campaigns to target parents have been unsuccessful. This Dissertation in Practice will create a technological application and toolkit to engage and educate parents of three- to five- year-old children as they transition to kindergarten. The central question facing researchers investigating data of parents of preschoolers is if using behavioral science concepts “nudges” parent via parent behavior and technology would help bridge the learning gap between students entering kindergarten. The positive benefits considered are the effects on kindergarten readiness, parent engagement, and low cost.

The rich body of literature is addressing kindergarten readiness, and related topics were examined at depth for relevancy to the aforementioned research questions. Carneiro and Heckman (2003) compared two school-based interventions: 1.) Early Childhood 2.) Elementary School and found that the most powerful engineer for adult outcomes are unmistakably prevented with environmental factors in early childhood. With an overwhelming body of evidence supporting the claims that kindergarten readiness supports a long-term school and adult success, the Dissertation in Practice study is intended to extend the body of literature to promote parent engagement in the preschool years.

Importance of Pre-Kindergarten

The importance of prekindergarten is a thoroughly researched topic. Clifford et al. (2005), describe preschool as center-based programs for 4-year-olds that are fully or partially funded by state education agencies and that are operated in schools or under the direction of state and local education agencies. Researchers found that enrolling children in preschool led to the most benefit in preparing children for kindergarten (Isaacs, 2016). Isaacs (2016) reports fewer than half of poor children are ready for school at age five, compared to 75 percent of children from families with moderate to high income. To illustrate this matter, a study conducted by Hover

(2015) reports 35% of 7,000 kindergarteners included in a teachers' survey was deemed not ready for kindergarten. Only 21% of 4-year-olds were enrolled in the state-funded pre-kindergarten programs.

Lack of kindergarten readiness can be correlated to unmarried parents with lower education, financial struggles, higher rates of depression, poor health, and decreased access to parenting resources. Magnuson et al. (2014), gathered literacy and math skill assessments, behavioral reports from kindergarten teachers and health reports from parents to create school readiness scores. The study found children from low-income families to be more likely to score very low in all categories evaluated. Speculation claims fewer resources, more crime, and pollution, lesser quality of parental engagement and interaction all contribute to why poor children are less prepared for school.

English Language Learners and Preschool

English Language Learner (ELL) school readiness benefits not only the student but a variety of educational stakeholders. Up until this point, the focus of this paper has been attributed to students from economically disadvantaged households, however, the findings indicate that a majority of these students are comprised of English Language Learners who require a different set of considerations. Children whose parents speak another language other than English are not as likely to enroll in preschool (Harper, 2017; Hopkinson 2017). The Migration Policy Institute whose nonpartisan research benefits policy in Washington D.C. states, "Dual language learners in California are enrolling in pre-K programs at lower rates than their non-dual language learner peers, which may contribute to lags in kindergarten readiness for this population (Harper, 2017). This problem is not a regional; however; research by Gottfried (2016) claims a lack of literature in examining the influence of care the year prior to formal

school in establishing kindergarten readiness. Synthesizing data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten [ECLS-K] Gottfried found that ELL students who attended center-based care opposed to parental care in the year before preschool had fewer socio-behavioral issues in kindergarten (2017). The study has changed the way school readiness for English Language Learners should be given focus; immigration patterns combined with federal educational accountability policies are targeting ELL school performance. Why do limited English proficient families struggle?

Firgens and Mathews (2012) assert children whose parents are English Language Learners face significant barriers as the access may not be as readily available and finding assistance in the native language may be equally challenging or finding bilingual preschools. This is contradictory considering data from the Migration Policy institute (2018) estimates that in 2016, there were nearly 44,000,000 immigrants in the United States comprising 13.5% of the total United States population. Research by Hardin, Roach-Scott, & Peisner-Feinberg (2007) state that population changes have increased the number of children in schools who are English Language Learners. Further, they argue that nineteen states have experienced a 100% increase or more of immigrant children under age six with approximately 44% in preschool to 3rd grade with Spanish being the top language spoken in these homes. After surveying administrators and teachers, the researchers found that the most pressing concerns were engaging families, providing training to educators who often feel unprepared with the increasing demands, assessing students' proficiency in the native language, and determining when ESE referral needs to take place. In 2015, Head Start revised its performance standards, the first time in seventeen years, to address dual language learners, which could mean that more immigrant children can enroll in the program (Lee, Walker, & Golden, 2015). Title VI (of the Civil Rights Act) states

that “school systems are responsible for ensuring that students of a particular race, color, or national origin are not denied the opportunity to obtain the education generally obtained by other students.” The United States Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOC) interprets and enforces Title VI and maintains that states are mandated to protect and help students overcome language barriers. Perplexing, is that this does not occur with children ages 0-5. With early childhood programs usually being the first encounter immigrant families have with school institutions, investing in the advancement of parental knowledge about kindergarten readiness in the segment of the population who comprise English Language Learners would be advantageous.

Common Core State Standards and Early Childhood

Common Core State Standards State Standards heightened the demands of students by detailing what K-12 students should know in English language arts and Mathematics at the end of every school year. As a result of more rigorous standards, kindergarten demands more from students. Many kindergartens are now using standardized tests to measure achievement. Students scoring below grade level are marked at risk. Parents have taken matters into their hands when it comes to kindergarten readiness. Hover (2015) found that parents of children who marginally meet the kindergarten enrollment date *redshirt* or homeschool their child for a year to allow them to catch up developmentally with their peers. This essentially widens the achievement gap between those who are overly prepared for kindergarten and students who have had no exposure to preschool. A school district in Tennessee offers an alternative solution for children who are redshirted. A Kindergarten Readiness Class at a local school simulates an abbreviated kindergarten until these children enroll in kindergarten the following year. Based off End-of-Year benchmark performance assessments in third grade, children of lower socioeconomic standing, who did not attend the Kindergarten Readiness Class, did not make academic gains

during their *redshirted* year. However, children who could afford the classes entered kindergarten prepared. Hatcher (2011) found parents from higher-income families display more anxiety over kindergarten and therefore delay kindergarten entrance for younger children.

Furthermore, Geoffrey et al. (2010) contribute a study that explores the effect of formal childcare, informal childcare, and parental care have on academic readiness. Cognitive school readiness, receptive vocabulary, and reading and math achievement scores were compared for children of mothers with low levels of education and mothers with high levels of education. Children whose mothers have a low level of education scored lower on achievement tests than those with highly educated mothers; unless they received formal childcare. Speculation deems the moderate quality of childcare to be responsible for this finding. Children with formal childcare scored higher in school readiness, receptive vocabulary, and reading and math achievement scores. A longitudinal study conducted by Magnuson, Meyers, and Ruhm (2005) uses reading and math skills to measure the impact of three types of academic exposure: pre-kindergarten, daycare, or preschool. The effects on disadvantaged versus more advantaged children; parents' education and income; the home learning environment; the school neighborhood and environment were all analyzed. Results show children who attend center-based care come from more advantaged families and perform better on reading and math readiness assessments than those who receive parental care. Government subsidies provide higher quality care for the lowest income families, leaving families with a slightly higher income attending less effective child care centers. The kindergarten retention rates of these children were also two percentage points lower. The effects of the disadvantaged groups of children tend to be larger than the advantaged group. The benefits of prekindergarten and preschool

outweighed the benefits of center-based care. All three routes displayed more competence in preparing children for kindergarten than parental care.

The literature review remains consistent; the achievement gap for students who do not attend preschool widens while the success of students who attend preschool fare much better in the kindergarten transition and beyond (Isaacs, 2016; Duncan, 2007; Windship, Sawhill, and Gold, 2011). Failure to attend preschool has an impact on kindergarten readiness specifically those from lower socioeconomic status families. Children who attend a quality preschool show higher scores in readiness than children who do not participate in preschool (Isaacs, 2016). Duncan et al. (2007) found that children who enter school with higher readiness skills are generally more successful in grade school, are less likely to drop out of high school, and earn more as adults - starting school with the readiness to learn increases a child's likelihood of reaching middle class by age 40 by 8 percentage points (Winship, Sawhill, and Gold, 2011).

Parents in Poverty

Poverty is defined by established thresholds and guidelines set forth by the United States Census Bureau taking into account income levels. United States Census Statistics (Fontenot, Smega, and Kollar, 2017) report roughly 21% of all children live in poverty. Further, African Americans (22%), Hispanics (19%), and single mothers (26.6%) as representing the largest percentage of the overall poverty demographic. Findings from the National Center for Children in Poverty (n.d.) indicate that poverty stifles children's ability to focus on learning and more importantly plays a role in behavioral and emotional issues. Compounding problems ensue for children who have one or more risk factors such as low income and single parent household. The repercussions for not providing parents the tools for bridging learning gaps in the most vulnerable populations are serious for not only the children but to American society. To further

support caregivers the psychological considerations of decision making should be taken into account. Vohs et al., (2008) provide information on decision fatigue; individuals are juggling many decisions that require both mental effort and resources tax the brain's executive control and result in a diminished ability to practice regulation.

Rent burdens on low-income families leave them with little money remaining for further wants and needs. According to Larrimore and Shuetz (2017), the lowest quintile pays 56% of total monthly earnings on rent which exceeds the HUD's definition of "severe rent burden." This means that rental prices continue to rise while incomes do not. As a result, households who spend a more significant percentage of their income on rent face lower economic stability. This supports the premise that low-income families with children face increased stress and lower economic well-being. Bourdieu (1986) conjectures that not enough consideration is given to academic yield from scholastic investment in time, or lack thereof, from the family. If parents do not possess time to transmit the necessary skills for children to acquire, how can their personal and institutional lives improve?

The United States SNAP, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, provides food programs to families in poverty. Data from SNAP reveals that 1 in 3 (47%) children are receiving benefits of SNAP. Also, 40% of all SNAP recipients live with preschool children. What a typical family on SNAP spends on housing is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of take-home pay. Food insecure families with young children are at a higher risk of decreased achievement in reading and math and increased odds of psychological and behavioral concerns (Keith-Jennings, 2012). Issues surrounding insecure housing and food put disadvantaged families at increased risk of lagging behind peers at school.

Studying the circumstances that inhibit family engagement should occur with poverty being the primary factor. Mullainathan (Harvard) and Shafir (Princeton), author of the book *Scarcity* and behavior economists, presented the “Tunneling” Theory or Present Bias culture among those in poverty and posits that adults in poverty are focusing on immediate needs such as food and shelter and are forced to place lower importance on areas of equal importance that do not have immediate payoffs, such as education. Research confirms that parents of three- to five- year-old’s, especially from disadvantaged households, may benefit from having tools to help them reduce stress and meet education goals. The significance here is that while parents want to do the right thing for their child, other aspects of “life” may take on a higher priority. Self-concept and cognitive dissonance should also be examined. Cognitive dissonance refers to the misalignment of the way a person behaves that is inconsistent with the type of individual a person would like to be (Festinger, 1957) *Unequal Childhoods* (Laureau, 2011) exposes how families with a low socioeconomic status approach institutions with the belief that education is the schools’ responsibility.

Daniel Kahneman using Dual System Theory (2011) gives the rationale of the system one and system two parts of the brain in the book *Thinking Fast and Slow*. The importance of these findings on parents living in poverty is significant because it affects decision making. Cognitive load resulting from living in high-stress conditions affect the focus and salience of which adults’ attention is given. Adults living below or slightly above the poverty line may be operating from an impulsive system one brain, resulting in more capricious decisions. System two decision making is analytical, effortful, and slower. Mullainathan and Shafir (2013) discuss the underpinnings of higher order behavior and decision-making as a means for cognitive capacity and executive control.

Furthermore, the psychological taxing of a person in poverty has negative downstream consequences to the individual's other areas of life specifically decision making. Shiv and Fedorikhin's study, (1999) examined decision making in terms of affect and cognition and found that when the brain was overly taxed, decisions were based on emotion (affect) rather than logic (cognition). The study attempts to measure decision making in participants who were memorizing a seven-digit code versus a two-digit code. Results confirmed when participants had a higher cognitive load they were more apt to select the cake (affect); memorizing the two-digit code participants were more likely to accept the fruit option (cognition).

Parents' Perceptions

Parents' perceptions of preparing their children for the transition to school is researched extensively. Data reported by the National Center for Education Statistics Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (2004), examined the beliefs of parents and teachers on kindergarten readiness skills, the characteristics, attributes, and attitudes necessary for a child to succeed in kindergarten. The research found parents and teachers to agree on the importance of a child's ability to communicate his or her needs, wants, and thoughts. They also agreed on the importance of a child to approach new activities with curiosity and enthusiasm. Parents and teachers disagreed on the level of importance for children to enter kindergarten with school-related skills, such as knowing the letters of the alphabet, counting to 20, and properly manipulating a writing tool.

Additionally, parents rated behavioral skills such as taking turns and sitting to listen quietly more essential than did kindergarten teachers. This study demonstrates the need for parent and teacher dialogue to create similar goals. The role of preschool has shifted from a play-based experience to a structured environment complete with learning standards (Hatcher,

2011). Preschool is a time when children learn behavioral expectations, such as following routine and rules, taking turns, and communicating needs. There are a variety of tools kindergarten teachers use to gauge readiness. These tools include play-based instruments, observations, and screenings. Hatcher (2011) found social-emotional maturity and the ability to interact successfully with peers and teachers to be a necessary component of kindergarten readiness.

School-related behaviors and self-regulatory skills were determined to be major factors in displaying school readiness. Consistent with the National Center for Education Statistics findings, Hatcher found parents to deem language and literacy skills of high importance. The researchers found the development of an enthusiastic and curious approach to learning to be an essential role of preschools. Pekdogan and Akgul (2016) studied teachers' perspectives of school readiness, which they defined as a child's ease and learning without emotional complexity. Pre-readiness skills include pre-writing and pre-reading skills, math skills, social skills, emotional skills, self-care skills, and motor skills. The maturation of these skills is beneficial because entering school will allow children to build on these already developed skills. Findings of teachers' perspectives include gathering and sustaining attention as more important than academic, social communication, and literacy skills. Teachers display an opinion that prior knowledge and age-appropriate behaviors should be sufficient for school readiness. The researchers discovered teachers' perceptions of school readiness to include a positive attitude towards school, acquisition of developmental skills such as using scissors, daily life skills, and having prerequisite communication skills. In the teachers' opinion, children should be able to respond to a conversation as a prerequisite skill for school. This study also examined teachers' perspectives on methods for preparing children for school, such as using educational toys and

hands-on learning to build prior knowledge. Assessment of school readiness included collaboration with friends, participation in activities, and communication skills. Quantitative results found age, family communication, and family attitudes as contributing factors to a child's preparation for school.

Puccioni (2014) tests the association between parental beliefs on school readiness and children's initial achievement and ongoing progress in school. The author examines the *conceptual model of academic socialization* by Taylor et al. (2000), which asserts parents' cognitions about school influences, their engagement in their child's academic readiness, and therefore contributes to their child's transition to school. Furthermore, parents who find more value in reading and writing skill abilities focus on this academic area in preparing their child for school. These children tend to score higher on readiness screenings. Parents who value inductive reasoning tend to place more emphasis on this type of preparation. *Unequal Childhoods* (2011) describes the *accomplishment of natural growth* versus *concerted cultivation* whereby working-class families place more importance on developing their children's language and skills that prepare them for future endeavors (Lareau).

Additionally, low income White and Hispanic families placed more emphasis on self-regulation competence than low-income Black families. Puccioni (2014) recounts children from low-socioeconomic families enter kindergarten with lower achievement scores than their peers, and this gap widens through elementary school. In addition to socioeconomic status, children's gender and age are associated with children's success in their transition to school. This study supports the notion that children who have more opportunities to learn and further exposure to academia have increased achievement. Using a Likert scale, parents were asked how often they participated in certain transitional activities, such as singing with their child, reading to their

child, playing sports, or building with their child. Factors such as parents' level of education, their occupation, and household income, and type of child care were included in the study. The study supports that early reading skills are strongly associated with mathematics achievement. This study found that children from higher socioeconomic homes enter school with higher levels of academic success and display more rapid growth. Children who attended Head Start experienced increased rapid growth than children who experienced parental care. Both populations entered school with the same readiness level. As expected, findings indicate parents' engagement has a positive effect on children's readiness for school.

Inadequate exposure to a linguistically rich conversation may be one causation for children from a low socioeconomic background to display lower achievement than their peers. Productive discussions are known to build conversational skills, along with taking turns and acquiring new words. Vocabulary skills later impact later oral language skills. A language-focused intervention, *Learning Language and Loving It*, build reading skills, vocabulary, decoding, and reading comprehension. A study by Johanson, Justice, & Logan (2015) examines the achievement gap between children with a middle to high socioeconomic status and children with low socioeconomic status. Reading scores in second grade can be predicted by vocabulary, decoding, and comprehension skills from kindergarten. Early language interventions are known to have a higher return on investment for disadvantaged children the earlier the intervention begins. These children's language trajectory can be positively altered with early language intervention. Improved word recognition and reading comprehension are two areas that can benefit in this population. Teachers who model linguistically rich conversations provide children with opportunities to learn language skills. Long-term impacts of language intervention have less backing than short-term effects. In one study where three-year-old children were a part of

rich book talk, they displayed sustained benefits for six months post-intervention. This study supports the *Matthew Effect* where the children with stronger linguistic skills benefitted more than those with less developed language skills creating a positive compounding trajectory. Specifically, those with more matured vocabularies grew their vocabulary skills and those with less developed vocabularies only benefitted slightly. Children who enter preschool with higher reading abilities are more successful in transferring their abilities and see greater improvements in language skill acquisition.

The NCES study (1995) discovered differing views of parents with contrasting levels of education. Parents with less formal education rated knowing the alphabet, counting to 20, sitting and listening, and using writing tools as essential skills for entering kindergarten. Parents with higher levels of education considered taking turns, effective communication, and enthusiasm for learning as more pertinent skills. Surprisingly, parents consistently rated these skills and behaviors at a higher importance than kindergarten teachers.

Recchia and Bentley (2013) examined the perspectives of parents of kindergarten children who had their preschool children enrolled in the play-based, child-centered preschool in New York. Children who demonstrate kindergarten readiness display strong “habits of mind,” which enables individuals to seek, acquire, and respond to knowledge about their world. These traits include persistence, taking risks, applying knowledge, empathy, and posing problems. Children who are deemed prepared for learning are complex thinkers and can navigate their environment. Three themes materialized: engagement of self, social adeptness and flexibility, and reading and navigating environments. Parents who perceive their children to be self-aware and self-assured can solve problems and negotiate challenges. They demonstrate an enjoyment of activities that provided choices for learning; a high level of social adeptness; and flexibility with which they

can communicate with awareness of others. Parents saw their children as having the ability to observe, research, and analyze the culture of the classroom. They also recognize their children's ability to follow directions.

As previously mentioned, research (Isaacs, 2016; Puccioni, 2014) asserts parents' perspectives on approaches for promoting kindergarten readiness are based on their experiences. Familial background, socioeconomic status, education, learning environment, and exposure to preschool settings affect parents' involvement in preparing their child for kindergarten. The skills parents deem necessary for transitioning into school vary according to the characteristics mentioned above. Studies demonstrate a variance in parent and teacher beliefs regarding the transition to kindergarten. Proposed literacy-related skills come from the Office of Early Learning Developmental and Learning Standards (2017). Specifically, they are taken from the Language and Literacy Skills for three- to five- year-olds.

Listening and Understanding

1. Demonstrates Understanding when listening

Benchmark a. Engages in multiple back-and-forth communicative interactions with adults (e. g., teacher-shared information, read-aloud books) and peers to set goals, follow the rules, solve problems and share what is learned with others

Benchmark b. Shows understanding by asking and answering factual, predictive and inferential questions, adding comments relevant to the topic and reacting appropriately to what is said

2. Increase knowledge through listening

Benchmark a. Identifies the main idea, some details of a conversation, story or informational text and can explicitly connect what is being learned to own existing knowledge

Benchmark b. Demonstrates increased ability to focus and sustain attention, set goals and solve dilemmas presented in conversation, story, informational text or creative play

3. Follows direction

Benchmark a. Achieves mastery of two-step directions and usually follows three-step directions

Vocabulary

1. Shows an understanding of words and their meanings (receptive)

Benchmark a. Demonstrates an understanding of age-appropriate vocabulary across many topic areas and demonstrates a wide variety of words and their meanings within each area (e.g., world knowledge, names of body parts and feelings)

Benchmark b. Demonstrates understanding of functional and organizational language (e.g., same and different, in front of and behind, next to, opposite, below) in multiple environments

Benchmark c. Understands or knows the meaning of many thousands of words including subject area words (e.g., science, social studies, math, and literacy), many more than he or she routinely uses (receptive language)

2. Uses increased vocabulary to describe objects, actions, and events (expressive)

Benchmark a. Uses a large speaking vocabulary, adding new words weekly (e.g., repeats words and uses them appropriately in context) (typically has a vocabulary of more than 1,500 words)

Benchmark b. Uses a variety of word-meaning relationships (e.g., part-whole, object-function, object-location)

Benchmark c. Identifies unfamiliar words asking for clarification

Benchmark d. Uses words in multiple contexts, with the understanding that some words have multiple meanings

Emergent Reading

1. Shows motivation for and appreciation of reading

Benchmark a. Selects books for reading enjoyment and reading-related activities including pretending to read to self or others

Benchmark b. Makes real-world connections between stories and real-life experiences

Benchmark c. Interacts appropriately with books and other materials in a print-rich environment

Benchmark d. Asks to be read to, asks the meaning of written text or compares books/stories

Benchmark e. Initiates and participates in conversations that demonstrate appreciation of printed materials

2. Shows age-appropriate phonological awareness

Benchmark a. Distinguishes individual words within spoken phrases or sentences

Benchmark b. Combines words to make a compound word (e.g., “foot” + “ball” = “football”)

Benchmark c. Deletes a word from a compound word (e.g., “starfish” – “star” = “fish”)

Benchmark d. Combines syllables into words (e.g., “sis” + “ter” = “sister”)

Benchmark e. Deletes a syllable from a word (e.g., “trumpet” – “trum” = “pet” or “candy” – “dy” = “can”)

Benchmark f. Combines onset and rime to form a familiar one-syllable word with and without pictorial support (e.g., when shown several pictures and adult says “/c/” + “at,” child can select the picture of the cat)

3. Shows alphabetic and print knowledge

Benchmark a. Recognizes that print conveys meaning

Benchmark b. Recognizes almost all letters when named (e.g., when shown a group of letters, can accurately identify, verbally or nonverbally, the letter that is named)

Benchmark c. Names most letters (e.g., when shown an uppercase or lowercase letter, can accurately say its name)

Benchmark d. Recognizes some letter sounds (e.g., when shown a group of letters, can accurately identify, verbally or nonverbally, the letter of the sound given)

4. Demonstrates comprehension of books read aloud

Benchmark a. Retells or reenacts story with increasing accuracy and complexity after it is read aloud

Benchmark b. Asks and answers appropriate questions about the story (e.g., “What just happened?” “What might happen next?” “What would happen if...?” “What was so silly about...?” “How would you feel if you...?”)

Parental Practices

The far-reaching effects of parental practices determines what experiences children bring to school with them. Writings and theories by James Heckman (2011), Economist, Professor, and Nobel Laureate are worth pursuing. His work has laid the groundwork for establishing amongst statisticians, early childhood experts, psychologists, economists, and neuroscientists that the quality of early childhood development has an economic return on investment for society. It was Heckman who questioned when inequality begins and measured cognitive and emotional stimulation in households of children ages 0-2 amongst intact families, single mothers, and broken families. This is significant because the research linked success not only in preschool but also parenting. List, Samek, and Suskind (2018) reiterate the influence that behavioral science reduces the divide between parent intention and behavior.

Heckman's work (2011) gave evidence that investing in family engagement can equalize opportunity for disadvantaged populations. Further, Heckman's research indicates that policy is not adequately creating the mechanisms that are trickling down to the familial level. Heckman reached several conclusions in reviewing the data. The first premise is that inequities in early childhood lead to inequalities in adult life. Second, adverse environmental and genetic deficits can be compensated by giving parents the resources and tools needed to develop both cognitive and social skills. Third, investments in early education for children from low socioeconomic status backgrounds has far-reaching positive life outcomes by closing achievement gaps, reducing crime rates in society, and creating healthier lifestyles. In conclusion, Heckman has used an equation to find that every dollar invested in early education has a seven to ten percent return on investment in later years.

When students enter kindergarten at a disadvantage, the literacy and mathematics gap widens over time. The “Matthew effect” (Gladwell, 2009) reveals that there are systemic loops in many aspects of society that make it so that humans who were given advantages will be able to use those advantages to gain even more benefits. In terms of early learners, this is translated as the reading rich enjoy reading and therefore spend more time reading, resulting in furthering their reading acquisition. Likewise, the reading deficient who encounter reading difficulties develop negative attitudes toward reading and therefore spend less time reading, creating more deficit in reading abilities (Morgan et al., 2008). Linder et al. (2013) defined kindergarten readiness as a child's preparedness in what they could be expected to know and perform when arriving at the formal classroom setting. The results of the meta-analysis revealed seven themes: 1.) Family structure and parenting 2.) home environment 3.) child care setting 4.) social skills 5.) math/literacy tasks 6.) learning ability and 7.) socioeconomic status. The elements surrounding home and parent involvement illustrate that maternal warmth, high expectations, and patience all play a role in kindergarten readiness. The second finding is that family structure is equally important in determining readiness. Single parents were found to have lower expectations and higher income households consistently outperformed peers in reading and math. The most important finding, however, is that homes lacking in literacy-rich environments were correlated to a child's oral language, decoding, and phonological awareness ability. These findings are essential in establishing a need to communicate and encourage behavior modifications to creating the right learning conditions at home.

Adult Learning Theory

There are advantages to merging adult learning theory and parental education with kindergarten transition skills. When instructional leaders can marry adult learning theory with

innovation to offset achievement gaps, opportunities are created. The three main theories of adult learning are 1.) andragogy 2.) self-directed learning, and 3.) transformational learning (TEAL, 2011). The more adult educators are aware of how to better disseminate literacy information to adult learners, the likelihood of success for children accelerates. To increase the knowledge of kindergarten and to level the playing field in marginalized populations, transformational learning is the shifting of how “individuals think about themselves and their world.” (TEAL, 2011).

Further, it would be remiss not to consider Self Determination Theory (SDT) when examining the practices of caregivers. Self Determination Theory (Bouffard, 2017) takes into account the social contextual factors that scaffold or obstruct people’s thriving through the needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy. Autonomous behaviors are one’s decisions based on self-regulatory decisions and volition. Competence is the attributes associated with one’s self-belief of efficacy and mastery. Relatedness is the integral component of belongingness. With autonomy, competence, and relatedness, researchers can investigate what moves people to action (Bouffard, 2017).

When deciding what information should be disseminated to caregivers, educators should be taken into account. Bassok et al. (2016) documented the findings that the percentage of kindergarten teachers who believed children should learn to read in kindergarten rose from 31% to 80% between 1998 and 2010. Additionally, teachers surveyed maintain that children should enter kindergarten with full knowledge of the alphabet (Bassok et al., 2016). The implications of the study reveal that out of thirteen school readiness beliefs between 1998 and 2010, learning to read the most significant. Using transformational learning to change the perceptions parents

have of kindergarten is pertinent. Instructional leaders have the responsibility to convey this message to the parents of incoming preschoolers before registering for school.

In addition to adult learning theory, technology can be a vehicle to reach parents of preschoolers. The study titled *The Parents and Children Together Intervention* (PACT) involved recruiting parents whose children attended Head Start in Chicago. The treatment group was given the behavior modification tools along with a reading tablet while the control group received verbal instructions and information about the importance of reading to children. As hypothesized, the treatment group who were given commitment devices overcame discount rate and present bias and read to their children eighty-eight minutes more than the treatment group. Survey questions were asked of both groups asking the parents how they felt reading to their child would improve their reading skills. There was virtually no difference in results. This is a significant finding as it proves that parents in both groups wanted their children to be successful; they hear the message about literacy in preschoolers even if it is not being acted upon.

Technology

Technology is penetrating the lives of Americans. Data collected from the PEW Research Center on America's smartphone habits reveal that 9-in-10 Americans are now online.

Technology could be a vehicle not only to reach parents but to do so in the least intrusive way without adding additional demands to resources or time. PEW has longitudinally tracked broadband, smartphone, tablet, and social media usage from 2000- present. In all areas, there has been exponential growth. The trends that have resulted from the surveys issued over the past fifteen years are as follows:

- 1.) 77% of Americans own a smartphone. This is relevant as applications can be downloaded to smartphones and websites can be accessed. The research indicates amongst young people;

smartphones are nearly ubiquitous with 92% of ages 18-29 owning one. This is a relevant finding as this is the target audience of the proposed study.

2.) 75% of Americans have broadband at home. There have been some findings that as smartphone dependence increases broadband subscription may decrease. The surveys indicate in the years 2013 and 2015 percentage decreases. The study also suggests socioeconomic status, geographic location, education levels play a role in broadband subscriptions.

3.) 7-in-10 Americans use social media. This study illuminates data revealing that in 2005 only 5% of the population used social media whereas today 69% of adults are users.

4.) Half the public own a tablet. From 2010 to the present there has been a fifty percent increase in tablet ownership. This is important because tools such as tablets help engage families and provide children with applications that are novel and may increase kindergarten readiness.

Further data from Statista (2017), a provider of market and consumer data, reports the daily self-reported online media usage of moms in the United States is roughly 200 minutes.

Researchers and policymakers have identified the factors in call-to-action campaigns that increase efficacy and response rates. Policy and lawmakers lack psychological interventions in their campaigns. Understanding the interventions that drive behavior is key to initiating change. *The Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy* (2013) text discussed two successful initiatives *Don't Mess with Texas* and *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk* Campaigns. Both effective, these relied on making audiences feel uncomfortable (Shaffir). These campaigns allowed individuals the ability to act appealing to human psychological subsidies and not psychologically taxing them. As a segue to this, the author explains negative campaigns that have not been successful, such as daycares that charged parents \$1.00 for picking children up late from school. This attempt essentially proved ineffective as parents traded their guilt for the ability to pay for

the service. Understanding behavioral levers are essential in creating effective behavior awareness campaigns for kindergarten readiness. Calling attention to parents' desire and responsibility to read to children before kindergarten may be a psychological lever that proves effective whereas telling parents to read to children is not as effective.

Nudge Theory

Influencing behavior is fundamental to public policy. The advances in the field of behavioral science allows leaders to examine what compels people to act in certain ways. According to a white paper by Mayer, Kalil, Oreopoulos, and Gallegos (2015) people who utilized a contract had reminders and were rewarded were less likely to procrastinate (p.8). The United Kingdom Cabinet Office has a dedicated Behavioral Insights Team called Mindspace (Dolan, Hallsworth, Halpern, King, & Vlaev, 2010) which outlines nine powerful forces central to influencing behavior and change:

1. Messenger: Influenced by who communicates a message
2. Incentives: Influenced by avoiding losses
3. Norms: Influenced by what others do
4. Defaults: Influenced by preset options and neurobiology
5. Salience: Influenced by novelty and relevancy
6. Priming: Influenced by subconscious cues
7. Affect: Influenced by emotional associations
8. Commitments: Influenced by promises made in public and pressure to keep them
9. Ego: influenced by the need to feel good

Cass Sunstein is the change agent for the coined term *Libertarian Paternalism*. The premise is that societies should consider framing choices so that individuals will make the most sensible decision in a way that allows them to practice free will. Cass Sunstein is a legal scholar and expert in behavioral economics. The central theme of the book is promoting a theory called *nudging* in which governments use behavior economics at little to no cost to help individuals make better decisions.

Many scholarly articles have linked nudging to health (weight loss, smoking) and finance (automatic retirement savings, cell phone plans). There is a lack of literature tying this theory to parenting or perhaps short-term decision-making related to education that could have long-term success, such as reading. Many of the theories Sunstein discusses in his book could be married with parenting and preparing children for kindergarten. Examples in his book cited nudging being utilized as tools like warnings or disclosure statements. This is important to the growing body of research being collected as perhaps the public and not just the academic community should be made aware of the outcomes of children not being prepared for school.

Another concept promoted in the book when creating policy is the use of choice architecture, or making it more likely that individuals will choose better. Through hard and soft paternalism, Sunstein gives examples of how human error can justify government action. In the school cafeteria, soft paternalism is at play when the fruits and salads are placed first on the lunch line. Hard paternalism is the fine for not wearing a seatbelt. Sunstein uses neuroscience to posit that impatient people tend to not have the same regard for future decision-making outcomes than patient individuals and uses the loss aversion theory to describe it. He asserts that people dislike losses more than they enjoy gains. This applies to reading to children as in parents may procrastinate or neglect this nightly step that has small, short-term investments of parents time

which may be short, but would produce long-term academic gains. Sunstein also uses the present bias to describe this theory. Another theory tied to procrastination is the research he cites in which consumers undervalue benefits that will only be realized in the future and not immediately. This is called salience. Salience is how attention is drawn to what is relevant at the moment. For example, inattention and neglect of one's bank account may result in bank overdraft fees, which are not sufficiently salient to some to result in a change in their money management. The perceived trivial act of reading to children lacks significant salience because the effect of them reading is not immediately attained. Cialdini (1998) argues that the higher the salient and focal norm, the higher the influence on behavior. Increasing perceptions around kindergarten readiness in vulnerable communities can translate into narrowed achievement gaps. The reward of a child utilizing early literacy behaviors results in the consistent deposits of parental engagement with a text.

Conclusion

There is substantial research supporting the positive benefits of parent engagement and preschool enrollment for kindergarten readiness. Parental engagement in the process of transitional processes is a critical contributing factor to children's positive introduction to kindergarten. Research shows children from low-income families receive the most benefit from quality academic settings before kindergarten (Geoffrey et al., 2010). This benefit is both short-term and long-term throughout the elementary school years. The Matthew Effect (Gladwell, 2009) is used as a motivator in our technological application to urge parents to start their children in building "habits of mind."

Parents are left on their own to build perspectives surrounding what kindergarten is and how to prepare their children for it often relying on others to do this work (Lareau, 2011). They

have left a void in the education, supplies, and tools to transition their children into an academic career. Consequently, parents from low-income households turn to merely teaching their children letter and number recognition. The important skills of communicating their needs, working with others cooperatively, engaging with peers effectively, and thinking deeply are not addressed. Parent perception and parent education programs can be a practical approach to bridging the kindergarten readiness achievement gap. The intent is to utilize research-based behavioral science techniques to merge philosophies of promoting communication and literacy skills.

The extensive body of literature confirms the need to offer low-income families with an opportunity to prepare their children for kindergarten. One discrepancy between low and high-income families that affect parent perceptions is parental education. Consistent with the tunneling theory, a more advanced education alters the perception parents have in their involvement in their child's academic career. In reviewing the literature, the researchers have not found an academic parent guide for the transition to kindergarten. Providing this resource would prepare parents to guide their children through the process of the transition to school. Utilizing the nudge theory, the application will send push notifications with specific learning tools parents can use to engage with their pre-kindergarten child. They are embedded in the content area literacy skills and conceptual learning approaches. Vocabulary development is shown to be more extensive among moderate to high-income families. This technology will provide vocabulary development.

Chapter II analyzed theoretical and conceptual frameworks pertaining to parental engagement in kindergarten readiness. The significance of pre-kindergarten, parents in poverty, parents' perceptions, parental practices, the adult learning theory, technology, and the nudge

theory are all related fields of the study discussed in this literature review. Figure 1 is a distillation of the themes in this chapter and how a behavioral science tool could provide beneficial.

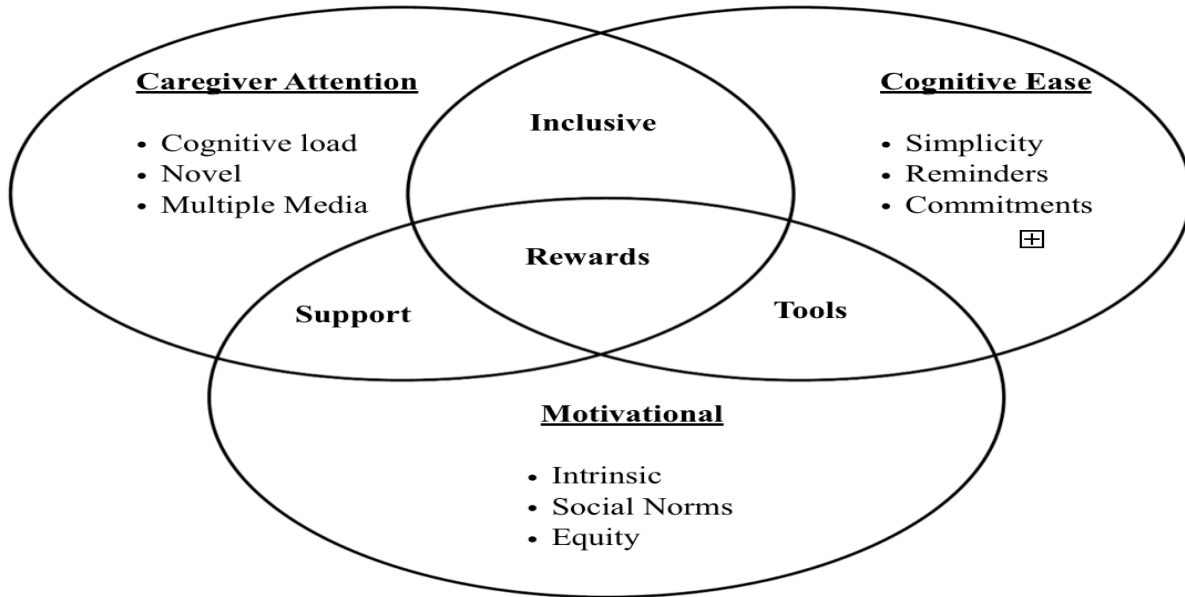


Figure 1: Nudge 2.0: Adapted from A Broader Toolkit for Lasting Behavior Change (Lamberton, 2017).

The researchers analyzed research for trends, strengths, and gaps in the literature. Chapter three will describe the technology-based solution to enhance parental engagement and strengthen children kindergarten readiness for literacy development. Furthermore, the chapter will describe the methods used for data collection, analysis, and evaluation. It will also include the evaluation process for determining the aptitude for which the technical application increases parent engagement.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter II was comprised of the Literature Review for this study. Chapter III contains the methodology, research design, and the sample population. Additionally, chapter III provides the instrumentation and procedures for this mixed methods study. This chapter concludes with the limitations, delimitations, risks and benefits, and confidentiality measures of the study.

The purpose of this action research mixed-methods study that utilized a convergent design was to create a resource to aid, encourage, and support parental engagement in kindergarten reading readiness for three- to five- year-old children in a southeastern United States school system. According to research by Mayer, Kalil, Oreopoulos, and Gallegos (2015), the children enrolled in full-time childcare still only spend about 22% percent of their day in preschool at ages three to five, and no time between the ages of zero and three. This judgment means that parents hold the ability to positively influence their child's academic foundation. The researchers aimed to explore the level of literacy engagement during this time in a child's life and parents' approach to building their child's literacy background. The purpose of using a mixed methods approach according to Creswell & Plano Clark (2011):

As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and combining both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (page 12).

The researchers used a convergent design as Leedy & Ellis Ormrod (2016) emphasize the data types used in the study were given equal weight and used in parallel with the outcome yielding similar findings (pg. 367). Parents with young children live busy and demanding lives. The researchers were interested in the theories of culture repositioning and how the use of data and rewards affect human behavior; in this case, parent engagement. A qualitative approach to

the study presented an opportunity to describe the parents' experiences to explain the action research thoroughly. The researchers conducted a mixed-method convergent research design study ensuring validity and reliability through triangulation in real life context. The researchers surveyed parents of preschool children and kindergarten teachers to determine a baseline of parents' knowledge regarding the rigor in kindergarten; parents' general understanding of learning standards; and their overall beliefs and motivations about the preschool investment. The researchers were interested in the kindergarten teacher's perspectives relating to the important kindergarten readiness skills. Also, the researchers investigated parent perceptions regarding the degree to which their child's preschool keeps up with rigor and teaching standards of public schools. The researchers believed there would be a significant gap in the perceptions of what parents think they know and what the current reality is of the changing kindergarten landscape. This knowledge could impact how schools do business. Once this was determined, the researchers analyzed the need to create a tool utilizing the nationally approved curriculum from the Office of Early Learning Developmental and Learning Standards. Using emerging techniques from the field of behavioral science, the researcher can applied these approaches to supporting parents. Then it was determined which participants would benefit most from having a technological tool to inform them of kindergarten reading readiness skills through consistent reminders and push notifications. The goal was to shift the paradigm to that of a more involved caregiver.

Research Approach

To formulate a research plan, the research questions and hypotheses were generated. The foundation of the study was the notion that parents play the role of the child's first educator, and the researchers used behavioral science to motivate more parents to engage in kindergarten

readiness activities. By increasing parent engagement, achievement gaps can be decreased. As Cheung and Pomerantz (2012) state, "Given the importance of parents' involvement in children's learning, the major question is that of what underlies its beneficial effect on children's achievement" (p. 820). The purpose of the study was to identify and change parent paradigms about kindergarten readiness and to support parents who may be stifled by a negative self-efficacy and a lack of resources for growing literacy skills. This effort provides caregivers a technology tool to bridge the gap from preschool to kindergarten.

Research Questions

Question 1: How does a parent's self-efficacy rating contribute to kindergarten readiness? This explains the perceptions of readiness parents have contrasted with that of teachers.

Question 2: What factors inhibit or promote parents' engagement in preparing their children for kindergarten? The justification of this question is to verify what facets of the lives of parents play a part in becoming absorbed in kindergarten readiness.

Question 3: What motivates parents to make decisions that they know yield a high payoff? The justification of this question is to determine what behavioral interventions help parents to commit to engagement. After exploring the nudge theory, the researchers utilized this influence to create a technological tool to assist in preparing children for kindergarten.

Question 4: According to kindergarten teachers, what standards/information is important for dispersing to parents regarding preparing three- to five- year-old children for kindergarten literacy instruction? The merit of this research question is to defend what the best information to

submit to caregivers is regarding parent advocacy and education. This question was addressed with kindergarten teachers.

Hypothesis

The researchers' hypothesis is twofold: 1.) A gap exists between the current rigor in American kindergarten, and the depth of knowledge parents have regarding the rigor 2.) Parents who are fiscally and time insecure face difficulties in overcoming the information cost. Improving parent advocacy techniques for societal preschool perceptions and kindergarten readiness alleviates a fundamental number of children who attend school unprepared by addressing populations left out by means of economic restraints and either not familiar with how kindergarten affects the long term success or not able to provide the necessary resources. Using research-based behavioral science interventions on the adults in children's lives will engage more families resulting in a positive outcome to preschool children's kindergarten readiness levels.

Research Design

Gaining the perspective of parents of three- to five- year-old children and teachers was key information for the development of the technology application. Understanding the field of behavioral science plays a role in being able to utilize positive reinforcement and suggestions. This shapes the reasoning and decisions of groups more powerfully than legislation or policy and by individual free will and at a much lower cost.

The researchers conducted a convergent design study through surveys (Appendix F and G) to measure the degree of knowledge parents have of kindergarten readiness, Common Core State Standards, and kindergarten literacy skills. The researchers wanted to gauge the parents' perceptions of their self-efficacy at teaching children kindergarten readiness skills. Responses

were themed from the survey. The action research of the study was pertinent. The independent variables of this study included the three- to five- year-old children's exposure to academic settings and teachers of kindergarten. These educational settings may include but were not limited to free Voluntary Prekindergarten, Head Start, private preschools, child care, and at-home child care services. The amount of parent engagement throughout a child's first four years of life through the start of kindergarten was an additional independent variable.

Furthermore, parents' perception regarding kindergarten and the rigor of preschool was also considered. Lastly, the parents' education level and consistent access to modern technology were deemed independent variables. The dependent variable of the study was the parents of three- to five- year-old children. The positive directional hypothesis reads: The perception of parents with three- to five- year-old children in the southeastern United States regarding the need for parent engagement of kindergarten reading readiness will increase with the use of the technological tool and will positively influence a cultural shift involving engaging with preschoolers in a more meaningful literacy-focused context.

Sample

The target populations of this mixed methods study were parents of three- to five- year-old children and public school kindergarten teachers in the southeastern United States. Target internet searches and telephone inquiries were made to community organizations that provide outreach to parents of preschool children and kindergarten teachers in the respective area. For this study, the purposive sample populations completed a survey to communicate their perception or experience of preschool and kindergarten readiness. The rationale for a purposive sample is that only members who represent perspectives from a specific audience were targeted (Bouffard, 2017). To find participants, snowball sampling occurred in which other purposive

contacts in the field may be requested from participants (Holloway, 1997). The researchers surveyed teachers and families from public elementary schools, Head Start, preschool centers, child care centers, and agencies that serve young children. Surveys taken by the parents of preschool children (Appendix F) and by the public school kindergarten teachers (Appendix G) were distributed via internet and email. After data was disaggregated from the survey, a parent supplemental program was created. This technological tool intended for use by parents of preschool children, or agencies, to prepare children for the start of kindergarten may even be translated into other languages to benefit English Language Learners. Further study can be collected by working with participating families and analyzing the value of said technology after being used for twelve weeks. This information could be gleaned through mixed data collections of its users to gain perspectives regarding kindergarten readiness technology.

To conduct an ethical study, the researchers made use of informed consent (Appendix E). Based on training from the National Institute of Health and requirements from Lynn University's Internal Review Board, the researchers created a protocol to gain informed consent from the participants, specifically:

- That they are part of a research study
- That the participants are free to stop at any point
- The risks and benefits of the research
- The voluntary nature of research
- The procedures used to protect confidentiality.

Each participant signed the agreement before being part of the study.

Instrumentation

The initial survey used to obtain the perspectives of kindergarten teachers and parents of three- to five- year-old children will be composed of a combination of responses. Some of the questions will utilize a Likert scale, and some of the replies will be open-ended. For example, the questions directed to parents of preschool children ask their knowledge of the kindergarten curriculum and what they are doing to prepare their child for kindergarten. The researchers created two surveys. One survey will collected the perspectives of parents regarding kindergarten readiness (Appendix F). A couple of sample questions include: *How much time do you spend preparing your child for kindergarten each week?* And *What obstacles do you face in reading with your child?* The second survey gathered the perspective of kindergarten teachers (Appendix G). A few sample questions include: *What motivates your students' parents to work with their children at home?* And *What skills do you believe are necessary for children to exhibit when entering kindergarten?* The surveys will mostly be distributed and completed via electronic format on Survey Monkey.

Procedures

These surveys provided the researchers with qualitative data to determine the most effective technology for communicating information to caregivers of preschool children. The purpose of using multiple data sources related to the same question were used for a research strategy called triangulation to find consistencies within the data (Holloway, 1997). The researchers used historical data to pull existing statistics from the Florida Department of Education and other journals on households with technology and or numbers of students not attending preschool while using the influence of Cultural Capital Theory to impact lasting change (Bourdieu, 1986). Lastly, the researchers researched to determine the elements of reading

instruction that are most valuable to prepare children for kindergarten. The researchers created a technological tool instructing parents on ways they can engage with their preschool-aged child to prepare them for kindergarten. With a convergent design, the researchers simultaneously collected qualitative and quantitative data through surveys. This research was conducted in various family organizations in South Florida. The researchers offered the use of the application, which is intended to educate parents on kindergarten readiness literacy skills and activities to implement with their preschool-aged children. The researchers completed the following steps:

- 1.) The first introduction to preschool providers via phone call (Appendix A) Recruit preschool teacher survey respondents through purposive sampling at public preschool locations in southeast Florida.
- 2.) Post flyers in preschool centers translated into Spanish and Haitian Creole (Appendix B).
- 3.) Have preschool centers forward an email to parents asking for their participation in the survey (Appendix C).
- 4.) Email public school kindergarten teachers (Appendix D).
- 5.) Administer informed consent in a preferred language to parents (Appendix E).
- 6.) Administer informed consent in preferred language to kindergarten teachers (Appendix E).
- 7.) Email link to survey on SurveyMonkey to interested parents in their preferred language (Appendix F).
- 8.) Email link to survey on SurveyMonkey to interested kindergarten teachers in their preferred language (Appendix G).
- 9.) Analyze data and themes from the survey.

- 10.) Create product based on results.
- 11.) Disseminate product to the public.

Data Collection and Recording

This convergent design study utilized surveys to obtain and depict the experiences of parents of preschoolers.

The researchers identified target locations in the southeastern United States and use home computers to search for potential research locations. Potential centers identified were Head Start Centers; State-sponsored Voluntary Prekindergarten Centers and independently operated preschools that serve low-income families. Also, organizations that work as community liaisons were canvassed. A list of these centers was drawn up and used as a guide when determining eligible study participants. The researchers visited selected preschool providers in person and asked them to reach out to the families they serve via email. Additionally, the researchers will emailed kindergarten teachers in the same geographical area as the preschools inquiring their interest in participating in the online survey.

The researchers will disseminate online surveys (Appendix F) to a variety of parents including, all marital backgrounds, and all educational accomplishments to understand the perceptions and perspectives of parents of preschoolers as they understand kindergarten readiness. The researchers also surveyed kindergarten teachers in the same area in the southeastern United States. Researchers initiated the relationship with preschools in the southeast United States via phone call (Appendix A). Once they had permission to reach out to parents, they sent the preschools an email to send to the parents of the preschool (Appendix C). The researchers posted flyers in preschools (Appendix B). Both parents at the preschools and kindergarten teachers will be given informed consent. Attached to the parent and teacher

surveys was an introduction, purpose of the study, and description of the procedures and anonymity. Potential participants completed, a consent form (Appendix E) where the voluntary nature of the study was outlined. Participants demonstrated consent by clicking “okay.” Surveys were emailed to the preschool parents and kindergarten teachers. The surveys and informed consents were translated into Haitian Creole and Spanish.

Data Processing and Analysis

The researchers’ interviews are intended to provide qualitative data to determine the interest of parents in playing active roles in their child’s education. Teacher responses provided insight into their perceptions of necessary literacy skills relating to kindergarten readiness. The research included how parents gather and apply the information their children use in the years preceding kindergarten. The data is intended to yield a persuasive argument for parent involvement in building their child’s academic foundation. It would benefit both academic communities and student populations to study the relationship between parental perceptions of kindergarten readiness to fulfill a dissertation in practice at Lynn University.

Qualitative Analysis

The researchers will utilize Colaizzi’s framework of descriptive data analysis to produce a meaningful interpretation of the raw results from surveys (Moustakas, 2010). The seven steps include (1) Personal log coding, (2) Identification of important statement coding, (3) Analytical log coding, (4) Scheme grouping, identification of themes, (5) Categorization of datasets, (6) Key feature grouping, and final categorization. Through this process, theme elements were compared and contrasted. Important coding statements were used to derive meaning from the data. Themes were clustered to identify trends and patterns throughout the data and then

transcribed. These steps were conducted to conclude the analysis of parent and teacher perceptions of kindergarten readiness and their roles in the process.

Quantitative Analysis

Both parent and teacher surveys contained a variety of question stems in which the responses were collected through multiple choice, likert scale, and ranking answer choices. The survey questions utilizing a Likert Scale were scored accordingly using a 1-5 rating grid, with one meaning strongly disagree, and five meaning strongly agree. The descriptive data analysis comprised comparing percentage weights to derive meaning and to draw inferences from the sample to a population in general. Additionally, survey questions were designed to aid researchers in gauging the level of familiarity and understanding parents have of the kindergarten curriculum.

Ethical Considerations

Electronic data and consents are stored on a password-protected computer for two years following the completion of the dissertation in practice. At the two year mark, it will be deleted from the password-protected computer. Quantitative data were examined for the purposefulness of the technological component of the dissertation in practice.

A benefit of this study for the preschool and kindergarten teachers is the parent survey opens the conversation for parents to recognize the need to prepare their children for kindergarten and to become better aligned to school district readiness expectations. Parents benefit from immediate access to the technological tool.

While risks are minimal, parents may feel uncomfortable answering questions regarding kindergarten readiness of their children.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

The qualitative instruments (the surveys conducted with the parents of three- to five-year-old children and kindergarten teachers) were coded and kept on a password-protected computer and themes derived from coding. Participants remain confidential as the survey is anonymous. All data collected from the surveys is stored in a locked file cabinet. The documents will be destroyed two years after dissertation defense and after completing two published follow-up educational articles.

Methodological Assumptions

At the onset of the study proposal, the researchers were confident that kindergarten readiness was the main topic with study questions surrounding a central theme of how to prepare a larger population of children for kindergarten. As the literature was studied, it became clearer that better interventions be put in place to educate parents on ways to effectively support their children's early literacy skill development. Keeping methodological assumptions in mind, the researchers can be cognizant that the research questions may change in the middle of the study, so the action research is better understood. The data collection might need to be modified to satisfy new questions.

Delimitations

While some public programs may encompass the age range from birth to five-years-old, the researchers will only be studying parent perceptions as they relate to the three- to five-year-old age group as the children transition to kindergarten. While the researchers are employed as full-time kindergarten teachers, the study does not involve any contact with children. This is not a study measuring the student's readiness. There will not be an experiment, so a control/experimental group is not necessary. Research, as postulated in chapter one, defends the

need for supporting parents of three- to five- year-old children in preparing their children for kindergarten. Therefore, an experiment is unnecessary. The qualities necessary for an effective preschool program and an investigation of the most effective preschools will not be researched and examined. The literature related to preparing children with disabilities will not be included in the review. The methodological procedures of conducting a longitudinal study, case study, or experimental design will not be conducted. The population of parents with children already attending kindergarten and beyond will not be considered in this action research study. The study remains action research rather than a case study because the effect of the app will not be measured.

The threat of bias is present because both researchers are current kindergarten teachers and have extensive training, experience, and schema on the kindergarten curriculum. Analyzing the data will open a potential for bias to present itself.

Limitations

The study offers a few perspectives regarding findings in the literature. One limitation the researchers are mindful of is the Hawthorne effect (Gladwell, M., 2009). As Leedy and Ormrod (2016) demonstrated, the Hawthorne effect takes place when participants in a study alter their behavior because they are being observed in research (p.368). The study participants may answer survey questions in a manner they believe will be perceived positively and not true to experiences or core values. This would be harmful as the researchers want to investigate what the participants truly perceive the preschool to kindergarten continuum. Respondents to surveys and the number of survey questions answered may also be potential limiters. The researchers must trust the honest response of whether respondents to the parent survey or truly parents of preschool children.

Risks and Benefits

One potential benefit of the current study is the opportunity to educate parents that they should be actively preparing their children for kindergarten. More so, the participants will experience the realization children need some academic exposure before kindergarten. Pianta and Cox conjectured, "The transition to kindergarten sets the stage for future academic success as well as for children and families' relationships with the educational system" (Pianta & Cox, 1999). Graue conducted an ethnographic study and found that more affluent parents held more specific beliefs on the skills and knowledge children should enter kindergarten with than less affluent parents (Graue, 1993). A main objective and benefit of this study are to increase parental engagement. As kindergarten teachers, the researchers acknowledge the need for parents to be informed about what kids need to know before starting kindergarten. This technological tool provides a method for communicating these necessary skills and concepts.

A potential risk of this action research study is a negative causal relationship between parents and their approach to preparing their children for kindergarten. Introducing parents to the idea they should be working with their children before the start of kindergarten may have negative effects and cause them to delay further or neglect any academic activities. They may exit the study at any time, and no consequences will occur.

Summary

Chapter III provides a detailed description of the methodology of the study. It explains the rationale for the design and approach to obtaining data. The research questions, sample population, delimitations, and limitations were identified. The data processing, analysis plan, and procedures for deriving themes are thoroughly explained. Furthermore, the risks and

benefits of the study are described. The chapter concludes with an explanation of how participants' confidentiality and anonymity are maintained.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Be The Change in Kindergarten Readiness

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Abstract

Research shows children who enter kindergarten unprepared tend to perform at lower rates than their peers who entered kindergarten ready to learn (Sabal & Pianta, 2015; Heckman, 2017).

This achievement gap demonstrates the necessity for addressing the need for parental and school district paradigm shift in kindergarten readiness. *Be the Change in Kindergarten Readiness* discusses relevant theories about kindergarten readiness and literature attending to the cause, the importance of, and approaches for remediation.

Keywords: parental engagement, kindergarten readiness, transition to kindergarten, achievement gap

Discussion

Mahatma Gandhi said, “Be the change that you wish to see in the world.” A variety of needs, educational experiences, and backgrounds results in students entering school with huge readiness gaps. *Unequal Childhoods* (Lareau, 2011) demonstrates how class differences influence how parents manage youths’ institutional lives and ultimately leads to unequal life

outcomes. The Florida Department of Education Kindergarten Readiness Screener indicates approximately 30-35% of students arrive in kindergarten classrooms unprepared to learn (FLKRS, 2015). Ideally, the researchers of that study believe it should be around 10-15%. On a national level, kindergarten readiness is a complex and stratified concept involving variances in curriculum among preschool programs, parent engagement, percentages of students attending preschool, curriculum alignment between kindergarten and preschool, and the provisions that preschools are not considered part of state learning standards; the system lends itself to a fractured system (Clifford et al., 2005). Reducing the achievement gap can be possible with early intervention.

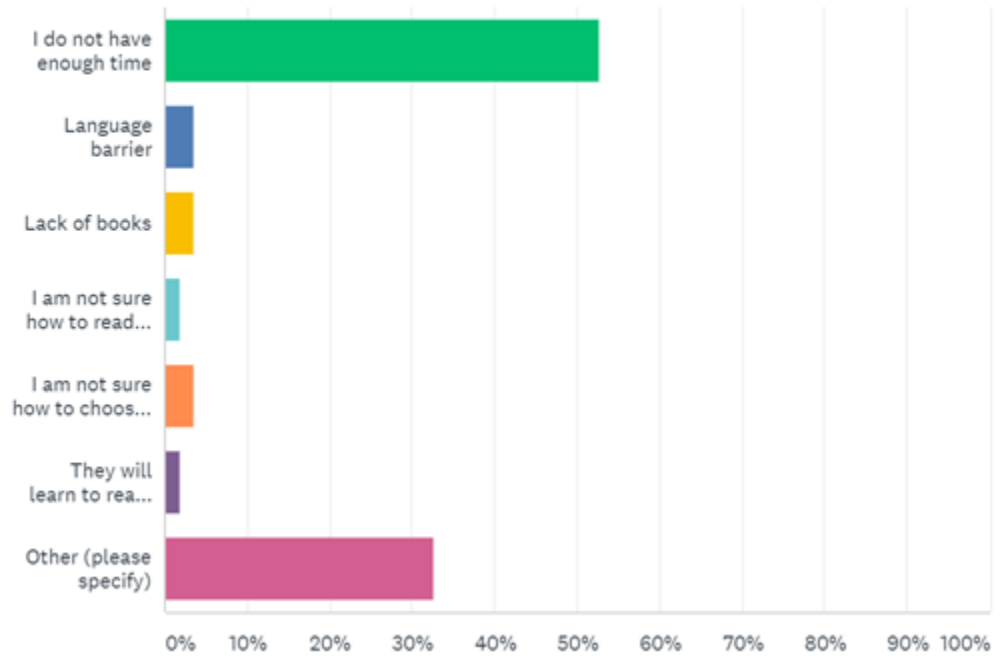
The United States has the fourth lowest number of enrolled three- to five- year-old children in preschool; meaning most of America's children are not in formal care (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017, p. 28). If children are not in center care, how are families engaging and investing in children's literacy development while at home? A study conducted by Carafiello and Hough (2019) reveals parents primarily read with their children and use educational technology to teach their children before attending kindergarten. They also found that 22% of preschool parents spend less than one hour preparing their children for kindergarten. 38% of preschool parents spend between 2-3 hours per week preparing their children for kindergarten; 24% spent between 4-5 hours, and 16% spent more than 5 hours per week. What detracts from or encourages families to engage in early childhood development? Carafiello and Hough (2019) found that a lack of time and resources are the primary causes for parents not being more actively engaged in preparing their children for the transition to kindergarten.

Table: 1

Parent Survey in Which Parents Responded to Barriers to Reading

What obstacles do you face in reading with your child?

Answered: 55 Skipped: 0



Note: Parent survey by Carafiello and Hough (2019) Combining Behavior Economics and Parent Engagement to Impact the Transition to Kindergarten.

Parents also reported that their children are ‘wobble worms’ or they ‘have a difficult time getting their child to sit still. Are teachers and preschool establishments able to disseminate the information necessary to be successful in kindergarten, and do caregivers realize the implications of kindergarten success on lifetime success?

"To be effective, the promotion of parent involvement through practice and policy needs to go beyond whether parents are involved; it needs to focus on how they are involved and what happens as a result" (Pelletier & Corter, 2005, p. 89). There is a fracture between rapidly

developing early education policy and parent behavior. One way to positively impact parent behavior is through interventions. Writings and theories by James Heckman (2011), Economist, Professor, and Nobel Laureate have laid the groundwork for establishing amongst statisticians, early childhood experts, psychologists, economists, and neuroscientists that the quality of early childhood development has an economic return on investment for society. It was Heckman who questioned when inequality begins and measured cognitive and emotional stimulation in households of children ages 0-2 amongst intact families, single mothers, and broken families. This data is significant because the research linked success not only in preschool but also parenting. A study conducted by Carafello and Hough (2019) illustrate a desire of preschool parents to become informed on ways to read effectively with their child. 80% of parents would accept assistance and guidance in learning these skills.

Kahneman and Tversky (1979) pioneers of examining decision making under risk have found that people under weigh outcomes that are uncertain and alternatively put a higher weight on decisions that maximize certainty. Under this umbrella, Kahneman and Tversky (1979) proposed utility theory which provides a framework for the evaluation of choices made by people and institutions. Utility refers to the gratification that each choice bestows to the decision maker. An already taxed caregiver may interpret reading thirty minutes at night a loss opposed to thirty minutes getting the dishes washed which would be considered a positive gain. The chore completion is tangible while the benefits of reading may not be realized instantly. While studies on the advantages of preschool have been numerous and define the future success of students regarding overall success in third grade and high school graduation predictors, what is missing from the literature is the parent engagement and education piece.

"The present study found that the assessment of children across multiple domains before

school readiness predicted achievement and socioemotional skills and behaviors in fifth grade."

This study investigates the perception of parents on school readiness. Research findings by Lareau (2011) highlight that families with a low socioeconomic status tend to not abide by concerted cultivation, whereby families intentionally provide opportunities for children to develop skills and aptitudes. Instead, this population tends to align with the *sense of natural accomplishment* where the families do not promote skills that will later benefit them in their academic and professional lives. The objective is to provide families of three- to five- year-old children with the necessary skills, strategies, and approach to learning for a successful transition into kindergarten. One possible solution is for kindergarten teachers and elementary schools to reach out to neighboring preschools.

Parents of preschool children perceive preschool experiences to have a significantly positive impact on preparing their children *socially* for kindergarten. Preschool and kindergarten teachers recognize meaningful preschool experiences to have a significant positive effect on developing children *academically* for kindergarten. Preschool parents believe socialization is a crucial aspect of preschool in preparation for kindergarten; whereas preschool and kindergarten, teachers think building an academic foundation is the critical aspect of preparing for kindergarten.

According to kindergarten teachers who were asked for their perception on the most vital information to be dispersed to parents regarding preparing three- to five- year-old children for kindergarten literacy instruction is the need to read with their children daily (Carafiello and Hough, 2019). Kindergarten teachers stress the importance of building an enjoyment of reading and not necessarily letter names and sounds or rote memorization of sight words.

There is a clear need for educational institutions to reach out to preschool parents to

promote their engagement in their child's literacy lives. Parent engagement is an essential tool and a powerful approach to closing the readiness gap of kindergarten students. Parents' challenge of limited time and the doubt of not knowing how to prepare children for school can be remediated. Through building parents' self-efficacy and educating them on the transition to kindergarten, we can lessen the discrepancy of competencies among our youngest learners.

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**Transforming Enrollment Procedures for at Risk Kindergarten Students using Behavior
Science Nudges**

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Abstract

The United States is in the bottom quartile of formally enrolled preschoolers in the developed countries. Not every student receives an equitable preschool experience and as a result, kindergarten classrooms contain a wide range of learners. One way to offset this variability in skill would be to transform enrollment procedures using nudges. How schools utilize the data contained on kindergarten enrollment registrations in the spring could help level the playing field for at risk students in the fall. Handing a parent a list of ways to get ready for kindergarten is not enough. One method is through the use of behavior economics and technology. This research is important because it could prove that weekly “nudges” or tips on what to expect in kindergarten can increase success in the fall. Our current understanding of the role family engagement plays in the year prior to kindergarten is limited. To support such an intervention, a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to investigate the perceptions of teachers and parents of preschoolers in kindergarten readiness and receptivity in receiving supports. Quantitative data show parents do not have enough time and lack of Common Core understanding to prepare children for kindergarten yet rate themselves high in their ability to do so. Parents also claim to have little knowledge of the kindergarten curriculum and want local school districts to do more in reaching out to families the year prior to school entry. In addition, the researchers examined technology habits of parents to determine the best

vehicle for interventions Based on these findings, recommendations for schools and families are provided.

Key Terms: Nudge Theory, kindergarten readiness, Present Bias, early childhood, literacy

In 2015, the national percentage of three- to five- year-old's enrolled in a full-day preschool program was 49.6% (OECD, 2017) ; the remaining students are dispersed between informal and familial care settings. When these students enroll for kindergarten an inventory, or triage, should take place. Current practices include testing students in order to evenly distribute abilities equally amongst teachers but how is this helping students? Kindergarten readiness is a precursor to preschool attendance. Colon states in his research, "The students who are walking into a classroom for the first time unprepared to begin learning at the grade level are more likely to remain academically behind through middle school and are three to four times more likely to drop out of high school in later years" (2008, pg.52).

The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K) highlights that school-readiness gaps are already present before children enter school and students coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds are one standard deviation behind higher-income students (Reardon, 2014).

On a national level, kindergarten readiness is a complex and stratified concept involving variances in readiness levels, curriculum among preschool programs, parent engagement, percentages of students attending preschool, curriculum alignment between kindergarten and preschool, and the provisions that preschools are not considered part of state learning standards; the system lends itself to a fractured system (Clifford et al., 2005). This mixed methods study aimed to focus on the strand involving parent perceptions and advocacy and how schools play a

role in supporting parents. One technique is through the use of nudges. The benefit of this intervention is that parents will be able to continue the support over the academic career of a child should the supports and technology be provided. This study surveyed parents on their receptiveness to nudges.

On a local level, a large urban school district in the southeast United States recently reported kindergarten readiness rates at 54.7%. One school reported rates as low as 15.9%. The white subgroup showed readiness rates at 73.8% for female and 68% in males. On the other hand, Black and Hispanic demographic rates were considerably lower. Black females reported 51.45%, and black males reported 42.2% ready to begin school. The Hispanic subgroup reported slightly lower than black at 49.8% for females and 41.7% readiness rates for males (Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener, n.d.)

Work by Lowenstein (1996) reveals that people in so called visceral states such as extreme hunger or anger distort decision making in ways that do not align with long term interests. Kahneman and Tversky (1979) pioneers of examining decision making under risk have found that people under weigh outcomes that are uncertain and alternatively put a higher weight on decisions that maximize certainty. The researchers hypothesize that caregivers do not realize the return on investment immediately with at home literacy. Under this umbrella, Kahneman and Tversky (1979) proposed utility theory which provides a framework for the evaluation of choices made by people and institutions. Utility refers to the gratification that each choice bestows to the decision maker. While the researchers do not doubt caregivers want what is best for children, the gratification one receives from completing other tasks may take precedence. On this note, economics has primarily assumed that people, in general, are rational and understand how to

make decisions that yield the best outcomes. However, behavior economic scientists take into consideration that people can be irrational and continuously frame decisions into categories of gains and losses (Loss Aversion Theory). An already taxed caregiver may interpret reading thirty minutes at night a loss opposed to thirty minutes getting the dishes washed which would be considered a gain. The chore completion is tangible while the benefits of reading may not be realized instantly. How can education be merged with behavioral science, more specifically, to increase parent investment? Thaler and Sunstein (2009) discuss a concept called “nudge,” a practice used for retirement savings and weight loss often involving technology apps. It is worth investigating if the same strategies would be applicable to education investment. This essentially would put caregivers in a better position to choose what is best for their child. Choice architecture and programs designed to provide information to parents can help alleviate “latent incentive conflicts between advantaged and disadvantaged parents” during decision-making processes, as well as, information avoidance.

Two conceptual frameworks are put forth that may explain the factors that influence a parent’s decisions the year before kindergarten. The first, Discount Bias in terms of parenting, means decisions made today have payoffs in the future both economically and socially. However, parents, particularly those of preschoolers, may discount the future focusing on present needs or survival (West, Stanovich, and Toplak 2012). Dual System Theory explained by Kahneman (2011) is a division between the two types of thinking: "System 1" is impulsive and emotional; "System 2" is logical, purposeful, and calculated. Interweaving the theories of

Discount Bias and Dual System Theory may better explain parents decisions regarding education investments in early childhood.

Rationale

There is a need for quantitative and qualitative data regarding both parent and educator perceptions in engaging parents of preschoolers. There is a need to investigate and contrast parent and educator beliefs in order to provide support. School readiness is not a new topic in education; however, the researchers see the benefit in engaging parents of preschoolers at enrollment not only to better prepare students for school but to develop accurate school expectations. Weiss, Caspe, and Lopez with the Harvard Family Research Project (2006) state, "Responsibility for learning outcomes refers to an aspect of parenting that involves emphasizing educational activities that promote school success" (p.3). Research by List, Same, and Suskind (2017) suggests school interventions are reactive rather than proactive in the scheme of human capital development. On this topic, research by Hanushek (2007) confirms that increasing overall education spending is not equal to increased student achievements because the education production formula can not take into account family characteristics and cannot measure parent

investment in the early years. It would make sense to increase parent investment in order to affect the output.

Research by Gottfried (2016) claims a lack of literature in examining the influence of care the year prior to formal school in establishing kindergarten readiness.

Data Collection and Processing

Electronic surveys were sent to parents of preschool children and kindergarten teachers. The parent survey comprised 27 questions consisting of likert scales, open ended text responses, rating scales, and multiple choice formats. The teacher survey consisted of 17 questions in the same answer format as the parent survey. A qualitative approach in open ended free text survey questions presented an opportunity to describe the parents' experiences to explain the action research. A couple of sample questions included: How much time do you spend preparing your child for kindergarten each week? And What obstacles do you face in reading with your child? The second survey gathered the perspective of kindergarten teachers. A few sample questions include: What motivates your students' parents to work with their children at home? And What skills do you believe are necessary for children to exhibit when entering kindergarten? Internet searches and telephone inquiries were made to community organizations that provide outreach to parents of preschool children and kindergarten teachers in the respective area.

Data Analysis

For qualitative data, the researchers utilized Colaizzi's framework of descriptive data analysis to produce a meaningful interpretation of the raw results from surveys (Moustakas, 2010). The seven steps include (1) Personal log coding, (2) Identification of important statement

coding, (3) Analytical log coding, (4) Scheme grouping, identification of themes, (5) Categorization of datasets, (6) Key feature grouping, and (7) final categorization. Through this process, theme elements were compared and contrasted. Important coding statements were used to derive meaning from the data. Themes were clustered to identify trends and patterns throughout the data and then transcribed.

Findings

The mixed methods convergent design of this study was key in analyzing divergence in contrasting teacher and parent perceptions on the transition to kindergarten. Forty-six kindergarten teachers were surveyed. 82.61% of the teacher respondents are considered “veteran” ranging from seven years of experience to just under thirty. 17.39% of respondents were considered between three years of experience to just under seven years. Quantitative data revealed that 69.56% of teachers surveyed strongly disagreed, disagreed, or were neutral that their student’s families were involved in their education. Further, a majority of teachers believe school districts do not communicate effectively regarding the transition to kindergarten with 63.05% of the teacher respondents marked strongly disagree, disagree, or neutral to the

statement. A majority of the teachers surveyed marked that 84.78% of incoming families are not familiar with Common Core. Table I includes some examples of the significant statements.

Table 1

Selected Examples of Significant Statements of Kindergarten Teachers

Significant Statement

Textural Meaning

They [parents] think they lack the time, money and experience to help with kindergarten work.

Working parents lack time

If parents have not worked with their children or placed them in a quality pre-K program, the students come to kindergarten with a lack of basic readiness skills

There is a strong link between parent self efficacy and readiness skills.

Our Pre-K program is a public school program. Students coming from that preschool are much more prepared than private providers. The Pre-K teachers regularly communicate with kindergarten teachers.

When public preschools matriculate into public kindergartens there is more communication and increased readiness.

Again, depending on state/district/school, parents need to understand that kindergarten is NOT what it was when they went to school. Times and expectations have changed

Kindergarten has changed dramatically in recent years, however, the perception of it has not.

Phonemic awareness, phonemic awareness, phonemic awareness.

Parent knowledge of kindergarten should extend beyond the ABCs when it comes to literacy skills.

Five themes emerged from organizing the teacher textural meanings into clusters. Table II consists of the thematic clusters.

Table II

Teachers Perceptions: *Examples of Thematic Clusters derived from Textural Meanings*

Time is the biggest barrier to involvement

Parents are just trying to survive financially, emotionally, and physically.

They work more than one job, do not speak English.

The older siblings sometimes take care of the younger ones.

They work too much.

Parents have a busy working schedule with a lack of support and resources.

They work too many hours and lack of know-how.

Parents are busy with work.

They have too much to do.

Exhausted and too many issues at home,

Parents have busy schedules and have a lack of education themselves.

There Needs to be More Communication Between Public and Private Prekindergartens

I am a kindergarten teacher and we do not communicate with preschools.

We do not communicate. It should happen more.

From my experience in five years, there has been zero communication. It doesn't exist.

We do not communicate at all.

Our preschool program is public. Students coming from there are much more prepared.

Private preschools here do not talk to public kindergarten teachers,

I do not know. I've never heard of local preschools communicating with public schools.

Kindergarten Readiness Extends Beyond Learning the Alphabet

They need to know phonological skills.

Students should know all letters and sounds upon entry as reading starts early in the year.

Students should have solid phonemic awareness skills.

They should have blending skills.

Students should have phonemic awareness skills.

Parents need to know how high the expectations are for reading in kindergarten.

When asked to elaborate on what motivates parents to be involved at school, a majority of the responses indicated that the family involvement is increased when there is a take-away. For example, one teacher said, “Hands on family games they can take home” while another teacher said, “If they can get something out of it like rewards, coupons, food, or free passes.” Other respondents made similar claims with comments such as “family projects” or “specific hands on activities”. This suggests a need for parent tangibles. On the other end of the spectrum, one teacher seemed deflated by stating, “Not a whole lot. Some parents are involved but most treat kindergarten as if it is a full time daycare.” Similarly the comment, “Most of the parents don’t work with their children no matter what I send home. They also do not attend events.” One of the reasons for parent apathy could be answered in which teachers were asked to give details about barriers to involvement. Thirty-six teachers agreed that lack of time or commitment to a job was the reason. One teacher further explains, “Busy schedules, lack of English proficiency, and a belief that kindergarten is not important.” Another insight is revealed is the following response: “Ability to understand the concepts being taught and how to best direct/instruct their child.” Another respondent said, “The number of siblings in the household and the ability to juggle priorities.” Another theme emerges from the teacher perspectives. When asked to correlate the connection between readiness skills and the parent’s self efficacy one teacher elaborated, “Huge. If parents have not worked with their children or placed them in a quality prekindergarten setting, their children come to school without being ready.” Similarly, “The

more a parent works with their child at home, the stronger they will be when they come to kindergarten.” Another respondent replied that, “ Many parents do not have fond memories of school and do not know how to help their children.” When teachers were asked if they communicate with preschool settings an important finding was revealed. Students who attend preschool located in the same building as the kindergarten were rated more likely be ready for kindergarten and those teachers will have cross collaborated. Further study into the implications of preschool location may have an impact on further equity findings. In fact, most of the teachers claimed to have no communication; the exception was unless they were in the same location. An interesting finding from teachers when asked to describe what kindergarteners should know went going beyond students merely memorizing the alphabet. Teachers want families to understand more phonological awareness concepts. For example this respondent said, “Teach them what sight words are, the sounds for letters, and how to blend and segment words.” This teacher seemed frustrated and elaborated by claiming, “So many parents have told me their children know their ABCs but their children do not know the sounds or the names. The children tell me that nobody reads at home with them or that they spend a lot of time on youtube. So with that being said nobody is talking with them or having conversations.”

Fifty-five Parents of 3-5 year old children were also surveyed. The ethnicity of parent comprise 57.45% White, 36.17% Black, 4.26% Asian, and 2.13% Native American or Alaskan. When asked what the biggest barrier to reading with children 52.73% of families responded that they do not have enough time. An overwhelming 96.37% of parents responded high to moderate in their ability to help their children get ready for kindergarten yet 49.08% responded that they had little to no understanding of Common Core. Researchers discovered over 55% of the preschool families they surveyed send their children to a Center Care of Voluntary Preschool.

Most of the families report a primary benefit of preschool attendance is the opportunity for their child to socialize. When asked why parents do or do not engage in educational activities with their child before the start of kindergarten 52% responded that they want their child to be prepared and ahead of their peers. The most significant finding is that parents have the perception that their preschool adequately prepares them for kindergarten with 69% strongly agreeing or agreeing, yet when compared with the teacher responses nearly all of them stated that

there is no communication between preschools and public schools. Table III contains significant statements from parents.

Table III

Selected Examples of Significant Statements of Parents

Significant Statement	Textural Meaning
I am my child's first teacher.	Parents have the desire to work with their children.
I have seen the problems in math and I feel many are not age appropriate and too adult-like for children.	There is a lack of awareness about Common Core and its desired objectives.
I am not sure if our preschool communicates with kindergarten teachers.	This statement potentially demonstrates that parents may not factor collaboration high on the list when seeking out quality preschools.
What is the best way to start learning to read and how do I help him?	Personal desire to help but lacks resources.
I do activities because I think it's important for learning but not specifically to prepare for kindergarten.	Parents engage in learning activities prior to kindergarten but if they knew the expectations it could have different purpose.

Five themes emerged from organizing the textural meaning into clusters. Table IV consists of examples of the themes that emerged.

Table IV

Parents Perceptions: Examples of Thematic Clusters derived from Textural Meanings

Parents want to help their children succeed.

We read together because it is enjoyable for both of us.

I want him to be school ready.

I understand the importance of a child being prepared.

I do not believe the school system is my child's first teacher; I am.

I want them to have a positive disposition towards school so I do activities.

Parents have a responsibility to have an active role in their children's learning,

Lack of Clarity for Common Core

It makes education difficult for parents and students.

I don't know what it is.

It is terrible.

I am very confused by it and what I have read.

I have heard of it but am not familiar with it.

Not much. I hope it will be less negative than it is made out to be.

It makes math more difficult compared to the way we did it back in my day.

There is a need for Reading Resources

What are good books for girls?

How do I pick books?

I need more advanced reading methods since kids are at different levels.

How can I incorporate more phonics into reading?

What kind of books should we be reading?

What is the most efficient way to teach a child to read?

One of the more interesting findings is that there is a contrast between teachers perceptions about lack of parent involvement and parents descriptions of wanting their child to succeed which lacks congruence. The parent responses to being surveyed about the benefits of preschool included responses that centered around socialization such as, "Socializing has been the biggest benefit to childcare and being exposed to different ideas." Here another parent says, "Increased social interactions with other children, potty training support, art projects. I wish there was more preparation for gifted and talented kindergarten programs." The following statement demonstrates that parents rely on their families when it comes to childcare, "My mother in law kept all four of our children before they started pre-K. She was a great help because she talked and sang to our children." This responder stated that, "Better management of communicable/contagious diseases/infections/etc. This means toys disinfected daily and the facility deep cleaned daily. This is a lot to ask of Day Cares, but would go a long way to help parents whose children are susceptible to everything." These statements support the idea that securing quality childcare is an issue. In this past statement, there is no reference to either academic or social skills but a concern of the cleanliness in the center.

On the matter of Common Core, 65% of parents said they either did not know or had little understanding whereas 85% of teachers believe their students parents do not understand

Common Core. This is an important finding because the same parent sample reported 63% were confident in their ability to prepare their child for kindergarten. Even more interesting is that 74.55% of parents are either neutral or disagree in their beliefs that the district does enough to reach out to preschool families prior to kindergarten. These statements combined with the low kindergarten readiness percentages in a school district reveal the need for more communication. On the same question, 63% of teachers had neutral or disagreeing beliefs about their district reaching out to families. With that said, the sample surveyed indicated that 90% of parents own a smartphone and 81.82% would be interested in receiving information through a text message or email.

Research Design

The target populations of this mixed methods study were parents of three- to five- year-old children and public school kindergarten teachers in the southeastern United States. Target internet searches and telephone inquiries were made to community organizations that provide outreach to parents of preschool children and kindergarten teachers in the respective area. For this study, the purposive sample populations completed a survey to communicate their perception or experience of preschool and kindergarten readiness. To find additional participants, snowball sampling occurred in which additional purposive contacts in the field may be requested from participants (Holloway, 1997). The researchers surveyed teachers and families from public elementary schools, Head Start, preschool centers, child care centers, and

agencies that serve young children. Surveys taken by the parents of preschool children and by the public school kindergarten teachers were distributed via internet

Limitations

Limitations of the study include the demographics of the sample. The researchers were particularly interested in responses from individuals whose first language was not English. The parent survey was created in English, Haitian Creole, and Spanish. There was one response in Spanish and zero in Haitian Creole. Implications tied to the literature as children whose parents speak another language other than English are not as likely to enroll in preschool (Harper, 2017; Hopkinson 2017) and outreach is not successful due to fears about deportation.

Discussion

The challenge for public schools is that a large number of students enter kindergarten at varying levels. Schools spend a great amount of time in remediation of students instead of prevention. The researchers propose a solution. Schools can identify incoming registrants who lack prior schooling, parent support, speak another language, or suffer financial burdens to increase student achievement through enrollment registrations. Schools may test incoming students in terms of placement in classes, however, an alternative is to use the placement data to provide summer interventions. This study proves that parents have the technology and desire to help their children. In addition, they are receptive to receiving help. An interesting finding was illuminated when the researchers reviewed the literature. It was found that Rent burdens on low-income families leave them with little money remaining for further wants and needs. According to Larrimore and Shuetz (2017), the lowest quintile pays 56% of total monthly earnings on rent which exceeds the HUD's definition of "severe rent burden." However, an article titled

Demographics of Mobile Device Ownership and Adoption in the United States notes, "81% of Americans now own a smartphone." Parents may struggle with rent but most people own a smart device. Understanding and using technological nudges could be a way to combat achievement gaps. Schools and district leadership, especially those processing kindergarten registrations should use this information to the students' advantage. What are best practices for registering children who are English Language learners or have not been to preschool? Do these caregivers walk away without any guidance? There are 5-6 months between registration in spring and school in the fall. This is ample time to make a significant impact in the preparation for school in a child's life.

Conclusion

In the introduction, the researchers discussed Behavior Economics and Nudge Theory as a means of combating high information costs and present bias and time discounting in parents of preschoolers. There is limited knowledge in what school districts do with kindergarten registration information containing a child's early learning experiences. Meanwhile parents and educators have different perceptions about kindergarten readiness. This article proposes that learning equalization can occur if data taken from the registration is used to provide summer literacy skills and interventions. Vulnerable students face disadvantages as a result of unregulated birth-five education, parent poverty, Common Core initiatives that increase rigor, and lack of parent engagement. The researchers' hypothesis was twofold and was confirmed in the findings that: 1.) A gap exists between the current rigor in American kindergarten and the depth of knowledge parents have regarding the rigor 2.) Parents face challenges with information costs with little time and resources. Using research-based behavioral science interventions on the adults in children's lives can reshape children's kindergarten readiness

levels, inform caregivers about public school system expectations, and increase the chances of success for students into adulthood.

Recommendations and Implications for Practice

In reviewing the literature, the researchers have found that most preschool activities focus on the children and not the parents. Behavior is fundamental to public policy and the literature reveals strategies to overcome discount bias. Providing a 12 week technological nudge by means of text message or push notification containing explicit strategies could increase readiness levels for at risk students identified on registrations. The advances in the field of behavioral science allows leaders to examine what compels people to remain committed to tasks is worth investigating in early childhood. According to a white paper by Mayer, Kalil, Oreopoulos, and Gallegos (2015) parents who utilized a contract had reminders and were rewarded when reading to children on a tablet were less likely to put off reading (p.8). The interventions and psychological levers that drive behavior is key to initiating change. The Behavioral Foundations of Public Policy (2013) documented campaigns *Don't Mess with Texas* and *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk* (Shaffir, 2013). These campaigns allowed individuals the ability to act appealing to human psychological subsidies and not psychologically taxing them proved most successful. Telling parents to read to children is not effective on its own.

Further Research

Future study would include surveying school districts to examine enrollment practices. Further, the length of time it takes for a vulnerable student to be tested and given interventions in the fall compared to that of a student given interventions at enrollment in the spring. In addition, conducting a randomized controlled study to determine how effective summer interventions

would be on the treatment group. It would be beneficial to further survey parents for their knowledge in specific reading knowledge beyond the alphabet to include phonograms, phoneme

substitution, phoneme manipulation and other components. According to kindergarten teachers, these are the components of reading that students are challenged with.

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CHAPTER V

EDUCATING FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

Implications for Schools and Families

Researchers and current kindergarten teachers, Laura Carafello and Sarah Hough, from Lynn University's Ross College of Education Ed.D Program, investigated the perceptions of early childhood teachers and parents and compared and contrasted the results. Simultaneously they questioned why a local school district's kindergarten readiness rates hovered around 54%. Utilizing the results from a mixed methods convergent study, the teachers created theground.com which is founded on the principles of behavioral economics. This executive summary recommends utilizing a technology support for at risk students identified by schools and non-governmental organizations. School leaders face difficulties in identifying at risk kindergarten ready students prior to enrollment. The researchers own experiences as kindergarten teachers combined with an extensive literature review, and results from the study will drive the intervention.

There is limited knowledge in what schools do with kindergarten registration information containing a child's previous learning experiences. In the introduction of this dissertation, the researchers discussed Behavior Economics and Nudge Theory as a means of combating high information costs and present bias in parents of preschoolers. Vulnerable students face disadvantages as a result of unregulated birth-five education, parent poverty, Common Core initiatives that increase rigor, and lack of parent engagement. The researchers' hypothesis was twofold and was confirmed in the findings that: 1.) A gap exists between the current rigor in American kindergarten and the depth of knowledge parents have regarding the rigor 2.) Parents face challenges with information costs with little time and resources. Using research-based

behavioral science interventions on the adults in children's lives thekground.com and its partnering application will engage more families resulting in a positive outcome for preschool children's kindergarten readiness levels.

Transforming How We Do Business

Technology is at the core of almost every aspect of our lives both personally and professionally and data collected from the PEW Research Center (Demographics of Mobile Device Ownership and Adoption in the United States, 2019) on America's smartphone habits reveal that 9-in-10 Americans are now online with 81% owning smartphones. Our education systems should also involve school-to-family technology interventions in order to increase student achievement in ways that are mutually beneficial for schools, students, and caregivers. Thekground will provide schools a low cost alternative to execute a program to assist caregivers over the summer months while not infringing on time. Another benefit of this technology is to reach dual language learners in the months between registration and fall.

Using Registrations to Drive Summer Intervention

The challenge for public schools is that a large number of students enter kindergarten at varying levels. The objective is for schools to be able to identify incoming registrants who lack prior schooling, parent support, or may speak another language. We need to train our school principals and office staff, especially those completing kindergarten registrations to use this information to the students' advantage. What are the best practices for registering children who are English Language learners or have not been to preschool? Do we let them walk out the school door without any guidance? There are 5-6 months between registration in spring and school in the fall. This is ample time to make a significant impact in the preparation for school in a child's life.

An Intervention Guided by Science and Technology

We propose that identified students and families who could use support be introduced to theground technology intervention during the enrollment process. In the literature review, themes central to the research included the importance of preschool, English Language Learners, Parents in Poverty, Nudge Theory, and Adult Learning Theory which were taken into account in the creation of the intervention. Caregivers will be asked to provide their cell phone numbers in order to receive push notifications or text messaging. The push notifications and text messages, over the course of 12 weeks will contain explicit tips and link to a website with videos and lessons from kindergarten teachers.

The culminating technology intervention is driven by the following qualitative and quantitative data:

Findings

The mixed methods convergent design of this study was key in contrasting teacher and parent perceptions on the transition to kindergarten. Forty-six kindergarten teachers were surveyed. 82.61% of the teacher respondents are considered “veteran” ranging from seven years of experience to just under thirty. 17.39% of respondents were considered between three years of experience to just under seven years. Quantitative data revealed that 69.56% of teachers surveyed strongly disagreed, disagreed, or were neutral that their student’s families were involved in their education. Further, a majority of teachers believe school districts do not communicate effectively regarding the transition to kindergarten. 63.05% of the teacher respondents marked strongly disagree, disagree, or neutral to the statement. A majority of the teachers surveyed marked that 84.78% of incoming families are not familiar with Common Core. When asked to elaborate on what motivates parents to be involved at school, a majority of

the responses indicated that the family involvement is heightened when there is a take-away. For example, one teacher said, “Hands on family games they can take home” while another teacher said, “If they can get something out of it like rewards, coupons, food, or free passes.” Other respondents made similar claims with comments such as “family projects” or “specific hands on activities”. On the other end of the spectrum, one teacher seemed deflated by stating, “Not a whole lot. Some parents are involved but most treat kindergarten as if it is a full time daycare.” Similarly the comment, “Most of the parents don’t work with their children no matter what I send home. They also do not attend events.” One of the reasons for parent apathy could be answered in which teachers were asked to give details about barriers to involvement. Thirty-six teachers agreed that lack of time or commitment to a job was the reason. One teacher further explains, “Busy schedules, lack of English proficiency, and a belief that kindergarten is not important.” Another insight is revealed is the following response: “Ability to understand the concepts being taught and how to best direct/instruct their child.” Another respondent said, “The number of siblings in the household and the ability to juggle priorities.” Another theme emerges from the teacher perspectives. When asked to correlate the connection between readiness skills and the parent’s self efficacy one teacher elaborated, “Huge. If parents have not worked with their children or placed them in a quality prekindergarten setting, their children come to school without being ready.” Similarly, “The more a parent works with their child at home, the stronger they will be when they come to kindergarten.” Another respondent replied that, “Many parents do not have fond memories of school and do not know how to help their children.” When teachers were asked if they communicate with preschool settings an important finding was revealed. Students who attend preschool located in the same building as the kindergarten will more likely be ready for kindergarten and those teachers will have cross

collaborated. Further study into the implications of preschool location may have an impact on further equity findings. In fact, most of the respondents claimed to have no communication the exception was unless they were in the same location. An interesting finding from teachers when asked to describe what kindergarteners should know went beyond students merely memorizing the alphabet. Teacher want families to understand more phonological awareness concepts. For example this respondent said, “Teach them what sight words are, the sounds for letters, and how to blend and segment words.” Likewise another teacher stated, “Kindergarten is now teaching what first grade used to. Students need to enter kindergarten knowing letters and sounds because they will be learning to read.” This teacher seemed frustrated and elaborated by claiming, “So many parents have told me their children know their ABCs but their children do not know the sounds or the names. The children tell me that nobody reads at home with them or that they spend a lot of time on youtube. So with that being said nobody is talking with them or having conversations.”

Fifty-five Parents of 3-5 year old children were also surveyed. The ethnicity of parent comprise 57.45% White, 36.17% Black, 4.26% Asian, and 2.13% Native American or Alaskan. When asked what the biggest barrier to reading with children 52.73% of families responded that they do not have enough time. An overwhelming 96.37% of parents responded high to moderate in their ability to help their children get ready for kindergarten yet 49.08% responded that they had little to no understanding of Common Core. Researchers discovered over 55% of the preschool families they surveyed send their children to a Center Care of Voluntary Preschool. Most of the families report a primary benefit of preschool attendance is the opportunity for their child to socialize. When asked why parents do or do not engage in educational activities with their child before the start of kindergarten 52% responded that they want their child to be

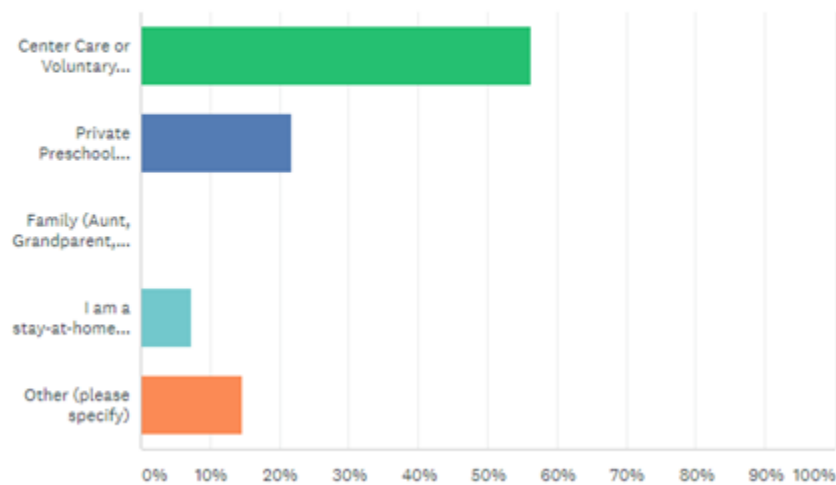
prepared and ahead of their peers. Yet, they claim to not have the know-how or resources to complete these tasks. These findings are consistent with the theoretical framework in which Bouffard's Self Determination Theory outline an individual's need for competence (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Furthermore, 32% of the parents surveyed report their child reads an equal amount at home and at the preschool center. 50% of parents say their children spend most of their reading time with parents or caregivers.

Table I

Type of Education

What type of childhood education does your preschooler (ages 3-5) receive?

Answered: 55 Skipped: 0



Note: Parent survey by Hough and Carafiello (2019) Combining Behavior Economics and Parent Engagement to Impact the Transition to Kindergarten.

Twenty-five percent of the families surveyed report that the public school system effectively communicates to incoming kindergarten families what they can do to prepare their children for the start of school. Whereas thirty-six percent of the kindergarten teachers say the

public school system effectively communicated with preschool parents. School districts could benefit from this knowledge by changing their practices to include more community outreach to parent of preschoolers in the year prior to kindergarten. Fifty-nine percent of the families said the same of their preschool providers. These stats demonstrate a significant need for educating parents of young children how to engage with their children to build their academic selves. One parent demonstrates interest in shadowing a preschool or kindergarten classroom teacher to see their methods. This finding is aligned to the theoretical framework in which the Social Constructivist Theory (Holloway, 1997) encompasses learners be part of a greater learning community of parents, caregivers, educators etc. Other qualitative data revealed that parents show interest in getting their children to focus and sit still while reading. Additionally, another parent would like parent support groups and information on reading stages.

The survey we conducted reveals a relevant way in which to reach and educate parents. Over 90% of the population of preschool parents that responded to our survey has a Smartphone. Therefore, our approach of reaching families with the content they desire to learn about engaging with their children is highly possible. Providing families with ‘bite-sized’ strategies and teaching points proves an effective way to teach them what to do with their children to prepare the preschoolers for kindergarten. 80% of the parents surveyed would like to receive assistance in learning how to choose books and read with their children. The primary deterrent of parents not reading with their children is time. Kindergarten teachers also recognize that time is the main cause parents do not work with their children at home. By sending push notifications to parents on their Smartphones for 12 weeks prior to the start of kindergarten, parents will receive an obtainable and achievable academic activity to complete with their children for the week. Kindergarten teachers surveyed believe parents should be aware of ‘school behaviors,’ a love of

reading, phonemic awareness, and a basic understanding of the expectations for kindergarten.

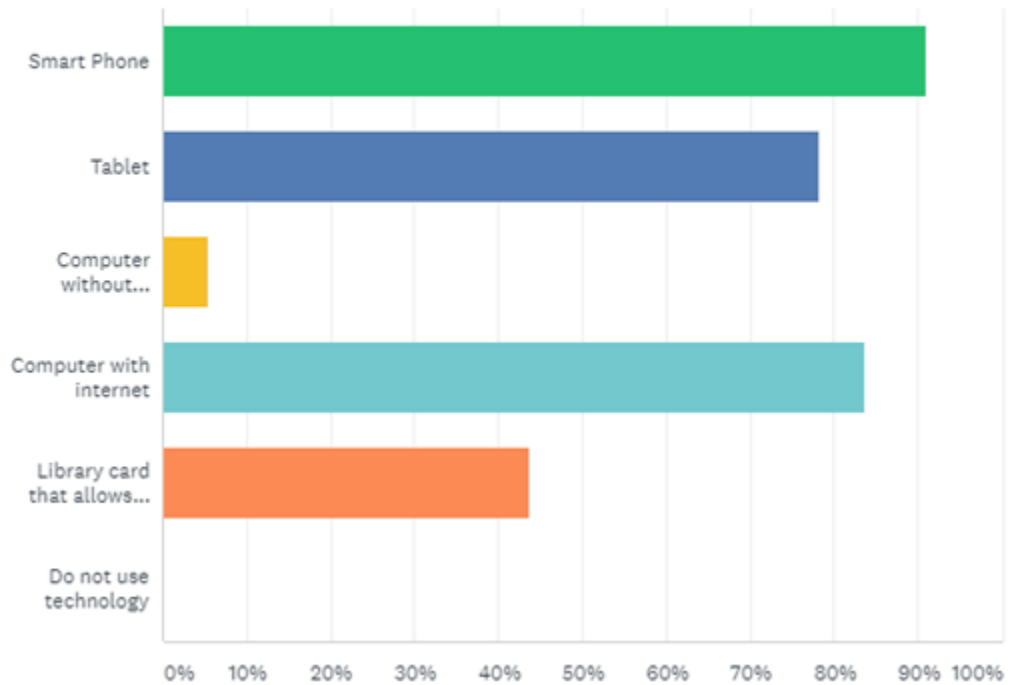
The merging of the Nudge Theory with the researchers findings, and known technological aptitude prepare a pathway for educators to promote parental engagement to improve the transition to kindergarten.

Table II

Forms of Technology Owned

What type of technology do you own? Choose all that apply.

Answered: 55 Skipped: 0



Note: Parent survey by Hough and Carafiello (2019) Combining Behavior Economics and Parent Engagement to Impact the Transition to Kindergarten.

Differences of Parent and Teacher Perceptions of Kindergarten Readiness

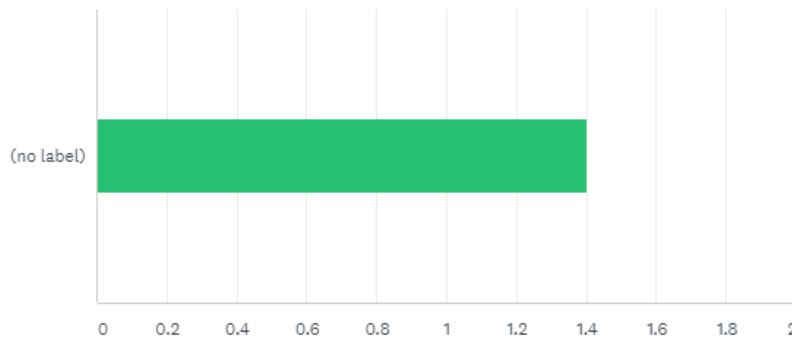
There is a comparable difference between the perceptions of preschool parents and kindergarten teachers in the way of preparing children for the transition to kindergarten. The two

populations articulate different benefits for sending children to preschool and admittedly do not communicate effectively in the months prior to kindergarten to prepare children for a smooth transition. Preschool parents perceive socialization to be the most influential benefit to preschool enrollment whereas kindergarten teachers recognize the benefit in forming ‘school behaviors’ and a rich academic foundation. Both groups vocalize that preschool prepares children and sets them at a higher echelon than their peers.

Table III
Parental Perceptions

How do you rate your ability to ready your child for kindergarten?

Answered: 55 Skipped: 0



	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW	NONE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	63.64% 35	32.73% 18	3.64% 2	0.00% 0	55	1.40

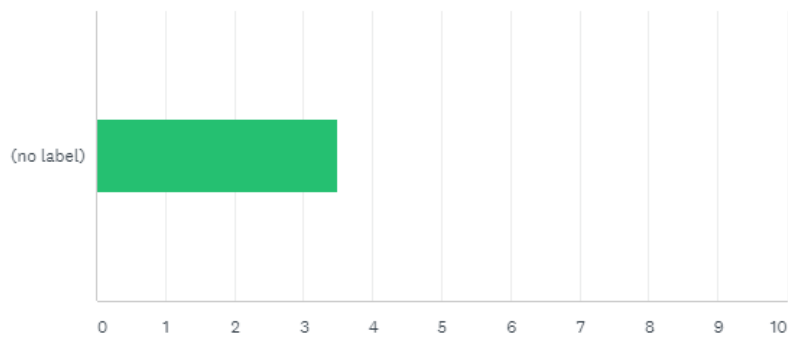
Note: Parent survey by Hough and Carafello (2019) Combining Behavior Economics and Parent Engagement to Impact the Transition to Kindergarten.

Table IV

Parental Perception on Curriculum

I am informed about the public school kindergarten curriculum.

Answered: 55 Skipped: 0



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	7.27% 4	16.36% 9	25.45% 14	21.82% 12	29.09% 16	55	3.49

Note: Parent survey by Hough and Carafiello (2019) Combining Behavior Economics and Parent Engagement to Impact the Transition to Kindergarten.

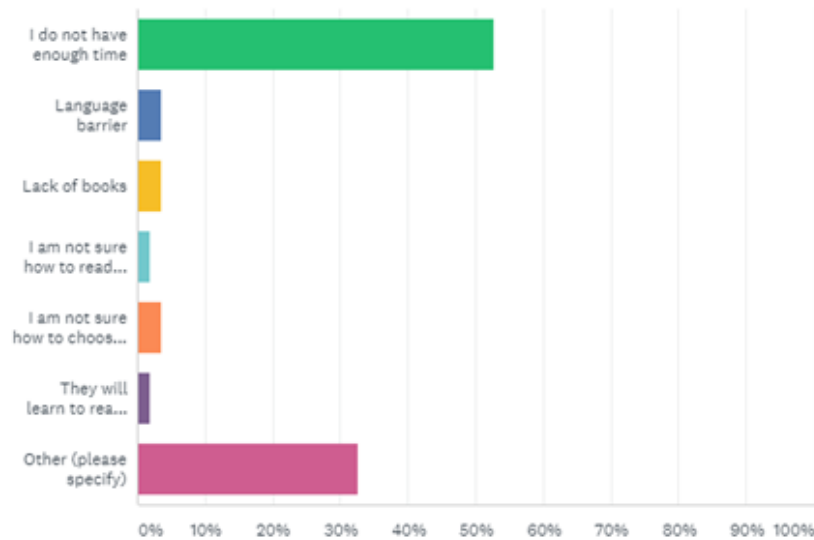
Parents Claim to Not Have Enough Time or Resources

Table V

Obstacles

What obstacles do you face in reading with your child?

Answered: 55 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ I do not have enough time	52.73% 29
▼ Language barrier	3.64% 2
▼ Lack of books	3.64% 2
▼ I am not sure how to read with my child	1.82% 1
▼ I am not sure how to choose the right books	3.64% 2
▼ They will learn to read at school	1.82% 1
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 32.73% 18
TOTAL	55

Note: Parent survey by Hough and Carafello (2019) Combining Behavior Economics and Parent Engagement to Impact the Transition to Kindergarten.

As evidenced by the table above, parents' most impactful obstacle they face preventing them from reading with their child is not enough time. One parent remarked further, "My schedule doesn't always coincide with her bedtime." Other parents mentioned their work schedules, other children, or the need to carry-out household responsibilities. Other parents demonstrated an interest in receiving input on how to encourage their children to read, what to read with their children, and how to approach reading with their child.

Teachers Realize Partnerships are Vital for Success

When asked what motivates students' parents to work with their children at home, kindergarten teachers report progress and academic success. Other teachers report a lack of parental support. The leading cause teachers provide for why parents do not work with their child at home is a lack of time. One element of teaching that kindergarten teachers admitted they are lacking is a partnership and collaboration with their students' parents. Thirty-seven percent of teachers agree that the public school system is effective in communicating what parents can do to prepare their child for the start of kindergarten. However, only 30% of the kindergarten teachers surveyed consider their students' parents involved in their child's education. How can these startling facts be addressed? What tools and resources can be utilized to create a partnership between preschool parents and kindergarten teachers?

Discussion and Further Study

Parents complete an exorbitant amount of paperwork when they enroll their children in school. What action is taken by the schools after they accept all the forms? One possible action is encouraging parents to use our free app, thekground, to learn how to effectively engage with their children academically leading up to the start of school. Table VI shows a portion of a student registration for public school. The bottom section asks about detailed preschool history. Are school districts using this to assist families or just collect data?

Table VI

Student Registration

PREVIOUS EDUCATION INFORMATION					
Last School Attended		City	County	State	Country
Telephone	Type (check one only) <input type="checkbox"/> Public / Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-K <input type="checkbox"/> Home Education		Educational Plan - Provide a copy. <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Education Plan (IEP) <input type="checkbox"/> 504		
Grade Level Last Year	Grade Level This Year	Last Date Attended	Did student attend public school in Palm Beach County before? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
The student has been arrested or prosecuted for a violation of a criminal statute resulting in a charge. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
The student has been expelled from school. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
Preschool Enrollment Information - For Students Entering Kindergarten Only (check all program(s) attended)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent fees	<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-K disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/> School District Pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/> Teenage parent program	<input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary Pre-K	
<input type="checkbox"/> Head Start	<input type="checkbox"/> Migrant Pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/> Readiness Coalition	<input type="checkbox"/> Did not attend preschool	<input type="checkbox"/> Title I Pre-K	


Note: Reprinted from Palm Beach Schools.org

Teachers spend years learning and refining the craft of educating. We learn the language, acronyms, and buzz words associated with the latest trends in pedagogy. How do we expect parents to learn this language and become adept enough to support their children academically at home? What support do schools provide parents? One way to support parents and provide them with tools to assist their children at home is to educate parents on the preliminary skills of reading. Parents perceive the act of reading with their children to mean a myriad of things. Teachers use a variety of acronyms in the reading process and articulating these skills into language that is parent friendly can be challenging. Informing parents on what CVC (words with

a consonant-vowel-consonant pattern) words are; how to blend and segment phonemes; and how to teach onset and rime would assist in building children's early reading skills.


CHAPTER VI
THE PRODUCT

THE K GROUND [HOME](#) [SCHOOLS](#) [FAMILIES](#) [SCHOLARS](#)



EVERY STUDENT READY FOR K
An intervention Guide for Families

[START HERE](#)



Week 1: Oral Language
[Video Lesson](#)

Week 2: Early Literacy Behaviors
[Video Lesson](#)

Week 3: Letters and Sounds
[Foundations Letter Sounds](#)



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APPENDIX A: PHONE DIALOGUE

Hello, we are Laura Carafiello and Sarah Hough. We are doctoral students at Lynn University. We are conducting an online survey and are asking questions about parent perceptions about kindergarten. This survey can positively influence your community by making them more aware of ways to engage with their children during the early years of learning. Communicating with these parents would also alert them to access the future technological application that would support them in preparing their children for kindergarten. Would you be willing to ask the parents of the three- to five- year-olds at your center to participate in the survey? The information provided will be used to build the background rationale for creating a technological application. We are not trying to sell you anything. We selected to reach out to you because you service preschool families. This study has been approved by the Lynn University Institutional Review Board, see our approval letter.

Your personal information will be strictly confidential.

The families at your center do not need to answer any questions they do not want to, and they can end the survey at any time. The online survey takes approximately 15 minutes. Any information your center's parents provide will remain confidential. If they have questions about the survey, we will provide you with a telephone number to call for more information.

APPENDIX B: EMAIL TO PARENTS



**Do you want all children to have the same start
in life?**

Lynn University's College of Education doctoral students are conducting a study about parent perceptions in the transition from preschool to kindergarten.

We are searching for parents of preschoolers to participate in a brief survey that will provide knowledge about parental practices.

Why: Help advance knowledge in early childhood and close achievement gaps

Who: Preschool centers/ health clinics

What: Refer parents to <http://>

Where: Completed online in 5-10 minutes

Questions? Contact:

Sarah Hough: [REDACTED]
Laura Carafiello: [REDACTED]
Dr. Jennifer Lesh: [REDACTED]

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

Dear families,

Our center has been informed of an opportunity for parents like you to share your perspectives on the preschool to kindergarten transition. This research is being conducted through Lynn University's Ross College of Education. By sharing your experiences you are helping the researchers to understand how to better serve parents of four year olds. This research is voluntary.

If you are interested please visit the following links:

English

Espanol

Kreyol

You can also email research questions to:

████████████████████

████████████████████

Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX D: PRESCHOOL PARENT SURVEY

Greetings,

My name is Sarah Hough, and along with my colleague, Laura Carafello we are conducting a doctoral research study on interventions for kindergarten readiness. As a current kindergarten teacher, your input and experiences would be an asset to problem- solve ways in which to help children at a disadvantage.

If you are interested, please click on the survey link below. If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact wither Sarah or Laura.

Thank you for your time.

Sarah Hough & Laura Carafello
Lynn University

APPENDIX E: KINDERGARTEN TEACHER SURVEY

Reflection Survey

Dear Parents,

We are conducting a study to understand the experiences of parents of four-year-old children who are involved in making decisions about preschool and kindergarten for your household. We would like to invite you to participate in this research. You were selected as a potential participant based off your family status of having children who will be entering kindergarten in the next 12 months.

This study is being conducted by Sarah Hough and Laura Carafello, two doctoral students at Lynn University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions surrounding preschool of parents to four-year-olds as they transition to kindergarten.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in the study, we will ask you to provide your perspectives through a 7 question survey utilizing a Likert scale, multiple choices, and open-ended questions.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in a Study:

The survey has minimal risks. Every precaution will be taken to protect your confidentiality. Most dissertations and study related documents are published. All recordings and paperwork related to the study will be locked in a file cabinet in a home office and/or a password protected computer for your protection. The conclusion of one's perceptions and the conclusion or reality/result of those perceptions may be different than what you expect. It is of little risk, however, as you are only disclosing personal information that you wish to disclose and you are always free to withdraw from the study at any time and request that your information be destroyed. The researchers have a core value of social change and justice so a benefit is that your honest feedback impact society to a greater good.

Anonymity

This study is strictly anonymous and participants will not be identified. The records of this study will be private. All data from this survey will be stored in a locked password protected computer. The only people with access to the data are the study leaders. The files will be destroyed two years following or after completion of two published educational journal articles.

Participation is Voluntary

If you decide to participate in this 7 question survey, it is on a voluntary basis. Your decision is solely up to you. At any time, you may withdraw from the study and will not affect your relationship with either the study leaders or the university. Should you decide to withdraw, your information will be destroyed.

Contact Information

If you have questions, please contact Sarah Hough at [REDACTED] or Laura Carafello at [REDACTED]. If you would like to receive the results of the survey, email us at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

We will provide you with a copy of this confidentiality statement for your records.

Click "ok" if you agree to take the survey and you understand the nature of the study.

* 1. Click "ok" to continue.

Ok

APPENDIX F: EMAIL FROM PRESCHOOL CENTER TO FAMILIES

Parent Survey

Parent Study Participants

Dear Parents,

We are conducting a study to understand the experiences of parents of four-year-old children who are involved in making decisions about preschool and kindergarten for your household. We would like to invite you to participate in this research. You were selected as a potential participant based off your family status of having children who will be entering kindergarten in the next 12 months.

This study is being conducted by Sarah Hough and Laura Carafello, two doctoral students at Lynn University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions surrounding preschool of parents to four-year-olds as they transition to kindergarten.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in the study, we will ask you to provide your perspectives through a 27 question survey utilizing a Likert scale, multiple choices, and open-ended questions.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in a Study:

The survey has minimal risks. Every precaution will be taken to protect your confidentiality. Most dissertations and study related documents are published. All recordings and paperwork related to the study will be locked in a file cabinet in a home office and/or a password protected computer for your protection. The conclusion of one's perceptions and the conclusion or reality/result of those perceptions may be different than what you expect. It is of little risk, however, as you are only disclosing personal information that you wish to disclose and you are always free to withdraw from the study at any time and request that your information be destroyed. The researchers have a core value of social change and justice so a benefit is that your honest feedback impact society to a greater good.

Anonymity

This study is strictly anonymous and participants will not be identified. The records of this study will be private. All data from this survey will be stored in a locked password protected computer. The only people with access to the data are the study leaders. The files will be destroyed two years following or after completion of two published educational journal articles.

Participation is Voluntary

If you decide to participate in this 27 question survey, it is on a voluntary basis. Your decision is solely up to you. At any time, you may withdraw from the study and will not affect your relationship with either the study leaders or the university. Should you decide to withdraw, your information will be destroyed.

Contact Information

If you have questions, please contact Sarah Hough at [REDACTED] or Laura Carafello at [REDACTED]. If you would like to receive the results of the survey, email us at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

We will provide you with a copy of this confidentiality statement for your records.

Click "ok" if you agree to take the survey and you understand the nature of the study.

1. Click 'Ok' to continue to the survey.

ok

2. Do you have a child between the ages 3-5 in your household?

- Yes
- No

3. What type of childhood education does your preschooler (ages 3-5) receive?

- Center Care or Voluntary PreKindergarten
- Family (Aunt, Grandparent, Extended Family)
- Private Preschool (Religious)
- I am a stay-at-home parent.
- Other (please specify)

4. Tell about your experience with the childcare? What benefits has your child received from attending the childcare? What improvements would you like to see?

5. Who reads books with the child more than anyone else?

- Preschool Center
- Parents/Caregivers
- We read equal amounts
- No one reads with the child
- Others

6. Rank the following activities in the order of importance.

- Teaching your child how to sit still
- Teaching them the alphabet
- Teaching your child to speak with adults
- Teaching your child how to play with other children
- Other (please specify)
- Reading with your child
- Teaching your child to be independent
- Teaching them numbers

7. How much time do you spend preparing your child for kindergarten per week?

- Less than 1 hour
- Between 2-3 hours
- Between 4-5 hours
- Between 6-7 hours
- More than 7 hours

8. How do you prepare your child for kindergarten?

- Technology (Ipad applications, audio books, internet programs, electronic curriculums)
- Reading
- Playing games
- Other (please specify)
- Workbooks
- The preschool takes care of this

9. Children are more successful when their parents prepare them for kindergarten.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree



10. Why do you (or don't you) do educational activities with your child before they start kindergarten?

11. What obstacles do you face in reading with your child?

- I do not have enough time
- Language barrier
- Lack of books
- Other (please specify)
- I am not sure how to read with my child
- I am not sure how to choose the right books
- They will learn to read at school

12. How do you rate your ability to ready your child for kindergarten?

High Moderate Low None



13. I am informed about the public school kindergarten curriculum.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. Children are more successful in kindergarten when they have attended preschool.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Kindergarten is an important year of school.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. The public school system effectively communicates what parents can do to prepare their child for the start of kindergarten.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. My preschool provider effectively communicates what parents can do to prepare their child for the start of kindergarten.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. How do you think your child's preschool experience will impact their performance in kindergarten?

19. We hear about Common Core in the news. What is your knowledge of Common Core?

20. Does your preschool communicate with local kindergarten teachers and schools?

21. If you could ask for help in learning to read with your child, what would you ask?

22. How do you prefer to be communicated with?

- Text message
- Phone call
- Email
- Push Notification
- Other (please specify)
- Apps
- Social media
- Mail

23. What type of technology do you own? Choose all that apply.

- Smart Phone
- Tablet
- Computer without internet
- Computer with internet
- Library card that allows access to computers
- Do not use technology

24. Would you be willing to accept assistance in learning how to choose books and read with your child?

- Yes
- No

If "no," why not?

25. What would be the best way to receive this assistance?

- Reminders on my phone
- Information through the mail
- Other (please specify)
- Website
- Social media

26. What is your highest level of education?

- Finished middle school
- Attended some years in high school
- Completed high school
- Attended some vocational courses
- Completed a vocational program
- Attended some courses at a community college
- Earned an AA Degree
- Earned a Bachelor's Degree
- Took some Master's level classes
- Completed a Master's Degree
- Working on a Specialist Degree
- Completed a Specialist Degree
- Working on a Doctorate Program
- Completed a Doctorate Program

27. What is your ethnicity?

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White or Caucasian

Other (please specify)

APPENDIX F (Cont.)

Parent Survey Translated to Spanish

Queridos padres,

Estamos realizando un estudio para comprender las experiencias de los padres de niños de cuatro años que participan en la toma de decisiones sobre preescolar y jardín de infantes para su hogar. Nos gustaría invitarte a participar en esta investigación. Usted fue seleccionado como posible participante en base a su estado familiar de tener hijos que ingresarán a kindergarten en los próximos 12 meses.

Este estudio está a cargo de Sarah Hough y Laura Carafello, dos estudiantes de doctorado en la Universidad de Lynn.

Información de fondo:

El propósito de este estudio es investigar las percepciones que rodean el preescolar de los padres a los niños de cuatro años a medida que hacen la transición al jardín de infantes.

Procedimientos:

Si acepta participar en el estudio, le pediremos que proporcione sus perspectivas a través de una encuesta de 27 preguntas utilizando una escala de Likert, múltiples opciones y preguntas abiertas.

Riesgos y beneficios de participar en un estudio:

La encuesta tiene riesgos mínimos. Se tomarán todas las precauciones para proteger su confidencialidad. La mayoría de las disertaciones y documentos relacionados con el estudio se publican. Todas las grabaciones y documentos relacionados con el estudio se guardarán en un archivador en una oficina en el hogar y / o en una computadora protegida con contraseña para su protección. La conclusión de las percepciones de uno y la conclusión o realidad / resultado de

esas percepciones puede ser diferente de lo que usted espera. Sin embargo, es de poco riesgo, ya que solo está divulgando información personal que desea divulgar y siempre tiene la libertad de retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento y solicitar que se destruya su información. Los investigadores tienen un valor fundamental de cambio social y justicia, por lo que un beneficio es que su retroalimentación honesta impacta a la sociedad en un mayor bien.

Anonimato

Este estudio es estrictamente anónimo y los participantes no serán identificados. Los registros de este estudio serán privados. Todos los datos de esta encuesta se almacenarán en una computadora protegida con contraseña bloqueada. Las únicas personas con acceso a los datos son los líderes del estudio. Los archivos serán destruidos dos años después o después de la finalización de dos artículos publicados de revistas educativas.

La participación es voluntaria

Si decide participar en esta encuesta de 27 preguntas, es voluntario. Su decisión es únicamente de usted. En cualquier momento, puede retirarse del estudio y no afectará su relación ni con los líderes del estudio ni con la universidad. Si decides retirarte, tu información será destruida.

Información del contacto

Si tiene preguntas, comuníquese con Sarah Hough al [REDACTED] o con Laura Carafello al [REDACTED]. Si desea recibir los resultados de la encuesta, envíenos un correo electrónico a [REDACTED] o [REDACTED].

Le proporcionaremos una copia de esta declaración de confidencialidad para sus registros.

Haga clic en "Aceptar" si acepta participar en la encuesta y comprende la naturaleza del estudio.

Título de la pregunta

1. Haga clic en 'Aceptar' para continuar con la encuesta.

De acuerdo

2. ¿Tiene un hijo de 3 a 5 años en su hogar?

Sí

No

3. ¿Qué tipo de educación infantil recibe su niño en edad preescolar (edades 3-5)?

Centro de Atención o PreKindergarten Voluntario

Preescolar privado (religioso)

Familia (tía, abuelo, familia extendida)

Soy un padre que se queda en casa.

Otros (especificar)

4. ¿Cuéntale sobre tu experiencia con el cuidado de niños? ¿Qué beneficios ha recibido su hijo de asistir a la guardería? ¿Qué mejoras te gustaría ver?

5. ¿Quién lee libros con el niño más que nadie?

Centro preescolar

Padres / Cuidadores

Leemos cantidades iguales

Nadie lee con el niño.

Otros

6. Clasifique las siguientes actividades en orden de importancia.

Enseñar a su hijo a quedarse quieto

Enseñándoles el alfabeto

Enseñar a su hijo a hablar con adultos

Enseñar a su hijo a jugar con otros niños

Leyendo con su hijo

Enseñar a su hijo a ser independiente

Enseñándoles números

Otros (especificar)

7. ¿Cuánto tiempo pasa preparando a su hijo para el jardín de infantes por semana?

Menos de 1 hora

Entre 2-3 horas

Entre 4-5 horas

Entre 6-7 horas

Más de 7 horas

8. ¿Cómo prepara usted a su hijo para el kinder?

Tecnología (aplicaciones Ipad, audiolibros, programas de internet, currículos electrónicos)

Leyendo

Jugando juegos

Cuadernos de ejercicios

El preescolar se encarga de esto.

Otros (especificar)

9. Los niños tienen más éxito cuando sus padres los preparan para el jardín de infantes.

Muy en desacuerdo En desacuerdo Neutral De acuerdo Muy de acuerdo

10. ¿Por qué hace (o no hace) actividades educativas con su hijo antes de que comiencen el jardín de infantes?

11. ¿Qué obstáculos enfrenta al leer con su hijo?

no tengo suficiente tiempo

Barrera del idioma

Falta de libros

No estoy seguro de cómo leer con mi hijo

No estoy seguro de cómo elegir los libros correctos.

Aprenderán a leer en la escuela.

Otros (especificar)

12. ¿Cómo califica su capacidad para preparar a su hijo para el jardín de infantes?

Alto Moderado Bajo Ninguno

Alto

Moderar

Bajo

Ninguna

13. Estoy informado sobre el currículo de kindergarten de la escuela pública.

Muy en desacuerdo En desacuerdo Neutral De acuerdo Muy de acuerdo

Totalmente de acuerdo

14. Los niños tienen más éxito en el jardín de infantes cuando han asistido al preescolar.

Muy en desacuerdo De acuerdo Neutral De acuerdo Muy de acuerdo

Muy en desacuerdo

De acuerdo

Neutral

De acuerdo

Totalmente de **acuerdo**

15. Kindergarten es un año importante de escuela.

Muy en desacuerdo En desacuerdo Neutral De acuerdo Muy de acuerdo

Muy en desacuerdo

Discrepar

Neutral

De acuerdo

Totalmente de acuerdo

**16. El sistema de escuelas públicas comunica efectivamente lo que los padres pueden hacer
para preparar a sus hijos para el inicio del jardín de infantes.**

Muy en desacuerdo

Discrepar

Neutral

De acuerdo

Totalmente de acuerdo

N / A

17. Mi proveedor de educación preescolar comunica efectivamente lo que los padres pueden hacer para preparar a sus hijos para el inicio del jardín de infantes.

Muy en desacuerdo

Discrepar

Neutral

De acuerdo

Totalmente de acuerdo

18. ¿Cómo crees que la experiencia preescolar de tu hijo afectará su desempeño en el jardín de infantes?

19. Oímos hablar de Common Core en las noticias. ¿Cuál es tu conocimiento de Common Core?

20. ¿Su preescolar se comunica con los maestros y escuelas locales de kindergarten?

21. Si pudiera pedir ayuda para aprender a leer con su hijo, ¿qué le preguntaría?

22. ¿Cómo prefieres estar comunicado?

Mensaje de texto

Llamada telefónica

Email

Notificación de inserción

Aplicaciones

Medios de comunicación social

Correo

Otros (especificar)

23. ¿Qué tipo de tecnología tienes? Elija todo lo que corresponda.

Teléfono inteligente

Tableta

Ordenador sin internet

Ordenador con internet

Tarjeta de la biblioteca que permite el acceso a las computadoras.

No usar tecnología

24. ¿Estaría dispuesto a aceptar ayuda para aprender a elegir libros y leer con su hijo?

Sí

No

Si "no", ¿por qué no?

25. ¿Cuál sería la mejor manera de recibir esta asistencia?

Recordatorios en mi telefono

Información por correo

Sitio web

Medios de comunicación social

Otros (especificar)

26. ¿Cuál es tu nivel más alto de educación?

Escuela secundaria terminada

Asistí algunos años en la escuela secundaria.

Escuela secundaria completa

Asistí a algunos cursos de formación profesional.

Completado un programa vocacional.

Asistí a algunos cursos en un colegio comunitario.

Obtuvo un título de AA

Obtuvo una licenciatura

Tomé algunas clases de nivel de maestría.

Completado un Máster

Trabajando en un grado de especialista

Completado un grado de especialista

Trabajando en un programa de doctorado

Completado un programa de doctorado

27. ¿Cuál es tu etnia?

Indio americano o nativo de Alaska

asiático

Negro o afroamericano

Nativo de Hawai u otra isla del Pacífico

Blanco o caucásico

Otros (especificar)

APPENDIX F (Cont.)

Parent Survey Translated to Hatian Creole

Chè paran,

Nou ap fè yon etid pou konprann eksperyans paran paran timoun ki gen kat ane ki patisipe nan pran desizyon sou lekòl matènèl ak jadendanfan pou fanmi ou. Nou ta renmen envite w patisipe nan rechèch sa a. Ou te chwazi kòm yon patisipan potansyèl ki baze sou sitiyasyon fanmi ou nan gen timoun ki pral antre nan klas jadendanfan nan 12 mwa kap vini yo.

Etid sa a ap fèt pa Sarah Hough ak Laura Carafiello, de elèv doktora nan Lynn University.

Istorik Enfòmasyon:

Rezon an nan etid sa a se mennen ankèt sou pèsèpsyon yo ki antoure lekòl matènèl nan paran yo nan kat ane-fin vye granmoun pandan y ap tranzisyon nan klas jadendanfan.

Pwosedi:

Si ou dakò pou patisipe nan etid la, nou pral mande w pou bay pèspektiv ou atravè yon sondaj kesyon 27 ki itilize yon echèl Likert, chwa miltip, ak kesyon ouvèti.

Risk ak Benefis Patisipe nan yon etid:

Sondaj la gen risk minim. Tout prekosyon yo pral pran pou pwoteje konfidansyalite ou. Pifò disètasyon ak dokiman etid ki gen rapò yo pibliye. Tout anrejistreman ak dokiman ki gen rapò ak etid la pral fèmen nan yon kabinè dosye nan yon biwo lakay ou ak / oswa yon modpas pwoteje òdinatè pou pwoteksyon ou. Konklizyon pèsèpsyon yon sèl la ak konklizyon an oswa reyalite / rezilta nan sa yo pèsèpsyon ka diferan pase sa ou ap atann. Li se nan ti risk, sepandan, menm jan ou yo, se sèlman divilge enfòmasyon pèsònèl ke ou vle divilge epi ou yo toujou lib yo retire nan etid la nan nenpòt ki lè epi mande pou enfòmasyon ou yo ap detwi. Chèchè yo gen yon valè debaz nan chanjman sosyal ak jistis se konsa yon benefis se ke onèt fidbak fidbak sosyete ou nan yon pi bon bon.

Anonimite

Etid sa a se estrikteman anonim ak patisipan yo pa pral idantifye. Dosye etid sa a pral prive. Tout done ki soti nan sondaj sa a pral estoke nan yon modpas bloke pwoteje òdinatè. Moun yo sèlman ki gen aksè a done yo se lidè etid yo. Dosye yo pral detwi de ane apre yo oswa apre yo fin de pibliye atik jounal edikasyonèl yo.

Patisipasyon an se Volontè

Si ou deside patisipe nan sondaj sa a 27 kesyon, li se sou yon baz volontè. Desizyon ou se sèlman jiska ou. Nan nenpòt ki lè, ou ka retire nan etid la epi yo pa pral afekte relasyon ou ak swa lidè yo etid oswa inivèsite a. Si ou ta deside retire, enfòmasyon ou yo pral detwi.

Enfòmasyon sou kontak

Si ou gen kesyon, tanpri kontakte Sarah Hough nan [REDACTED] oswa Laura Carafiello nan [REDACTED]. Si ou ta renmen resevwa rezilta yo nan sondaj la, voye yon imèl ba nou nan [REDACTED] oswa [REDACTED].

N ap ba ou yon kopi deklarasyon konfidansyalite sa a pou dosye w.

1. Klike sou "ok" si ou dakò pran sondaj la epi ou konprann nati etid la.

2. Èske ou gen yon timoun ant 3-5 timoun nan kay ou?

Wi

Non

3. Ki kalite edikasyon timoun ou fè pou timoun ki prese prese (ki gen laj 3-5 an)?

Swen Centre oswa PreKindergarten Volontè

Prive Lekòl Matènèl (relijye)

Fanmi (Matant, Granparan, Fanmi ki pi long)

Mwen se yon paran rete lakay.

Lòt (tanpri presize)

4. Di sou eksperyans ou avèk gadri a? Ki benefis pitit ou resevwa nan ale nan gadri a? Ki amelyorasyon ou ta renmen wè?

5. Ki moun ki li liv ak timoun nan plis pase nenpòt lòt moun?

Lekòl Matènèl

Paran / moun kap bay swen

Nou li kantite egal

Pa gen moun ki li ak timoun nan

Lòt moun

6. Rank aktivite sa yo nan lòd ki gen enpòtans.

Ansèyman pitit ou a kijan pou yo chita toujou

Anseye yo alfabè a

Ansèyman pitit ou a pale ak granmoun

Ansèyman pitit ou a kijan pou yo jwe avèk lòt timoun

Lekti ak pitit ou

Ansèyman pitit ou a dwe endepandan

Anseye yo nimewo

Lòt (tanpri presize)

7. Konbyen tan ou depanse prepare pitit ou a pou jadendanfan pou chak semèn?

Mwens pase 1 èdtan

Ant 2-3 èdtan

Ant 4-5 èdtan

Ant 6-7 èdtan

Plis pase 7 èdtan

8. Kijan ou prepare pitit ou a pou jadendanfan?

Teknoloji (aplikasyon iPad, liv odyo, pwogram entènèt, kourikoulòm elektwonik)

Lekti

Jwe jwèt

Travayè

Lekòl matènèl la pran swen sa

Lòt (tanpri presize)

9. Timoun yo gen plis siksè lè paran yo prepare yo pou jadendanfan.

Pa dakò nèt Dakò Nèt Dakò Dakò Dakò Dakò

10. Poukisa ou (oswa ou pa) fè aktivite edikasyonèl ak pitit ou anvan yo kòmanse klas jadendanfan?

11. Ki pwoblèm ou rankontre nan lekti ak pitit ou a?

Mwen pa gen ase tan

Lang baryè

Manke liv

Mwen pa fin konnen kijan pou li avèk pitit mwen an

Mwen pa fin sèten ki jan yo chwazi liv yo dwat

Yo pral aprann li nan lekòl la

Lòt (tanpri presize)

12. Kijan ou ta renmen abilite ou pou prepare pitit ou pou jadendanfan?

Segondè Modere Ba Okenn

Segondè

Modere

Ba

Okenn

13. Mwen enfòm sou kourikoulòm lekòl leta lekòl leta a.

Pa dakò nèt Dakò Nèt Dakò Dakò Dakò

Dakò Dakò

14. Timoun yo gen plis siksè nan jadendanfan lè yo te ale nan lekòl matènèl.

Pa dakò nèt

Dakò

Neutral

Dakò

Dakò toutbon

15. Jadendanfan se yon ane enpòtan nan lekòl la.

Pa dakò nèt

Pa dakò

Neutral

Dakò

Dakò toutbon

16. Sistèm lekòl piblik la efektivman kominike sa paran yo kapab fè pou prepare pitit yo pou kòmanse nan klas jadendanfan.

Dakò nèt pa dakò Nèt Dakò Dakò Dakò Dakò N / A

17. Founisè lekòl matènèl mwen an efektivman kominike sa paran yo kapab fè pou prepare pitit yo pou kòmanse nan matènèl.

Pa dakò nèt

Pa dakò

Neutral

Dakò

Dakò toutbon

18. Kijan ou panse eksperyans lekòl matènèl pitit ou a ap gen enpak sou pèfòmans yo nan jadendanfan?

19. Nou tande pale sou Common Core nan nouvèl la. Ki sa ou konnen nan Common Core?

20. Èske lekòl matènèl ou a kominike avèk pwofesè lekòl ak lekòl lokal?

21. Si ou ta ka mande èd nan aprann li ak pitit ou a, kisa ou ta mande?

22. Ki jan ou pito yo dwe kominike avèk?

Mesaj tèks

Apèl telefòn

Imèl

Notifikasyon pouse

Apps

Medya sosyal

Mail

Lòt (tanpri presize)

23. Ki kalite teknoloji ou posede? Chwazi tout sa ki aplike.

Smart Telefòn

Tablèt

Odinatè san entènèt

Odinatè ak entènèt

Kat Bibliyotèk ki pèmèt aksè nan òdinatè

Pa sèvi ak teknoloji

24. Èske ou ta vle aksepte asistans nan aprann kouman pou chwazi liv epi li avèk pitit ou a?

Wi

Non

Si "non," poukisa pa?

25. Ki sa ki ta pi bon fason pou resevwa asistans sa a?

Rapèl sou telefòn mwen

Enfòmasyon nan lapòs la

Sit wèb

Medya sosyal

Lèt (tanpri presize)

26. Ki pi wo nivo edikasyon ou ye?

Fini lekòl presegondè

Te ale nan kèk ane nan lekòl segondè

Konplete lekòl segondè

Ale nan kèk kou vokasyonèl

Konplete yon pwogram vokasyonèl

Ale nan kèk kou nan yon kolèj kominotè

Touche yon AA Degre

Gen yon diplòm bakaloreya

Te pran klas nivo Mèt la

Konplete yon Metriz

Travay sou yon Degre Espesyalis

Konplete yon Degre Espesyalis

Travay sou yon Pwogram Doktora

Konplete yon Pwogram Doktora

27. Kisa etnisite ou ye?

Endyen Ameriken oswa Alaska Alaska

Azyatik

Nwa oswa Afriken Ameriken

Natif natal Awayi oswa lòt Zil Pasifik

Blan oswa Blan

Lòt (tanpri presize)

N / A

APPENDIX G: EMAIL TO KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

Teacher Survey

Teacher Study Participants

Dear Teachers,

We are conducting a study to understand the lived family experiences of parents of four-year-old children who are involved in making decisions about preschool and kindergarten for their household. We would like to invite you to participate in this research. You were selected as a potential participant based off your involvement with families who have children in kindergarten.

This study is being conducted by Sarah Hough and Laura Carafiello, two doctoral students at Lynn University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions surrounding preschool of parents to four-year-olds as they transition to kindergarten. We would like your feedback on parent perceptions.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in the study, we will ask you to provide your perspectives through a 17 question survey utilizing a Likert scale, multiple choices, and open-ended questions.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in a Study:

The survey has minimal risks. Every precaution will be taken to protect your confidentiality. Most dissertations and study related documents are published. All recordings and paperwork related to the study will be locked in a file cabinet in a home office and/or a password protected computer for your protection. The conclusion of one's perceptions and the conclusion or reality/result of those perceptions may be different than what you expect. It is of little risk, however, as you are only disclosing personal information that you wish to disclose and you are always free to withdraw from the study at anytime and request that your information be destroyed. The researchers have a core value of social change and justice so a benefit is that your honest feedback impact society to a greater good.

Anonymity

This study is strictly anonymous and participants will not be identified. The records of this study will be private. All data from this survey will be stored in a locked password protected computer. The only people with access to the data are the study leaders. The files will be destroyed two years following or after completion of two published educational journal articles.

Participation is Voluntary

If you decide to participate in this 16 question survey, it is on a voluntary basis. Your decision is solely up to you. At any time, you may withdraw from the study and will not affect your relationship with either the study leaders or the university. Should you decide to withdraw, your information will be destroyed.

Contact Information

If you have questions, please contact Sarah Hough at [redacted] or Laura Carafello at [redacted] If you would like to receive the results of the survey, email us at [redacted] or [redacted]

We will provide you with a copy of this confidentiality statement for your records.

Click "ok" if you agree to take the survey and you understand the nature of the study.

* 1. Click "ok" to continue.

Ok

2. I am well informed about the public school kindergarten curriculum.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree



3. Children are more successful in kindergarten when they have attended preschool.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree



4. Kindergarten is an important year of school.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree



5. My students' parents are involved in their education.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree



6. What motivates your students' parents to work with their child at home?

7. What prohibits your students' parents from working with their child at home?

8. How does a parent's self-efficacy rating contribute to kindergarten readiness?

9. The public school system is effective in communicating what parents can do to prepare their child for the start of kindergarten.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. The local preschool providers are effective in communicating what parents can do to prepare their children for the start of kindergarten.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. It makes a difference where parents send their child to preschool.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. What is your knowledge of Common Core? How and why was it initiated? What are its benefits and weaknesses?

13. How does your preschool communicate with local kindergarten teachers and schools?

14. What skills do you believe are necessary for children entering kindergarten to exhibit?

15. What standards / information is important to be dispersed to parents regarding preparing their four-year-old children for kindergarten literacy instruction.

16. Our students' parents are familiar with the Common Core Standards.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree



17. How many years have you been teaching?