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Breaking Barriers: Designing an Effective Early Intervention Process for Enhanced Developmental Outcomes in Private Schools

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BREAKING BARRIERS: DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE EARLY INTERVENTION

PROCESS FOR ENHANCED DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES IN PRIVATE

SCHOOLS

by

Breanne Cox, Ed.D

A DISSERTATION

submitted to Lynn University in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

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Designing an Effective Early Intervention Process for Enhanced Developmental Outcomes in Private Schools

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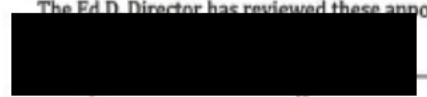*Name*   *Signature*

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Abstract

BREANNE KRISTEN COX: Breaking Barriers: Designing an Effective Early
Intervention Process for Enhanced Developmental Outcomes in Private Schools

The challenge of ensuring inclusive and equitable support for students with disabilities is increasingly prominent in education, particularly in private school settings. This dissertation explored the implementation and effectiveness of an early literacy intervention process, the "Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative," in a small Montessori preschool in South Florida. The study addresses the gap in support services for students with disabilities in private schools, which often lack the comprehensive frameworks mandated by public education systems under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Through a qualitative two-phase action research design, this study gathered insights from preschool teachers, the preschool director, the school counselor, and parents of students who participated in the intervention process. Phase one involved semi-structured interviews to identify key themes, while phase two used surveys to rank these themes identified during the interview process in order of importance, providing a structured assessment of the implementation process components.

Findings revealed significant themes, including the need for additional professional development, effective communication strategies, and the critical role of administrative support in implementing an early literacy process. The study underscored the importance of tailored training programs and open communication channels among educators and parents to enhance the efficacy of implementing an early reading process.

This research contributed to the limited literature on special education services in private schools and offers practical recommendations for improving early intervention processes. By addressing these critical areas, the "Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative" aims to bridge the gap in educational support, fostering a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

discussions, study sessions, and mutual support we provided each other were invaluable and created a sense of community that I deeply cherish.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge my husband and daughter for always cheering me on throughout this process. My husband, having completed his doctorate, was helpful in guiding me through the research and writing stages. His understanding and patience during the many late nights and busy weekends were invaluable. My daughter's unwavering support and enthusiasm reminded me of the importance of perseverance and hard work.

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List of Abbreviations or Keywords

ASD   Autism Spectrum Disorder

ESE   Exceptional Special Education

IDEA   Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

MTSS   Multi-Tiered System of Support

RTI   Response to Intervention

SLD   Specific Learning Disability

Chapter I: Introduction

Background

In the landscape of modern education, ensuring the inclusion and equitable support of students with disabilities has become a pivotal challenge that underscores the commitment to fostering accessible and effective learning environments (Gupta, et al., 2023). As educational institutions strive to meet the diverse needs of their students, the disparities between private and public schools in providing specialized support have become increasingly evident (Kennedy, 2019). This dissertation delved into the complex issue of how private schools, while admitting students with identified and unidentified disabilities, often fall short of delivering the comprehensive support mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and sought to provide a viable solution.

In the pursuit of educational excellence, public schools, mandated by federal and state regulations, offer a standardized framework for accommodating students with disabilities, whereas private schools possess more autonomy but frequently lack uniform mechanisms for supporting these students effectively (Rains, 2020). The disparity is evident by statistics indicating that 42% of students aged 3-5 within a South Florida school district receive services for disabilities within an inclusion classroom (Florida Department of Education, 2021). This contrast between the public and private sectors highlights a fundamental tension between educational autonomy and the legal obligation to provide an inclusive education (Smith, 2005).

Compounding the matter, the legal framework further emphasizes the divide. The Individuals with Disabilities Act firmly stipulates that public schools must provide free

and public education to students with disabilities (Smith, 2005). This mandate, however, does not extend uniformly to private schools, which are not bound by the same federal and state regulations as their public counterparts. As such, private schools are not obligated to adhere to the same Individualized Education Plans (IEP), due process, or placement requirements (Blackwell & Robinson, 2017a; Rains, 2020). Consequently, a critical gap emerges between legal requirements and the reality of support afforded to students in private schools.

Despite the growing enrollment of students with disabilities in private schools, an alarming lack of comprehensive research discusses the nature and extent of services provided to this population (Blackwell & Robinson, 2017b; Lane, 2023; Taylor, 2005). Private schools' limited capacity to identify and support children with disabilities compounds this issue, "as they believe it leads to stigmatization of the children" (Wolf et al., 2012, p.1). Not only are private schools not providing support, but they are also failing to identify students who need additional support. A study conducted in Milwaukee indicated that students who switched between public and private school were more likely to be identified as in need of special education services when they were in the public sector. Students in private schools were:

> "classified as in need of special education at the rate of 9.1% when attending private schools but at a rate of 14.6% when attending Milwaukee's public schools. If we assume that a student's need for special education did not change at the time the student switched sectors, this suggests that 5.5% of students attending private schools were not identified as in need of special

education but would have been had they been attending public school" (Wolf et

al., 2012, p. 3).

The lack of standardized data collection and research impedes a deeper understanding of

this phenomenon (Wolf et al., 2012, p. 3).

The necessity to bridge this knowledge gap is underscored by the relative scarcity

of literature addressing the provision of special education services in private schools

(Eigenbrood, 2004; Rains, 2020). The constraints on gathering information from private

institutions further hinder progress in this area (Taylor, 2005). While the 1997

amendments to IDEA attempted to clarify the rights of students with disabilities in

private schools, the gap in services provided persists, leaving students with limited access

to specialized interventions and support (Eigenbrood, 2005; Osborne, et al., 2000).

To qualify for special education services in a school district located in South

Florida students must go through the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. After going

through the RTI process and it is determined additional testing is necessary, students will

receive an academic evaluation. Most private schools are not equipped to provide RTI

services to students and it is often outsourced at the cost of the parent. If a student does

qualify for services after their evaluation those services are limited. The school district

located in South Florida would provide 1 hour of speech therapy virtually a week and up

to two hours of pull-out reading support weekly. This is due to the limited funding

provided. "Reflecting statutory language, Section 300.453 would limit the amount of

funds that a district is required to spend on providing services to students in private

schools" (Osborne, et al., 2000, p. 225).

In light of these considerations, this study examined the existing landscape of support for students who struggle academically in a private Montessori school in South Florida. Through a comprehensive review of the literature, an analysis of current practices, and a focus on the experiences of educators, students, and parents, this research laid the groundwork for a more inclusive and effective educational environment for all students. By addressing this pressing concern, the early intervention process "Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative" aspired to provide displayed evidence of an effective implementation of the process.

Rationale

As an educator in a private school, it was frustrating to watch students struggle and not have a formalized process in place to assist them. This study delved into a specific scenario, focusing on a small Montessori private school situated in South Florida catering to preschool students ages 3-5. Notably, the Montessori method was initially designed to accommodate learners with varying needs and serves as the foundation for this educational environment (Marshall, 2017). While this method emphasizes phonemic awareness and a robust phonics foundation, it may not offer the requisite repetition necessary for students to fully grasp concepts (Montessori, 2004). Moreover, in a setting where a class is comprised of 36 students with four teachers and an assistant, repetitious, individualized attention becomes a considerable challenge, hindering the delivery of tailored reading instruction and reinforcement (Luborsky, 2017). By the conclusion of their preschool experience, students are anticipated to have proficiently acquired knowledge of all letter sounds and be able to identify the beginning sound of objects and words, commencing their journey into blending and segmenting these sounds to develop

their reading and writing skills. Furthermore, students are introduced to essential sight words during this period. As students transition into kindergarten, it is anticipated that they will have reached a stage where they are either proficient readers or at the outset of their reading journey, while also possessing the ability to compose sentences in their writing endeavors. Furthermore, despite increasing enrollment, the school struggles to provide additional assistance to its students.

At this small private school in Delray Beach, Florida, the current protocol for addressing students struggling academically, physically, mentally, or behaviorally, revealed several gaps. Firstly, the protocol lacks a formal written document outlining the steps to take when a teacher identifies a student as requiring additional support, relying instead on informal communication channels. For instance, when an educator identifies a struggling student, the initial step involves informing the school counselor who then should observe the student, but feedback is often scarce, if provided at all, leaving students to struggle with their difficulties unaided. The observation by the school counselor often takes months to materialize. The process often concludes after contacting the school counselor, leaving both the student and the teacher without additional support. If the educator perseveres and seeks further intervention, the school counselor convenes a meeting with parents, offering a list of external professionals for evaluation or tutoring. If a child is privately evaluated, the school counselor determines eligibility for accommodations ranging from seating proximity to the teacher to provided notes. Parents have the option to seek out independent professionals for external assistance or even pull their child out of class for specialized support. These external interventions, although valuable, are often cost-prohibitive and lack the effectiveness that routine support in class

could offer. Throughout this entire process, formalized documentation is absent, from the initial teacher observation to the determination that the student requires a private tutor or an evaluation. Establishing a more structured and documented protocol would enhance the overall effectiveness of the support system for struggling students.

In stark contrast, the local school district has implemented a well-defined process that educators and parents must navigate when in pursuit of additional support. This structured approach necessitates comprehensive documentation and adherence to specified timelines. At each school site, a meticulously designed response-to-intervention tree visually outlines the prescribed steps for teachers to follow. Every facet of the process is meticulously documented, and further insights into this procedural framework can be found in the literature review.

Further complicating this scenario, the teaching staff within this private school encompass a mix of certifications and backgrounds, without all teachers holding Montessori certifications or traditional teaching credentials. This disparity in training equips them unequally to employ strategies specifically designed for struggling students. As an illustration, in the past school year, several students struggled academically; we will call the students Bob, Tom, and John. Bob, Tom, and John were all second-year students who had a gift of another year, meaning that all three students should have graduated to kindergarten but stayed another year in preschool to master early literacy concepts. During their gifted year, they continued to struggle. An educator at the school volunteered their time to work with the students for 20 minutes daily, which resulted in notable progress. For instance, all three students initially recognized four to five letter sounds after being exposed for the last year and a half. After a 6-to-8-week intervention

the students identified all 26 letter sounds and progressed to effectively segmenting sounds to spell CVC words. Furthermore, their kindergarten readiness assessment scores displayed remarkable improvement, progressing from the low 20s to a range of 50 to 54 following the intervention. A score of 50 is required to show readiness for kindergarten.

Despite admitting students in need of additional support, the Montessori private school in South Florida is not furnishing the necessary resources for their success. The school maintains high academic standards. Incoming kindergarten students are taught on a first grade reading level, and this school often fails to accommodate students requiring supplementary assistance, inadvertently exacerbating achievement disparities. This deficiency can lead to behavioral, mental health, and academic challenges that hinder overall student development.

Moreover, the repercussions extend beyond the school's immediate sphere, affecting both enrollment and teacher well-being. Parents, recognizing the inadequacy of support, have sought alternative institutions with specialized programs, leading to enrollment decline. Consequently, the institution faces not only the risk of not achieving its mission of inclusivity but also of sacrificing a significant revenue source. The school does not accept the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program or Gardiner scholarships at this time. Furthermore, teachers, unequipped to manage the diverse needs of their students, struggle with burnout due to the lack of training in supporting struggling students effectively.

It is imperative to address the unmet needs of struggling students in private schools. It goes beyond professional duty; it represents a moral obligation. By constructing an effective support framework, this research sought to create transformative

change, ensuring that no student is left behind and each child has the opportunity to flourish both academically and holistically.

Conceptual Design

Response to Intervention (RTI) is an instructional framework that can help ensure the academic strengths and needs of students are met effectively and efficiently (Johnson, 2020). RTI emerged in response to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Smith, 2005). This model facilitated a shift from the "wait to fail" approach to a preventative model (Pendharkar, 2023). Prior to the implementation of early identification methods students often did not receive the immediate support they needed to address the achievement gap.

In 1996, Vellutino et al. conducted a study involving 118 students identified as poor readers. After providing daily tutoring, most students achieved average to above-average scores on a standardized reading assessment. This finding suggested that students classified as poor readers might not necessarily have a learning disability (LD) but could benefit from intensive early intervention programs (as cited in Pendharkar, 2023). Similarly, in 2002, Torgesen et al. discovered that intensive reading instruction led to a statistically significant increase in reading scores for 60 students previously identified as having learning disabilities (as cited in Pendharkar, 2003). The collective findings underscored the importance of early intervention through intensive reading instruction for students at risk of reading disabilities.

RTI, a model of multitiered instruction comprising of a minimum of three tiers, was established on the foundation of the behavior modification model (Parks, 2023). The data-based, decision-making, and problem-solving models of RTI are rooted in the

broader behavior modification framework. This model involves identifying a problem, implementing an intervention, and evaluating its effectiveness (Parks, 2023). Specifically, the underpinnings of RTI can be traced back to Bergan's (1977) behavioral consultation model, also referred to as the problem-solving process. The problem-solving model itself draws both from psychology and education, incorporating data-driven decision-making and evidence-based practices (as cited in Parks, 2023). This approach also shares its roots with behavior modification or behavior therapy, wherein educators use a problem-solving approach to address behavioral and academic challenges.

As a multi-tiered system of support, it provides targeted interventions to students who are struggling with a skill or lesson (Parks, 2023). The RTI process involved a minimum of three tiers, with different levels of intervention based on students' needs. The first tier involves high-quality instruction and universal screening to identify students who may be at risk for academic difficulties. The second tier involves targeted interventions for students who are not making adequate progress on the first tier. The third tier involves intensive interventions for students who continue to struggle despite the second-tier interventions.

The RTI framework lays a robust conceptual foundation for addressing the research questions.

Context of the Study

The research setting for this study was a small Montessori private school located in South Florida. The school caters to students aged 2 through eighth grade, but the focus of this study was specifically on preschool students, aged 3-5. There are approximately 70 preschool students in the Montessori private school.

To ensure ethical considerations, formal permission was sought from both the head of school and the preschool director prior to the commencement of the study. This step was crucial to obtain the necessary approvals for implementing the proposed process and conducting the associated research.

Data collection involved one-on-one interviews, which were conducted in person or via online platforms such as Zoom to accommodate participant preferences and any logistical constraints. Additionally, participants were invited to engage in a survey facilitated through SurveyMonkey, an established online survey platform. In this survey, participants were asked to rank the key themes identified from the interviews, thereby providing a structured perspective on the insights gathered.

Regarding participant selection, the study utilized a combination of purposeful and convenient sampling. This approach involved reaching out to a select group of participants who have been directly affected by the early literacy intervention process. While convenient samples offer an accessible means of gathering initial data, it is acknowledged that it might not yield results that can be generalized to the wider population (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020).

Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to discern and analyze the prevalent themes that participants deemed significant during the implementation of an early literacy intervention process. By dissecting the outcomes derived from both the comprehensive interviews and the encompassing survey this research sought to enhance the execution of the early literacy intervention initiative which assisted struggling students in a private Montessori preschool that offers a fast-paced curriculum. Furthermore, the insights

garnered from this investigation have the potential to extend beyond the current

Montessori private school setting and offer applicable insights for other institutions of

similar nature.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

RQ1: How do participants perceive the various components of the early literacy

intervention process, Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative?

RQ2: What are the effective components of an academic early intervention process for

implementation at a private Montessori preschool?

Assumptions

This dissertation was built upon a foundation of carefully considered assumptions,

which serve as the bedrock for the research endeavors and findings. The assumptions

were derived from a combination of insights gathered from teacher feedback during the

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, observations made

during professional development sessions focusing on school needs, and a comprehensive

understanding of the educational landscape. The following assumptions guide the

direction and scope of this study:

1. Identification of a need for an Early Intervention Literacy Process: Grounded in
   invaluable input from educators, including feedback obtained through SWOT
   analysis and discussions on the school's needs, this research assumed the
   existence of a pronounced need for an early intervention literacy process. These
   inputs, which have been consistently emphasized during professional

development sessions, collectively pointed toward the necessity of addressing literacy challenges at an early stage.

2. Justification through local District Statistics: The assumption of a pressing need for an early intervention literacy process was further substantiated by statistical data from the local school district. The district's official website reported a student body of 28,748 students with special needs, accentuating the urgency of providing effective literacy support to a substantial population.

3. Perceived Effectiveness and Benefit for the School: This research also assumed that participants engaged in the study would perceive the proposed early intervention literacy process as effective and valuable. This assumption was rooted in the successes and outcomes observed from similar processes implemented within public schools. Past evidence indicates that such processes contribute positively to students' literacy development and overall learning experience (Armijo, 2021, p. 1).

4. Alignment with Established Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework: The implementation of the proposed process drew inspiration from the widely acknowledged Response to Intervention (RTI) framework that is commonly employed in public schools. The assumption here was that the adaptation of this proven framework for early literacy intervention would lead to favorable outcomes. Additionally, the fact that the process implementation is guided by a professional with 14 years of experience working with students with different learning needs lent further credibility to this assumption.

5. Parallels with Outcome in Private School Settings: It is assumed that the positive outcomes observed in private school settings will carry over to the early literacy intervention process offered within a private school environment. This assumption is grounded in the underlying principles and strategies that have demonstrated efficacy across different educational settings.

In acknowledging these assumptions, it was essential to recognize the potential limitations and external factors that may have influenced their validity. As the research progressed, these assumptions were continually evaluated and revalidated to ensure the accuracy of the study's foundation.

Definitions of Terms

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Autism Spectrum Disorder encompasses a spectrum of pervasive developmental disorders that can significantly impact a student's functioning. This range of disorders necessitates the implementation of specially designed instruction and related services to address the unique needs of individuals within this spectrum. (Florida Department of Education, n.d.a).

Developmental delay: Students aged 3-8 who exhibit a developmental delay in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development are identified under a disability category (Cormier-Lavergne, 2010).

Developmental disability: A collective set of conditions stemming from impairments in physical, learning, or behavior domains (West, 2019).

Early intervention: The provision of services and support to infants, toddlers, and their families is a crucial process when a child has or is at risk for a developmental delay,

disability, or health condition that could potentially impact typical development and learning (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2023).

Exceptional Special Education (ESE): Programs for students with disabilities (Florida Department of Education, n.d.b).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Guarantees that every child with disabilities is entitled to a free appropriate public education tailored to meet their unique needs, fostering their preparation for further education, employment, and independent living (Smith, 2005).

Literacy: The ability to comprehend, utilize, and contemplate written texts enables individuals to attain their objectives, cultivate knowledge and potential, and actively engage in society (Lan & Yu, 2023).

Montessori: A comprehensive, self-directed learning philosophy (Portwood, 2023).

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS): A comprehensive framework designed to provide three tiers of instruction that address academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs. MTSS is often used interchangeably with Response to Intervention (RTI), but it encompasses a broader range of supports (Sailor et al., 2021).

MTSS/RTI and RTI/MTSS: In this research, the terms MTSS and RTI are used interchangeably to account for the inconsistent terminology across states regarding tiered support system models. RTI is a multi-tiered approach and a subset of the more comprehensive MTSS framework (Zhang et al., 2023).

Performance gap: The disparity between the intended goal and the current level of performance is calculated by subtracting the present performance level from the benchmark, standard, or desired goal (Avila, 2011).

Phoneme: The smallest discernible unit of sound within a word. For instance, in the word "if," there are two phonemes: /i/ and /f/ (Farrow, 2018).

Phonemic awareness: The capacity to blend, segment, and manipulate individual phonemes within spoken words (Farrow, 2018).

Phonics: The correlation between sounds and the corresponding spelling patterns is employed to represent them in written language (Farrow, 2018).

Phonological awareness: The ability to manipulate sounds which includes syllables, onsets, rimes, and phonemes (Smith, 2018)

Progress monitoring: Frequent assessment of students, utilizing brief probes to gauge their comprehension of the content (National Center on Student Progress Monitoring, 2015).

Response to Intervention (RTI): A systematic approach that offers intervention and educational support to students, adjusting the intensity based on their individual needs. The aim is to proactively address issues and intervene early, fostering student success (Palm Beach County School District, 2023).

Specific learning disability (SLD): Characterized as a challenge in one or more fundamental processes related to comprehending or using language, whether spoken or written. This condition may lead to significant difficulties in listening, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, or performing mathematical tasks. Associated conditions encompass, among others, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, or developmental aphasia. It's important to note that specific learning disabilities do not encompass challenges primarily stemming from visual, hearing, motor, intellectual, or emotional/behavioral disabilities,

limited English proficiency, or factors related to environment, culture, or economics (Florida Department of Education, 2023).

Organization of the Dissertation

Beginning with Chapter II, a comprehensive review of existing literature pertaining to the research topic was presented. The chapter focused on identifying gaps and inconsistencies within the literature, which highlighted the necessity of the current study.

Chapter III explained the research methodology employed to investigate educators' perceptions of the intervention process components. It meticulously detailed the research design, including the rationale behind the chosen approach. The methodology delved into the specifics of the sample population, clarifying the selection criteria. The chapter outlined the data collection, encompassing one-on-one interviews and online surveys, while also addressing ethical considerations. Moreover, it explained the systematic process of data analysis, from transcription to theme identification.

Chapter IV provided a thorough analysis of the results. This chapter presented the findings without opinions or interpretations, organized by each research question. It included a summary of analyses, detailed results for each research question, and a summary of the results. Relevant tables and figures were used to complement the text, ensuring clarity and comprehension.

Chapter V offered a detailed discussion of the results, exploring their implications for practice and providing recommendations for future research. This chapter interpreted the findings in the context of the research questions and the literature review, discussed practical implications for educators and policymakers, and suggested areas for further

investigation. The conclusion summarized the key insights of the study, reinforcing its significance and contributions to the field of education.

Summary

The preceding chapter provided an overview of the background of the problem being examined. The evolution of legislation and a growing emphasis on inclusive educational practices have prompted the provision of specialized services in public schools, but this trend has not been prevalent in private schools. The central drive behind instituting an early literacy intervention process is to extend similar services, already established within the public sector, to students attending private schools.

At the heart of this research was the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework. Rooted in Bergan's (1977) behavioral consultation model and characterized by a problem-solving methodology, RTI constitutes an instructional approach aimed at addressing both academic and behavioral challenges. By embracing this framework, this study sought to bridge the gap in early literacy intervention services between private and public educational settings.

The study's focal point was a small Montessori Preschool situated in South Florida. Here, the perspectives of preschool teachers, administrative staff, and parents converged in an exploration of the implementation of an early literacy intervention process. The research methodology encompassed in-depth one-on-one interviews, followed by a survey, to capture the views of the participants involved.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

There is minimal research on private educational institutions and early interventions. One factor that has influenced the lack of transparency is that private institutions do not have to adhere to the state or federal standards set forth by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) (Kunichoff, 2023). While they are not required to follow IDEA, private schools should still provide early interventions to students who struggle. This literature review investigated how IDEA impacts private schools. It also examined Response to Intervention (RTI) which public schools have utilized as a framework to provide intervention services to students. The literature also explored the importance of providing students with the least restrictive environment which often is offering a pull-out service at the cost of the parents, or the local school district provides support outside of the general education classroom. It also explored the multifaceted challenges faced by private schools in providing effective support for neuro-diverse students. The literature explored the barriers hindering private schools, including the lack of training, the role of school leadership, funding concerns, and the need for professional development. Additionally, the literature explored research-based interventions and the role of the What Works Clearinghouse in evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. By understanding these crucial aspects, this literature review aimed to shed light on the complex landscape of special education in the United States and contribute to the ongoing dialogue on improving educational opportunities for all students, regardless of their learning differences or place of education, be it in the public or private sector. The

literature revealed a notable research gap in the domain of private schools offering early intervention and special education services.

Special Education and Laws

In 1975, Congress passed the Education of Handicapped Children Act, now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), in response to concerns that states were not providing equal opportunities to children with learning differences (Lipkin et al., 2015). States sought federal assistance to provide public education services for children with learning disabilities. IDEA authorized federal funding to states for services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and developmental delays, as well as special education and related services for school-aged children with disabilities. Subsequent amendments in 1990 changed the name to IDEA, with additional revisions in 1997 and 2004 aimed at ensuring equal access to education.

Under IDEA, school districts were allowed to allocate up to 15% of their special education funding for professional development, early intervention aid, and literacy instruction. Additionally, it introduced the implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI), a school-wide method to address achievement gap concerns by improving instruction and monitoring student progress (Williams, 2023).

It is important to note that IDEA does not impose the same regulations on private schools that it does on public schools. Private schools are not directly governed by IDEA but are subject to regulations through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), and IDEA, reauthorized in 2004 (Weber, 2007). ESEA programs require public school districts to provide services and benefits to eligible private school students on an equitable basis.

Meanwhile, IDEA mandates that public school districts conduct a child-finding process to identify students with disabilities in private schools and allocate funding for special education services to eligible students enrolled in private schools.

In some cases, students in public schools can use vouchers, like the McKay Scholarship in Florida, to attend private schools if their parents believe the public school cannot meet their child's needs. However, concerns have been raised about the accountability and quality of instruction in private schools when students are no longer protected by IDEA (Rains, 2020). Public schools are required to report student progress to the state, offer professional development for teachers, provide inclusion classes, and create Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) (Kunichoff, 2023), while private schools have more flexibility and can determine their special education guidelines. This discrepancy has led to variations in the quality of programs, services, and instructional practices in private schools.

Regarding Response to Intervention (RTI), there have been various proposed models, but the Department of Education does not endorse any particular implementation model (Murrah, 2016). Nevertheless, there are fundamental principles that should be part of any RTI framework, including early identification and intervention, a learning disabilities assessment system, evidence-based early intervention services, progress monitoring, annual progress evaluations, professional development, and a multitiered problem-solving team (Williams, 2023).

Florida has been implementing RTI since 2004, and in 2008, the Florida Department of Education published its RTI implementation plans, providing a state-level framework to support districts with critical components, definitions, and applications for

sustaining school-wide implementations (Calero, 2015). Florida uses RTI to determine eligibility for Exceptional Student Education.

This study aimed to explore the perceived elements that contribute to the success of the early literacy intervention process in private schools.

Response to Intervention, Three-Tier Model

This study will focus on the three-tier Response to Intervention (RTI) model, specifically honing in on the literacy component.

In Tier 1, all students in the general education classroom are included. Instruction at Tier 1 is grounded in established, evidence-supported methods. These methods are employed to deliver instruction to students and to continuously assess whether they are comprehending the content being taught. The aim here is to proactively address potential issues and prevent future academic difficulties (Fox et al., 2010).

Tier 2 provides targeted, explicit instruction designed for at-risk students who require additional support beyond what's offered in the standard curriculum (Tier 1). Students in Tier 2 participate in small group lessons, employing proven methods. The goal is to help these students catch up with their peers by offering more systematic and focused instruction on the specific skills they are struggling with (Silva et al, 2021; Fox et al., 2010).

Tier 3 is the most intensive and individualized level of intervention and is utilized for remediating academic performance (Silva et al, 2021; Fox et al., 2010). Tier 3 comes into play when a student continues to struggle even after Tier 2 interventions. At this stage, support becomes more deliberate, direct, and explicit in terms of how students are taught. Students in Tier 3 may even be referred to a problem-solving team for further

evaluation to determine if they qualify for special education services (Silva et al, 2021; Fox et al., 2010)

Response to Intervention Team

The Response to Intervention (RTI) team consists of educators and experts who collaborate to address the needs of struggling students requiring intervention services (Murrah, 2016). Typically, this team includes teachers from various grade levels, a reading coach (if available), a school counselor, an assistant principal, special education teachers, and occasionally the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Coordinator (Thur, 2015). This team may be known by various names such as the Child Study Team (CST), Prereferral Intervention Team, School Study Team, or Problem-Solving Team (Thur, 2015). For this study's purpose, the researcher referred to it as the Child Study Team (CST).

The CST's responsibilities encompass planning interventions, selecting progress monitoring tools, evaluating the success of interventions, and, when necessary, facilitating the referral of the student to the ESE Coordinator for further assessment (Brendle, 2008; Murrah, 2016). Effective collaboration within the intervention team can lead to a reduction in the number of referrals to special education services (Brendle, 2008; Thur, 2015).

Response to Intervention and Special Education Identification in Florida

Florida utilizes the RTI process to identify Emotional Behavior Disorder (EBD), Specific Learning Disability (SLD), and Language Impaired (LI) eligibility. When a child has completed all three tiers of intervention and still isn't making sufficient progress toward their academic goals, they are referred for a psycho-evaluation. The three most

commonly utilized methods for identifying students with learning disabilities are the discrepancy model, Response to Intervention (RTI), and Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses (PSW) (Gonzalez, 2016). For this study, the researcher concentrated on the discrepancy model, which was incorporated into federal legislation by the Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Murrah, 2016).

The discrepancy model assesses whether a student qualifies for a specific learning disability status based on the extent of difference or discrepancy between their performance on intelligence tests and achievement tests. To meet the criteria for specific learning disability classification, a student must satisfy four distinct conditions:

1. A significant discrepancy must exist between their cognitive ability and academic achievement.

2. A psychological processing deficit must be identified.

3. The student's needs cannot be adequately met through special education services.

4. Factors such as vision, hearing, motor skills, intellectual abilities, emotional factors, cultural factors, environmental factors, economic disadvantages, or limited English proficiency must be ruled out (Gonzalez, 2016).

However, it's important to note that the discrepancy model may not be effective in the early identification of specific learning disabilities because some students may not exhibit a significant discrepancy at a young age. This can result in students struggling academically until they eventually demonstrate a notable difference between their achievement and IQ scores (Maki et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the application of the discrepancy model varies from state to state, primarily because the Handicapped Children Act did not define what constitutes an

"extreme" discrepancy. Consequently, a student who qualifies for services in one state may not qualify in another (Ihori & Olvera, 2015).

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a "written curriculum-based pedagogical document designed to support a student's learning process and growth" (Räty et al., 2019, p. 25). The primary purpose of an IEP is to assess a student's current abilities, establish individualized goals, and outline the special education and related services needed to achieve those goals (Rains, 2020).

Typically, an individualized IEP consists of "four core elements that build upon each other: a) a description of the present level of performance, b) a definition of intended learning goals, c) recommended supportive actions and d) conditions and methods for evaluating goal achievement" (Özdemir et al., 2020, p. 130). The Department of Education mandates that IEPs include information on monitoring student progress and ensuring appropriate placement within the least restrictive environment. Additionally, students are entitled to due process, annual IEP reviews, and reevaluations to determine their eligibility for continued support services, as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA).

IDEA specifies that goals within an IEP should be attainable within one year, and these annual goals are further broken down into short-term, measurable objectives. The IEP also outlines how a student's progress will be measured and how parents will be kept informed of their child's development (Olszewski, 2023).

It's important to note that private schools are not obligated to develop IEPs, which means that the protective measures provided by an IEP may be absent for private school

students (Rains, 2020). However, the U.S. Department of Education states that students attending private schools may have the option to participate in a service plan. Service plans detail the specific special education and related services that the local education agency (LEA) or district will provide to the student. Notably, IDEA does not specify how often a service plan must be updated, and the availability of services for private school students is contingent upon the funding allocated to support such students.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) brought about a significant change in the education landscape by establishing a standard that mandates the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting, thereby eliminating barriers (Giddings, 2023). This means that students with disabilities must be educated alongside their non-disabled peers in the regular education environment, unless it is determined that their needs cannot be adequately met in that setting, even with specialized instruction and services. The 2004 amendment to IDEA that introduced this provision has been a source of controversy and remains one of the most contentious aspects of the law (Martin, 2016).

One of the primary concerns shared by parents and advocates of students with disabilities is the potential separation of these students from their typically developing peers (Spring, 2018). According to the law, students must receive specialized instruction within the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Any placement outside of the general education classroom is considered more restrictive. The determination of the LRE is made by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes the parent, and is based on the individual needs of the student. It is important to note that the general

education classroom is considered the "primary and optimal setting," and the goal is to transition the child back into the general education setting as swiftly as possible (Deno, 1970). Figure 1 illustrates Deno's (1970) model of LRE. Additionally, Florida offers support services within the general education classroom, provided by a special education teacher and tailored to the individual needs of the student (Rains, 2020).

Research has consistently demonstrated that a student's placement in the LRE can significantly impact their academic and social outcomes (Geishert Gooden, 2022). Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that students with disabilities are placed in the most appropriate educational environment (Geishert Gooden, 2022). However, determining the right placement for a student with disabilities is a multifaceted process that necessitates a thorough evaluation of their individual needs and abilities.

IDEA underscores the importance of offering a continuum of placement options, ranging from the least restrictive to the most restrictive environment (Geishert Gooden, 2022). This consideration extends beyond academics and encompasses social and emotional benefits. Alternative placements may encompass instruction in a special class, special school, homeschooling, private schools, hospitals, or institutions.

Under the IDEA and Section 504, school districts are obligated to provide an appropriate education tailored to the unique needs of students with disabilities, and they must make individualized determinations regarding each student's educational needs. As such, the LRE for each student may vary based on their distinct requirements and circumstances.

The New York City School District has demonstrated unwavering commitment to enhancing support for students with disabilities attending private schools. To this end, the

city continually updates its *Special Education Standard Operating Procedure Manual* to encourage private schools to adopt the inclusion model when it is both feasible and aligned with the needs and individual goals of the students (Samuels, 2018).

David Rubel, a special education consultant in New York, regards the inclusion of language integrated into the district policy as a potential model for private schools across the nation (Samuels, 2018). This proactive approach has been instrumental in setting an example for the broader educational community.

In contrast, some states have encountered challenges in providing special education services to private schools. For instance, Massachusetts adheres to a policy that restricts the provision of services exclusively to public schools or a neutral location (Samuels, 2018). This approach may limit access to services for students with disabilities in private schools within the state.

In South Florida, the small Montessori preschool which was the focus of this study offers private pull-out support, which does not incorporate the principles of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Parents have the option to privately hire a reading specialist who works on campus. However, the reading specialist primarily conducts one-on-one sessions with students but does not collaborate with classroom teachers to support students within the general education setting. While some private schools in the area offer specialized services or establish dedicated academies to support students with special needs, others do not. In schools that provide the academy option for students with learning disabilities, these students often share a classroom environment with peers who have similar learning challenges. Nonetheless, they may still have opportunities to

participate in general education classes, particularly for specialized subjects or specific

core courses.

This comparison underscores the varying approaches and challenges faced by

different regions in providing special education services to students in private schools.

Figure 1

Deno's Model for LRE
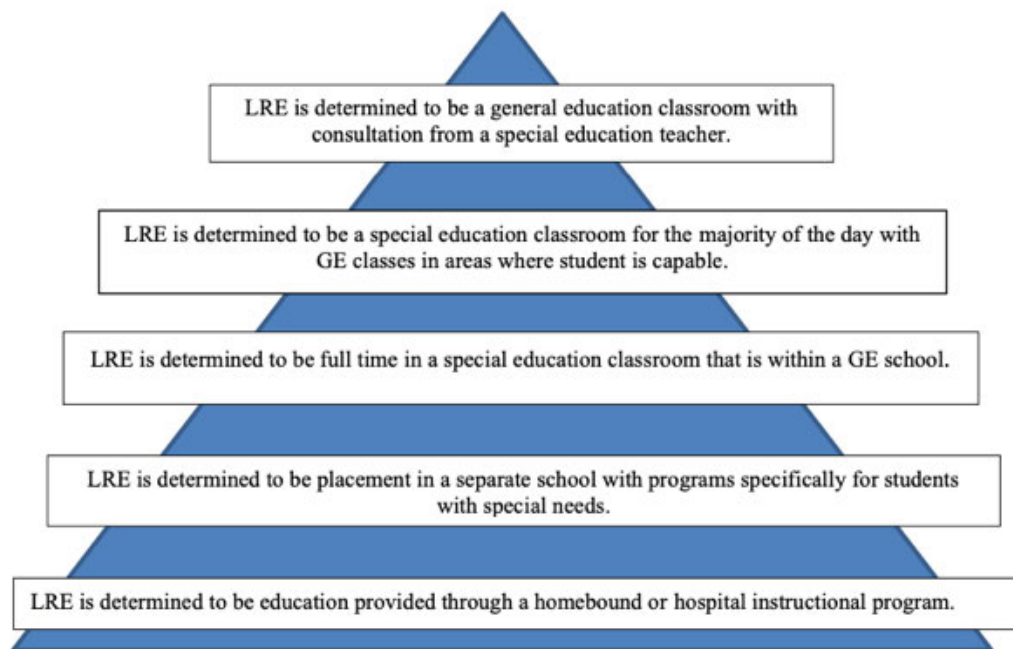
Source: Deno, 1970 (p. 235); Rains, 2020 (p. 26)

Response to Intervention in Private Schools

The study began with an extensive review of literature, drawing upon reputable

research paper repositories including ERIC, ProQuest, Google Scholar, and Education

Source Databases. The focus was on practices related to early intervention programs,

early intervention processes, early intervention services, and special education services

within the context of private schools. A set of carefully chosen keywords were used to guide the researcher's search, including terms such as "special education in private schools," "early intervention in private school," "response to intervention in private school," "effectiveness of interventions in private schools," "reading interventions in private school," and "academic support services in private schools."

The search did not yield any specific information regarding intervention services provided in private schools. The available information was primarily centered around the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which does not mandate private schools to publish or disclose information regarding their intervention or support services.

This study represented a pioneering effort in its field, as it set out to explore the perspectives of educators and parents concerning the implementation of an early literacy intervention process. This exploration held the potential to significantly enhance the quality of intervention services within private schools. Consequently, the insights that teachers and parents provided regarding their perceptions of the early intervention services deployed in a small private Montessori preschool made a novel and invaluable contribution to the lack of existing literature on early intervention services offered by private schools.

Barriers

Lack of Training. Private schools, as highlighted by Wolf et al. (2012), frequently fall short in identifying students who require academic support. This deficiency is primarily attributed to the glaring absence of proper training in recognizing and addressing the unique needs of neuro-diverse students (Al Jaffal, 2022; Wolf et al.,

2012). Additionally, an unfortunate reality in some private schools is the stigmatization of neuro-diverse students. This unwarranted stigma compounds the challenges faced by these students and adds to the reluctance of private school staff to adequately address their educational requirements.

The consequences of this training gap among educators cannot be understated. When teachers lack essential training in recognizing and accommodating neuro-diverse students, they find themselves ill-prepared to understand and support these individuals effectively. This knowledge and skill deficit not only hampers the educational progress of neuro-diverse students but also impedes the development of inclusive and accommodating learning environments within private schools.

Research has consistently shown that staff buy-in is a critical factor in the success of the Response to Intervention (RTI) development process (Murrah, 2016). When teachers are provided with opportunities to question and receive useful information about RTI implementation, their buy-in improves. A study conducted in a private elementary school in the northeastern United States provides a vivid illustration of this issue (Al Jaffal, 2022). It revealed that general education teachers in this private school lacked essential training on how to effectively work with students diagnosed with autism in their classrooms. Moreover, they had limited opportunities for collaboration with their special education colleagues, who possess valuable expertise in supporting students with autism. Furthermore, the school failed to provide these teachers with the necessary resources to establish an appropriate inclusive environment within their classrooms.

To address this critical issue, private schools must prioritize and invest in comprehensive neurodiversity training for their educators. Such training equips teachers

with the skills and knowledge to effectively support neuro-diverse children and empowers them to work collaboratively with their colleagues across special and general education. By bridging this training gap, private schools can lay the foundation for a more inclusive and accommodating educational environment. This benefits not only the neuro-diverse students but also the entire school community and their families (O'Hara, 2016).

Head of School Support. The support of the Head of School plays a pivotal role in determining whether a school is motivated to implement programs for neuro-diverse students. When the Head of School fails to prioritize these needs, teachers are less inclined to seek the necessary training to support students with diverse needs. This leadership directly shapes the school's culture (Taylor, 2005). It is essential for school administration to clearly communicate the reasons behind proposed changes and underscore the positive benefits of the RTI process. To gauge staff support, incorporating surveys is imperative, as less than 80% approval could hinder the success of the new program (Wright, 2007).

For a successful intervention program, school leaders should exemplify specific cultural and organizational qualities, including a unifying vision, strong support for collaboration, active participation in shared decision-making, and efficient utilization of available resources (Rains, 2020). These qualities significantly influence the school's culture, which, in turn, fosters effective student progress through collaborative efforts (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2014). Without a vision aligned with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to support RTI implementation, private schools may

continue to operate without adequate oversight or accountability for student progress (Rains, 2020).

Funding. Another potential concern is the allocation of funds for additional student services not traditionally offered in private schools. While offering these services does incur additional costs, it is essential to recognize that a well-designed program has the potential to generate extra income, which may offset these expenses. This dynamic represents both a challenge and an opportunity—an opportunity to diversify revenue streams and expand the school's capacity to serve a broader range of students. It is worth noting that some private schools, although not the focus of this study, are eligible to accept the McKay scholarship, which can provide additional financial support for students with disabilities.

Professional Development. Lastly, the private educational sector often faces a scarcity of professional development opportunities. According to Taylor (2005) and Lane (2011) there is a need to address professional development in special education services by private schools. To implement the proposed process effectively, it is imperative to provide current teachers with additional professional development. This investment enables them to better understand the process's purpose and execution, thus enhancing its overall effectiveness.

To facilitate the development of individualized instructional techniques, the administration should allocate time for professional coaching, establish professional learning communities, and encourage participation in study groups. This investment in teacher skill development is vital for enhancing student learning outcomes (Lane, 2011).

Notably, the additional cost associated with professional development could potentially be offset by the revenue generated from offering the program.

Research by Kosko and Wilkins (2009) found that the number of hours teachers spent in professional development related to inclusion was a strong predictor of teachers' perceptions of their ability to modify instruction for students with learning disabilities. This was even more influential than the number of years they spent working with students with disabilities, but only when they received 8 or more hours of professional development. It's essential to highlight that private school teachers are more likely than their public-school counterparts to be responsible for implementing inclusion practices in their classrooms while being less likely to have participated in professional development activities focused on teaching students with special needs (O'Hara, 2016). Research by Bitterman et al. (2013) found that only 28% of private school teachers participated in professional development activities geared towards teaching students with disabilities, compared to 36% of public-school teachers.

In conclusion, addressing these barriers in private schools requires a concerted effort to prioritize training, leadership support, funding, and professional development. By overcoming these obstacles, private schools can create a more inclusive and accommodating environment for neuro-diverse students, benefiting the entire school community.

Research-Based Response to Intervention Programs

In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) emphasized the importance of employing research-based or evidence-based interventions within the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework. This approach should be systematic, ongoing,

and include progress monitoring (Haager, et al., 2007; Murrah, 2016). However, determining the level of research and evidence required to classify an intervention as evidence-based remains a challenge (Murrah, 2016).

To address this issue, the U.S. Department of Education established the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) in 2002. The primary purpose of this clearinghouse is to categorize the effectiveness of interventions into three grades: strong, weaker, or insufficient evidence (Rains, 2020). While WWC does not conduct its own research, it diligently assesses research designs, implementation, and impacts on a child's learning (Cross & Conn-Powers, 2014).

For a study to be considered by WWC, it must adhere to specific research designs such as randomized controlled trials, quasi-experimental designs, regression discontinuity designs, or single-case designs (Rains, 2020). Qualitative research studies may be accepted if they provide information about how an intervention works or identify factors influencing its implementation.

WWC further recommends that an intervention should be replicated at least five times by three different research teams to establish its evidence-based status (Birri et al., 2022). However, it is crucial to understand that being labeled as evidence-based by WWC does not necessarily imply a positive effect on a child's learning (Cross & Conn-powers, 2014). "Evidence-based" simply indicates that the research was conducted rigorously and correctly (Cross & Conn-Powers, 2014).

Cross & Conn-Powers (2014) suggested a three-step process for educators and administrators to determine the effectiveness of a curriculum:

1. Verify that the curriculum is a well-documented resource with specific goals, learning experiences, methods of instruction, and materials for implementation.

2. Utilize WWC to assess whether studies of the curriculum meet evidence-based guidelines.

3. Use WWC to determine if the curriculum has demonstrated effectiveness in enhancing learning.

While WWC aids in reviewing and selecting curricula, it is important to note that it does not report on any potential negative effects of an intervention and may not consider instances where an intervention could have both positive and negative impacts (Zhao, 2017). Nonetheless, WWC provides a valuable starting point for educators and administrators to enhance student learning through evidence-based practices.

Reading Research-Based Interventions

Prior to the present study, the researcher, then acting as the interventionist, implemented the Heggerty program at the pre-kindergarten level as a Tier 2 intervention. Developed by Dr. Michael Heggerty in 2003, Heggerty serves as a comprehensive phonemic awareness curriculum tailored for early childhood and primary grades. This curriculum adheres to a deliberate and systematic progression, encompassing a spectrum of phonological and phonemic awareness skills (Heggerty, 2023).

Despite not securing approval from the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) due to a lack of inclusion in a control group, Heggerty has demonstrated the program's effectiveness. As outlined by Learning Experience Design (LXD) Research and Consulting, for WWC approval, Heggerty needs representation in at least two schools from each district for both control and treatment groups. A thorough analysis of student

growth concerning demographics, alongside standardized overall reading achievement scores, is essential for a multi-grade examination. It is noteworthy that Heggerty has earned a level 3 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) evidence badge, indicating a substantial level of empirical support (Heggerty, 2023).

The second instructional resource the researcher employed in their role as the interventionist was the Orton-Gillingham approach. Similar to Montessori, Orton-Gillingham is a "multisensory, structured, sequential, diagnostic, and prescriptive method for teaching literacy, specifically designed for individuals who struggle with reading, writing, and spelling, such as those with dyslexia" (Orton-Gillingham Academy, n.d., para. 1).

Distinguished as an approach rather than a method, program, or system, Orton-Gillingham derives its name from its founders, Samuel T. Orton and Anna Gillingham. This approach is typically implemented in a one-on-one setting, deviating from common small-group practices. The interventionist tailors lessons and materials to the unique needs of each student, adjusting the pace of instruction and introducing new materials based on individual strengths and weaknesses (Orton-Gillingham Academy, n.d.).

Writing Interventions

Writing was not implemented as an intervention for students aged 3-5. Writing involves the mastery of fine motor skills to produce legible letters, requiring the retention of conventions, directionality, word spacing, capitalization, and punctuation. This intricate process is further compounded by the limitations of working memory, presenting a challenging task for young children that demands self-regulation and effortful control (DeBaryshe, 2023).

In the area of emergent writing, two critical domains are handwriting and spelling. If a teacher observes a student grappling with handwriting, a domain intricately linked to fine motor skills, the appropriate course of action is to refer the student to an occupational therapist for targeted intervention. This intervention addresses specific issues related to fine motor skills, ensuring that the student receives tailored support (DeBaryshe, 2023).

Moreover, in the context of emergent writing, the development of phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge is crucial for producing invented spelling (DeBaryshe, 2023). To address this concern, students received targeted reading support, enhancing their capacity for utilizing invented spelling effectively. This strategic approach aimed to bolster foundational skills and facilitate a smoother transition into the writing process for young learners.

Early Interventions

Based on the empirical evidence and the associated findings discussed, early intervention emerges as a potent force, consistently yielding positive effects on both early and subsequent educational outcomes. It appears that, particularly for certain students in both public and private contexts, early interventions are crucial for achieving anticipated academic performance levels. Moreover, these early interventions have the potential to prevent or minimize the necessity for later, often extensive intervention programs in a child's academic journey, such as prolonged ESE services and associated IEPs. The Heggerty intervention is highly beneficial for both student and educational expenditure as underperforming students typically end up requiring extended services, as per law, but there is a good chance and supporting evidence this can often be avoided. Thus, using Heggerty as a form of early intervention stands out as possibly the most effective and

efficient approach, benefiting all children, regardless of whether they attend public or private schools.

Summary

In the United States, there is a rich and successful history of providing support and initiating the implementation of early intervention programs which are designed to support all students equitably within the public school system regardless of their unique situations or characteristics. Based on prior research, early intervention programs have proven highly effective in both identifying students who need support and providing the support in the form of an intervention. However, as evidenced by this review, this may not be the case within private schools. The research is largely limited, and the reporting of data is not required, so the researcher cannot determine if this is always the case. However, the perspective endorsed and assumed by this research is that based on existing evidence from the public sector, if processes are implemented within the private school setting, they will likely be similarly effective and thereby represent an opportunity for private schools.

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

Private schools enroll students with identified and unidentified disabilities; however, they often fail to provide the same level of support as public schools (Rains, 2020; Wolf et al., 2012). In contrast, within a school district in South Florida, 42% of students aged 3-5 receive in-class services, highlighting the robust support offered by public education (Florida Department of Education, 2021). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act mandates a free and public education for students with disabilities, yet private schools are not bound to the same federal and state regulations as their public counterparts (Smith, 2005). Unlike public schools, private schools are not obligated to adhere to the same standards for Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), due process, or placement (Eigenbrood, 2004). Consequently, a noticeable gap exists in addressing the academic needs of struggling students within most private schools, leading to a deficiency in language-based intervention programs aimed at bridging achievement disparities (Mulholland, 2011; Rains, 2020).

Given the lack of comprehensive data on students with disabilities in private schools, this study aimed to contribute to the limited literature on special education services within private educational settings. The current scarcity of information arises partly due to the absence of widespread mandates for private schools to disclose their internal workings to external agencies (Taylor, 2005). By addressing this gap, the research intended to enrich the educational literature surrounding private-sector student support.

The purpose of this qualitative two-phase action research study was to gauge the effectiveness of an early literacy intervention process. This process aimed to address the existing academic support gap between private and public schools. Specifically, the study focused on the preschool age group of 3-5 at a private Montessori preschool located in South Florida.

Research Questions

The research questions associated with the problem of study were as follows:

RQ1: How do participants perceive the various components of the early literacy intervention process, Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative?

RQ2: What are the effective components of an academic early intervention process for implementation at a private Montessori preschool?

Research Design

In this two-phase qualitative action research study, preschool teachers, the preschool director, school counselor, and parents of students who participated in the "Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative" offered insights into the process's implementation. Qualitative data allows the researcher to study people and situations in a naturalistic setting, which permits the researcher to gain a perspective from the participants' point of view (Syring, 2018). Given that the study aimed to gather feedback about the early literacy intervention process in a South Florida private Montessori preschool for ages 3-5, qualitative research offers a fitting approach. The data collected from interviews and surveys shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of the process, informing its potential enhancements. During the first phase, one-on-one interviews were conducted, transcribed, and subjected to thematic analysis. The second phase involved quantitatively

analyzing survey ranking results to validate the findings from the first phase. Results from both phases were then triangulated to confirm and reinforce findings or identify discrepancies. Mertler (2020) provides a thorough framework for planning and conducting two-phase qualitative research.

Methodological Assumptions

The study's foundation rested on the assumption that a need exists for an early intervention process within the South Florida-based Montessori private school. The assumption was drawn from the local school district's service to 28,748 students with an IEP as reported by the school district on their website and extends to the private school environment. Furthermore, assumptions surrounding the effectiveness of the process stemmed from comparable evidence in public school contexts. The study's approach was constructivist and fostered collaborative knowledge development.

Context/Setting of the Study

The research setting for this study was a small Montessori private school situated in South Florida. The school serves students aged 2 through eighth grade. For purposes of this study, the focus was explicitly on only preschool students, ages 3-5.

Prior to beginning the study, permission was sought from the head of school as well as the preschool director to implement the process and associated study (Appendix A). If the head of school does not support the needs of neuro-diverse students, the school will not seek to implement processes to meet their needs. Teachers will not seek training to better understand and support students with varying needs. The head of School directly impacts the culture of the school (Taylor, 2005). After approval was granted by the head

of school and preschool director, additional consent was sought and required from parents of children who participated in the process.

Description of Population

The target population of this study was preschool teachers who educate students ages 3-5, the preschool director, school counselor, and the parents of students who participated in the process at a private school. The Montessori private school located in South Florida is small, therefore the sample of preschool teachers was limited. Out of the 14 preschool teachers, 12 participated. The number of parent participants was determined by how many students participated in the early intervention process. A total of eight parents were invited to participate in the study, and seven chose to participate. The researcher sought to have at least 50% of participating students' parents participate in the study which was reached. When collecting data from interviews it is important to note that saturation should be reached to satisfy data collection. An adequate sample is achieved when "gathering fresh data no longer sparks new insights or reveals new properties" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The teachers who participated in the study have experience working with students who require early intervention services but have not completed any official training regarding early intervention services. All of the teachers and the preschool director are women and are above the age of 18.

Data Collection

Phase 1

The data collection process was a crucial aspect of this research, encompassing two distinct phases. Phase one involved qualitative semi-structured one-on-one

interviews with the preschool teachers, the preschool director, the school counselor, and parents (Appendix E). The utilization of open-ended and semi-structured questions allowed participants to provide rich insights into the experiences, perceptions, and suggestions regarding the early literacy intervention process. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed participants the opportunity to provide additional insight that is not presented through a quantitative research method, e.g., a survey (Syring, 2018). This approach enabled the collection of diverse perspectives and ensured that the research remained participant driven.

Phase 2

Phase two complemented the interview findings by quantifying the themes identified in phase one. Participants were invited to complete a survey through SurveyMonkey, an online platform, ranking identified themes in order of importance (Appendix F). This approach not only aided in validating the interview results but also provided a structured and comparative assessment of theme significance.

After receiving approval from Lynn University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), the study initiated the process by reaching out to 14 preschool teachers, the preschool director, school counselor, and 8 parents of the students who participated in the "Bright Beginnings Boost Imitative." This contact was established through email to gain their consent. The school's directory book, available both online and in hard copy, was used to obtain contact information.

To ensure transparency and informed participation, the participants were provided with the research questions and a clear outline of the role of the interview administrator. Upon their willingness to participate, interviews were scheduled at a convenient location,

either at school or a mutually agreed-upon venue, prioritizing the participants' comfort in location. The timing of the interviews was flexible, accommodating the participants' availability. In-person interviews were preferred whenever feasible, with Zoom as an alternative option if circumstances required remote interaction. Most parents and educators opted to have the interview on the campus of the small Montessori preschool that participated in the study with 3 parents choosing the option to meet via Zoom.

Before each interview began, the researcher provided an informed consent form and then engaged the participants in a discussion about the study's expectations and objectives as outlined in the interview protocol. Participants were assured that their responses would be treated confidentially, fostering an atmosphere of trust and open communication. It was also emphasized that participation was entirely voluntary, and participants may choose to withhold answers or provide expanded responses as they felt comfortable. The interviews were audio-recorded using an iPad voice recorder; additionally, a phone was used to record the interviews, ensuring a precise record of the interactions. Additionally, the researcher took notes during the interview to capture any nuances that may not have been captured in the recording.

Subsequent to conducting each interview, thorough transcription took place using Otter.ai. The transcribed interviews were then shared with the participants via email to ensure accuracy and maintain credibility. Participants had 1 week to approve the transcript. If the participants did not reach out, the interviewer assumed participants approved the transcription. The recording of the interviews added an extra layer of reliability, as it served as an authentic source of information. Participants were also given the opportunity to clarify or elaborate on the information they provided during the

interview. The qualitative data derived from these interviews was a central component of the research.

Throughout the entire process, confidentiality was rigorously maintained. All participants' identities were kept confidential, and their demographic information was protected. The collected data was stored securely on a password-protected external drive, adhering to data protection protocols. Following the interviews, data will be retained for 3 years to ensure compliance with data retention regulations.

The methodology primarily relied on conducting interviews with the participants within a small Montessori private school located in South Florida. The procedural steps for phase one are outlined as follows:

1. Secure permission from the head of school and preschool director to introduce an early intervention process to preschool students ages 3-5 within the small Montessori private school. Gain additional permission to conduct interviews and disperse surveys to participants.

2. Obtain IRB approval from Lynn University to ensure ethical and responsible research practices.

3. Initiate an interview scheduling process, contacting participants approximately 2 weeks prior to the interview date.

4. Secure informed consent from participants, emphasizing confidentiality and voluntary participation, allowing them the option to share or withhold information as they see fit.

5. Conduct interviews at a mutually suitable time and place, recording discussions for accuracy.

6. Provide transcriptions of the interviews to participants for accuracy verification within one week.

7. Collect qualitative data from interviews, maintain confidentiality throughout the process.

Table 1

Interview Protocol

Part	Procedure	Approximate time
1	Introductions of research and participant	1 minute
2	Discussion of the purpose of the study and expectations	1 minutes
3	Review confidentiality and informed consent	1 minute
4	Review recording policies and ability to cancel participation	1 minute
5	Clarification/questions from participant	1-5 minutes
6	Interview	20 minutes
7	Open time for participant to share any additional thoughts	1-5 minutes
8	Thank participant for their time	1 minute
	Total:	**~30 minutes**

In the subsequent phase, the research proceeded with previously obtained approval from Lynn University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The participants were engaged via the same email addresses used for scheduling interviews. This communication aimed to introduce the survey phase of the study. The first question on the survey was consent to participate. The survey itself was developed using SurveyMonkey, an online survey platform.

Participants were given a 2-week window to complete the survey, allowing ample time for thoughtful responses. A gentle reminder was not needed as all participants completed the survey within 2 weeks after the survey's initial dissemination.

Upon the survey completion period, the researcher closed the survey and analyzed the data. By progressing through this phase, the study satisfied its quantitative

component, providing a balanced perspective alongside qualitative interviews. After the data collection process concluded, 2 parents, a husband and wife, expressed their desire to participate in the study. The researcher promptly conducted and transcribed their interviews, which were then sent to the participants for verification. Once verified, the survey was distributed to them and completed within a week.

The procedural steps for phase two are outlined as follows:

1. Email participants using the same email used during the interview process with an introduction to the survey and a link to the survey, consent will be the first question.

2. Send a gentle reminder a week after initially sending the email

3. Two weeks after sending the survey, close the survey and analyze the results.

Product

The product used in this action research study was an early literacy intervention process geared towards preschool students ages 3-5in a small private school located in South Florida (see Appendix D).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity was paramount in this study. All necessary steps were taken to ensure participants' rights and confidentiality were upheld. Prior to data collection, the researcher completed Lynn University's Institutional Review Board Protecting Human Subjects training and certification. This training equipped the researcher with a deep understanding of ethical research practices and ensures participants' well-being. Approval from the IRB of Lynn University was received thereby certifying the safety of the human subject design. A copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix C.

Participants received a duplicate of the consent letter they signed, reaffirming their agreement to voluntarily participate and the right to withdraw from the study at any point without obligation or penalty. The confidentiality of all collected data was upheld as a paramount principle. To this end, a data protection protocol was implemented: all data, including transcriptions and records, were securely stored on a password-protected external drive. This secure storage will be maintained for a duration of 3 years post the interviews and survey. During the interview phase, participants remained confidential. During the survey phase, participants remained anonymous.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the researcher holds a professional role within the school where the research took place. In recognition of this potential bias, a comprehensive strategy was adopted to uphold objectivity and validity. This included the transparent sharing of interview transcripts and themes with the participants themselves. This practice fostered a collaborative approach, allowing participants to confirm the accuracy and authenticity of the shared information. Moreover, participants were invited to partake in a survey aimed at ranking the identified themes. By incorporating participant input, the study ensured a well-rounded and reliable perspective on research findings. Additionally, after each interview a journal was kept, capturing immediate reflections and insights that emerged throughout the interview process. This practice of documenting personal thoughts allowed the researcher to acknowledge any potential impact these interactions may have on the researcher's perspectives.

Risks & Benefits

One minor conceivable risk to participants was that teachers may feel expressing negative thoughts about the process may impact their relationship with the researcher. In

an effort to prevent teachers from not feeling comfortable sharing honest feedback, the researcher met the participant at a mutually agreed-on place. Additionally, the researcher reinforced that participation in this study was voluntary and its purpose was to gather information to improve the intervention process and will not impact the relationship between the researcher and participant. The researcher kept a journal following each interview to prevent bias or negative feelings towards the participants.

The participants did not derive direct benefits from their involvement in the study; nevertheless, they might have found satisfaction in contributing towards the development of an early literacy intervention process.

How Data Was Secured

The data was secured on a password-protected external hard drive during the interview and survey process and will continue to be stored for 3 years following interviews and survey. After 3 years the data will be destroyed.

Anonymity & Confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality all participants' names were coded with numbers. This approach guaranteed confidentiality while fostering an environment of openness during data collection. Consent, transcription, and audio-tape data was stored on the researcher's password-protected external hard drive, which will then be destroyed after 3 years. The participants completed the survey anonymously. There was no mention of student or parent names, and all identifiers were redacted. Participants were identified by numbers.

Quality of Data

To ensure qualitative validity the researcher used member checking to verify the accuracy of the qualitative findings. This "does not mean taking back the raw transcripts

to check for accuracy, the researcher takes back parts of the polished or semi-polished product, such as the major findings, themes" (Creswell, & Creswell, 2018, p. 274). All participants received a copy of the themes found during the interview process. To further ensure validity the participants took a survey, ranking the themes in order from the most important to the least important. This safeguarded any bias the researcher had towards determining the most important themes. Furthermore, the researcher provided many perspectives about a theme using "rich, thick description to convey the finding" (Creswell, & Creswell, 2018, p. 274). Moreover, it was important for the researcher to state possible biases they may bring to the study. Since this is "backyard" research, the researcher self-reflected to create an open and honest narrative (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 275). It was also important to use qualitative reliability where the researcher documented as many of the steps of the procedure as possible. This was achieved through creating a detailed protocol that is easy for others to follow. Some examples include checking transcripts and comparing the data with the codes.

Data Analysis

Phase 1

During phase 1 of the study, the qualitative data gathered from interviews was transcribed using Otter.ai and was subjected to thematic analysis. Interviews were transcribed into text-based documents after each occurrence. Through careful coding by hand, common patterns and themes emerged. To enhance validity, participant checking was conducted, wherein the findings were shared with participants for their input.

Phase 2

During phase 2, the survey ranking results were quantitatively analyzed, offering an additional layer of validation. The survey data rank order results were quantified based on the responses from the participants. The highest scores were applied to the highest rankings and the lowest scores went to the lowest rankings and so on. The data scores were aggregated through summation, resulting in a final cumulative list of rankings from most important to least important, which was presented. This revealed what was collectively viewed as the most important and less important themes.

The phase 1 and phase 2 results were then triangulated to the results the interviews yielded which were then used to confirm and reinforce findings or identify discrepancies. For example, during many of the interviews, participants mentioned that teachers were either prohibited from using the program or encountered resistance from the preschool director. It was expected that the theme most commonly mentioned/identified would also be scored as the most important thereby supporting the results. However, there were some surprising findings. A theme that was mentioned less than administrative support was perceived by the sample as being very important.

Delimitations

This research effort did not yield results capable of directly conveying how effective the process was on student growth or the closing of the achievement gap utilizing student data. Though that research and analysis pertaining to the process's effectiveness and student performance certainly represents a fruitful avenue for future research, it was beyond the scope of the current project.

Limitations

Some relational bias could have influenced responses given the school where the process was being implemented. To ensure this bias did not interfere, the researcher recorded the interview protocol and incorporated a survey after conducting interviews. The survey allowed participants to rank the themes in order from the most important to the least important as opposed to interpreting which may be the most important themes.

Teachers may not have fully shared how they feel since the researcher is a co-teacher and lead teacher in one of the preschool classrooms. To help teachers feel at ease while sharing their thoughts the researcher had the participants choose a location to meet where they are comfortable speaking freely. Additionally, the researcher shared the purpose of the study and followed the interview protocol to prevent any participants from feeling uncomfortable to openly express their thoughts.

There was a limited sample of teachers and parents to conduct the interview with. There were only 14 possible teacher participants and one preschool director and one school counselor participant. The number of parent participants was determined by how many students took part in the process; there were a total of eight possible participants. There were few student participants in the early intervention process therefore there were not enough parents to ensure statistical significance.

Lastly, not all teachers had a direct relationship with a student who participated in the early literacy intervention process. All teachers received professional development on the implementation of the process but did not experience the implementation firsthand because the students they worked with would not benefit from the process. Their answers

may have been influenced by other teachers who were directly impacted by the implementation of the process.

Summary

Chapter III focused on the methodology and the implementation of the "Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative." The research study used a two-phase action research method utilizing interviews for phase 1 and a survey ranking the themes in phase 2. Interviews established important themes to successfully implement an early literacy intervention process at a small Montessori preschool located in South Florida. "Backyard" research was conducted using preschool teachers, the preschool director, school counselor and parents (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 275). There can be some bias when using "Backyard" research which was addressed in Chapter III (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 275). All participants remained confidential during the interview and anonymous when completing the survey. This research focused on only the implementation of the process and did not explore its effectiveness. Chapter IV will provide the results of the interviews and survey.

Chapter IV: Results

Introduction

In the dynamic domain of education, it is imperative to continually reassess our methods to ensure they cater to the diverse needs of our students, particularly as the population of learners with disabilities continues to grow (Cook & Roa, 2018). Despite this surge in students with learning disabilities across both public and private educational institutions it is evident that private schools often do not adhere to the same standards in providing specialized services (Kennedy, 2019; National Center for Education Statistics, 2024). This research aimed to address this gap by examining the experiences of parents and educators following the introduction of a new early reading intervention program at a small Montessori private school in South Florida.

This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How do participants perceive the various components of the early literacy intervention process, "Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative"?

RQ2: What are the effective components of an academic early intervention process for implementation at a private Montessori preschool?

Phase 1 of the study involved conducting one-on-one interviews and employing coded identification of participants' themes to ascertain crucial insights into the implementation of an early reading intervention program in a small private Montessori preschool located in South Florida. Through this qualitative exploration, the aim was to discern the key considerations and challenges faced by educators and administrators in integrating such programs effectively. Subsequently, in phase 2, a survey was administered to further explain and rank the identified themes in order of importance,

thus providing a comprehensive understanding of the overarching priorities in program implementation.

As noted by Alamri (2019) interviews serve as a powerful tool for delving into specific topics or issues, offering nuanced perspectives and invaluable insights. In line with this understanding, this study engaged preschool teachers and administration personnel at the Montessori private school in South Florida, allowing them the opportunity to share their perspectives and contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding early reading intervention programs.

Through this multifaceted approach encompassing qualitative interviews, quantitative surveys, and triangulation of data, this study sought to enhance our understanding of the critical factors influencing the successful implementation of early reading interventions in private school settings. By shedding light on the experiences and perspectives of key stakeholders, this study sought to inform future initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes for all students, including those with learning disabilities.

Summary of Methodology

After obtaining approval from the IRB committee, contact was initiated with participants via email, extending invitations to preschool teachers, the preschool director, the school counselor, and parents of students enrolled in the program (Appendix B). Informed consent was facilitated through a SurveyMonkey link embedded at the bottom of the email. The initial email was dispersed on April 7, 2024, with a follow-up reminder sent on April 21 to encourage survey completion (Appendix C). The invitation to participate included informed consent (Appendix D). As participants completed the

informed consent form the researcher contacted them to schedule a convenient time and location to meet for one-on-one interviews. On May 27, 2024, an invitation to participate in phase 2 of the research study was sent to all participants from the interviews. This email included a copy of the original informed consent and a link to SurveyMonkey to access the survey (Appendix D). A reminder email was unnecessary as all participants completed the survey within 2 weeks. In June, after receiving an email from two parents expressing interest in participating in the study after the data collection phase had closed, the researcher scheduled their interviews and added their data to the initial set.

Among the educators, 12 participants consented to participate out of 16. Among the parents, 7 parents agreed to participate out of 8. Five parents participated in the data collection phase, which took place during the initial data collection period. Additionally, in June, a husband and wife who were invited during the initial data collection expressed their interest in joining the study.

To maintain participant confidentiality no identifying information was collected, stored, or utilized. The researcher conducted an analysis of the educator survey data, examining the frequency of rankings for each theme to identify the most commonly prioritized themes. Aggregated scores were then employed to rank the themes in descending order of perceived importance, as indicated by participant responses.

Additionally, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were scrutinized and compared against their theme rankings to identify potential correlations. For instance, the analysis explored whether newer teachers ranked certain themes as more significant compared to their more experienced counterparts.

Similarly, the parent survey data underwent analysis, with a focus on the frequency of theme rankings to ascertain the most prevalent priorities among participants. Utilizing aggregated scores, themes were subsequently ranked from highest to lowest importance based on parental responses.

Overview of the Interview Process

Interviews were conducted with seven parents and 12 teachers, focusing on their experiences, observations, and feedback regarding the intervention process. These interviews were primarily conducted on the campus of the Montessori preschool located in South Florida while a couple opted to meet via Zoom. Following each interview, the researcher journaled to mitigate any potential bias. As Dodgson (2019) emphasized, reflexivity is essential in qualitative research, as it enhances the credibility and reliability of the findings by making the researcher's role and potential biases explicit.

At the beginning of each interview, consent was reviewed and confirmed that the participant could stop the interview at any time. Both the use of a phone and the recording option on the researcher's computer were used to record the interviews. The interviews were guided by the questions listed in Appendix G, with follow-up questions posed as necessary. The participants shared their observations and experiences with the early intervention process, appearing eager to provide insights and feedback. In one instance, a participant became uncomfortable answering some questions and was reminded that their responses would be kept confidential.

Before concluding each interview, participants were asked if there was anything else they would like to share about the process. Participants were thanked and the next

steps were reviewed, which included transcribing the interviews, sending them to the participant for member-checking, and subsequently conducting a follow-up survey.

After each interview concluded, it was transcribed using Otter.ai. Each transcript was then reviewed and edited to ensure accuracy. Once all interviews were transcribed, the researcher read through each one, coding it to generate themes. The results of this study were presented in a collection of themes that emerged from interviews. These findings were discussed in the Summary of Results section below.

Participant Data

Phase 1 Interviews Educators

A total of 12 educators participated in the study following the initial outreach to 16 individuals via email using convenient purposeful sampling. All participants were female. Among them, three (25%) teachers have taught for 1-5 years, five teachers (42%) have taught for 6-10 years, one teacher (8%) has taught for 15-20 years, and three teachers (25%) have taught for more than 24 years. This information is summarized in Table 2.

Table 3 illustrates the educational background of the teachers interviewed and their role in relation to the support process. One teacher (8%) holds a Master's in Early Childhood Education, 5 teachers (42%) hold a Bachelor's of Art or Science in Early Childhood Education, 2 teachers (17%) hold certifications in Montessori or a Child Development Associate (CDA) without a degree, 1 teacher (8%) holds a Bachelor's of Arts in History, 1 teacher (8%) holds an Associate in Arts degree, 1 teacher (8%) holds a Bachelor's of Art in Advertising and Marketing with a minor in Entrepreneurship, and 1 school counselor (8%) holds a Master's in School Counseling.

Parent Interviews

All but one participant were females. Among them, 2 parents (29%) had children who were 4 years of age while 5 parents (71%) had children who were 5 years old. None of the participants had children who were 3 years old, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Age of Students Who Participated in the Program

Source: Data Analyst https://chatgpt.com/share/9e87bd93-5260-475c-a28f-081956951246
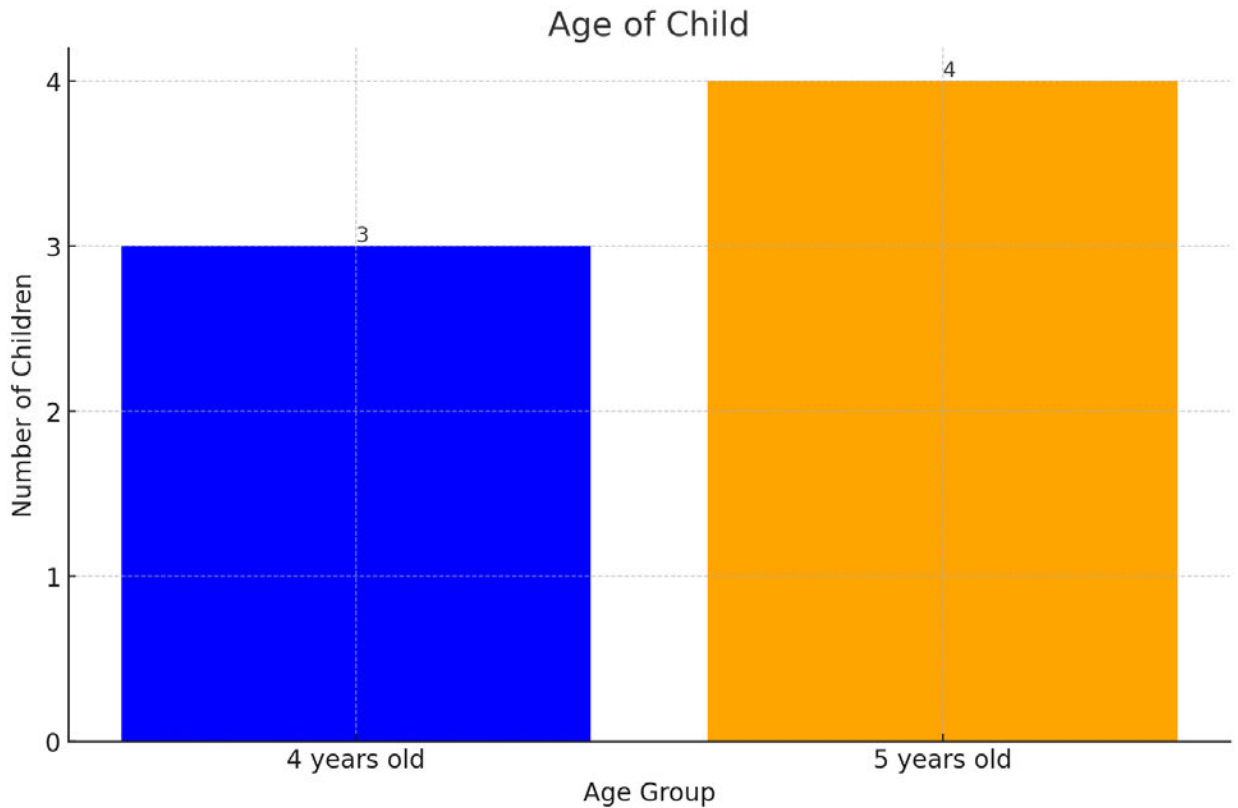
Additionally, the duration of each child's participation in the program was recorded. Three children (50%) participated all 8 weeks, while 3 children (50%) participated for 6 weeks. The children who participated for 6 weeks were exited early due to mastering their goal. The students who exited the program early successfully mastered their initial goal of identifying all 26 letter sounds. Through the multi-faceted

intervention, they also learned to identify the beginning, middle, and end sounds of words, encode consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words, and began to fluently decode CVC words. The expectation is that students are beginning to read by the end of their second year of preschool, which these students were in the initial phase of accomplishing. All 3 students who were exited early were fluently reading simple CVC books by the end of their second year in preschool. It is important to note that students typically spend 2 years in preschool because they began the class when they were 3 years of age. This information is summarized in Table 4.

The final participant data included information on the number of years each child had attended school, encompassing both daycare and preschool. Two participants (29%) reported that their child had attended school for 2 years. Another two participants (29%) indicated their child had attended school for 3 years. Three participants (43%) stated their child had attended school for 4 years. This distribution is illustrated in Figure 3.

The interview data were manually coded to identify emerging themes. Following an initial reading of all interviews, each interview was read three additional times. During these readings, the researcher color-coded responses for each interview question to facilitate analysis. Upon completing the coding, themes were generated, and significant quotes from the transcripts were applied to these themes. Qualitative research enables the inclusion of multiple voices from participants, gathering diverse perspectives and developing multiple themes. (Creswell & Báez, 2020). These direct quotes ensure that the participants' voices are heard (Creswell & Báez, 2020).

Figure 3

Number of Years Child Attended School

Number of Years Child Attended School

Source: Data Analyst https://chatgpt.com/share/9e87bd93-5260-475c-a28f-081956951246
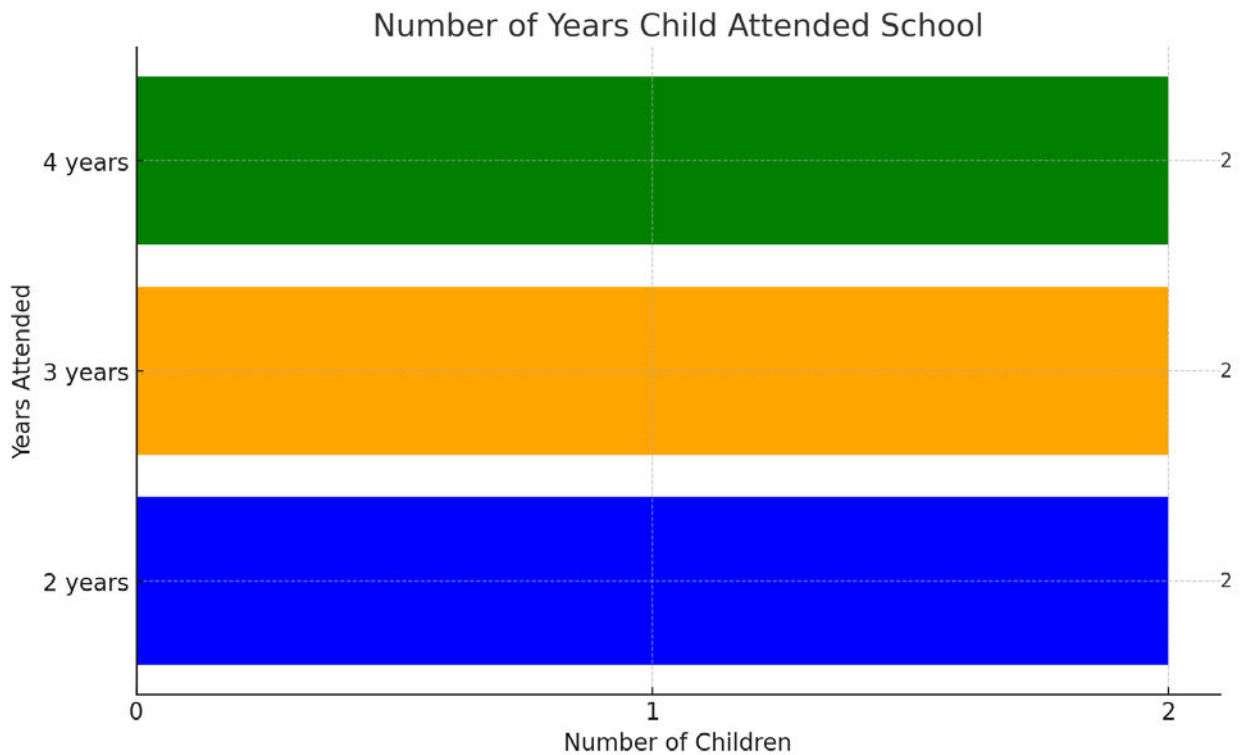
Educator Interview Data Analysis

Participants who participated in the interview included teachers who taught students aged 3-5, some of whom may have had students who participated in the intervention process. All teachers had received professional development related to the process. Additionally, one participant was the school counselor, who took part in student support meetings to help determine the appropriate support actions for students.

Interview questions 1 and 2 gathered demographic information and details about the participants' role within the early intervention process. This information was presented earlier in Tables 1 and 2.

Educator Interview Analysis

Educator Interview Question 4 Analysis

Participants were asked, "How do you envision the process helping the students?" The responses highlighted three main themes: early intervention (timing of program), general benefit, and skill improvement. All 12 participants expressed that they see the process benefiting students, with many emphasizing the importance of early intervention.

The themes extracted from these responses indicate a consensus among educators about the positive impact of an early intervention process. The dominant theme of early intervention reflects the educators' belief in addressing students' needs promptly to prevent long-term issues. One participant stated,

> I think earlier we start targeting what the needs are for specific students earlier we
> can start working on that and it's going to be helping them to succeed and with
> their self-esteem instead of just like going to other classes and growing with a
> problem.

Another mentioned, "Because early intervention is key. I mean, if the earlier we can identify them, the less the gaps they have, and then the quicker it is to fill in the easier."

The general benefit theme encompasses the overall positive influence of the process on students' learning experiences and personal growth. As one educator noted, "I think it's gonna prepare them for kindergarten and give them the competence they need to start reading. And be proud of themselves because you know, you don't know what's going on. You're not sure and nervous." Another participant highlighted,

> I think it's a great process. And I think if we started from day one, it's going to be
> really, really, really be implemented and like it's going to help the kids all

fantastic. Incredibly, it's already helped one of our students like soar from the beginning of the year for now.

Lastly, the skill improvement theme highlights how the process helps enhance specific academic and social skills, contributing to the students' readiness for future educational challenges. One participant observed,

I definitely have seen a change I think simply having more practice. And then the more of a one-on-one interaction with you and understanding the importance of what they're learning has helped them even simply as much as the confidence piece.

Another noted, "I think their behavior will change towards the better once we target it and see or at least help them. If the teacher learns how to cope with those behaviors, and the child will benefit."

These responses collectively illustrate that early intervention is seen as a key factor in student success, providing general benefits across various aspects of learning and personal development, and significantly improving specific skills that prepare students for future academic challenges.

Educator Interview Question 5 Analysis

The responses to the question, "As the process was implemented, what were some of the challenges or obstacles that arose? How were these challenges addressed, and what lessons were learned?" revealed significant insights into the challenges faced during the intervention process. Two primary themes emerged: Administrative Support and Availability of Intervention Specialists. These themes can be seen in Table 6.

Many participants highlighted the lack of support from the administration as a significant obstacle. For instance, one participant expressed frustration by stating,

Not as much as I'd hoped for. It was there, it was definitely there. And I don't know if it's just my class being the younger side, or it being such a new program or maybe you know, not everyone being on the same page, but not as much as I'd hoped for. When I asked questions to certain people, it was kind of like, hitting a brick wall sometimes, and my only outlet was to come to you really. So not as much as I hoped for.

Another participant mentioned, "Yes, because I couldn't do the paperwork. I was told by administration to do it on a different document then I wasn't allowed to refer the student." Another participant mentioned, "I was told a lot of the time from administration. It didn't it wasn't for my kids. I couldn't implement it because I was told it didn't correlate to the kids." This sentiment highlights the critical need for consistent administrative support to ensure the effective implementation of the intervention process.

The availability and accessibility of intervention specialists were also noted as a challenge. One participant pointed out the scheduling and time commitment issues, stating, "I think the only challenge could potentially be scheduling and simply your time commitment. I mean, there are a lot of students who need this program." Another participant highlighted the lack of follow-up and support from the administration, stating,

I try to talk to these parents without the support of the administration, it was a little bit on my own but because there was no follow-up there was not support. It was okay, let's see what we do and nothing happened.

Educator Interview Question 6 Analysis

Question 6 asked participants, "In your opinion, what forms of support or resources are necessary for the successful implementation of the early reading intervention process?" The responses highlighted three key themes: Communication, Administrative Support, and the need for Professional Development. Most participants stressed the importance of effective communication among the entire team implementing the early intervention process. These themes can be seen in Table 7.

As a follow-up question, participants were asked if they felt supported when implementing the process. Many participants said that they did not feel adequately supported. One participant emphasized,

> It is a very, very important program…we should be able to go straight to the person who is the mediator of this program without having to go through other lines of communication who do not allow us to use the program.

This statement underscores the frustration caused by bureaucratic barriers and the need for direct access to key program coordinators.

Another participant felt there was "not as much as I'd hoped for…When I asked questions to certain people it was kind of like hitting a brick wall sometimes." This sentiment was echoed by another participant who specified that it was the preschool director who did not support her in using the program. The lack of support from the administration created significant obstacles for teachers trying to implement the intervention.

Moreover, a participant highlighted the necessity for unified administrative support, stating, "Administration needs to be on the same page and give that support and

give that go ahead for us teachers to refer to actually go ahead and do that process."

These responses collectively highlight the critical role of administrative support in the successful implementation of an early intervention process. Effective communication, professional development, and cohesive administrative backing are essential to ensure the intervention's success and to empower teachers in their efforts to support students' early reading development.

Educator Interview Question 7 Analysis

The responses to the question, "How has the process been received by students and their parents? Are there any noteworthy successes or positive outcomes you would like to highlight?" revealed a generally positive reception of the intervention process by both students and parents. Three main themes emerged: Increased Confidence, Communication, and Parental Support. These themes can be seen in Table 8.

Several participants noted significant improvements in student confidence and eagerness to learn. One participant mentioned,

> I think child 1 is coming back with so much more confidence. He struggles a little bit with I think, his emotions and really telling me what his problems are. And I think that he's coming back more competent and able to tell me those things.

Another participant shared,

> My two parents were absolutely so happy, like please anything we could do. This is awesome. They were so happy that it was once a day or you know, the whole week, and the price they were, my two parents are very happy, satisfied.

This sentiment was echoed by another teacher who observed,

I think they're extremely happy. And I've heard a few parents make comments that you know, this has seen a big change in their child. I see children in here, more eager to learn and read and having that boost of confidence. So yes, I definitely have seen this being beneficial for all of these students.

The importance of effective communication between educators and parents was another prominent theme. One participant stated, "Great, actually. So, in the beginning, that first meeting was very awkward. But they were extremely happy and still to this day, they think that it's helped with the behavior at home and at school." Another participant highlighted the variability in parental reception, stating, "I think it's mixed probably. And I think that's also understandable because you're, you're telling parents something that they don't understand, and I always feel like, parents have to take that information and then process it."

Overall, the responses suggest that the intervention process was well-received, with noticeable improvements in student confidence and positive feedback from parents. The key to success appears to lie in effective communication and consistent support, which helped foster a positive environment for both students and parents. Addressing any gaps in these areas could further enhance the outcomes of the intervention process.

Educator Interview Question 8 Analysis

Question 8 asked participants "Have there been any unexpected or unique outcomes from the implementation of the process you would like to share?" This question resulted in two themes, Administrative Support and Student Growth. Themes and transcript evidence can be seen in Table 9.

Administrative support emerged as a crucial factor influencing the effectiveness of the intervention process. Several participants highlighted challenges related to inadequate administrative backing, which impeded their ability to fully implement the process. For instance, one participant noted, "No, we were not able to use the process," indicating a clear lack of support. Another expressed optimism for future success with improved support, stating, "We have the support we need…I think for next year it's going to be amazing because I'll have the support that I need and somebody's actually understanding that there's something going on so."

The theme of growth was evident in the positive outcomes observed despite some implementation challenges. Participants reported significant progress and improvement in student confidence and academic performance. One participant shared, "not unexpected. I think in a good way. Yeah. But with the progress that he's making specifically, it took me forever to get any progress out of him and being with you, I think you really changed that." This sentiment was echoed by another who noted, "Not unique but the process worked, my students gained confidence and are excelling in class."

Educator Interview Question 9 Analysis

When asked "In your experience, what areas might require further improvement or refinement in the process?" two themes emerged, the need for Resource Expansion and Administrative Support. Administrative support emerged as a critical factor for improving the intervention process. Several participants highlighted the need for consistent and structured administrative backing to enhance the process's effectiveness. One participant emphasized the need for the program coordinator to provide feedback,

stating. "Just having the person in charge come in and interview with the child…so we can get some feedback from the program coordinator."

Resource expansion was also prominent, with participants emphasizing the necessity for additional resources to support the intervention process effectively. Participants pointed out the need for more groups and people involved in the support process, indicating that current resources are insufficient. One noted, "Probably expanding…more people involved in the support group and more groups of kids." Another participant echoed the need for external specialists, "Having an outside reading specialist coming in the same way we have a speech therapist and occupational therapist."

Educator Interview Question 10 Analysis

Participants were asked, "Was the time allotted for the intervention appropriate? If not, what should it be?" The responses were classified under the theme of Duration and Timing of the Intervention (see Table 11). Most educators agreed that the timing and duration of the intervention were appropriate. However, one participant expressed that extending the sessions beyond a 10-minute timeframe could enhance learning, suggesting, "sessions should extend beyond a 10-minute time frame and incorporate two sessions a day to reinforce learning."

To clarify the duration, a follow-up question was added due to a misunderstanding about the session length; the program actually consisted of 25-minute sessions each day, not 10. When queried about this adjustment, the participant responded, "I mean, that's hard to say because based on support group what they feel is best that works since I'm not in and I couldn't say but so far it seems to be working."

Additionally, participants found the timing of the sessions to be convenient, with one educator stating, "I think it's good. It's a good time for them that time of day."

These insights underscore the educators' recognition of the current scheduling as effective while also suggesting potential adjustments to further optimize the intervention's impact.

Educator Interview Question 11 Analysis

Participants were asked "How do you envision the process evolving in the future?" Based on participants responses three themes emerged: Resource Expansion, Administrative Support, and Early Intervention. Participants emphasized the need for additional support personnel, such as behavior therapists, reading specialists, and occupational therapists, to assist with the intervention process. For example, one participant mentioned, "Adding additional support people such as a behavior therapist." There is a call for expanding the number of groups and sessions to accommodate more students. One participant noted, "Like, it's gonna be I feel like you're gonna have a lot of kids. I think you're gonna have multiple groups." Participants appreciated the flexibility in group sizes, allowing for both small and large groups to benefit from the intervention. One stated, "I like that you're giving everyone an opportunity to do it. You're able to kind of be flexible with that."

Additionally, administrative support is imperative when starting the intervention process early. One participant said, "I think this would be like the prime time to do it." The expectation that the process will expand and improve with supportive administration was evident. For instance, "I see with new administration the process will expand because we will be supported."

The participants' responses reflected a strong consensus on the importance and benefits of early intervention in the educational process. Early intervention was frequently highlighted as a key theme, with educators consistently expressing the need to identify and address students' needs as early as possible to prevent long-term academic and behavioral issues.

Many participants emphasized that early intervention is crucial for students' success. One teacher stated, "It's a great process. If started from day one, it will significantly help kids; it has already helped one student turn around." This sentiment was echoed by another participant who noted, "Starting earlier and targeting specific needs will help students succeed and boost their self-esteem." One educator emphasized,

> I think it would be so great because both behavioral and academic. Like I said, we are able to kind of see where students may need that extra help or guidance or support. And I don't see anything wrong in starting it early. I think the earlier the better and they could just need it for a small amount of time then they catch up and that's it and then they're smooth rolling instead of missing it missing it missing it and you know, then there all of a sudden, so behind that time to catch up. So, I think this would be like the prime time to do it.

This response underscores the belief that addressing students' needs early can prevent them from falling behind and ensure smoother academic progression.

> Another participant mentioned the positive impact of early steps and stated,
> Well, that the little ones participate in the process. In the program, we all know about early steps and it's something free so why are we gonna wait after 3, if

early steps is before 3 that means that they believe in super early intervention, so

why don't they believe in that?

This highlighted the consensus on the value of early intervention and the necessity of implementing it at the earliest possible stage to enhance student outcomes.

The participant interviews suggested a strong consensus among educators on the importance of early intervention. The earlier the intervention is implemented, the better the outcomes for students, allowing them to catch up quickly and avoid prolonged academic struggles. Comprehensive support from the school is crucial for the successful implementation of early intervention programs.

Educator Interview Question 12 Analysis

Participants were asked about the effectiveness and adequacy of the training provided for the early intervention process (timing of the intervention), as well as the need for ongoing professional development. The responses highlight two primary themes: the Adequacy of the initial training and the necessity for ongoing Professional Development.

Overall, educators expressed satisfaction with the initial training, noting that it was clear and comprehensive. Several participants emphasized that the instructions were well-documented and easy to follow. For example, one participant stated, "It was all written down very well. Like everything was written perfectly. If I had any questions, I knew I could look back into the document that you sent, and it was all laid out very well." This sentiment reflects the general appreciation for the thoroughness of the initial training materials.

However, there were instances where participants missed the initial professional development session but still felt adequately supported through subsequent explanations and materials provided by the mediator. For instance, one educator noted,

> I unfortunately missed the whole professional development, but you were able to come in and you kind of came in on your own and told me all about it and explained it in depth and gave me all the pamphlets.

Despite the positive feedback on the initial training, a significant number of educators highlighted the need for ongoing professional development to enhance their understanding and implementation of the process. One teacher mentioned,

> Yeah you know what like to be updated because I know information is constantly being found. And maybe everyone talking together with some other teachers can hear from the other teachers like oh if they're seeing that action item to kind of like a communal professional development where we are both listening, and you know giving and receiving.

Some educators expressed the need for further clarification and expansion on specific aspects of the process, such as differentiating between behavioral, academic, and occupational therapy needs. A participant stated, "I do just like kind of like I guess like kind of deciphering like between like what what's an OT and like what's the like behavior or what's the academic and like what is like things like that?"

Participants noted challenges in implementing the process without ongoing support, particularly in dealing with administration and the referral process. One educator highlighted this by saying, "It was fully explained by the mediator, but it was once I wanted to implement it. That's when I got kind of like a lot of backlash from it."

The desire for a communal approach to professional development was evident, with educators suggesting that shared experiences and discussions could enhance their practice. As one teacher put it,

> Maybe everyone talking together some other teachers can hear from the other teachers like oh if they're seeing that action item to kind of like a communal professional development where we are both listening and you know giving and receiving.

The analysis of responses regarding training and professional development reveals a clear need for ongoing support to ensure the successful implementation of the early intervention process. While the initial training was generally well-received and deemed adequate, educators expressed a strong desire for continuous learning opportunities to stay updated, clarification of specific aspects of the process, for implementation challenges to be addressed, and to foster a collaborative learning environment. This highlights the importance of sustained professional development in maintaining and enhancing the effectiveness of early intervention programs. As Guskey (2021) highlighted, ongoing professional development is critical for educators to adapt to new information and continuously improve their teaching practices.

Educator Interview Question 13 Analysis

To conclude the interviews, participants were asked if there was anything else they would like to share about the program. The responses were overwhelmingly positive, highlighting a strong endorsement and appreciation for the program's impact. The theme identified is Positive Reaction to Support Process.

The educators expressed gratitude and satisfaction with the program, emphasizing its significance and the benefits it brought to the students. One participant remarked, "I think it is great what you're doing, I think at school you really need it, I think that it's important to have that one on one with them. I think you're doing great; I love it." This sentiment was echoed by another who stated, "No, I think you're going to do this next year. Right. So no, I think that will be great."

The positive outcomes were also highlighted, with one educator noting, "No, I think it's really helpful. I have two kids in the class that I did with one we're still working on the other one really, really, really helped. So, no I'm just glad that you were able to school something that we've been struggling with for years." Another participant simply said, "No, I thought it was great," while others conveyed their approval with concise affirmations such as "No, good job."

These responses underscore the educators' strong support and recognition of the program's value, indicating that the intervention is well-received and appreciated within the school community.

Educator Interview Emerging Themes

Based on coding the interviews, 10 themes emerged, as shown in Table 12. After analyzing these themes to identify those that led to the successful implementation of an early intervention process, five key themes were identified:

1. Professional Development Training on the Process (Initial and Ongoing): Emphasizing the need for both initial and ongoing training for teachers to ensure they are well-prepared to implement the intervention effectively.

2. Administrative Support Implementing the Process (Administration Allowing Utilization of the Program): Highlighting the critical role of consistent and supportive administration in the successful implementation of the intervention.

3. Parental Support of the Process: The importance of engaging and communicating with parents to gain their support and involvement in the intervention process.

4. Clear Communication and Collaboration Among All Parties Involved (Teachers, Parents, Intervention Specialists): Effective communication and collaboration among all stakeholders to ensure a cohesive approach to the intervention.

5. Timing of the Program (Beginning the Program at the Start of the School Year, Early Intervention): The importance of starting the intervention early and at the beginning of the school year to maximize its effectiveness.

These themes were crucial for the effective implementation of the early intervention process. Additionally, other themes emerged that, while important, were not directly related to the effective implementation of the early intervention process:

1. Resource Expansion: Noted as significant but focused on areas outside the reading intervention process, such as behavior, academics, and speech. While expanding the program to be more comprehensive is necessary, the purpose of this study was to focus solely on the reading aspect of the early intervention process.

2. Positive Student Outcomes: This encompasses several sub-themes, including student growth, increased confidence, general benefits, and skill improvement. These themes collectively highlight the beneficial effects of the early intervention process on students, indicating various ways in which the students' development

and performance were enhanced through the intervention. While these results are important, the purpose of this study was to focus on the successful implementation of the process, rather than exploring the outcomes in response to the implementation.

Parent Interview Analysis

As with the educator interviews the parent interviews were manually coded to identify themes. Following an initial reading of all the interviews, three additional readings of each interview were conducted. For each interview question, the researcher color coded response to facilitate analysis. Once coding was completed, themes were generated, and the researcher applied significant quotes from the transcript to these themes.

Parents interviewed were those whose children participated in the process. Questions one through three captured demographic information as shown in previous tables and figures. Question one asked if the participant had any questions regarding the consent form. Question two asked how old the participants child is which is shown in Figure 1. The third demographic question asked how many years the child has attended school which is shown in Figure 2.

Parent Interview Question 4 Analysis

Participants were asked, "What was your initial reaction when you learned about the early intervention process?" The responses indicate an overwhelmingly positive reception among parents, with various nuances reflecting their thoughts and feelings. The theme derived from the responses is Initial Positive Reaction (see Table 13).

Most parents expressed excitement and positivity upon learning about the early intervention process. One parent mentioned feeling "excited but also nervous" about their child being behind and expressed relief that "there was a solution to help" their child. Another parent reflected an enthusiastic acceptance of the program, thinking it would be "great for my child" and expressing happiness to participate.

Parents appreciated the reassurance provided by the program, which alleviated their concerns about their child's academic standing. One parent shared that they initially thought their child might be behind but were assured that it was more of "an extra opportunity" and not because their child was falling behind,

> Yes absolutely. I even thought about it afterwards. Like, oh my gosh, is my child behind? Is that why he's been asked to participate in this program? But I was assured that it was more of an extra opportunity for him and not because he's falling behind but just because the school knew how much I cared about him. I care about his education and making sure that he was ready for kindergarten, and so I felt like it was approached in a very professional way.

One parent expressed feeling "really excited" because they recognized their child was not at the same level as their older sibling. Additionally, parents acknowledged the necessity of additional support for their children. One parent was glad that there would be "some service or program" available for their child. Another participant wanted their child to have an opportunity to catch up or receive individualized attention that "kind of fits more to her learning needs, so that she doesn't feel inadequate...I think they should do it for every grade."

The initial reactions to the early intervention process were predominantly positive, with parents expressing excitement, relief, and appreciation for the professional and supportive approach of the program. This positive reception sets a strong foundation for collaborative engagement between parents and educators in supporting the students' educational development.

Parent Interview Question 5 Analysis

Participants were asked, "How did you feel about your child participating in the program?" The responses reflected a positive reaction, highlighting various benefits of the program. The themes identified were Positive Reactions and Benefits of the Program (see Table 14).

Several parents expressed relief and gratitude, emphasizing the program's role in preparing their children for kindergarten and enhancing their confidence and engagement in reading activities. One parent mentioned, "I mean I was glad she was doing it. It took away some of the fear of her not being behind for kindergarten." This sentiment was echoed by another parent who felt, "It was really positive. He took to the program really well. It seemed to suit him, and he was achieving quite quickly."

The theme of positive reaction and observed improvements was also evident, as one parent stated, "I was grateful that she could have a process to participate in." Another parent appreciated the support provided by the program due to their limited time at home, stating, "I wanted him to do it because I don't have a lot of time at home." Another parent was happy that their child was getting the help that they needed and that they "were building the foundation so that she could learn the next things that come after building that foundation."

Excitement and immediate positive results were highlighted by one parent who noted, "I was just really proud and happy that we chose a school for our son that offers something like this because we feel like today it's so rare to find that in a school where people are willing to do the extra help and it seems like more and more you have to go out and find additional help."

An aspect that was not directly addressed in the interviews but emerged during the final interview was the child's perspective and their initial response to starting the program. Many parents mentioned that their child enjoyed attending the group and showed increased confidence. However, they did not explain how the program was introduced to their child. This is important because the child's engagement is crucial for success. One parent shared,

> I loved how it was presented to the child. Instead of saying, 'you have trouble with this, so we're going to talk,' it was framed as, 'Hey, you're special. You get to be part of this reading group, and it's going to be so fun.' It was like a reward and an exciting adventure, which I thought was pretty cool.

This reflects a common thread among the responses where parents observed significant improvements in their children's reading abilities and confidence, contributing to an overall positive experience with the program. A parent noted "it was like a relief to me" that their daughter had the opportunity to improve their confidence. Overall, the analysis reveals that parents felt positive about their child's participation in the program, appreciating the preparation for kindergarten, the child's improved confidence and reading skills, and the immediate positive impact observed at home.

Parent Interview Question 6 Analysis

Participants were asked to describe any changes they observed in their child since starting the reading support program. The responses highlighted significant improvements in various areas, particularly in confidence, willingness to engage with reading activities, and overall reading abilities (see Table 15).

Several parents noted a marked increase in their child's confidence and willingness to engage with reading activities. One parent shared, "At first, she found it a chore because she was frustrated with not knowing the letters. But once she started, her confidence grew, and now she enjoys picking out letters and trying to read." This shift from frustration to enthusiasm was echoed by another parent who observed that their child's self-confidence rose as they were able to achieve reading tasks: "I noticed that his self-confidence, also, you know, rose with that. Like the being able to achieve things and know that he could read and do these, all these amazing things that helped in other areas as well."

Parents also reported noticeable improvements in their children's reading skills, including letter identification and phonemic awareness. One parent mentioned,

> You know, not only like just learning her, identifying the letters, but she really is able to tell me the sounds that they make at the beginning of words and now you know, I'm noticing that she's able to identify at the end of words too.

This improvement in reading skills was also highlighted by another parent who noted their child's newfound ability to identify letters and words in various environments: "He began identifying letters and words in the community and at home. He became more willing and excited to learn."

The positive impact of the program extended beyond just reading skills. One parent expressed their excitement about the immediate results they saw in their child: "I was so excited and immediately saw results. It was like he had the ability in him all along, and it just needed to be pulled out. I couldn't have been happier." Furthermore, a parent observed that their child shifted focus from always getting the right answer to mastering the skill and began to "understand the reasoning behind everything." The parent shared, "I loved hearing her say, 'I've almost mastered this.'" This sentiment of satisfaction and happiness was shared by others who observed significant positive changes in their children's attitudes towards reading and learning.

The program fostered a love for learning and reading in children, boosted their confidence, and significantly improved their reading skills, leaving parents extremely satisfied with the outcomes.

Parent Interview Question 7Analysis

Participants were asked, "Were you satisfied with the support provided to your child during the process?" The responses uniformly expressed a high level of satisfaction with the support provided. This unanimous approval is encapsulated in the derived theme of Satisfaction with Support (see Table 16).

Parents consistently responded affirmatively, with simple yet powerful confirmations of their satisfaction. Responses included an unequivocal "Yes" from multiple participants, reinforcing the consistency in the positive reception of the support their children received.

One parent emphatically stated, "Ya, I thought it was fabulous." Another parent responded with, "1000% yes," indicating an extraordinary level of satisfaction and appreciation for the support provided.

The unanimous positive feedback illustrated that the support provided during the process was highly effective and well-received by the parents. This theme of satisfaction underscored the program's success in meeting the needs of the children and meeting parental expectations, thereby affirming the program's value and impact.

Parent Interview Question 8 Analysis

Participants were asked "Was the time allotted for the intervention appropriate? If not, what should it be?" Parents were satisfied with the time allotted for the intervention. Several parents appreciated that the sessions took place during nap time, which was convenient for children who did not nap and avoided disrupting the family's schedule. One parent stated,

> I was glad it was during nap time since she doesn't like to nap. It was perfect because I didn't have to take time away to pick her up early. The 6 weeks made a huge impact on her progress.

Another parent echoed this sentiment, noting the program's duration was appropriate for achieving progress: "Child 1 did really, really well. So, it suited him great. He graduated early, which was great. The time was enough for progress, not too short or too long."

The intervention's duration and scheduling seemed to strike a balance, ensuring it was not too burdensome for the children. As one parent remarked, "The 25 minutes was perfect. He never complained or said he didn't want to go, unlike other programs that were too long."

Overall, the feedback indicates that the timing and length of the intervention sessions were well-received, contributing to the children's positive experiences and progress (see Table 17).

Parent Interview Question 9 Analysis

Participants were asked for suggestions on ways to improve the Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative. The responses reflected themes of the Time Offered for the program and Communication Enhancements (see Table 18).

Several parents suggested that offering the program earlier in the school year could be beneficial. One parent noted, "I almost wish it would have been offered earlier... he could have benefited from this earlier in the school year." They also suggested expanding the program to include other areas such as math and numbers. Another parent mentioned the idea of making the program an option for students transitioning to kindergarten early in their preschool year, stating, "Maybe have it as an option for the students that are going to go into kindergarten next year?"

Communication was another critical theme. One parent highlighted the benefit of having a relationship with the program coordinator, which allowed them to receive ongoing feedback. They noted, "If I were maybe a parent that didn't have an ongoing and existing relationship with you, I would want maybe a report, a written report at the end of the week." This suggestion indicated the importance of maintaining clear and regular communication with parents about their child's progress.

Overall, the feedback was positive, with most parents not suggesting significant changes but appreciating the impact of the program. One parent remarked, "Um, I don't think so? I don't think so. Maybe it's probably just me afterwards, right, I would have

liked to receive ideas or work that I could use to continue practicing at home after the program ended." Another parent expressed their satisfaction with the support provided: "I was getting my feedback and I was very satisfied with that." The combination of timely intervention and effective communication was seen as crucial to the program's success.

Parent Interview Question 10 Analysis

Participants were asked, "Are there certain elements of the process you feel should remain as they are?" The responses revealed three key themes: Program Expansion, Communication, and Benefits of the Program.

Some parents expressed interest in expanding the program to include other areas or next steps. One parent suggested,

> No umm, it was just for like the letters and the alphabet and all that. Is there, are there more, um, other areas that you could do a program with that as well or like the next steps if it's down the road, that there's something like this, ya?

This indicates a desire for similar interventions in other academic or developmental areas.

Effective communication was highlighted as a crucial element of the program. One parent noted,

> Just the communication. I just really love the progression of like starting with making sure he knew all the sounds of all the letters and then the progress progression into putting those sounds together into the words it was it was a nice progression. I didn't feel like it was too slow. I didn't feel like it was too fast. It was just perfect.

Another parent emphasized the importance of making the experience special and engaging for the children:

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I mean, I didn't like see it in action. Yeah, one on one so had to say. I mean, I

think it was a great idea of taking kids out during naptime because the kids

probably are not napping anyways so that was great and make them feel a bit

special. You might have said we're going on this special mission and whatever

and made it very fun so whatever you did was great.

These testimonials underscore the pivotal role of communication and engagement in

fostering a successful learning experience.

Parents overwhelmingly praised the positive impacts of the program on their

children. One parent shared, "Ya, I mean the whole the whole thing. It was great. I don't

exactly know what went down in the room but I think the outcome was wonderful. I think

I would even want her to keep going." The reward system also received positive

feedback: "I think what I mean, the reward system was really cool for him because he

would tell me like, you know, little reinforcements he got and things he was going to get.

So that seems to work." Parents were satisfied with the existing elements of the program,

particularly the communication and the positive outcomes for their children. There is also

a noted interest in expanding the program to address other areas of learning and

development (see Table 19).

Parent Interview Question 11 Analysis

Participants were asked "How would you rate the communication between the

school and parents regarding the process?" The overall theme derived from the responses

to this question is Effective Communication. Most parents rated the communication

between the school and parents highly, expressing satisfaction with the updates and

feedback they received.

One parent stated, "It was great, you told me what to work on at home. You explained, high rating." Another echoed this sentiment, saying, "It was good." These responses highlight that the parents felt informed and supported by the school.

However, one parent suggested a slight improvement:

I think it was good. I think something I would have liked, I guess more of would be like to know what actually were you doing to teach her so that maybe I could try to replicate some of it at home. Otherwise, yeah, great. I mean, I think that I got great feedback on how she was progressing. You know, and which letters like we're getting stuck on.

This indicated that while communication was generally effective, providing more detailed insights into the teaching methods could further enhance parent involvement at home.

Another parent was highly appreciative of the communication efforts:

Incredible. I am so happy with the communication, the email communication even just the text updates and just it's like yes, no, I have never questioned or wondered what's been going on. I felt like I was completely in the know every step of the way.

This highlights the effectiveness of various communication channels used by the school.

As a follow-up question, participants were asked whether communication should be directed to both parents or just the parent who primarily interacts with the school. Parents agreed that communication should include both parents but also be flexible to accommodate different family dynamics. One parent suggested,

No, it would be good for both? Or even like, maybe even asking because I know

every family is different and we both work so sometimes I miss stuff and he

misses stuff. So, we try to work together on everything related to the kids. I mean,

I could have easily told him stuff, but I didn't.

This highlights the importance of considering both parents' involvement and the need for

flexibility in communication. Another parent emphasized the role of fathers: "Yeah, I

mean the dad needs to and they need some autonomy over the process as well, it can't all

just be on the moms, but I mean they're usually the ones to remember everything but ya."

This response underscores the importance of engaging both parents in the communication

process.

However, one parent recognized the practical challenges:

That's a hard one because I think you know as a whole yeah, like, you know, you

never know the dynamic of a family but I think 99.9% of the time, you're gonna

know who the parent is that you need to talk to and it would be not a greatest use

of your time and or the family's time to have to like, you know, funnel it to the

correct person, if that makes sense.

This suggests that while inclusivity is important, the primary communication should be

directed to the parent most involved in the child's school matters.

Parents expressed satisfaction with the current communication practices,

suggesting slight improvements for more detailed insights and inclusive communication

approaches to involve both parents effectively.

Parent Interview Question 12 Analysis

Participants were asked if they felt the process benefited their child and their family. All participants confirmed that the process indeed benefited their child and family, revealing a strong theme of Benefits of Program. Responses included emphatic affirmations such as "Yes," "Absolutely," and "Yeah, absolutely. Child 1 has come leaps and bounds." Another parent echoed, "Absolutely," emphasizing the widespread positive impact observed by the participants.

As a follow-up, participants were asked if they would recommend the process to families that might benefit from it. Again, parents overwhelmingly acknowledged that they would recommend the process to other families. One parent stated, "100%," while another said, "Yeah, absolutely. She changed dramatically after doing the program. She wants to do things at home, even by herself where she didn't use to want to." Other participants reinforced this sentiment with responses like "Absolutely, one hundred percent," "Ya, all of them," and "Yeah, I would and I have." Another parent reiterated the sentiment with a straightforward "100%."

These responses collectively highlight the perceived effectiveness and value of the program, both in terms of direct benefits to the children and the willingness of parents to advocate for the program to others.

Parent Interview Question 13 Analysis

Participants were asked if there were any challenges or obstacles their child faced while participating in the process. The responses revealed the theme of Challenges, with most parents reporting minimal to no significant issues. One parent mentioned, "She has a tick that bothers her, making her feel insecure sometimes. That might have affected her

during the process." Another parent highlighted that it depended on their child's mood, saying, "Not directly, I mean, just in general. It depends on his mood; he can be kind of stubborn about participating." Other parents did not observe any challenges, with one stating, "No, not any," and another confirming, "Honestly, no, I can't think of anything at all." These quotes suggest that while there were some minor individual challenges, overall, the obstacles faced by children were not significant enough to hinder their participation in the process (see Table 20).

Parent Interview Question 14 Analysis

Parents were asked if there was anything else they would like to add about the early intervention process. The responses revealed a theme of Gratitude and Appreciation for the program's positive impact on their children. Many parents expressed their satisfaction with the program, highlighting the significant improvements they observed in their children's confidence and learning progress.

One parent stated, "Thank you so much for doing this program, we have seen such an improvement with our child." Another parent echoed this sentiment, saying, "This program was amazing and helped so much with his confidence." This reflects the appreciation parents felt for the benefits their children received.

Parents also noted their desire for the program to continue or to have started earlier in the school year. One parent mentioned,

> I think she could benefit from continuing it and I think the only reason we stopped was because we know she has next year. I honestly would keep her in it... I wish that we had started it at the beginning of the year.

This indicates a strong belief in the program's efficacy and a wish for its extended implementation.

Another parent expressed their gratitude by saying, "I'm just so grateful and thankful that you did this for us because he has made so much progress and I am so proud of him." This shows the deep appreciation parents have for the positive changes they have seen in their children due to the program. One of the most impactful quotes from a parent was, "This program can change a child's learning path and future."

The theme of benefits of the program was evident in the parents' responses, highlighting their satisfaction with the early intervention process and their desire for its continuation.

Parent Interviews Emerging Themes

During the parent interviews, 12 themes emerged. These themes were combined to form six broader categories: Initial Presentation of Program, Program Outcomes, Appropriate Time Allocation, Communication and Collaboration, Effective Communication and Collaboration Among All Parties, Program Expansion, and Challenges.

The theme of Program Outcomes, although valuable, will not be used in the survey. The focus of the survey themes is to identify effective aspects of the process, not the results of the program. Similarly, while expanding the program was an important theme, it did not focus on effectively implementing the early reading intervention process and thus fell outside the scope of this research. Finally, although challenges were noted, they were personal challenges that students overcame while in the program rather than challenges related to the implementation of the process itself.

The follow-up survey focused on themes related to the Initial Presentation of the program, Appropriate Time Allocation, and Effective Communication and Collaboration among all parties. The themes of Program Outcomes, Program Expansion, and Challenges were excluded from the survey as they did not directly address the implementation effectiveness of the early reading intervention process.

Phase 2 Survey

Educator Survey

In the educator survey, a total of 12 participants were included in the study after contacting 16 individuals via email. All participants were female. Among the 12 respondents, eight (67%) held certifications pertinent to teaching, while only two (17%) possessed an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) certification. Table 22 provided a breakdown of the various certifications held by the participants.

Table 23 illustrated the spectrum of experience levels within the sample, spanning from 1 year to 36 years of teaching. Of the participants three (25%) teachers have taught for 1-5 years, five (42%) have taught for 6-10 years, one (8%) has taught for 15-20 years, three (25%) have taught for more than 24 years.

Parent Survey

In the parent survey, seven participants were surveyed for this study after contacting eight individuals via email. All participants, with the exception of one, were females. The children who participated in the support program were between the ages of 4 and 5. Specifically, two (33%) participants were 4 years old, four (67%) were 5 years old. Figure 2 provided a detailed breakdown of the ages of the participants.

Educator Survey Analysis

The first question asked participants if they still consented to completing the survey, despite having already given initial consent prior to scheduling interviews for both the interview and the survey. The survey link included a copy of the previously sent consent form for reference. Questions two and three were demographic, asking how many years the participants had been teaching and what certifications they hold, as displayed in Tables 22 and 23. The survey aimed to rank identified themes from the interviews in order of importance.

Among the participants who provided rankings for the themes, six (50%) identified clear communication and collaboration as the most crucial component, while four (33%) selected support from administration, and one (9%) chose ongoing professional development. None (0%) identified parental support and timing of the program as the most crucial parts of implementing an early intervention program.

The second most important theme identified was administrative support, with five participants (42%) prioritizing it. Two participants (17%) selected parental support, clear communication and collaboration, and timing of the intervention. One participant (8%) chose professional development.

The third most important theme identified was parental involvement, with five participants (42%) selecting it. Two participants (17%) chose ongoing professional development, clear communication and collaboration, and timing of the program. One participant (8%) identified support from administration.

The fourth most important theme was timing of the program, with five participants (42%) choosing it. Four participants (33%) chose parental support, two

participants (17%) chose ongoing professional development, one participant (8%) chose clear communication and collaboration, and none (0%) chose administrative support.

Lastly, seven participants (58%) chose ongoing professional development as the least important part of implementing an early intervention process. Three participants (25%) chose timing, one participant (8%) chose administrative support and parental involvement, while none (0%) chose clear communication and collaboration.

Clear Communication and Collaboration Among All Parties Involved stands out with the highest number of participants (six) rating it as the most important theme (first rank). It also received moderate rankings in the second, third, and fourth positions, with no participants ranking it as the least important (fifth rank). This indicated a strong consensus on the critical importance of communication and collaboration in the intervention process.

Administrative Support Implementing the Process is another highly regarded theme, with four participants ranking it as the most important and six ranking it as the second most important. This theme has a small number of participants ranking it third and fifth, and none ranking it fourth, showing a significant emphasis on the necessity of administrative backing for successful implementation.

Parental Support of the Process has a more dispersed distribution, with no participants ranking it as the most important, but a considerable number (five) placing it in the third position. It also received rankings in the second, fourth, and fifth positions, reflecting moderate importance across different perspectives.

Professional Development and Training on the Process shows a contrasting pattern, with a majority of participants (seven) ranking it as the least important (fifth).

Only one participant ranked it as the most important, and the rest distributed across the third and fourth ranks. This suggests that while professional development is valued, it is considered less crucial compared to other themes.

Timing of the Program (beginning the program at the start of the school year) also has a varied distribution, with participants ranking it across all positions. Notably, four participants ranked it fourth and three ranked it fifth, indicating that while timing is important, it is not seen as a top priority compared to other themes.

In summary, Figure 4 reveals that Clear Communication and Collaboration and Administrative Support are perceived as the most important factors for the success of the intervention process. In contrast, Professional Development and Training is viewed as the least critical, with Parental Support and Timing of the Program receiving moderate importance. This insight can help prioritize focus areas for enhancing intervention strategies.

Parent Survey Analysis

Question one asked participants if they still consented to completing the survey, with initial consent having been given prior to scheduling interviews for both the interview and the survey. The survey link included a copy of the previously sent consent form for reference. Question two asked how old their child was during the intervention, as shown in Figure 2.

The parent interviews revealed three prominent themes: Clear Communication and Collaboration, Appropriate Time Allocation, and Initial Presentation of the Program. Figure 5 illustrates the ranking of these themes.

Figure 4

Theme Rankings in Order of Most Important to Least Important (Educator Survey)

Ranking of Themes by Educator Participants

A: Parental Support of the Process
B: Professional Development and Training on the process (initial and ongoing)
C: Timing of the Program (begin the program at the start of the school year)
D: Administrative Support Implementing the Process
E: Clear Communication and Collaboration Among All Parties Involved

Source: Data Analyst https://chatgpt.com/share/63aaea40-04dc-42f2-84dd-30f415a54cca
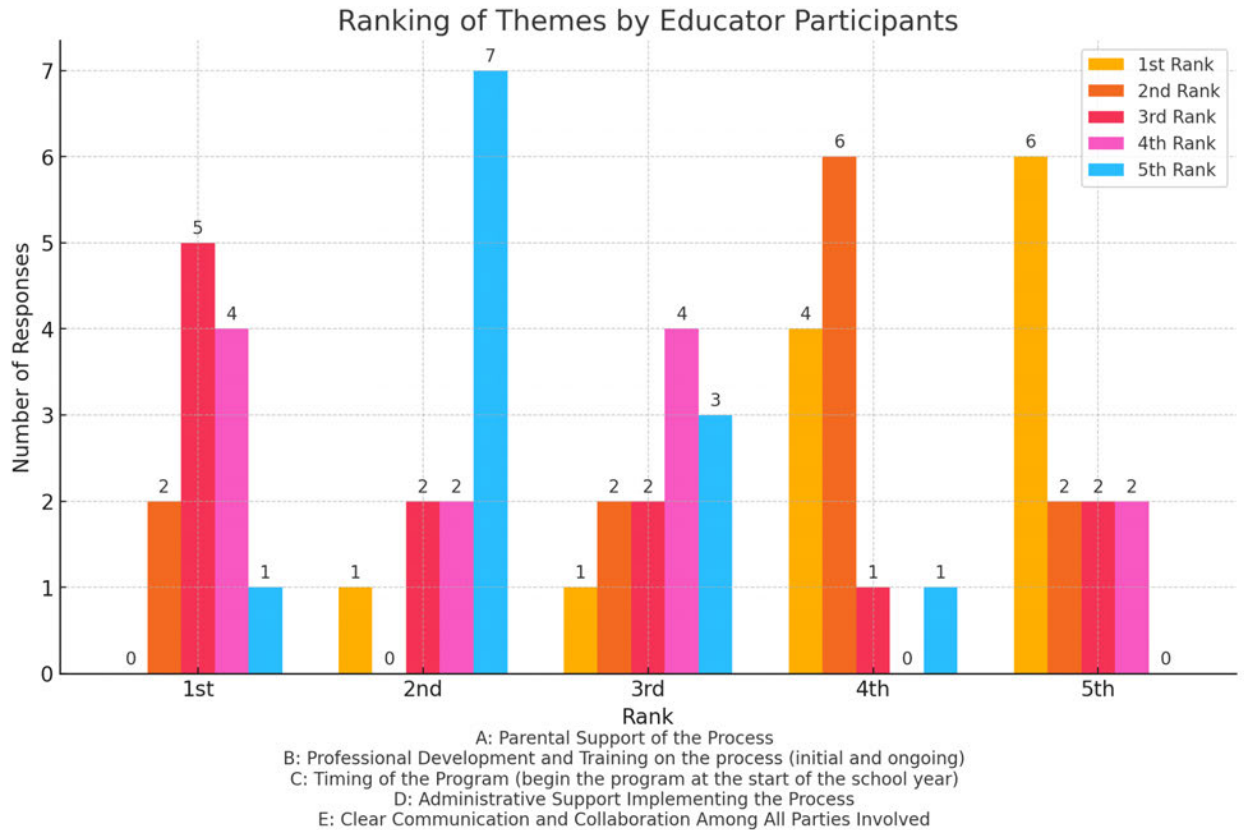
Among the participants who provided rankings for the themes, five (70%) identified clear communication and collaboration as the most crucial component, while one (14%) selected appropriate time allocation and initial presentation of the program. The second most important theme identified was appropriate time allocation, with five participants (70%) prioritizing it, while two participants (29%) selected clear communication and collaboration. No participants (0%) chose initial presentation of the program. Lastly, six participants (86%) found initial presentation of the program to be the least important when implementing an early intervention process, one participant (14%)

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Figure 5

Theme Rankings in Order of Most Important to Least Important (Parent Survey)

Ranking of Themes by Parent Participants

A: Clear Communication and Collaboration Among All Parties Involved
B: Appropriate Time Allocation (daily duration as well as total number of weeks)
C: Initial Presentation of the Program (clarity of initial information, given in a caring way)

Source: Data Analyst https://chatgpt.com/share/63aaea40-04dc-42f2-84dd-30f415a54cca
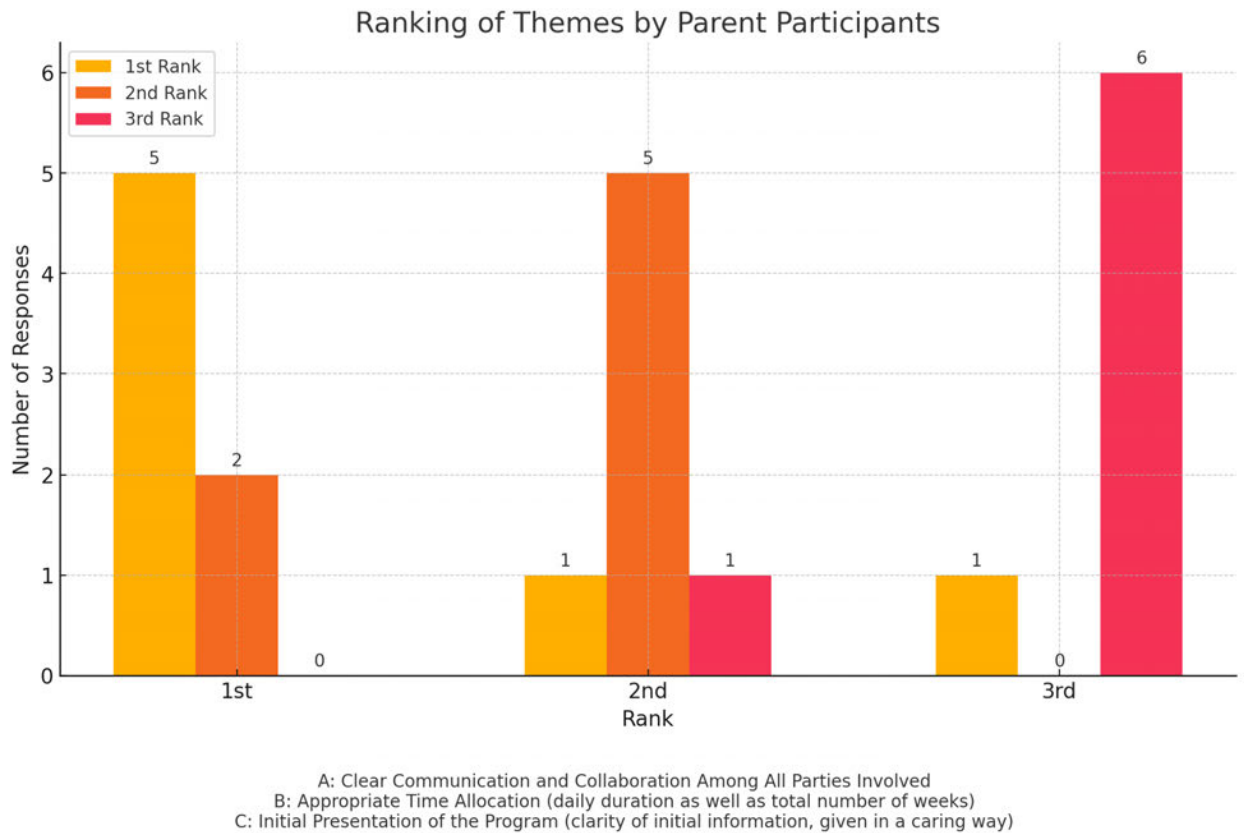
found appropriate time allocation to be least important, and no participants (0%)

identified clear communication and collaboration as the least important.

Clear Communication and Collaboration Among All Parties Involved was rated as

the most important by the majority, with three participants placing it in the first rank and

two participants in the second rank. None rated it as the least important.

Appropriate Time Allocation received a more balanced distribution, with one

participant ranking it as the most important, three as the second most important, and one

as the least important.

Initial Presentation of the Program was predominantly ranked as the least important, with four participants placing it in the third rank. Only one participant rated it as the most important, and none ranked it second.

In summary, the analysis reveals that Clear Communication and Collaboration is perceived as the most critical factor for the success of the intervention process. Appropriate Time Allocation is also important but shows a more varied ranking. Initial Presentation of the Program, while valued, is considered the least critical among the themes. This insight can help prioritize focus areas for enhancing intervention strategies.

Results for Research Question 1

RQ1: How do participants perceive the various components of the early literacy intervention process, Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative?

Participants' perceptions of the various components of the Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative can be categorized into several themes: clear communication and collaboration, appropriate time allocation, initial presentation of the program, challenges, obstacles, parental support and engagement, and professional development.

Clear communication and collaboration were repeatedly identified as crucial components of the intervention process. Six participants (50%) ranked it as the most important aspect. One participant highlighted the effectiveness of communication by stating, "It was great, you told me what to work on at home. You explained, high rating." Another parent emphasized the importance of communication, noting,

Incredible. I am so happy with the communication, the email communication even just the text updates and just it's like yes, no, I have never questioned or

wondered what's been going on. I felt like I was completely in the know every

step of the way.

This indicated a strong consensus on the critical role of effective communication in ensuring the success of the intervention process.

Appropriate time allocation was another significant theme. One participant mentioned the convenience of scheduling the intervention during nap time, saying,

I was glad it was during nap time since she doesn't like to nap. It was perfect

because I didn't have to take time away to pick her up early. The 6 weeks made a

huge impact on her progress.

Another parent expressed satisfaction with the duration, stating, "Child 1 did really, really well. So, it suited him great. He graduated early which was great. The time was enough for progress, not too short or too long." This feedback highlighted the importance of integrating the intervention into existing routines without causing disruptions.

The initial presentation of the program also played a role in shaping participants' perceptions. While it was not ranked as highly as the other themes, participants expressed appreciation for the way the program was introduced and the support it provided. One participant noted, "Thank you so much for doing this program, we have seen such an improvement with our child." Another participant echoed this sentiment, saying, "This program was amazing and helped so much with his confidence." The positive initial reactions were further emphasized by another parent who said,

Absolutely. I even thought about it afterwards. Like oh my gosh, is my child

behind? Is that why he's been asked to participate in this program? But I was

assured that it was more of like an extra opportunity for him and not because he's

falling behind but just because the school knew how much I cared about him. I care about his education and making sure that he was ready for kindergarten. This gratitude reflects a positive initial reaction and appreciation for the intervention's benefits. Another parent shared, "I was really excited because I know like compared to my oldest, he's not where she was at this age. So, I was like here for it."

Some challenges were noted, primarily related to administrative support and availability of intervention specialists. One participant expressed frustration with administrative obstacles, stating,

> Not as much as I'd hoped for. It was there; it was definitely there. And I don't know if it's just my class being the younger side or it being such a new program or maybe, you know, not everyone being on the same page but not as much as I'd hoped for. When I asked questions to certain people, it was kind of like hitting a brick wall sometimes. Despite these challenges, the overall perception of the program was positive.

Parental support and engagement were considered crucial but were not always perceived as the most critical component. However, the importance of parental involvement was acknowledged, with one participant stating, "The reward system was really cool for him because he would tell me like, you know, little reinforcements he got and things he was going to get. So that seems to work." Another parent highlighted the impact on home learning, noting, "Yeah, absolutely. She changed dramatically after doing the program. She wants to do things at home, even by herself where she didn't use to want to." This indicates that the intervention not only benefits the child during school hours but also fosters a positive attitude toward learning at home. Another participant expressed their

satisfaction, saying, "I'm just so grateful and thankful that you did this for us because he has made so much progress and I am so proud of him." This gratitude highlights the importance parents place on their child's educational progress and the role of the program in facilitating this.

Participants found that the professional development provided to introduce the early intervention process was thorough and comprehensive, resulting in no immediate need for follow-up questions. However, during interviews, the researcher discovered that while participants initially felt the professional development was comprehensive, some gaps in understanding persisted. These gaps included uncertainties about the process, their specific roles, and the proper steps to follow.

Although many participants did not initially see a need for further professional development, they later acknowledged the value of ongoing opportunities. They expressed a desire for additional sessions to further explore the process, understand its various aspects, and collaboratively problem-solve situations occurring in their classrooms. This highlighted the importance of continuous professional development to ensure educators are fully equipped to implement the intervention effectively.

Participants perceived the Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative positively, with a particular emphasis on clear communication and collaboration, appropriate time allocation, and the initial presentation of the program. Despite some challenges related to administrative support, the overall perception was that the program was beneficial and well-received by both parents and educators. These insights provided a comprehensive understanding of the key components valued by participants and can guide future improvements in early literacy intervention processes.

Results for Research Question 2

RQ2: What are the effective components of an academic early intervention

process for implementation at a private Montessori preschool?

The analysis of interviews and surveys with educators and parents revealed

several key components essential for the successful implementation of such a process.

These components included clear communication and collaboration, training on the

implementation process, administrative support, parental support and engagement, and

the timing of the program.

Clear communication and collaboration among educators, parents, and

intervention specialists emerged as a fundamental component of the early intervention

process. Participants consistently emphasized the importance of effective communication

to ensure that everyone involved understands their roles and responsibilities, which

ultimately contributes to providing consistent support to students. One parent highlighted

the effectiveness of communication, stating, "It was great you told me what to work on at

home. You explained high rating." Another parent reinforced this sentiment, saying,

> Incredible. I am so happy with the communication, the email communication,
>
> even just the text updates. I have never questioned or wondered what's been going
>
> on. I felt like I was completely in the know every step of the way.

Additionally, a teacher underscored the necessity of communication within the school,

noting, "Communication between teachers and the coordinator is crucial for feedback and

support. Teachers need immediate support to address student issues without delays."

The importance of both initial and ongoing professional development for teachers

was a recurring theme. Training equips teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge

to implement the intervention effectively. Ongoing training ensures that teachers remain updated with new insights and techniques, which enhances the intervention's effectiveness. One teacher appreciated the comprehensive documentation provided during training, stating, "It was all written down very well. Like everything was written perfectly. If I had any questions, I knew I could look back into the document that you sent, and it was all laid out very well." Another teacher, who missed the initial professional development session, felt adequately supported through subsequent explanations and materials, saying, "I unfortunately missed the whole professional development, but you were able to come in and explain it in depth and gave me all the pamphlets." The need for continuous learning was also emphasized, with one teacher suggesting, "Yeah, you know what, like to be updated because I know information is constantly being found. And maybe everyone talking together, some other teachers can hear from the other teachers."

Consistent and supportive administration was identified as critical for the success of the intervention. Administrative support includes providing the necessary resources, facilitating professional development, and ensuring that the intervention program is smoothly integrated into the school's existing framework. One teacher expressed frustration with the administrative obstacles encountered, stating,

> Not as much as I'd hoped for. It was there; it was definitely there. And I don't know if it's just my class being the younger side or it being such a new program or maybe, you know, not everyone being on the same page but not as much as I'd hoped for.

Another teacher highlighted the importance of unified administrative backing, noting, "Administration needs to be on the same page and give that support and give that go ahead for us teachers to refer to actually go ahead and do that process." The role of a proactive and supportive director was also mentioned, with a teacher stating, "A proactive and supportive director makes it easier to follow through with the process."

Engaging parents and ensuring their support is crucial for the success of an early intervention process. Parents play a key role in reinforcing the intervention at home and providing feedback. Effective communication with parents about their child's progress and how they can support the intervention at home was also highlighted. One parent expressed their appreciation for the school's efforts, saying,

I was just really proud and happy that we chose a school for our son that offers something like this because we feel like today it's so rare to find that in a school where people are willing to do the extra help.

Another parent observed significant positive changes in their child, stating, "Absolutely. She changed dramatically after doing the program. She wants to do things at home even by herself where she didn't use to want to." The overall sentiment of gratitude was summed up by another parent who said, "I'm just so grateful and thankful that you did this for us because he has made so much progress and I am so proud of him."

Implementing the intervention early in the school year and as soon as possible was seen as beneficial. Early intervention helps address issues before they become more significant, thus providing better outcomes for students. One teacher articulated this importance by saying, "I think the earlier we start targeting what the needs are for specific students, the earlier we can start working on that, and it's going to be helping

them to succeed and with their self-esteem." Another teacher emphasized the readiness for future academic challenges, stating, "I think it's gonna prepare them for kindergarten and give them the competence they need to start reading. And be proud of themselves because, you know, you don't know what's going on. You're not sure and nervous." The consensus among educators was clear, as one teacher pointed out, "Starting earlier and targeting specific needs will help students succeed and boost their self-esteem instead of just like going to other classes and growing with a problem."

From the analysis of interviews and surveys, it is evident that several key components are essential for the successful implementation of an early intervention process at a private Montessori preschool. These components include clear communication and collaboration, training on the implementation process, administrative support, parental support and engagement, and the timing of the program. These insights provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of early intervention processes, guiding future improvements to enhance educational outcomes for all students, including those with learning disabilities.

Summary of Results

This study aimed to identify how participants perceived the components of an early reading intervention process as well as the effective components at a private Montessori preschool. The research involved qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys with educators and parents to gather comprehensive insights into the implementation and impact of the intervention process.

The findings revealed several key components crucial for the successful implementation of an early intervention process:

1. Clear Communication and Collaboration: Both educators and parents emphasized the importance of effective communication. Clear and consistent communication ensures that all parties involved are well-informed and can work together cohesively. This component was highlighted as the most critical by the majority of participants, underscoring its fundamental role in the success of the intervention.

2. Training on the Implementation Process: Providing initial and ongoing professional development for educators was identified as essential. Training equips teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the intervention effectively. Continuous updates and communal professional development sessions were suggested to keep educators informed and adept.

3. Administrative Support: Consistent backing from the school administration was highlighted as crucial. Administrative support involves providing necessary resources, facilitating professional development, and ensuring smooth integration of the intervention into the school's existing framework.

4. Parental Support and Engagement: Actively involving parents in the process and maintaining effective communication with them was deemed vital. Parents play a key role in reinforcing the intervention at home and providing feedback, contributing significantly to the program's success.

5. Timing of the Program: Starting the intervention early in the school year and addressing issues promptly were seen as beneficial. Early intervention helps in tackling problems before they escalate, thereby enhancing students' outcomes and boosting their self-esteem.

The analysis of interview and survey data consistently pointed to these components as critical for effective implementation. The study underscored the importance of a collaborative approach involving educators, parents, and administrators, supported by ongoing training and clear communication channels. By prioritizing these components, Montessori preschools can enhance the efficacy of their early intervention programs, ultimately improving educational outcomes for all students, including those with learning disabilities.

Tables

Table 2

Number of Years Teaching

Years Teaching	Number of Participants	Percentage of Sample %
2.5	2	17%
5	1	8%
6	1	8%
8	2	17%
9	1	8%
10	1	8%
16	1	8%
25	1	8%
27	1	8%
36	1	8%

Table 3

Educational Background

Number of Participants	Percentage of Sample %	Educational Background	Role
1	8%	MA in Early Childhood Education	teacher
3	25%	BA in Early Childhood Education	teacher
2	17%	BS in Early Childhood Education	teacher
1	8%	AMS Montessori Certification	teacher
1	8%	Child Development Associate	teacher
1	8%	BA in History	teacher
1	8%	Associate of Arts	teacher
1	8%	BA in Advertising and Marketing/Minor in Entrepreneurship	teacher
1	8%	Masters in School Counseling	school counselor

Table 4

Number of Weeks in the Program

Number of Children	Percentage of Sample %	Number of Weeks Participated in the Program
3	50%	8
3	50%	6

Table 5

Analysis of Question Four Educator Interviews: Derived Themes and Transcript Evidence

Interview Question	Participant Response	Derived Theme #1	Derived Theme #2	Derived Theme #3
How do you envision the process helping the students?	• Yes, it will benefit students. • Absolutely. • Young students, especially those aged 2 1/2 to 3 and 1/2, could benefit a lot. • Behavior will improve with targeted help; if teachers learn to cope with behaviors, children will benefit. • Great process. If started from day one, it will significantly help kids; it has already helped one student turn around. • Will prepare them for kindergarten, giving them confidence to start reading and making them proud. • Provides more one-on-one time and personalized support. • Starting earlier and targeting specific needs will help students succeed and boost their self-esteem. • Seen a change with more practice and one-on-one interaction, increasing students' confidence. • Observing students and providing early intervention is important. • Early intervention is key; earlier identification leads	Early Intervention (timing of program)	General Benefit	Skill Improvement

to smaller gaps and
quicker, easier solutions.
- Everyone can benefit from
this process.

Table 6

Analysis of Question 5 Educator Interviews: Derived Themes and Transcript Evidence

Interview Question	Participant Response	Derived Theme #1	Derived Theme #2
As the process was implemented, what were some of the challenges or obstacles that arose? How were these challenges addressed, and what lessons were learned?	- Hesitant due to not understanding behavioral aspects, caused by administration. - Important program but not implemented as it should be. - Not as much support as hoped; felt like hitting a brick wall when asking questions. - Couldn't do the paperwork due to administrative issues. - Told by administration it wasn't for the kids; couldn't implement it. - No obstacles once paperwork and meeting were completed. - Director discouraged referring kids who needed help to avoid confrontation with parents. - No obstacles. - Scheduling and time commitment were challenges; many students need the program. - Tried to talk to parents without administrative support; no follow-up, nothing happened. - No obstacles, sometimes just parents not understanding. - The obstacle was the Preschool Director not allowing use of the program.	Administrative Support	Availability of intervention specialist (timing of program)

Table 7

Analysis of Question Six Educator Interviews: Derived Themes and Transcript Evidence

Interview Question	Participant Response	Derived Theme #1	Derived Theme #2	Derived Theme #3
In your opinion, what forms of support or resources are necessary for the successful implementation of the early reading intervention process?	• Communication between teachers and the coordinator is crucial for feedback and support. • Teachers need immediate support to address student issues without delays. • Hands-on support is necessary; administration must be aligned and supportive. • Ongoing professional development is needed to reinforce behaviors and interventions. • A proactive and supportive Director makes it easier to follow through with the process. • Support from lead teachers, department heads, the team, and parents is crucial. • Effective communication and support from the team are vital. • The disconnect between Montessori and traditional curriculums is challenging;	Communication	Administrative Support	Professional Development

	integrating concrete materials could help.
	• An evaluation by a professional specialist is needed to support teachers' observations.
	• Teachers need training in different strategies and additional tools, even in a Montessori setting.
	• More support from administration is needed to communicate with the intervention team and refer students effectively.
	• Open communication and support from administration

Table 8

Analysis of Question 7 Educator Interviews: Derived Themes and Transcript Evidence

Interview Question	Participant Response	Derived Theme #1	Derived Theme #2	Derived Theme #3
How has the process been received by students and their parents? Are there any noteworthy successes or positive outcomes you would like to highlight?	• Child 1 has gained confidence, better able to express emotions and problems. • It was planned but never implemented; parents were initially excited. • Parents were open to the process, but it didn't proceed due to administrative issues. • The director didn't allow me to implement it. • Initial meeting was awkward, but parents are now happy with improvements at home and school. • Two parents were thrilled with the process and its affordability. • Process was well received; parents value one-on-one support. • Mixed responses; one parent receptive, the other not. • Parents have noticed significant positive changes in their children. • Children return happy from sessions, showing excitement and positive impact.	Communication	Administrative Support	Increased Confidence

•	Mixed initial reactions; parents need time to process information, but overall, not negative.
•	Two students showed great improvement and increased confidence, making parents very happy.

Table 9

Analysis of Question 8 Educator Interviews: Derived Themes and Transcript Evidence

Interview Question	Participant Response	Derived Theme #1	Derived Theme #2
Have there been any unexpected or unique outcomes from the implementation of the process you would like to share?	• Progress was not unexpected, but the process made a significant difference in one child's progress. • We were not able to use the process. • I didn't get to do it fully. • With support, I think next year will be amazing as we'll have the needed understanding and backing. • It helped a lot, as expected, making it easier to help the kids through obstacles. • It worked tremendously for my two students. • One child is still struggling, likely due to a processing disorder, but the process helped identify this issue sooner. • No. • No, I don't think so. The integration of preschool and kindergarten curriculums was expected. • No. • Not that I can think of. • Not unique, but the process worked, my students gained confidence and are excelling in class.	Administrative Support	Student Growth

Table 10

Analysis of Question 9 Educator Interviews: Derived Themes and Transcript Evidence

Interview Question	Participant Response	Derived Theme #1	Derived Theme #2
In your experience, what areas might require further improvement or refinement in the process?	• You're doing a great job, no pointers needed. • Having the person in charge interview the child for feedback from the program coordinator. • Everything was clear, well-explained, and visually demonstrated. Nothing needed clarification. • Conscious Discipline class materials, like posters, would have been helpful. • Having a consistent behavior therapist and occupational therapist on site would be beneficial. • We should start assessing kids earlier in the school year. • More time for sessions, longer than 10 minutes, and possibly meeting twice a day. • No changes needed. • Starting the process earlier in the classroom would reduce the need for external resources later. • Intervening earlier in the school year gives more time to work with the kids and better supports them across home and school environments. • No changes needed. • Excited for the future with the new Director, as everyone will be able to use the process.	Resource Expansion	Administrative Support

Table 11

Analysis of Question 10 Educator Interviews: Derived Themes and Transcript Evidence

Interview Question	Participant Response	Derived Theme #1	Derived Theme #2	Derived Theme #3
How do you envision the process evolving in the future?	• Flexibility to pull both bigger and smaller groups. • Making the process attainable and moving forward when there's no response. • Starting early for both behavioral and academic support; the earlier, the better. • Kids will be helped, and teachers will be supported. • Adding support people like a behavior therapist. • Anticipate having multiple groups and many kids involved. • Expanding the support group with more people and groups. • Hiring specialized staff to handle the process instead of pulling teachers out of classrooms. • Having trusted professionals work with the students alongside teachers. • Bringing in outside specialists like reading, speech, and occupational therapists. • Early intervention with little ones is crucial; no need to wait until they are older. • More time and ability to work one-on-one or in small groups. • New administration will expand the process with better support.	Resource Expansion	Administrative Support	Early Intervention (timing of program)

Table 12

Themes Identified Educator Interviews

Theme Category	Interview Themes Identified	Survey Themes to be Used	Used in Survey
Professional Development	Initial Training, Ongoing Training	Training (initial and ongoing)	Yes
Administrative Support	Implementation Support, Program Utilization	Administrative Support	Yes
Parental Support	Engagement, Communication with Parent	Parental Support	Yes
Communication and Collaboration	Teacher Collaboration, Communication Channels	Communication and Collaboration	Yes
Timing of the Program	Start of the School Year, Early Intervention, Scheduling	Timing of the Program	Yes
Resource Expansion	Additional Resources Needed, Program Expansion	Resource Expansion	No
Positive Student Outcomes	Student Growth, Increased Confidence, General Benefit, Skill improvement	Positive Student Outcomes	No

Table 13

Analysis of Question 4 Parent Interviews: Derived Themes and Transcript Evidence

Interview Question	Participants Response	Derived Theme #1
What was your initial reaction when you learned about the early intervention process?"	- I was excited but also nervous about my daughter being behind. Glad there was a solution to help her. - Positive. Thought it would be great for my child and happy to participate. - Glad there was a program to help as much as possible. - Really excited because my child is not at the same level as my oldest. - Initially thought my child might be behind but was assured it was an extra opportunity, not because of falling behind. Appreciated the professional approach. - I thought the support was great. I liked the idea of Child 1 working one-on-one with a teacher, as it's hard for kids to focus at their age. This individual attention helped Child 1 stay focused and be engaged, which was very beneficial for her. - I was very happy to hear about the additional support beyond her regular schooling. If she's struggling, I want her to have the opportunity for one-on-one attention to meet her learning needs and not feel inadequate	Initial Positive Reaction

compared to other kids. I fully support it and think every grade should offer this kind of assistance for students who need extra help to comprehend and absorb information.

Table 14

Analysis of Question 5 Parent Interviews: Derived Themes and Transcript Evidence

Interview Question	Participant Response	Derived Theme #1	Derived Theme #2
How did you feel about your child participating in the program?	• Felt good about the participation and relieved that it would help prepare their child for kindergarten. Noted that smaller groups were beneficial. • Found the experience positive, noting that the child responded well to the program and their confidence increased. • Was grateful for the opportunity and observed significant improvements in their child's ability to identify letters and sounds. • Excited for their child to participate because they didn't have much time to help at home. Noted increased willingness in their child to engage with reading activities. • We were proud and happy to choose a school that offers extra help, as it's rare to find schools willing to provide this support nowadays. • I was very happy to know she was getting the help she needed to build a strong foundation for future learning. I was surprised she didn't have this foundation before, so it was a relief for her confidence, especially in her first year of school. I didn't want her to have negative feelings about school because she was struggling without the proper foundation. • I loved how it was presented to the child. Instead of focusing on her difficulties, it was framed as a special, fun adventure and an exciting journey, making it feel like a reward. I thought that was pretty cool."	Positive Reaction	Benefits of Program

Table 15

Analysis of Question 6 Parent Interviews: Derived Themes and Transcript Evidence

Interview Question	Participant Response	Derived Theme #1	Derived Theme #2
Can you describe any changes you observed in your child since they started the process?	• At first, she found it a chore because she was frustrated with not knowing the letters. But once she started, her confidence grew, and now she enjoys picking out letters and trying to read. • His self-confidence increased as he learned to read and achieve things, which helped in other areas too." • She not only learned to identify letters but also the sounds they make at the beginning and end of words. • He began identifying letters and words in the community and at home. He became more willing and excited to learn. • I was so excited and immediately saw results. It was like he had the ability in him all along, and it just needed to be pulled out. I couldn't have been happier. • She loves the program and felt special being part of the extra group. Her confidence improved significantly as she progressed, and now it's back to where it was before she started struggling. This summer, we've continued working on her writing and sound sheets, and she's now recognizing and spelling sight words and three-letter words. There's still more to work on, but we've seen great progress. • I enjoyed that she didn't worry about always getting the right answer but focused on trying her hardest every day. She was proud of her progress, saying, 'I've almost mastered it.' This understanding boosted her confidence, leading her to ask more questions and discuss these topics more with us. She	Enthusiasm for learning	Increased Confidence

	matured significantly in her grasp of the sounds and the purpose behind learning them.	

Table 16

Analysis of Question 7 Parent Interviews: Derived Themes and Transcript Evidence

Interview Question	Participant Response	Derived Theme #1
Were you satisfied with the support provided to your child during the process?	• "Yes." • "Yes." • "Ya I thought it was fabulous." • "Yes." • "1000% yes." • "Yes" • "Yes"	Satisfaction with Support

Table 17

Analysis of Question 8 Parent Interviews : Derived Themes and Transcript Evidence

Interview Question	Participant Response	Derived Theme #1
Was the time allotted for the intervention appropriate? If not, what should it be?	• I was glad it was during nap time since she doesn't like to nap. It was perfect because I didn't have to take time away to pick her up early. The 6 weeks made a huge impact on her progress. • It suited child 1 well, and he graduated early. The time was enough for progress, not too short or too long. • It was great and convenient during nap time since she doesn't nap. • I have no complaints. He never complained about it. • The 25 minutes was perfect. He never complained or said he didn't want to go, unlike other programs that were too long. • I feel 8 weeks is enough, but she could benefit from more. It would be great if it were available all year. • Yes	Time Allotted

Table 18

Analysis of Question 9 Parent Interviews: Derived Themes and Transcript Evidence

Interview Question	Participant Response	Derived Theme #1	Derived Theme #2
Do you have any suggestions on ways to improve Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative?	• I don't think so. Maybe I could have done more at home during the program, but overall, it was great. Options for things to do at home after the program. • Maybe offer it as an option for students going into kindergarten early in their preschool year. • No, I think having a relationship with you helped. If I were a parent without an ongoing relationship, I might want a written report at the end of each week for feedback. • I don't think so. I really don't know. • Maybe it could have been offered earlier. He doesn't nap, so he could have benefited from it earlier in the school year. Expanding it to other areas like math and numbers could also help. • Consistency is crucial for helping children grasp concepts at this age. I loved how the program was presented to the child as a special and fun adventure, making her feel excited and valued rather than focusing on her difficulties. • Providing lesson sheets to parents earlier could help reinforce learning at home, especially if the child wants to practice on weekends. My child often corrected me, saying, 'That's not how the interventionist does it,' and then explained the correct method. Including parents in the process and giving them materials to use at home could be an easy improvement.	Time Offered	Communication

Table 19

Analysis of Question 10 Parent Interviews: Derived Themes and Transcript Evidence

Interview Question	Participant Response	Derived Theme #1	Derived Theme #2	Derived Theme #3
Are there certain elements of the process you feel should remain as they are?	• No, but maybe consider adding programs for other areas or next steps in the future. • I didn't see it in action, but taking kids out during naptime was great, and it made them feel special. Whatever you did was great. • The whole thing was great. I don't know the exact details, but the outcome was wonderful. I'd want her to keep going. • The reward system was cool for him. He liked the reinforcements he got. • The communication and progression were perfect. The way it moved from learning sounds to forming words was great—neither too slow nor too fast, just perfect. • The communication and providing parents with resources • The consistency and how it is presented to the children	Program Expansion	Communication	Benefits of Program

Table 20

Analysis of Question Thirteen Parent Interviews: Derived Themes and Transcript Evidence

Interview Question	Participant Response	Derived Theme #1
Were there any challenges or obstacles your child faced while participating in the process?	• She has a tick that bothers her, making her feel insecure sometimes. That might have affected her during the process. • It depended on his mood; he can be stubborn about participating. • No, not any. • Not that I was aware of. • Honestly, no, I can't think of anything at all. • No • No	Challenges

Table 21

Themes Identified Parent Interviews

Theme Category	Interview Themes Identified	Survey Themes to be Used	Used in Survey
Reactions	Initial Positive Reaction, Positive Reaction, Satisfaction with Support, Appreciation, Gratitude	Initial Presentation of Program	Yes
Outcomes of Program	Benefits of Program, Enthusiasm for Learning, Increased Confidence	Program Outcomes	No
Time Allocation	Time Allotted, Time Offered	Appropriate Time Allocation	Yes
Communication	Communication	Effective Communication and Collaboration Among All Parties	Yes
Program Expansion	Program Expansion	Program Expansion	No
Challenges	Challenges	Challenges	No

Table 22

Certifications Held by Participants

Number of Participants with the Certification	Certification	Percentage of Sample %
Teacher Certification	2	17%
Bachelors in Education	4	33%
Masters in Education	1	8%
Montessori Certification	3	25%
Special Education Certification	2	17%
Directors Credential	2	17%
School Counseling	1	8%
Licensed Mental Health Therapist	1	8%
National Board Certified	1	8%
No certifications related to teaching	1	8%

Table 23

Number of Years Teaching

Years Teaching	Number of Participants	Percentage of Sample %
2.5	2	17%
5	1	8%
6	1	8%
8	2	17%
9	1	8%
10	1	8%
16	1	8%
25	1	8%
27	1	8%
36	1	8%

Chapter V: Discussion, Conclusions, & Recommendations

Introduction

In Chapter IV, the study's findings on the implementation of an early reading intervention program at a Montessori private school are presented. This research aimed to address the disparity in specialized services between private and public schools by examining the experiences of parents and educators with the implementation of a new early reading intervention process at a small Montessori private school in South Florida. Chapter V provides a detailed discussion of the findings, exploring their implications, significance, and broader relevance within the field of education. The study sought to address two key research questions:

RQ1: How do participants perceive the various components of the early literacy intervention process, Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative?

RQ2: What are the effective components of an academic early intervention process for implementation at a private Montessori preschool?

Summary of Results

The study employed a combination of qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys to capture detailed insights from both educators and parents involved in the program. This multifaceted approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the implementation process and identified key factors contributing to its effectiveness.

Findings from educator interviews and surveys highlighted the paramount importance of effective communication throughout the intervention process. Educators emphasized the need for clear and consistent communication to facilitate smooth implementation and address any challenges that may arise. Administrative support

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emerged as the second most critical theme, underlining the significance of equipping educators with the necessary skills and resources to execute the intervention effectively. Although parental support was considered important, it was ranked lower in priority compared to communication and administrative support. Parental support and the timing of the program were equally ranked fourth, while professional development was deemed the least important factor when implementing an early reading intervention process.

Parent perspectives echoed similar sentiments regarding the centrality of communication in the implementation process. Parents stressed the importance of being informed and involved at every stage, underscoring their role as key stakeholders in their children's education. Additionally, parents identified appropriate time allocation as essential, although it was slightly less prioritized than communication. The initial presentation of the program, while acknowledged, was perceived as less critical from the parental standpoint.

Discussion of Results

The findings from both educator interviews and surveys, as well as parent perspectives, offer valuable insights into the effective implementation of an early reading intervention program in a small private Montessori preschool located in South Florida.

Clear Communication and Collaboration

One of the overarching themes that emerged from both groups was the critical role of effective communication throughout the intervention process. Educators emphasized the need for clear and consistent communication channels to ensure the smooth implementation of the program. This includes not only disseminating information

about the intervention itself but also providing ongoing updates, addressing concerns, and soliciting feedback from all stakeholders. Maintaining open lines of communication fosters a collaborative environment conducive to successful intervention implementation. As one teacher noted during the interviews, "It would be nice to have communal professional development" which not only addresses the need for clear communication but also the professional development need. The participant felt that having this communal professional development would allow teachers to give and receive information regarding things they are seeing or struggling with in the classroom. Raguindin et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of constant collaboration and communication with fellow educators, which can lead to best practices.

From the parental perspective, it is evident that parents see themselves as integral partners in the intervention process. They emphasized the importance of being informed and involved at every stage, highlighting their role as key stakeholders in their children's education. This underscored the importance of building strong partnerships between educators and parents, wherein parents are actively engaged and empowered to support their child's learning both at school and at home. As noted by Paccaud et al. (2021), parents are important in the process of educating their children because schools are also accountable to the parents of the children that they are educating. By fostering a collaborative relationship with parents, schools can enhance the effectiveness of the intervention and promote positive educational outcomes for all students.

Administrative Support

Support from direct administration was acknowledged as important by educators, but it was perceived as less critical compared to communication and collaboration. A

study conducted by Acton (2020) found that principals who participated agreed that school leaders play a vital role in implementing school initiatives. However, principals noted that they receive very few professional development opportunities for effectively influencing change, which could explain why the administration was not able to effectively support this new initiative. This suggests that while administrative support is valuable, it may not be the primary determinant of intervention success. Instead, educators and parents prioritize factors that directly impact the day-to-day implementation of the intervention, such as effective communication.

Professional Development

Training on the implementation process emerged as another key component contributing to the effectiveness of the intervention. Educators highlighted the importance of being equipped with the necessary skills and resources to effectively deliver intervention to their students. This training should encompass not only the theoretical aspects of the intervention, but also practical strategies and techniques tailored to the unique needs of the students and the Montessori educational approach.

Incorporating collaboration during professional development is crucial. MacPhail et al. (2019) stated that collaboration enhances professional development, noting that "having access to a community of teacher educators was consistently reported as an effective and preferred means of experiencing professional development" (p. 853). By investing in professional development opportunities for educators, schools can ensure that they are well-prepared to implement the intervention with fidelity and efficacy.

Timing of the Program

The timing of the intervention emerged as a critical factor in the effectiveness of the early literacy intervention process for both parents and educators. Participants highlighted the importance of starting the program at the beginning of the school year to maximize its impact. One participant mentioned,

> I think the earlier the better and they could just need it for a small amount of time then they catch up and that's it and then they're smooth rolling instead of missing it missing it missing it and you know.

Another participant echoed the same feeling, "I definitely think the earlier, the better. The earlier we can identify them, the smaller the gaps they have, and the quicker it is to fill in the easier." McCarten et. al (2023) found that students who begin school without being ready to cope due to a lack of school-readiness may be severally disadvantaged, highlighting the importance of early intervention in preschool. McCarten et al. (2023) underscored the value of early intervention, allowing students to receive support when they first encounter challenges, thus preventing them from falling behind. Additionally, the duration of the intervention was deemed appropriate, with several participants noting that the 25-minute sessions were "perfect" and not overly burdensome for the children. For example, one parent stated, "He never ever once said, 'please don't make me go with the intervention specialist today or I just want to stay for rest time.'" This indicates that the intervention length was sufficient to foster noteworthy progress without causing fatigue or disengagement. In the study conducted by Wanzek et al. (2018), they found that the number of sessions of an intervention was more important than the total number of hours, yielding higher results.

Overall, the timing, both in terms of starting the intervention early in the school year and maintaining a balanced duration for each session, is crucial for the success of early literacy programs in a private Montessori preschool setting.

Parental Support/Initial Presentation of the Program

When implementing a new program at a private school, it is crucial to secure the support of the parents, as their involvement and approval can significantly influence the program's success. If parents do not agree to participate in the process their child will not receive the intervention. One key factor that affects parental support is the initial presentation of the early reading intervention process. From the gathered data, it is evident that parents' initial reactions play a pivotal role in shaping their perception and support of the program. Clear, enthusiastic communication about the program's objectives, methods, and anticipated outcomes helps in fostering a positive attitude among parents. For instance, parents who were well-informed and felt included in the process from the beginning reported a higher level of satisfaction and were more likely to support the program actively.

Furthermore, the data suggested that parents appreciated it when the intervention is presented as an additional opportunity for their child's growth rather than a remedial measure. One participant noted they were concerned at first but upon further reflection noted

> Like oh my gosh, is my child behind is that why he's been asked to participate in this program, but, but I was assured that it was more of like an extra opportunity for him and not because he's falling behind, but just because the school knew how much I cared about him.

This framing can alleviate concerns about their child being perceived as behind and instead position the program as a proactive step towards enhancing their child's educational experience.

For educators, having parental support is vital when implementing an early intervention process. Parental involvement not only reinforces the efforts made in the classroom but also extends learning opportunities into the home environment. When parents are engaged and supportive, they can provide additional practice, encouragement, and reinforcement of the skills being taught, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of the intervention. Through the use of effective communication and collaboration parents felt engaged in the process and observed their child wanting to show their newly learned skills off at home. As one parent said,

> At home he would start sounding out everything. So, you know, saying Mom, do you know how to spell cat? And then he would sound out the letters and or if I sounded them out, and I said c-a-t he would go Yeah, you did it like he started being like the teacher. And that's when it really hit me like oh my gosh, he is really enjoying this because he comes home and wants to repeat the things that he is learning at school.

Educators rely on parents to create a consistent and supportive learning environment. When parents are well-informed and actively participate in their child's education, they can help address any challenges or difficulties that may arise, providing a more holistic approach to intervention. This collaboration ensures that both educators and parents are working towards the same goals, making the intervention process more coherent and effective.

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Moreover, parental support can significantly boost a child's confidence and motivation. Children who see their parents valuing and supporting the program are more likely to engage with and benefit from the intervention. This positive reinforcement can lead to better outcomes and a more successful intervention process. Research has shown that parental involvement in early literacy activities at home, such as shared book readings, can significantly improve children's language and literacy development (Burgoyne et al., 2018). One parent noted, "She changed dramatically after doing the program. She wants to do things at home, even by herself where she didn't use to want to." This transformation highlights how parental encouragement can enhance a child's enthusiasm for learning, reinforcing the positive effects of the intervention and contributing to its overall success.

The success of an early reading intervention program in a private school setting depends significantly on gaining parental support through effective initial presentation and continuous, transparent communication. By involving parents from the start and maintaining their engagement, schools can ensure a more robust and supportive environment for implementing such educational initiatives. For educators, parental support is crucial in creating a consistent and effective learning experience that maximizes the benefits of early intervention for students.

The findings of this study highlighted the importance of effective communication and collaboration, training, appropriate amount of timing of the intervention, and parental involvement in the successful implementation of early reading intervention program in a small private Montessori preschool located in South Florida. By prioritizing these key factors, schools can create an environment conducive

to intervention success and ultimately improve educational outcomes for students with learning disabilities. Moving forward, it is essential for schools to continue investing in these areas and to tailor their approaches to meet the unique needs of their students and communities.

Implications for Practice

The discussion of the findings offered valuable insights into the effective implementation of early reading intervention programs in a small private Montessori preschool. The emphasis on communication underscores the need for transparent and collaborative efforts between educators, administrators, and parents (Rains, 2020). Schools should prioritize establishing clear and consistent communication channels to ensure all stakeholders are informed, involved, and engaged throughout the intervention process. Regular updates, feedback sessions, and collaborative meetings can foster a more supportive and cohesive environment (Polirstok, & Hogan, 2024). While communication among educators, the intervention specialist, and parents was found to be effective, communication with the administration needed improvement.

The significance of ongoing professional development opportunities for educators was highlighted in the study. Schools need to invest time in providing meaningful, continuous professional development opportunities where educators can hone their skills and understanding to meet the diverse needs of students. According to Pink (2010), it takes approximately 10,000 hours of practice to achieve mastery in a field. Consistent, focused practice is crucial for developing expertise and reaching high levels of proficiency (Polirstok, & Hogan, 2024). By offering ongoing professional

development, schools enable teachers to progressively reach a higher level of proficiency, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness in the classroom.

Parental support and involvement are crucial for the success of early reading interventions Çaliskan, & Ulas (2022). Schools must consider this and involve parents from the initial presentation of the program, ensuring they understand the objectives, methods, and anticipated outcomes. This can be achieved through clear and consistent communication and collaboration (Morales, 2020). The study highlighted the importance of how the intervention is presented, as it can be a sensitive subject for parents to learn that their child may be behind or struggling. If not presented in a professional yet caring manner, it can create animosity, leading to a breakdown in communication and collaboration (Penttinen, et. al., 2020).

The timing of interventions plays a critical role in their effectiveness. To avoid waiting for a child to fail, schools must implement processes that intervene early in the school year and early in the child's educational journey (Guralnick, 2019). Additionally, maintaining a balanced duration for each session, as highlighted by the positive feedback on 25-minute sessions, ensures that students receive sufficient support without feeling overwhelmed.

Implementation

Moving forward, the school must ensure that administrative support is prioritized, as it is essential for the successful implementation of early reading interventions (Taylor, 2005). School leaders need to provide the necessary resources, support, and training to educators, ensuring they can effectively implement the interventions. This study demonstrated that without administrative backing, the process

cannot be fully implemented. Several participants noted that although they were trained and ready to use the intervention, administrative barriers prevented them from doing so. A unified approach from the administration can help address any challenges and create a supportive environment for both educators and students.

While not directly related to the reading intervention process, expanding resources to include support for behavioral, academic, and speech needs can enhance the overall effectiveness of educational programs (Stodden et. al., 2023). Schools should consider integrating additional support services, such as behavioral therapists and occupational therapists, to provide a more comprehensive approach to student development. The study demonstrated that when students felt confident, they were able to excel. By providing additional resources for students who may have barriers preventing them from feeling confident in their abilities, schools can create a greater opportunity for student success.

Furthermore, speech can impact a child's ability to master phonemic awareness, which is crucial for reading development. Integrating speech therapy into the intervention process can address these issues, enabling students to develop the foundational skills necessary for reading proficiency (Becker & Sylvan, 2021). Providing a holistic support system that addresses behavioral, academic, and speech needs ensures that all aspects of a student's development are nurtured, leading to improved educational outcomes.

Additionally, creating an inclusive environment where all students have access to the resources they need fosters a supportive learning community. When students receive the necessary support to overcome their challenges, they are more likely to

participate actively and confidently in their education. This comprehensive approach not only benefits individual students but also enhances the overall learning environment, making it more conducive to success for all learners.

The early intervention program comprised several key steps designed to systematically support students' academic progress. Below is a detailed outline of these steps, including the support team involved and the necessary documentation for each stage. The documents referenced can be found in Appendix F.

1. Contact and Plan: The process begins with contacting parents to discuss their child's academic progress. During this initial contact, a plan is developed to help the student, and the monitoring process, which lasts 4-6 weeks, is explained. This step is crucial for setting clear expectations and ensuring parental involvement from the start. Documentation of this meeting is recorded on a conference form.

2. Implement Plan: For the next 4-6 weeks, the agreed-upon strategies and interventions are implemented. During this period, teachers provide regular updates to the parents to keep them informed of their child's progress.

3. Evaluate Progress: After 4-6 weeks, the student's progress is evaluated. If the student has made adequate progress, the plan continues until the skills are mastered, and parents are updated accordingly. If progress is inadequate, a Referral Form is completed, and the intervention specialist is contacted to take further action. Documentation is maintained on both the conference form and the referral form if needed.

4. Schedule Meeting: The intervention specialist arranges a meeting with the parents, teacher, preschool director, and school counselor to discuss the next steps. This collaborative meeting ensures that all stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process.

5. Create Support Plan: A comprehensive plan for additional support outside the general classroom is developed, detailing specific interventions and strategies tailored to the student's needs. This plan is documented on a conference form.

6. Monitor Progress: The intervention specialist monitors the student's progress for 6-8 weeks, providing regular updates to both parents and teachers. This ongoing communication ensures that everyone is informed of the student's development. Progress is tracked using a progress monitoring tracking form.

7. Discuss Progress: The team reconvenes after 6-8 weeks to discuss the student's progress. If the student has made adequate progress, support continues until it is no longer needed. If progress is still inadequate, a new plan is discussed and implemented for another 6-8 weeks. All discussions and decisions are documented on the conference form and parent meeting request form.

8. Final Review: Meet as a team to discuss progress. If the student has made adequate progress, continue support until no longer needed. If progress is inadequate, discuss an evaluation. The team should include the teacher, parents, intervention specialist, school counselor, preschool director, and psychologist. Document the discussion on the conference form.

9. Post-Evaluation: After the evaluation is complete, meet as a team to discuss services and accommodations. Include the psychologist if needed. Document the discussion on the conference form.

By following these structured steps, the early intervention program ensured that students receive the necessary support and resources to succeed academically. Detailed documentation at each stage provides a clear record of the interventions and progress, facilitating ongoing communication and collaboration among the support team. See Table 24 for the components of the program.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could investigate strategies to optimize communication channels and tailor training programs to better meet the diverse needs of educators and parents, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of early reading interventions. For example, schools could offer additional professional development for all educators and the preschool director, ensuring they fully understand their roles in the intervention process and the steps to take when a student shows signs of needing assistance. Professional development could also focus on effective communication with parents. One participant noted initial discomfort in these conversations, highlighting the need for training that includes suggested verbiage and role-playing exercises to increase educators' confidence.

Emphasizing open communication among staff could alleviate barriers encountered when implementing the process. Researching the most effective communication methods with both educators and parents and testing these techniques to determine their effectiveness and potential modifications could further refine the

approach. Additionally, schools could investigate the best practices for communicating with parents about identifying struggling children and supporting them at home, possibly through in-person workshops.

Ongoing training is crucial when implementing a new initiative. It is vital that this training focuses on identifying struggling students, employing classroom strategies to support them, and building a strong foundation for their future academic success. Ensuring that professional development is both productive and effective is essential. Future research could focus on identifying the most impactful training components and delivery methods for introducing an intervention process.

Additionally, longitudinal studies could assess the long-term impact of early reading interventions on student outcomes, providing further evidence-based insights into effective educational practices. This study focused solely on the implementation of the process but not on the outcomes. Both teachers and parents observed increased confidence and a desire to apply newly acquired skills both in school and at home during the intervention process. Future research could examine how early intervention influences academic performance and literacy development over time, assessing its impact during the intervention and in subsequent years.

Furthermore, more studies should be conducted at various private institutions implementing inclusive early reading intervention processes. As mentioned previously, there is limited research on private institutions and their interventions or special education services. Such research could help guide other private institutions in meeting the growing needs of their neuro-diverse students.

By addressing these areas, future research can contribute to the development of more effective and inclusive early reading intervention strategies.

Summary

Chapter V provided a comprehensive discussion on the findings from the study investigating the implementation of an early reading intervention program at a private Montessori preschool. Key themes emerged from both educator and parent perspectives, emphasizing the importance of effective communication, administrative support, professional development, appropriate timing of interventions, and parental involvement.

The chapter highlighted that clear and consistent communication is crucial for the smooth implementation of the intervention. Educators stressed the need for transparent channels to facilitate collaboration, while parents appreciated being kept informed and involved throughout the process. Administrative support, although not the highest priority, was identified as essential for providing the necessary resources and training for educators.

Professional development was recognized as a key component, with ongoing training enabling educators to effectively deliver the intervention. The timing of the intervention also played a critical role, with early implementation in the school year and appropriately balanced session durations being vital for success.

Parental support emerged as a pivotal factor, with effective initial presentation and continuous engagement enhancing the overall effectiveness of the intervention. The study demonstrated that when parents felt involved and informed, their children showed increased confidence and a greater willingness to apply newly acquired skills both at school and at home.

The implications for practice suggested that schools should prioritize communication, invest in professional development, secure administrative support, and ensure early and appropriately timed interventions. Additionally, expanding resources to include support for behavioral, academic, and speech needs can further enhance educational outcomes.

Finally, recommendations for future research included exploring strategies to optimize communication, tailoring training programs, conducting longitudinal studies to assess long-term impacts, and expanding research on inclusive early reading interventions in private institutions. Addressing these areas can contribute to the development of more effective and inclusive early reading intervention strategies, ultimately improving educational outcomes for all students.

Table 24

Bright Beginnings Boost Process Components

Steps	Details	Support Team	Documents
Contact and Plan	Contact parents about academic progress, create plan to help student. Explain the process of monitoring for 4-6, document on conference form	Parents Teacher	Conference Form
Implement Plan	Implement plan for 4-6 weeks, following agreed upon strategies and interventions, provide updates to parents	Parents Teacher	
Evaluate Progress	Evaluate student's progress after 4-6 weeks. If progress is adequate, continue the plan until skills are mastered and update parents. If progress is inadequate, complete a Referral Form and contact the intervention specialist.	Parents Teacher Intervention Specialist (if needed)	Conference Form Referral Form (if inadequate progress)
Schedule Meeting	Intervention specialist will schedule a meeting to discuss next steps	Parents, Teacher, Intervention Specialist, Preschool Director, School Counselor	Parent Meeting Request Form
Create Support Plan	Develop a plan for additional support outside the general classroom, detailing specific interventions and support strategies	Parents, Teacher, Intervention Specialist, Preschool Director, School Counselor	Conference Form
Monitor Progress	The intervention specialist monitors the student's progress for 6-8 weeks, providing regular updates to parents and teachers.	Intervention Specialist, Parents, Teacher	Progress Monitoring Tracking Form

Discuss Progress	Meet as a team after 6-8 weeks to discuss the student's progress. If progress is adequate, continue support until no longer needed. If progress is inadequate, discuss and implement a new plan for another 6-8 weeks.	Parents, Teacher, Intervention Specialist, Preschool Director, School Counselor	Parent Meeting Request Form Conference Form
Final Review	Meet as a team to discuss progress. If progress is adequate, continue support until no longer needed. If progress is inadequate, discuss an evaluation.	Parents, Teacher, Intervention Specialist, School Counselor, Preschool Director, Psychologist	

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Appendix A: Email Request for Permission to Conduct Research Study

Request for permission to Conduct Research Study
Breanne Cox <bcox2@email.lynn.edu>
Sun 8/27/2023 7:26 PM

Dear Mrs. _____,

I hope this email finds you well. As you know I am a doctoral student at Lynn University. I am writing to seek your permission to conduct a research study as a part of my dissertation.

The focus of my research is centered on the implementation of a new early literacy intervention process. Specifically, I am interested in investigating the perspectives of educators, administrators, and parents regarding the implementation of such process at _____. My aim is to gain valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with introducing an early literacy intervention process in a private school environment.

I assure you that my research will adhere to the highest ethical standards, ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of all participants. The collected data will be used solely for academic purposes, and any identifiable information will be handled with the utmost care.

After approval from Lynn University's IRB, I would like to conduct interviews as phase one and administer a survey as phase two to gather comprehensive feedback from relevant stakeholders. Specifically, I would ask to interview and survey all preschool teachers that work with students aged three to five, Mrs. _____, and parents whose child participated in the intervention process. Participation would be voluntary and optional of course.

I kindly request your permission to engage with the participants. Additionally, I would be grateful for any guidance or insights you might have that could enhance the quality and relevance of my study.

I understand that your time is valuable, and I greatly appreciate your consideration of my request. If you require any further information or have any concerns, please feel free to reach out to me at bcox2@email.lynn.edu.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,
Breanne Cox
Lynn University
bcox2@email.lynn.edu

(EXTERNAL)Re: Request for permission to Conduct Research Study
Tue 8/29/2023 12:13 PM
Hello Breanne-

It would be our honor to support this important work. Everything is approved on
our end pending that the child's name will not be used in the reporting.

Best of luck!

████████

Appendix B: Emails to Gain Study Participant Entry

Subject: Invitation to Participate in Research Study on the implementation of an Early Literacy Intervention process.

Good morning,

I hope this email finds you well. As you may know I am a doctoral student at Lynn University. I am reaching out to invite you to participate in an important research study that I am conducting for my dissertation, under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Lesh.

The focus of my research is centered on the implementation of an early literacy intervention process at _____, your insights as a participant are invaluable to this study. I am interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of an early literacy intervention process, and your perspective will greatly contribute to the richness of the findings.

Participation in this study would involve two phases. Phase one would be a one-on-one interview which would last twenty to thirty minutes. After all interviews have been conducted, I would ask you to complete a brief survey that will not take more than five minutes. Your participation will be entirely voluntary, and all information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your survey answers will be anonymous. Your name and any identifying information will be anonymized to ensure your privacy.

Your involvement will not only contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of education but also have a positive impact on the development of an effective early literacy intervention process for private schools.

If you are interested in participating, I would be delighted to schedule a convenient time for our interview session. This will be an opportunity for you to share your insights and experiences, and the estimated time commitment is approximately twenty to thirty minutes.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study or the participation process, please do not hesitate to contact me at bcox2@email.lynn.edu or 561-762-9006. You may also contact Dr. Jennifer Lesh at jlesh@lynn.edu or 561-237-7082 (Dissertation Chair). Your thoughts and feedback are highly valued.

Thank you for considering this invitation. Your willingness to contribute is deeply appreciated, and I am hopeful that your involvement will be both meaningful and rewarding.
If interested, please follow this link to provide informed consent.

Thank you,
Breanne Cox
Bcox2@email.lynn.edu 561-762-9006

Appendix C: Follow-up email to Gain Study Participant Entry

Subject: Follow-Up: Invitation to Participate in Early Literacy Intervention Process Study

Good morning,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to follow up on the invitation I sent regarding participation in my research study on an early literacy intervention process implementation at _____ School.

I understand that you may have a busy schedule, and I want to assure you that your time and input are greatly valued. Your insights as a teacher/parent are crucial to the success of this study, and your participation would contribute significantly to advancing knowledge in the field of education.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study or the participation process, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I am more than happy to provide further clarification or address any queries you may have.

Thank you once again for considering this invitation. Your willingness to contribute is deeply appreciated, and I am hopeful that you will be able to participate in this important research endeavor.

To participate you must consent to participate.

If interested, please follow this link to provide informed consent.

Thank you,
Breanne Cox
Bcox2@email.lynn.edu
561-762-9006

Appendix D: Consent Forms

Informed Consent Form

Title: *Breaking Barriers: Designing an Effective Early Intervention Process for Enhanced Developmental Outcome: A qualitative action research study*

Introduction:
Thank you for considering participating in this research study for my dissertation. Before you decide, it is important that you understand the purpose of the study, what your participation will involve, and any potential risks or benefits. Please read this informed consent form carefully and feel free to ask any questions before deciding whether or not to participate.

Researcher Information:
Principal Investigator: Breanne Cox
Affiliation: Lynn University
Contact Information: bcox2@email.lynn.edu

Purpose of the Study:
The purpose of this research study is to investigate the implementation of an early literacy intervention process at _____ School. The study aims to gather insights and experiences from participants like you to inform future practices and interventions in the field of education.

Study Procedures:
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one confidential interview followed by an anonymous survey. The estimated time commitment for your participation will be approximately 20-30 minutes for the interview and no more than five minutes for the survey. Your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

Confidentiality and Data Protection:
All data collected during this study will be kept strictly confidential and anonymized and participants will be given pseudonyms. Your identity and personal information will be protected. Only the research team will have access to the data, and it will be stored securely on a password protected external hard drive. The findings of the study will be reported in a manner that ensures the anonymity of all participants.

Potential Risks and Benefits:
There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. However, sharing personal experiences or opinions may evoke emotional responses. If you feel uncomfortable at any point during the study, you may choose to withdraw without penalty. There are no benefits however; by participating in this study, you contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of education.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:
Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision to participate or not will not have any impact on your relationship with myself or _____School. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without providing a reason, and it will not affect you in any way.

Contact Information:
If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact me, Breanne Cox, at bcox2@email.lynn.edu, 561-762-9006. If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Dr. Jennifer Lesh at JLesh@lynn.edu (Dissertation Chair) or Dr. Erika Grodzki at egrodzki@lynn.edu (IRB chair)

By consenting below, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the information provided in this informed consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in the research study.

Appendix E: Email to Verify Transcript Accuracy

Subject: Verification Needed: Your Interview Transcript
Good morning,

I hope you're well. Attached is the transcript of your interview that you participated in. Your input is crucial to me, and I want to ensure its accuracy.

Please review the transcript and let me know of any errors, missing information, or if you wish to make any revisions. Your feedback is invaluable in ensuring the transcript accurately reflects your thoughts.

Kindly send any corrections or feedback to bcox2@email.lynn.edu by May 23, 2024. If I do not receive an email, I will assume the transcript is accurate.
Thank you for your participation and support.

Thank you,
Breanne Cox
Bcox2@email.lynn.edu
561-762-9006

Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **What Is RTI?**
  RTI stands for response to intervention, which includes academic and behavior intervention. This is a system of support designed to help all students who need additional support. As a student begins to struggle with a skill or behavior, the student will receive additional support. If the student still struggles, they will receive more intensive interventions. If a student continues to struggle even with intensive interventions, they may be referred for a special education evaluation.

- **Which students participate in RTI?**
  All students participate in the RTI process. Tier 1 includes all instruction the classroom teacher uses to teach the students which includes instruction and assessment for all students. Most students will be successful at Tier 1.

  If a student is not successful as Tier 1, they move to Tier 2 interventions which consist of additional support using targeted and research-based interventions. Most students will be able to go back to Tier 1 after successfully completing Tier 2. Tier 2 is five days a week for 15-20 minutes a day for 6-8 weeks.

  Students requiring additional support will move to Tier 3. Tier 3 interventions will be an additional 15-20 minutes of daily research-based instruction for 6-8 weeks. If a student is

successful, they will go back to Tier 2. If a student is not successful, they will be referred for additional evaluations.

- **How do you know if Tier 2 or Tier 3 is working?**
  Progress monitoring is important during the RTI process. The assessment is based on the individual student goals and will take place weekly during Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction.

- **Who is part of the RTI team?**
  The RTI team is made up of the students' parents, classroom teacher, intervention specialists, school counselor, preschool director, and any other staff members who may have insight into the student or interventions. These individuals may include speech therapist, occupational therapist, psychologist, and behavior therapist.

Referral Protocol

- Speech
  1. Ask speech pathologist if the student was already evaluated
  2. If a student was screened, let speech pathologist know your concerns to see what they think.
  3. If a student was not evaluated, contact the parent to let them know your observations and ask if they are interested in having their child screened and provide a screening form. (Record conversation on conference form)
  4. If parent is not interested in a screening continue to follow up with the parent if you continue to observe the same struggling communication skills (document on conference form)

- Behavior
  1. Contact parents with observations, develop a plan together to put in place for 3-4 weeks, document on conference form.
  2. If behavior is not improving or has declined, record observations for three days (using Behavior Tracking Form) This includes the date, what happened before, during, and after any incidents. This allows us to see if there are any trends occurring.
  3. After recording behavior for three days, contact intervention specialists and provide Behavior Tracking Form.
  4. A meeting will be scheduled with the teacher, Pre-school Director, intervention specialist, and school counselor to discuss and implement a plan to assist students. Conversation will be documented on conference form.
  5. Use intervention plan for 4-6 weeks unless behavior has declined, or it is necessary to contact behavior specialist
  6. After 4-6 weeks, conference with parents and decide if the plan is working. If the plan is not working, include a behavior therapist at the meeting to discuss an evaluation and using their services. Document on conference form.

- Academics
  1. Contact parents with observations regarding academic progress and develop a plan to help the student. Please make sure you tell the parents the process which involves monitoring for 4-6 weeks. If the student does not make adequate progress, please let parents know we will meet as a team to provide additional support. Document on conference form.
  2. Implement plan for 4-6 weeks
  3. If a student has made adequate progress, continue the plan until the student has mastered skills. Meet with parents to update. Document on conference form.
  4. If a student did not make adequate progress, contact the intervention specialist by filling out a Referral Form. The intervention specialist will schedule a meeting with parents, teachers, intervention specialists, and Pre-school Director.
  5. During the conference, a plan for additional support outside of the general education classroom will be created. Document on conference form. **Tier 2**
  6. Intervention specialists will monitor progress for 6-8 weeks and will update parents and teachers during that time.
  7. Meet after 6-8 weeks as a team to discuss progress. If the student made adequate progress, continue support until the team determines the student no longer needs support. If a student did not make adequate progress, discuss a new plan and implement it for another 6-8 weeks. Document on conference form. **Tier 3**
  8. Meet as a team to discuss progress. If a student makes adequate progress, continue support until determined no longer needed. If a student did not make adequate progress, discuss an evaluation. During the meeting the teacher, parents, intervention specialist, school counselor, Pre-school Director, and psychologist should be present. Document on conference form.
  9. After evaluation is complete, meet as a team to discuss services/accommodation. Document on conference form. If we invited the psychologist, it would be at this step.

Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative
TIER PROCESS

Tier 1:

All students, regular classroom instruction.
Notify a parent once a struggle is identified:
-send home conference request form
-meet with parent(s) (bring observations and data regarding student progress)
-develop an individual plan to help struggling student
-fill out conference form
-fill out referral form
-meet with intervention specialists and preschool director regarding student
-continue monitoring student with data progress for 4-6 weeks
If a student is successful, continue monitoring progress (update parent). If a student did not make adequate progress move to Tier 2 (update parent).

Tier 2:
Students who were not successful at Tier 1.
-send home conference request form
-meet with parent to review Tier 1 progress (meeting to include parent(s), classroom teacher, intervention specialist, and pre-school director) Bring data from Tier 1, discuss intervention process.
-create formalized intervention plan as a team (complete conference form)
-intervention specialist will provide support for 15-20 minutes a day (progress monitoring will continue)
If a student is successful, maintain Tier 2 for several more weeks, move back to Tier 1 if still successful (notify parent, meet with intervention team). If a student is not successful, move to Tier 3.

Tier 3:
Students who were not successful at Tier 2.
-send home conference request form (intervention request form)
-meet with parent to review Tier 2 progress (meeting to include parent(s), classroom teacher, intervention specialist, and pre-school director) Bring data from Tier 2
-create formalized intervention plan as a team (complete conference form)
-intervention specialist will provide support for 15-20 minutes a day at an individual level (progress monitoring will continue)
If a student is successful, maintain Tier 3 for several more weeks, move back to Tier 2 if still successful (notify parent, meet with intervention team). If a student is not successful, move to evaluation.

Evaluation:
-send home conference request form (intervention specialist)
-meet with parents to review Tier 3 progress (meeting to include parent(s), classroom teacher, intervention specialist, pre-school director, and school counselor) Bring data from Tier 3
-discuss moving forward with an evaluation to gain additional information to best support the student

Review Evaluation:
-send home conference request form (intervention specialist)
-meet with parents to review evaluation (meeting to include parent(s), classroom teacher, intervention specialist, pre-school director, evaluation specialist, and school counselor)
-discuss recommendations based on evaluation and next steps

Tier Support Resources

- Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR)
Phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension
https://fcrr.org/fcrr-student-center-activities/pre-kindergarten

- Spell-Lang Tree

Phonics, vocabulary, spelling, grammar

Seeds – Targets pre-k through first and focuses on the foundations of sound-symbol correspondence. It includes visuals, literature connections, enrichment activities, games, and word lists.

Roots – This level addresses first graders or struggling learners who have not mastered sound-symbol relationships. The Roots scope & sequence covers phonics, handwriting, and grammar. The lessons are 20-minutes and can be used in classrooms or homeschool settings.

Trunks – Targets second graders or those needing support with advanced phonics and grammar skills. Students study syllable patterns, learn more about word families and begin working more deeply on grammar skills. Phonics skills include silent letters at this level. The system includes a robust plan for formative assessment to guide your instruction.
https://sites.google.com/view/spel-langtree/home?authuser=0

- ABeCeDarian Company Reading Program

Phonics and Vocabulary
Level A
These materials are best for non-readers or those at the beginning of their reading journey. Lessons target phonological awareness, sound-symbol correspondence, and the foundations of reading and spelling. There are 10 decodable readers that are included in this level. By the end of Level A, students will have a bank of more than 100 words they can read fluently.
Level B
Once students get to Level B, they'll be working on more complex phonics skills. They'll begin learning about vowel pairs and spend time on phoneme-grapheme correspondence.
The level includes fluency building with these new patterns and offers strategies to help students begin to accurately decode multi-syllable words. Level B is best for on-level students in grades 1-2 or struggling learners in upper elementary.

Level C
This level begins to focus more on morphology. Students learn the most common prefixes and suffixes and their meaning. They begin to look at spelling patterns more deeply as well. Level C is for on-level 3-4th grader readers. It would be an excellent option for struggling students in late elementary or early middle school depending on their gaps.

Level D

This level is advanced word study. It would be unlikely to be helpful for elementary learners needing intervention. Targeting 5-6th graders who are on-level, this level might be a great fit for your later middle school or high school level reading interventions. The resource targets Greek roots. Exercises are fast-paced and designed to help students learn the meaning of these roots along with their spelling.

- Free Reading
print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and writing
https://www.freereading.net/wiki/Find_Activities.html

- Easy CBM

- What Work's Clearinghouse (WWC)
  Find evidence-based interventions

Partnerships

Specialist	Contact Information
Speech Language Pathologist	

Behavior Specialist	
Occupational Therapist	
Psychologist	

Conference Form

Student Name	Grade	Meeting Date

Purpose of Meeting

Participants Name and Title

Discussion:
Conclusion:

Parent Meeting Request Form

Student Name	Grade	Tier: 1

Purpose of Meeting:

The intervention team is eager to meet with you to delve into your child's classroom progress. Our aim is to collaboratively explore the way forward and formulate a

comprehensive plan to cater to your child's specific needs. Below, you will find a list of individuals who have been invited to participate in this meeting.

Participants Name and Title

The meeting will be _____ at _____.

_____Yes, I can attend

_____No, that day/time does not work for me. The following days/times work best for me (please provide at least three options.

_____
_____

_____   _____
Parent Signature/Date   Parent Signature/Date

Student Referral Form Checklist

_____ copy of any conference forms (when you notified the parent there was a concern and when you notified the parent you were referring their child to the support program)

_____ copy of any emails you think are important

_____ copy of any other information you think is important

_____ behavior tracking form if submitting a behavior

_____ referral form

Student Referral Form

Current Date

Teachers Name	Students Name	Grade
Area(s) of Concern	Parent Contacted Yes/No	Date of Contact

Present Levels (recent assessments)

Observations/Concerns:

What have you already tried?:

What have the parents done at home to support their child?:

Progress Monitoring Form

Student Name	Grade	Academic Area

Baseline Data from Progress Monitoring Tool/Date Given

Score	Score	Score
Date	Date	Date

Goal:

	Mon.	Tues.	Weds.	Thurs.	Fri.	Trendline
Week of						
Week of						
Week of						
Week of						
Week of						
Week of						

Form completed by_____

Appendix G: Interview Questions

Teachers/Preschool Director

1. What is your educational background?
2. What is your teaching background?
3. Can you describe your role and responsibilities in relation to the early literacy intervention process?

4. How do you envision the process benefiting the students?
5. As the process was implemented, what were some of the challenges or obstacles that arose? How were these challenges addressed, and what lessons were learned?
6. In your opinion, what forms of support or resources are necessary for the successful implementation of the early literacy intervention process?
7. How has the process been received by students and their parents? Are there any noteworthy successes or positive outcomes you would like to highlight?
8. Have there been any unexpected or unique outcomes from the implementation of the process you would like to share?
9. In your experience, what areas might require further improvement or refinement in the process?
10. Was the time allotted for the intervention appropriate? If not, what should it be?
11. How do you envision the process evolving in the future?

Parents

1. How old is your child?
2. How many years has your child attended school?
3. What was your initial reaction when you learned about the early intervention process?
4. How did you feel about your child participating in the process?
5. Can you describe any changes you observed in your child since they started the process?
6. How would you rate the communication between the school and parents regarding the process?
7. Were you satisfied with the support provided to your child during the process?
8. Was the time allotted for the intervention appropriate? If not, what should it be?
9. Do you have any suggestions on ways to improve Bright Beginnings Boost Initiative?
10. Are there certain elements of the process you feel should remain as they are?
11. Do you feel the process has benefited your child and your family?
12. Were there any challenges or obstacles your child faced while participating in the process?
13. Would you recommend the process to other parents whose children may benefit from it?

Appendix H: Survey Questions

Educator Survey Questions

Bright Beginnings Boost Ranking of Themes (Teachers)

Thank you for participating in the initial interview regarding the effective components of an academic early intervention process for implementation at Unity School. Your insights were invaluable. Please complete this short survey.

* 1. Your consent was previously given prior to your interview. Do you still consent to complete this survey?

○ Yes

○ No

2. How many year of experience do you have teaching?

3. What certifications do you hold? (teaching certificate, directors credentials, apple teacher, etc)

* 4. Several key themes have been identified from the interview you participated in and would like your feedback on their importance. Please rank the following themes from most important to least important based on their significance to the success of the intervention process.

≡ Professional Development and Training on the process (initial and ongoing)

≡ Administrative Support Implementing the Process (administration allowing you to utilize the process)

≡ Parental Support of the Process

≡ Clear Communication and Collaboration Among All Parties Involved (teachers, parents, administration, intervention specialist)

≡ Timing of the Program (begin the program at the start of the school year)

Parent Survey Questions

Bright Beginnings Boost Theme Ranking Survey (Parents)

Thank you for participating in the initial interview regarding the effective components of an academic early intervention process for implementation at Unity School. Your insights were invaluable. Please complete this short survey.

* 1. Your consent was previously given prior to your interview. Do you still consent to complete this survey?

○ Yes

○ No

2. How old is your child?

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5

* 3. Several key themes have been identified from the interview you participated in and I would like your feedback on their importance. Please rank the following themes **by dragging them** from most important to least important based on their significance to the success of the intervention process.

≡ Clear Communication and Collaboration Among All Parties Involved (teachers, parents, intervention specialist) ⌃ ⌄

≡ Appropriate Time Allocation (daily duration as well as total number of weeks) ⌃ ⌄

≡ Initial Presentation of the Program (clarity of initial information, given in a caring way) ⌃ ⌄