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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEAD START PARENT
PARTICIPATION IN A PRESCHOOL LITERACY ACQUISITION
PROGRAM AND THEIR CHILDREN'S SCHOOL READINESS

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Hester M. Hughes

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By

Hester M. Hughes

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEAD START PARENT PARTICIPATION IN A PRESCHOOL LITERACY ACQUSITION PROGRAM AND THEIR CHILDREN'S SCHOOL READINESS

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The present study investigated the relationship between Head Start parent participation and non-participation in a preschool literacy acquisition program. This study also measured school readiness of Head Start children. A total of nine Head Start parent-child pairs were obtained. The Parents' Opinion Survey (Luster, 1985) was used to assess parental beliefs and parental efficacy level. Ethnographic interviews were used to get descriptive data from the participants' perspective. The AGS-ESP posttest scores improved from the pretest group mean scores for the participating Head Start children's. Also, the non-participating Head Start children's posttest group mean was higher than the participating group mean score. Participating Head Start children's *Concept about print* Clay (1979) scores improved, but the non-participating group mean score was slightly lower. The Parents' Opinion Survey results showed that parents who participated scored higher than the non-participants, and that education and self-efficacy were found to be very important. This study provided evidence that early intervention programs involving parent training may improve the language development of their Head Start children. More research is needed that assesses why some lower income families are more likely to participate in shared reading programs, and which factors promote involvement in these early interventions.

TO THE ELDERS WHO LAID THE FOUNDATION

The late Hester Ladson, the late Robert McFadden, the late Essie Hughes,

and the late Nettie Borum

.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

School readiness is a term used by many researchers and educators when they talk about preschool children entering kindergarten. In the late 1980s, there was a shift in the way that readiness was represented, and in the 1990s, new definitions began to evolve. Nurss (1987) defined school readiness as the preparation of what came next, which emphasized two prominent factors: the child and the instructional situation. Within this model, based on the curriculum structure, the teacher assessed the social, perceptual, motor and language skills development of the child. The child's behavior, skill level and the end of program expectations then determined readiness. Graue (1993) thought of school readiness as a construct, which focused on untangling the complexity of the characteristics that comprised the growing, ready child. Finally, Burns, Griffin & Snow (1999) believed that it was an ability to be prepared for instruction.

But in recent years, preparedness of many children has not met the criteria of Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which stated that every child should enter school ready to learn. Researchers have found that school readiness is the greatest predictor of whether a child would later be in the appropriate grade for their age or not, or whether that child would be in special education (Renwick, 1984; Nurss, 1987; Robinson, 1990; Graue, 1993; Campbell & Ramey, 1994; Zigler, 1998 & NRC, 2001). The social, motor and perceptual development of

these children would also be assessed, since they should affect the linguistic acquisition, mathematical and other skills relevant to school readiness (NRC, 2001).

Another factor that is relevant to preschool children's school readiness is their early experience with books and reading. Studies have shown that this factor has contributed to the ability or failure in learning to read (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Teal & Sulzby, 1986; & Wells, 1986) [as cited in Cronan, Cruz, Arriaga & Sarkin, 1996]. In addition, Burger & Landerholm (1991) [as cited in Cronan, Cruz, Arriaga & Sarkin, 1996] found that parents who interacted with their through activities such as "talking to them, modeling literacy activity, providing access to reading materials, reading to them, expecting them to achieve, and teaching them, together with involvement in school activities," had a tendency to foster literacy development (p. 253).

Allen and Mason (1989), in the book *Risk Makers, Risk Takers, Risk Breakers: Reducing the Risks for Young Literacy Learners, for Young Literacy Learners*, collated a number of informed practices that would correct the disparity in the reading performance of those who are educated and those who are not and ensured the reading success of children at-risk for learning difficulties. Among them, McCormick & Mason (1989) gave Head Start children "simple picture books" to foster home/school relationships; Martinez, Cheyney, McBroom, Hemmeter & Teale (1989) implemented a Kindergarten Emergent Literacy Program; & Edwards (1989) implemented a Book Reading Project. Additional studies have shown positive results for children, in that early

experiences with books and reading with parents, have contributed to their ability or failure in learning to read (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Teal & Sulzby, 1986; & Wells, 1986) [as cited in Cronan, Cruz, Arriaga & Sarkin, 1996].

Changing the home environment to reflect literacy is another way to ensure the reading success of young children (Edwards, 1994; Cronan, Cruz, Arriaga, & Sarkin, 1996; & Lawson, J., 2000). The National Research Council (NRC) (2001) reported a number of studies that showed significance between home literacy environments and the language abilities of preschool children. Further, to help children gain the language skill and knowledge that would enable them to comprehend later on, the Commission on Reading advised that the way in which parents read aloud to their children matters (Hall & Moats, 1999). This lends additional support to parental involvement in the literacy instruction of young children previous to school entry.

Research has shown that not all children participate in shared reading activities or are read aloud to; this group is representative of those who are *negatively* impacted by what Soderman, Gregory & O'Neill (1999) call "sociocultural influences" (p. 6). Family and community contexts that are *positive* precursors to literacy are more often found in middle class families where shared reading is a common event. This shared reading event or "one-on-one middle class dyadic interaction" (Edwards, 1994) provides the child with an enriched bank of experiences prior to and after school entrance. The key to school readiness, then is the parent and child interaction during the shared reading experience.

According to Belsky (1990), parents who are psychologically healthy and mature have strong beliefs, have a high level of parent efficacy, and are more likely to provide a healthy psychological development for their children. These factors, particularly parent efficacy and parental beliefs, are key in the academic success of low-income young children. In addition, they may contribute to the low participation rate in parent education programs that are specific to literacy.

Statement of the Problem

Even though more children begin school eager to learn, lower SES children are generally not provided with a wide range of ready access to reading and writing materials at home (Allen & Mason, 1989;Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Heath, 1983, & Burns, Griffin & Snow, 1999). They frequently begin school with less prior knowledge and skill in certain domains, particularly in the areas of general verbal abilities, phonological sensitivity, familiarly with the basic purposes and mechanisms of reading, and letter knowledge (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Moreover, parents may not engage in social contexts that validate their language resources, literacy learning and diverse backgrounds even when they are well intentioned, because of multiple factors that prevent them from participating in these types of programs. Factors include work schedules; conflicts with scheduled appointments, and time of the programmed event or child care availability.

Also problematic is parental efficacy. According to Hoover-Dempsey &
Sandler (1997), parents must have, or be enabled to create, a strong sense of
efficacy for helping their children to succeed in school (Dorsey, 1999). Those
parents, who possess both a strong-to-moderate standing in parental efficacy
and believe that involvement is useful, will be effective in the successful
education of their children.

Further contributing to the low literacy acquisition of young children is the
attrition rate of low-income parents in shared parent-child reading programs.
According to Sarkin, Tally, Cronan & Matt (1997), the attrition from a community-
based literacy program with Head Start families was due to either person-
centered variables or program-centered variables. Keeping parents for the entire
service cycle of the reading programs after they registered, and staying in
constant contact with those who registered but never participated, were key to
the school readiness of their children. The purpose of this study is to measure
the relationship between Head Start parent participation and non-participation in
a preschool literacy acquisition program and the Head Start child's school
readiness.

Significance of the Study

The recent work of Paris & Paris (2001) has demonstrated that joint reading practices of parents and children provide purpose and structure to early reading. In addition, they also demonstrated that the children in their study stayed engaged with books and expended effort towards "cracking the code" of learning to read. Information gained from this study will contribute to our understanding of parental factors related to Head Start children's school readiness, particularly since there is a high rate of low-income children entering school lacking literacy competencies, (National Research Council, 2001; Adams, 2001, Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998; & Graue, 1993) as well as a limited number of studies that have been done at this time on Head Start parent participation in a preschool literacy acquisition literacy program.

Understanding the characteristics that make up parental efficacy in supporting Head Start children's school readiness is needed as a result of the high attrition rate of low-income parents in literacy acquisition programs. According to Sarkin, Tally, Cronan, Matt & Lyons (1997), attrition rates and the reasons given for not completing the intervention cannot be ignored. Few studies have examined in depth the reasons for this non-participation. This study is intended to add to the body of research relative to low-income parent participation in literacy acquisition programs.

Research Objectives

This study had four objectives: a) to assess differences in the school readiness of participating and non-participating parents' Head Start children; b) to measure parental efficacy in participating and non-participating Head Start parents; c) to assess the educational aspirations of participating parents verses non-participating parents for their children; and d) to identify barriers to parent participation in a readiness program.

Research Questions

1.   How do children's school readiness scores (the *Concepts about print* and the AGS-ESP scores) differ among those whose parents participated in the literacy acquisition program and those whose parents chose not to?

2.   Do participating and non-participating parents differ on self-efficacy as measured by the Parents' Opinion Survey?

3.   How do parental educational aspirations for their children differ among participating and non-participating Head Start parents?

4.   What factors, if any, were barriers to Head Start parents participating in the readiness acquisition program?

Conceptual Framework: Ecological Model

The primary conceptual framework for this study is an ecological model.

According to Bubolz & Sontag (1993), "The family is the principal microsystem context in which development takes place" (p. 423). In addition, family decision-

making from an ecological framework (Paolucci, Hall, & Axinn, 1977) enables

families to shape their own destiny through the decisions and actions that they

take. Finally "families can transform society by creating new lifestyles"(Bubolz,

2002, p. 112). Through this transformation, parents can educate their children in

accepting new values and practices that will eventually transform their futures. In

this study, it was hypothesized that Head Start parents' decision to participate or

not participate in literacy acquisition programs may shape the school readiness

of their children.

A secondary framework is an adapted version of Parker, Boak, Griffin,

Ripple, and Peay's (1999) conceptual model of Head Start parent involvement

and the positive contribution to their children's school readiness. According to

these authors, as seen in Figure 1, the positive relationship between parents'

participation in Parent And Children Together (PACT) promoted school readiness

through at-home experiences and activities. Because there had not been

previous studies done, this laid a foundation for future investigation in the study

of school readiness. This study was adapted from Parker et al's (1999) study.
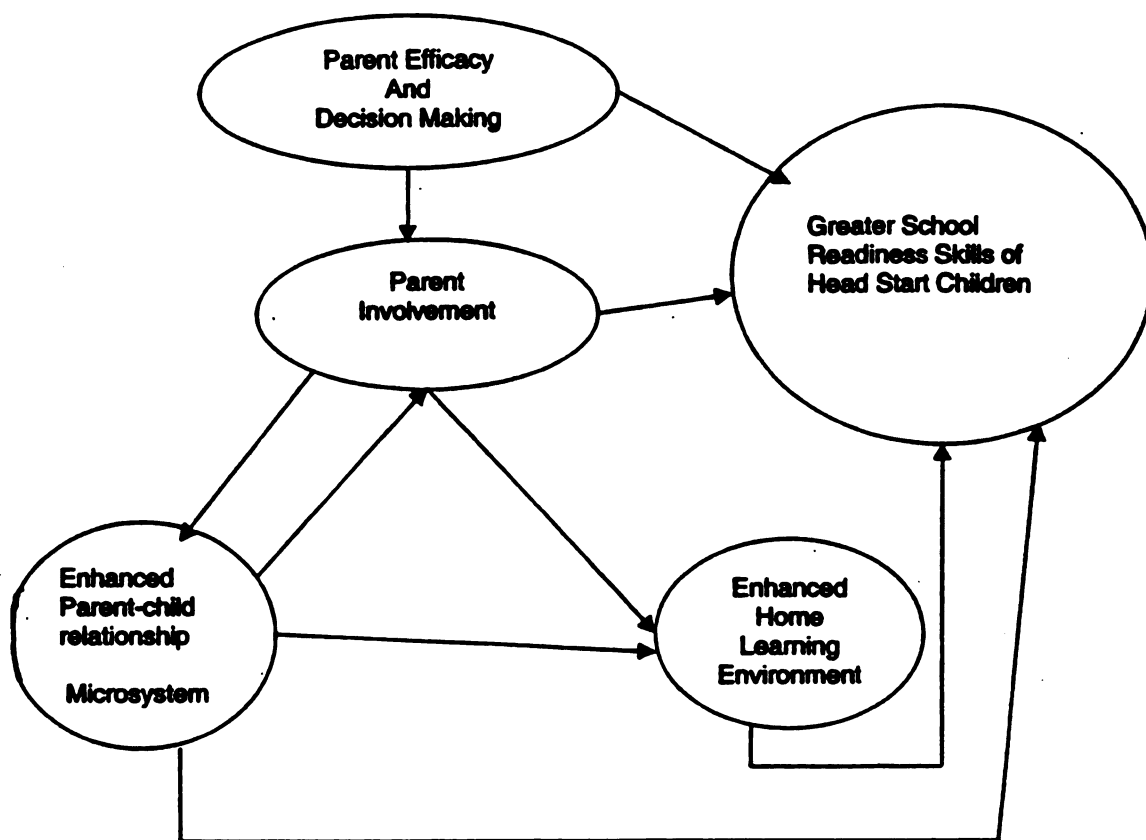
Figure 1 Adapted from Parker et al (1999) Conceptual Model of Parent
Involvement in Head Start

Conceptual and Operational Definitions

Emerging Literacy

Emerging Literacy in this study is conceptually defined as the beginning phase of the "becoming literate" process. According to Soderman, Gregory & O'Neill (1998), this phase is referred to as *emerging*. As the "reading-related development is interwoven and continuous with [the child's] development [this] will lead to expertise in other spheres of life" (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998, p. 43).

Emerging Literacy, in this study, is operationally defined as the Head Start child's scores on the adapted Clay's (1979) *Concept about print* test.

Literacy Acquisition

Literacy Acquisition in this study is conceptually defined as the Head Start child's gain in emerging literacy concepts by the reflecting the child's mastery of a complex set of attitudes, expectations, and skills that are related to written language (Neuman, 1998).

Literacy Acquisition in this study is operationally defined as the Head Start child's scores on the adapted *Concept about print* test.

School Readiness

School Readiness in this study is conceptually defined as the children's basic school skills including acquisition of linguistic, mathematical, social and perceptual skill (Nurss, 1987 & NRC, 2001).

School Readiness in this study is operationally defined as a combination of two sets of scores taken from each Head Start child: the Cognitive/Language Profile scores on the AGS Early Screening Profiles and the adapted *Concepts about print* scores.

Cognitive Development

Cognitive Development in this study is conceptually defined by Vygotsky in that learning leads toward development, and there was a learning continuum that enabled a child to have the ability to independently problem solve with the assistance of an adult (Vygotsky, 1978. 1986).

Cognitive Development is operationally defined as the Head Start child's nonverbal reasoning ability scores on the following subtests of the AGS Early Screening Profiles: Visual Discrimination and Logical Relations.

Language Development

Language Development in this study is conceptually defined as the ability to engage in verbal communication. According to Berk (2002), this verbal communication combines four components of language, sound, meaning, overall structure and everyday use, in order for it to be effective.

Language Development is operationally defined as the Head Start child's receptive and expressive language ability scores on the following subtests of the AGS Early Screening Profiles: Verbal Concepts and Basic School Skills.

Head Start Parent

Head Start Parent is conceptually defined as the low-income parent of a child who is enrolled in Head Start, a comprehensive federally funded early intervention program (Parker, Boak, Griffin et al, 1999).

Head Start Parent is operationally defined as a parent selected to participate in the literacy acquisition program.

Head Start Child

Head Start Child is conceptually defined as the low-income child who is enrolled in Head Start, a comprehensive federally funded early intervention program (Parker, Boak, Griffin et al, 1999).

Head Start Child is operationally defined as the child selected to participate in the literacy acquisition program.

Parental Efficacy

Parental Efficacy in this study is conceptually defined as the belief or attitude that a parent holds about one's ability to successfully accomplish a task, and in this case, parenting (Whitten, 1990).

Parental Efficacy in this study is operationally defined as the parent's score on the following subscales of the Parents' Opinion Survey: perceived contingency, perceived competency, and perceived importance of extrafamilial influences.

Parental Beliefs

Parental Beliefs is conceptually defined as the parent's values "regarding the opportunities their children are likely to encounter as they approach adulthood" (Luster, 1985, p. 102).

Parental Beliefs is operationalized by the score participating parents receive on the Parental Beliefs Survey (Luster, 1985).

Parental Competency

Parental Competency is conceptualized as the belief that parents have that they are capable and can influence the developmental outcomes of their children (Luster, 1985).

Parental Competency is operationalized as the score participating parents receive on the Perception of Parental Efficacy (POPE) Scale (Luster, 1985). Also included is the attendance and completion of the participating parents in the preschool literacy acquisition program.

Parental Educational Aspirations

Parental Educational Aspirations is conceptualized as the educational expectations that parents have for their child within the following parameters – how much education would they like their children to have; what is the minimum of education that they would like their children to receive; and how much schooling they expect their children to complete (Luster, 1985).

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Parental Educational Aspirations is operationally defined as the responses given to the above questions during the in-home interview and on a questionnaire given out in the beginning of the literacy acquisition program.

Parent Involvement

Parent Involvement is a concept that includes many different activities that range from impersonal visits to their children's school occasionally to frequent parent volunteer activities related to school and home (Epstein, 1995; Brito & Waller, 1994 [as cited in Georgiou, 1997].

Parent Involvement is operationally defined as the history of participation in the preschool literacy acquisition program.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, literature is reviewed related to cognitive and language development and how they relate to children actively constructing knowledge. Special attention will be given to specific parental strategies used to encourage emerging literacy skills. The purpose of early intervention and a comparison of successful early intervention programs will also be discussed.

Cognitive Development

Children vary significantly in the areas of brain organization, gender, age and experience, and since each of these factors impact on the abilities and capabilities of literacy acquisition, the way children think, learn and construct knowledge needs to be addressed. Piaget (1971) developed an approach that viewed cognitive development as taking place through a series of stages. Here, children were viewed as actively constructing knowledge as they manipulated and explored their world, with development leading the learning.

Vygotsky, on the other hand believed that learning led development, and that children's learning took place "within the zone of proximal development – a range of tasks too difficult for the child to do alone but possible to accomplish with the help of others" (Berk, 2002, p. 337). According to Painter (1999), this concept attracted the language acquisition researchers, and enabled the child to

work collaboratively on a task on a given day and then again independently at a later time. This zone of proximal development within Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development gained popularity among researchers in literacy development (Bruner, 1986; Graue, 1993; NRC, 2001, & Soderman, et al 1999).

As children progress chronologically, during cognitive development, their visual discrimination and logical relations become sharper. They are able "to note detail or likenesses and differences, and develop eye-hand coordination and fine motor abilities" (Soderman et al, 1999, p. 2). As time passes, children begin to show interests in simple numbers and quantity activities, literacy activities and classifying and naming activities (Renwick, 1984; Robinson, 1990; Neuman, 1998; & Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). While these cognitive changes occur, Vygotsky noted that language begins to emerge. The link connecting language development to literacy acquisition will be discussed next.

Language Development and Literacy Acquisition

Language development is viewed as a unified, historical interrelated process, which includes listening, speaking, writing and reading (Parker & Davis, 1983; Teale & Yokota, 2000). During this interrelated process, children connect words with concepts that foster their language acquisition, which then connects them to interacting and conversing with adults. In order for this experience to be successful, children are interacting and conversing with adults who are sensitive, caring, and who are using developmentally appropriate techniques that promote language skills related to reading and writing (Berk, 2000). Research has shown

that adults have used various strategies that have helped children become proficient in oral language, such as sharing books, notes, lists, and environmental print, as well as talking through the events that they are sharing with the children (Weaver, 1990; & Adams, 2001).

In addition to adult interaction, the environment influences the child greatly, which encourages emerging language skills. "In print-rich early learning environments, reading and writing are incorporated into every aspect of the day" (Adams, 2001, p. 428). It is through adult modeling and purposeful use that language is learned and literacy is acquired (Soderman et al, 1999).

According to Neuman (1998), children are driven to learn language and literacy for the sake of functionality. During this process, integrated language activities skills that emerge from functionality are used to discover and explore the beginnings of literacy. Some examples of such activities are developing a Big Book with illustrations of past stories read, creating ways for children to ask meaningful questions, and then allowing them to write about it. These activities actively engage the minds of children, allowing them to practice what they know and enabling them to "use literacy for real-life purposes (Neuman, 1998, p. 16). Literacy continues to emerge as discussed in the next section.

Emerging Literacy and Clay's Theory of Literacy Acquisition

Research has shown that literacy is a natural process that begins early before formal schooling (McNaughton, 1999; Clay, 1993; Neuman, 1998; Purcell-Gates, 1995; & Burgess, Lundgren, Lloyd & Pianta, 2002), is very individualistic

(Allen & Mason, 1989), and it is emergent in nature (Clay, 1993, Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998; & Soderman et al, 1999). "Reading is and should be a continuously developing skill" (Adams, 2001, p. 7). This last factor is a very important feature in literacy research, since it is continuous, there is "no set prerequisite body of skills" (Allen & Mason, 1989, p. 182). Instead, there are a variety of components that are inclusive of the integrated language activities. These are best described as the *Concepts about print*, which is a measure, developed by Marie Clay that describes children's understandings of the conventions of books, and introduced the concept of new skills emerging continually during development (McNaughton, 1999).

Marie Clay has been a major developmental psychologist and researcher in the area of literacy acquisition, and her theory is not about teaching about literacy; rather it is about children's learning to read and write continuous text. In doing this, children learn to use language to construct meaning while focusing on the story or text meaning, as well as attending to sentence meaning, language structures, and print (Jones & Smith-Burke, 1999). For young children in the formative period of literacy acquisition this can be challenging. On the other hand, a more relevant example of understanding the words would be learning to read and write continuous text in a naturally occurring book-sharing event, or learning print through socially significant literate activities (Taylor, 1998, Burgess, Lundgren, Lloyd & Pianta, 2002 & Teal & Yokota, 2000).

According to Smolkin & Donovan (2002), this style has a greater impact on children's literacy acquisition. As children continue to engage in literacy

related activities with adults, their natural curiosity surfaces. They begin to develop an understanding that print had meaning, they learn to value reading and books, and they learn to expect that one day they will be able to read and write for themselves. During this time, growth and changes in the quality of children's abilities and competencies are noticed, i.e., ability to control a number of concepts and conventions and operations related to book skills, as they develop from nonreader to reader, as well as from nonwriter to writer. These have been exciting factors to discover in the literacy development of children.

Unfortunately, children who were low income, in particular, often lack these types of literacy immersion activities. They are not in the best position to become proficient readers and writers, and this put them at-risk for becoming successful. Further, children who encounter these problems often fall further and further behind their peers (Strickland, 2000). Research has shown that a child's reading skills (Parker & Davis, 1983; Juel, 1988), and cognitive test scores (Neisser, Boodoo, Bouchard, Boykin, Brody et al, 1996) by the end of third grade predicted success. If these skills were not remediated, then the academic success as defined by high school graduation would not be attainable. One possible solution to the next step along this road to literacy acquisition and emerging literacy is early intervention.

Early Intervention to ward off school failure

One solution to the academic success of low-income children has been early intervention. According to Ramey & Campbell (1991), the purpose of

intervention was to enhance the intellectual competence and academic achievement of children from low-income families. This cost-effective solution provided this population with some techniques, strategies and programs that were created to produce short- and long-term gains (Sawhill, 1999). The short-term gains were in the area of cognitive functioning. According to Campbell & Ramey (1994), cognitive development should be enhanced when there was a developmentally appropriate and an intellectually stimulating early environment. On the other hand, long-term gains are in the area of school achievement and social adjustment. Such children enter school with a greater degree of school readiness, due to early intervention and the changed environment. These children also gained an enhanced likelihood of success, which led "to an eventually command of higher-paying jobs and other social and cultural rewards" (Campbell & Ramey, 1994, p.684).

Research has indicated that there are considerable savings to the government when programs for low-income children began early, provided an intensive education component and provided other empowering services over a lengthy period of time (Sawhill, 1999). In order for these early intervention programs to be effective and have a more lasting impact on the children's success, parental efficacy and parental involvement both are key. These two components are discussed in the next section.

The Role of Parental Efficacy

Parents are children's first teacher, and it is very important to involve them in education. Validating this role, finding usefulness in their involvement, and enabling them to create a strong sense of efficacy, by helping their children to succeed in school (Dorsey, 1999), are also very important. Before efficacy level is discussed; parental role construction must be addressed.

What drives parental role construction? One suggestion could be motivations and choice patterns of individuals. Researchers have noted that the following components are associated with life histories: 1) prior relationship experiences that are carried forward, and 2) attitudes, expectations, and emotions that are associated with those relationship experiences (Belsky, 1990; Vondra & Belsky, 1993, & Luster & Okagaki, 1993). These components help shape and drive parental role construction in the families that parents establish in the future.

Other factors that affect parenting role and performance are coping with demanding circumstances and approaches to problem solving. Less effective parents are generally under emotional distress, due to the economic status that affects them at this level (Bandura, 1995). These factors tend to reduce parents' confidence in their ability and influence their parental beliefs about making a positive difference in their children's lives.

Now that the stage is set for the beginnings of parental efficacy, the next step is to identify the efficacy level of parents. According to Hoover-Dempsey &

Sandler (1997) & Dorsey (1999), parents who possess a strong-to-moderate standing in all of the before mentioned areas, and communicate this level of efficacy through home-school connections are considered "involved" by educators.

High levels of self-efficacy in parents tend to promote opportunities to develop strategies and minimize risks by using preventative strategies. These parents also rely upon and trust their social supports – i.e. family, neighbor, and school (Bandura, 1997). However, some parents from low-income populations tend to believe that they are not effective in their parenting skills. These parents consider themselves "ill-prepared to take on the parenting role because of a lack of effective parental modeling during their own childhood and an insecure sense of personal efficacy to manage the expanded familial demands" (Bandura, 1997, p. 190).

Research in emerging literacy and literacy acquisition has found that parents who appear to exhibit efficacy help their children become more informed about the structure of the written language. This is achieved through the use of multiple preliteracy activities that are developmentally appropriate and promoted verbal and written language (Burgess, Lundgren, Lloyd & Pianta, 2002).

According to the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K), children who can recognize their letters, who are read to at least three times a week, who recognize their basic numbers and shapes, and who demonstrate an understanding of the mathematical concept of relative size, demonstrate a higher overall reading and mathematics knowledge and skills as they enter

kindergarten. In addition, children who frequently demonstrate a positive approach to learning and who are in very good to excellent health as they enter kindergarten follow the same pattern.

Efficacious parents create a literate home environment, read aloud to their children prior to kindergarten, and turn the pages of a book so that their children can hear "the soft swishing sound" of the moving paper (Teale & Yokota, 2000). As stated earlier, these real-life activities helped children to develop literacy since they have purpose and are critical to their becoming literate. Parents in a high efficacy category also teach their children the conventions of print (directionality, concept of word, and punctuation) through direct contact with books.

Since children become literate at different rates and the paths to conventional reading are various, the literate activities that these parents involve their children in tend to induce them to read a lot and help them become good readers (Adams, 2001). These activities help children to make the connection between print and the spoken sound. The children see their parents model these reading behaviors and this builds the children's aspirations and intellectual efficacy. It also affects other areas in the children's lives, in particular their social relations and their academic development (Bandura, 1997). But research has suggested that this is not the same for all ethnicities.

Culture

During the qualitative parent-child relationship within the home learning environment, parents reinforce and satisfy their curiosity aboutthe world through

families sharing culture. Culture in this context refers to the "dynamic and shared system of beliefs, mores, values, attitudes, practices, roles, artifacts, symbols, and language" (Barbarin, 2002, p. 7). When parents use reading to share their attitudes about literacy to the child in the form of beliefs, expectations, and values, then this example of providing a rich context for self-affirmation serves as a viable means for constructing knowledge and school readiness.

Another aspect about culture as it relates to values is that culture is transformed through children socializing. According to Hannon (1998), young children do not acquire knowledge about literacy on their own. Parents, who place a value on education, generally promote this through home literacy, which is embedded in the literacy learning contexts and values transmission in that family. According to Luster & McAdoo's (1996) study, actions that parents were involved in while their children were at home were considered more important and valuable than the time these children spent while in school.

Ethnic Differences Related to Literacy

There are differences across cultural groups, in that for some families "the ways that reading is used by adults and children varies" (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998, p. 29). For some communities, the functional roles for literacy in the homes are not conducive to the children's acquisition of reading skills (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Nor is the practice of critical thinking, an essential aspect of information literacy, nurtured, valued, or considered a priority in those cultures

(Teacher Librarian, 2003). Further, in some cultures, social behaviors, strategies and dispositions that would help children from diverse cultures succeed in school must be modeled.

Research has also shown "that lower SES mothers and especially most [B]lack lower SES mothers have difficulty sharing books with their young children, (Edwards, 1999, p. 224). It is through this sharing that skills such as verbal language, phonological understanding, and alphabetic knowledge to skilled reading, develop a strong relationship and literacy is promoted. Bowman (2002) found that skill development was less likely to be promoted in the homes of African American children than in other children.

Family literacy in the Hispanic community, especially when one considers "the complexity of these immigrant families' lives and their relations with the schools" is a serious concern of educators (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993, p. 393). Mexican Americans have the lowest median school years completed, and the reading levels of Hispanic students are below school expectations (Becerra, 1998 & Delgado-Gaitan, 1993). But Delgado-Gaitan and other researchers have pointed out that there is "discrepancy between the place of literacy in the Mexican community and the schools' understanding of its place" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993, p. 393).

Resourceful Families

McNaughton (1996) viewed families as resourceful in that they: a) arranged family time and provided resources which socialized the children into practicing literacy; b) reflected family practices that built social and cultural identities; and c) were involved with literacy practices that expressed specific activities that had constituents that were identifiable, i.e. rules, goals and instructions to activities.

Resourceful families create a learning and development system within the family. Both Hispanic and African American families used resourceful strategies that were related to literacy, as stated earlier. These children gained meaning from the activities, and the close literacy relationship between the parent and the child was based on the connections made from these activities and the setting. This was another way of linking parental efficacy and family literacy together. (McNaughton, 1996).

Positive Ethnic Literacy Learning Environments

Patterns of parental involvement and positive learning environments do exist in some ethnic minority families that are low-SES, where literacy is positively valued by the adults in those minority communities (Slaughter & Epps, 1987 & Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). In Mexican families, "oral storytelling by

parents to younger children, letter writing to relatives in Mexico, and storybook reading of popular trade books in Spanish" were reported by Delgado-Gaitan (1990).

According to Edwards (1989), "the most extensive body of research describing parent-child book reading interactions in lower SES black families is the research reported by Heath and her colleagues (Heath, 1982a, 1982b, 1986; Heath, Branscombe & Thomas, 1985; Heath & Thomas, 1984)" (p. 224). Heath found several things 1) black teenage mothers seldom-asked preschooler literacy related questions such as, "What is this?" 2) adult-question-and answer routine had to occur "before children could answer question(s) posed by the adults in these interactions," and 3) questions the children in the sample heard at home differed from those questions that the teachers in school asked (p. 224).

"When poor families provide supportive environments for their children, the children develop the social and cognitive skills necessary to succeed academically" (Luster & McAdoo, 1996). African American parents have high expectations for their children, especially in the areas of education and occupational status. This is due to the forced enslavement of African Americans, and the old adage that knowledge is power (Yeakey, 2000).

> Schooling is the key to the attainment of elevated social and economic status...[and it] provided the means by which European immigrant Americans moved into the social, cultural, and political mainstream while African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans evinced far less prosperity (p. 56-57).

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For these reasons, "many African Americans want their children to reach higher educational and occupational status than they themselves obtained. The parenting approaches and higher expectations are essential, especially in the long run" (McAdoo, 2002, p. 48).

Children's School Readiness

Predictors to school readiness

While parents involve their children in preschool literacy acquisition activities at home, they also involve them in two important predictors to school readiness – a qualitative parent-child relationship and the home-learning environment (Parker et al, 1999).

In Parker et al's (1999) parent involvement in Head Start study, both the Head Start parent-child relationship and the home-learning environment were positively linked to parent involvement. Further, these factors played a key role in intervention programs, in that they helped to establish long-term relationships with "hard-to-reach families" which later on led to sustained family involvement, where it became challenging.

A second finding in this study was that parents who spend more time helping their children learn skills at home score higher overall on cognitive and language competencies. Parents are able to better facilitate the at-home learning process and, as a result, the children are well prepared to begin kindergarten. According to Parker et al (1999), these children's behavior,

cognitive development, and adaptation to the classroom experience is underscored in the comprehensive nature of their school readiness.

Graue (1993) found that parents think that age/maturity have an impact on readiness, along with the academic orientation of the program, and the way of behaving (social readiness) of the child. Further, she had parents define school readiness, and then divided the definition into four dimensions: 1) that children grasped the fundamental concepts like learning the alphabet and numbers, writing the alphabet, and counting; 2) that children developed social skills, so that they could become group oriented, and be able to handle different situations that would come up with the kindergarten experience; 3) that children needed to develop good school attitudes; and 4) that children are prepared for later school.

Current research has found that there are many strategies and activities that parents take advantage of to help determine the readiness level of their children, i.e., shared reading, writing notes, coloring, playing board games, and using flash cards. Some parents avail themselves and their children of the benefits of intervention preschool programs, many of which use the activities just discussed. There are many such programs that stand out, but four – Head Start, Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), Parents as Teachers (PAT), and Parents as Partners in Reading Program are each designed to help build the bridges between school and home. Each intervention program accomplishes this task differently, and a brief history and key points are discussed in the next section.

Preschool Program and Parental Capacity Building

Previously, it was stated that early intervention was key in the academic success of low-income children and that there was a link to their cognitive development. Early in the 1960s, the "war on poverty" caused a variety of intervention programs to change the conditions associated with this population. According to NRC (2001), preschool programs are very important vehicles for enhancing the school readiness of low-income and educationally disadvantaged preschool children. In order to maximize the successful early school experiences at home, parental assistance was seen as the key.

Head Start

Head Start is a federally funded, comprehensive child development and family support services program. Founded in 1965, it began as a six-week summer program. Over the course of the years Head Start has expanded and it is now a nine-month school-year program. Head Start is designed to meet the needs of low-income preschool children and their families by preparing the children for school cognitively, socio-psychologically, and to ensure that the children were healthy.

During a Head Start national conference of community agency directors who met in Kansas City, Missouri in 1973, there was a need to develop a private and national association. The Head Start Association would advocate to Congress the special needs of the Head Start community. This came about

because community action agencies were being eliminated, and the directors of these agencies resisted.

Support grew and the increased advocacy efforts resulted in a parent affiliation association formed in September 1974. After that, participants increased and needs and varied interest caused the separate associations to form the National Head Start Association. Later on, "friends" of Head Start who became interested (directors, parents, staff members and friends) did not fit into the already affiliated associations, and as a result on June 7, 1990, the current affiliate NHSA was organized.

Parent involvement is central to Head Start's philosophy, and it is a part of the governing body and input on policy councils and program planning. Parents not only work with their children at home, but they are required to spend time in the classroom. As a result of this type of involvement, parents can see first hand what is expected of their children and what school readiness skills they will be equipped with when they leave Head Start and begin kindergarten.

Home Instruction Program For Preschool Youngsters - HIPPY

HIPPY was developed in 1969 at the National Council of Jewish Women Research Institute for Innovation in Education, located at Hebrew University in Israel. Its goal was to improve Israel's immigrant children and because of its success, it expanded and was brought to the United States in 1984. It is a two-year home-based early intervention program that believes that the family plays a

significant role in the learning abilities of young children, so much so that the two

basic tenets in their mission statement "are that all children can learn, and all

parents want what's best for their children" (www.hippyusa.org).

Parents are visited weekly for thirty weeks per year by home visitors who

role-play weekly guidebook lessons. The home visitors leave the lessons with

the parent and they, in turn, teach their children for 15 minutes per day for two

years. Participation in this type of program gives professionals a view of: (1) the

parents' educational aspirations for their children, and how they value education;

(2) parental efficacy, especially the quality of the parent-child interaction and the

parent's ability to teach their child; and (3) parental involvement, in particular the

time spent doing the weekly guidebook lessons. All of these are related to

parents being informed about school readiness skills.

Parent as Teachers – (PAT)

Parent as Teachers (PAT) is a national and international family education

and support program. Currently, PAT has implemented over 2,000 program sites

in 48 other states and internationally in Australia, Canada, England, Malaysia,

New Zealand and the West Indies (PAT national center web site). It began in

four pilot sites in 1981 in Missouri for first-time parents of newborns. When the

"Early Childhood Development Act of 1984 which mandated that every school

district provide parent education and screening services to families with children

ages birth to five," PAT was implemented statewide (Early Childhood

Development Act Annual Final Report, FY2000). This statewide program in

Missouri served as the prototype for replications both nationally and internationally.

The goals of the program are to: (1) increase parents' knowledge of child development from birth to 3 years of age; (2) have home, school, and community partner with each other; and (3) have parents later on impact the school performance of their children. These goals obtained through a wide range of activities, encourage language development, intellectual growth, social and motor skill development in young children (Welfare Information Network website). These are good examples of building the bridge between school and home.

Evaluation studies have shown positive outcomes and that PAT parents and were: more knowledgeable about child rearing practices and child development; are reading more to their children and engaged in more language- and literacy-promoting behaviors; more confident in their parenting skills; and are more involved in their children's schooling (PAT national center web site).

With regard to the positive child outcomes, PAT children are also significantly more advanced by age 3 in language and social development, problem solving and other cognitive abilities. In addition, they have higher kindergarten readiness tests scores and measure higher on reading, math and language in the first through fourth grades.

Parents as Partners in Reading Program

The Parents as Partners in Reading Program (Edwards, 1989, 1994,1995a, 1995b, &1995c), was developed as a result of a case study in

Donaldsonville, Louisiana, in 1985. The Donaldsonville Case had five African

American Head Start mothers that participated in a parent-child book-reading

project. This Program took the next step in literacy research involving low-SES

parents involvement in storybook reading, in that it recommended strategies

towards improving parental participation (Edwards, 1995a). According to

Edwards (1989), none of these mothers had previous book reading interactions

with their Head Start children. Most of them were not high school graduates, and

they were all single parents.

A second reason why this program was developed was because it had

hands-on activities, whereby it showed parents how to read to their children

effectively, and they could practice immediately. Finally, parents were able to

fulfill an important personal goal/expectation; they could learn to identify

pedagogical techniques, text factors, reading strategies and familial factors, all

central to the literacy acquisition of their children (Edwards, 1995a).

The goals of Parents as Partners in Reading Program were structured to

correlate the goals and objectives of the kindergarten and first-grade curriculum

of this rural southern Louisiana school. It was also "designed to facilitate a fit

between the parents' expectations and the school's general expectations"

(Edwards, 1995c p. 1). There were nine course objectives ranging from learning

strategies and techniques related to shared reading to developing a parental

involvement teacher-training sequence that would involve parents as home tutors

(Edwards, 1995b).

Parents as Partners in Reading made another impact on the local community; this was the first time in history that the Donaldsonville school parents gained the privilege to borrow books from the school library. With respect to the primary teachers, a literacy-learning course was developed. This course met during the academic school year at the school. The 23 two-hour sessions were divided into three phases: coaching, peer modeling, and parent-child interactions, with each phase running approximately six to seven weeks.

Another lesson that the teachers learned were that all literacy environments should be acknowledged and not be ignored. These primary teachers learned to respect that parents held the key to unlocking the meaning of text (Chapman, 1986) [as cited in Edwards, 1995a]. Both parents and teachers could learn to support each other, and teachers thought more carefully about the directives they gave parents.

All these early intervention programs showed evidence of success, but more importantly, each of them actively included parents as key partners. Parents not only worked with their children at home, but they saw first hand what was expected of their children. In addition, parents saw what school readiness skills their children would be equipped with when they entered school. Each of these intervention programs fostered establishing long-term relationships with "hard-to-reach families", which later on led to sustained family involvement, where it might become challenging.

Summary

The review of literature concerning the factors that relate to school readiness and literacy acquisition revealed that readiness is determined by the social, and perceptual development of the child. Also, it is determined by the impacts on the acquisition of linguistic, mathematical, and other skills relevant to school readiness (NRC, 2001). Some cognitive studies have found that children who have increased exposure to developmentally appropriate, intellectually stimulating, and literacy activities early, resulted in enhanced development (Campbell & Ramey, 1994; Renwick, 1984; Robinson, 1990; Neuman, 1998; & Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998).

Language development studies have shown that children who interact and converse with adults, tend to increase their language and literacy acquisition, especially when the literacy was used through real-life, and purposeful activities (Clay, 1979, Parker & Davis, 1983, Berk, 2000, Teake & Yokota, 2000, Newman, 1998, Jones & Smith-Burke, 1999, Taylor, 1998, and Burgess et al 2002).

Research has shown that early intervention was one solution to the academic success of low-income children, as it relates to school readiness (Campbell & Ramey, 1994; Parker et al 1999, Adams, 2001 and Burgess et al 2002), and these children were better prepared for kindergarten, and there were gains. Also, there is little difference in the academic performance of children involved and not involved in enrichment activities.

Studies in emerging literacy and literacy acquisition have shown that parents who are efficacious help their children become informed about the

structure of the written language (Burgess et al 2002). These parent models impact on the children's aspirations, intellectual efficacy, and academic development in the form of school readiness (Bandura, 1997). This fact was shown through each of the successful preschool programs – Head Start, HIPPY, PAT and Parents as Partners in Reading Program. Parental role construction as a base for parental efficacy, and the factors that affect its performance - coping with demanding circumstances and approaches to problem solving were also discussed.

The literature review revealed that there are differences in ethnicity as it is related to literacy. In some African American and Hispanic communities, literacy was not used the same way that the white community used it, and it was perceived by educators that those ethnicities didn't value literacy. However, examples were given of research done on African American and Hispanic populations that demonstrated positive ethnic literacy learning environments. In these studies there was evidence of qualitative parent-child relationship and the home-learning environment, both of which are predictors to school readiness. Finally, culture was discussed as it related to ethnicity, and the role of the family system in emergent literacy as being resourceful.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The focus of this study was to measure the relationship between Head Start parent participation and non-participation in a preschool literacy acquisition program and their children's school readiness. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methods and procedures used in conducting this study. First, the study design and the rationale for qualitative method are presented. Then, a description of the participants, procedure, instrumentation, description of measures, limitations of study and summary are presented.

Study Design

The design of this study was qualitative (see Figure 2). The major emphasis or goal of this study was to test the difference of participating and non-participating parents in a literacy acquisition program. Stratified sampling was used to ensure that the participants were "drawn from homogeneous subsets of [the] population" (Babbie, 1995, p. 210). The total population of participants was small (9) and there were two subgroups formed, those who participated in the literacy program (6), and those who registered but chose not to participate (3).

Open-ended interviews were conducted face-to-face in the participants' home. There are numerous benefits in using this approach. The first benefit in using ethnographic interviewing is that it focuses on the participant's perspective

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of culture through a firsthand encounter (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; & Edwards, 1995c). Second, it is descriptive (Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; & Edwards, 1995c) in that the interviewing enables the participants to give rich narrative descriptions and meanings of their experiences and the event (Seidman, 1998). Finally, themes are generated from the descriptions given by participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1999), and recurring ideas.

	Data Collection	Dimension Studied	Analysis
Qualitative	Face-to-Face Interviews	Participant's Opinion	Analyze & interpret participant and non-participant parents' experiences and educational aspirations. Using quotes, telling story. Brief case histories
Parents' Opinion Survey	Self-Administered Survey Questionnaire	Parental Belief • Subscale 1 (Spoiling) • Subscale 2 (Floor Freedom) • Subscale 3 (Discipline/ Control) • Subscale 4 (Talking/ Reading to child)	Descriptive Statistics
		Perception of Parental Efficacy Scale • Subscale 1 (Perceived Contingency) • Subscale 2 (Perceived Competency) • Subscale 3 (Extrafamilial Influences) • Subscale 4 (Fatalism)	Means and Standard Deviations
AGS-ESP Cognitive/Language Profile	Researcher administered Assessment	Early literacy knowledge and ability	Group sum and group mean of pretest & posttest AGS scores
		Cognitive • Visual Discrimination • Logical Relations	Group sum and group mean of pretest & posttest AGS scores
		Language • Verbal Concepts • Basic School Skills	Group sum and group mean of pretest & posttest AGS scores
Concepts about print	Researcher administered Assessment	Early literacy knowledge and ability	Group sum and group mean of pretest & posttest *Concepts about print* scores

Figure 2 Qualitative Study Design

Quantitative data were collected from three sources: The Parents' Opinion

Survey (Luster, 1985), AGS Early Screening Profiles (AGS-ESP, Harrison et al,

1990) and *Concepts about print* (Clay, 1979). A description of these can be seen

in Figure 2.

Participants

Sixteen registered participants were sent a letter with a consent form,

asking them to participate. This was followed by a phone call. Only two letters

sent were returned, due to relocation of the parents. Nine Head Start parent-

child pairs of the original sixteen who enrolled in the literacy acquisition program

responded and were willing to complete a one-hour interview. This was a sample

from a funded FACT grant that supported early literacy development from a

community school approach to school readiness. These parent-child pairs

attended Wexford and Harley Franks Head Start Programs during the academic

year 2000-2001.

All the adult participants were female, as shown in Table 1. The mean age

was 29.78 years. The ethnic breakdown consisted of 4 African American women

and 5 Latina women. Their educational level ranged from 11th grade to at least

one year of college. All families met the income requirements that are required

for Head Start participants, in that they were living below the federal poverty line

or they received Aid to Families with Dependent Children (Administration for

Children, Youth and Families, 1995).

Table 1

Demographics of PACT Head Start Parent Participants'
Age, Ethnicity, Education, Marital Status & Employment Status

Women	Age	Ethnicity	Highest Grade	Marital Staus	Employed
1	33	African American	12+*	Divorced	No
2	36	Latino	11	Married	No
3	28	African American	12	Divorced	No
4	35	Latino	12+*	Divorced	No
5	22	Latino	11	Divorced	No
6	45	African American	12+**	Married	Yes
7	25	African American	12	Divorced	Yes
8	23	Latino	12+*	Divorced	No
9	21	Latino	12	Divorced	No

Note: Participants who have 12+ = 6-24 months of college (*) or vocational training (**).

The Head Start children's mean age was 4 years and 2 months (see Table 2), and the sample included eight boys and one girl.

Table 2

Demographics of PACT Head Start Children's Participants'
Age, Ethnicity and Gender

Child	Age	Ethnicity	Gender
1	4 years 5 months	African American	Male
2	3 years 9 months	Latino	Male
3	4 years 8 months	African American	Male
4	4 years 5 months	Latino	Male
5	4 years 11 months	Latino	Male
6	3 years 9 months	African American	Female
7	3 years 10 months	African American	Male
8	4 years	Latino	Male
9	3 years 10 months	Latino	Male

Procedure

Both a questionnaire survey and an interview survey for the parent

participants were used for this study. In addition, two screening profiles were

used for the children who volunteered. The researcher administered both of

these assessments in school for the children. A pretest and posttest were done at the beginning and the end of the program to see if there was an increase in skill level.

Data Collection

Selecting the Sample

The list of Head Start parents, from Harley Franks and Wexford, who registered for the literacy acquisition program, was used to obtain the sample for this study. Head Start mothers that indicated that they were willing to participate in this study by the returned permission slip (Appendix B) were called, and a one-hour interview appointment was scheduled. In several instances, interview appointments had to be rescheduled due to family obligations

Administering the Parents' Opinion Survey

The Parents' Opinion Survey (POS) served, as a type of interview and the respondent was the "interviewer". This self-administered survey questionnaire was used as a means for gathering descriptive and analytical characteristics of Head Start parents. In particular, the Perception of Parental Efficacy (POPE) Scale, assessed parental beliefs regarding the environmental influences on the Head Start children's development (Luster, 1985). The importance of this type of research is to understand from the participants' perspective the meaning of their experience in the intervention.

The Parents' Opinion Survey was mailed and included was an informant consent (Appendix E), and a returned self-addressed stamped envelope. A reminder of their upcoming scheduled interview was also included, with telephone numbers of the researcher in the event of a schedule change.

Conducting Interview of Parent

At the beginning of the interview, the Parents' Opinion Survey (Appendix E) was collected if it had not been returned in the self-addressed stamped envelope. One-hour interviews were done on all nine of the parents who indicated that they wanted to be interviewed. These face-to-face interviews were done during the months of March and April 2002.

Each Head Start mother was asked if the interview could take place in her home, and they all agreed. None of the Head Start children was present at the time of the interview. During the interview, the Head Start mother was asked questions concerning her participation in the literacy acquisition program (PACT), program effectiveness, barriers to participation, and recommendations for future parent education programs (Appendix G). Each interview was audio taped and later transcribed, analyzed and reported by the researcher.

Administering the AGS Early Screening Profile

The AGS Early Screening Profile (AGS-ESP) instrument was used to screen preschool children to determine if they were developmentally at-risk. The researcher administered the test. Only one subscale was used, the

Cognitive/Language Profile which consists of two cognitive subtests -Visual

Discrimination and Logical Relations, that measure nonverbal reasoning abilities;

and two language subtests – Verbal Concepts and Basic School Skills, that

measure both the receptive and the expressive language abilities of children

(Harrison, Kaufman, Kaufman, et al. 1990).

Each Head Start child was given a pretest in the beginning of the program,

and a posttest near the end of the program. This test takes approximately 15 - 30

minutes each time to administer, depending on the development and the

individual age of the Head Start child. There were few distractions while the test

was administered in a semi-isolated hallway in the representative elementary

schools.

Administering the adapted *Concepts about print*

The adapted *Concepts about print* test was used to test the Head Start

child's understanding of the conventions of books. This test was administered

before the AGS-ESP test and lasted approximately 10 minutes in a semi-isolated

hallway of the representative elementary schools.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

Microsoft Excel was used to enter data from the Parents' Opinion Survey and certain questions (3, 6, 9, 18, 20, 23, 26, 34, 37, 41, 46, 48, 54, 56, and 57) were recoded to reverse the response as suggested by Luster (1985). Means and standard deviations were calculated for participating and non-participating parents.

In order to test the research questions regarding the statistical difference between participating and non-participating children's school readiness, the Head Start children's pretest and posttest scores on the AGS-ESP were calculated based on the scoring system of the national standardized sample outlined in the AGS-ESP manual. Also, the children's pretest and posttest adapted *Concepts about print* scores were calculated based on the total number of correct answers out of a possible 22. The responses to each AGS-ESP and adapted *Concepts about print* questions were then reduced to a group mean.

Qualitative Data Analysis

A face-to-face interview was conducted for each Head Start mother, and common themes were identified. Interview questions in the following categories were asked: parent participation, program design, parental efficacy, barriers to participation, access to resources and use of social networks, and

recommendations. A brief case history of the participating mothers was documented.

MEASURES

Instrumentation

Ethnographic Interview of Parent

An interview is a purposeful conversation that is used to get descriptive data from the participants' perspective (Creswell, 1998). It is a vehicle used to "unearth the 'voices' of people usually not heard and to excavate these voices across a range of life's activities" (Weiss & Fine, 2000, p. 26).

Since the goal of in-depth interviews is for the researcher to understand how participants understand and make meaning of their experience, the authenticity of what is said makes it reasonable for the researcher to have confidence in the participant's validity (Seidman, 1998). For these reasons this qualitative research method was chosen

Parents' Opinion Survey

The Parents' Opinion Survey was designed to assess parental beliefs that were related to effective and appropriate child-rearing practices (Luster, 1985). This was used to assess the efficacy level of parents as it related to their belief that they could influence the development of their child. There are four subscales: Subscale 1) beliefs regarding spoiling the child (seven items), with a

high score indicating mothers believe their children can be spoiled; Subscale 2) beliefs regarding floor freedom (six items), with a high score indicating that "mothers believe the child should be given considerable leeway in exploring the home environment; Subscale 3) beliefs regarding floor freedom (six items), with a high score indicating that "mothers believe the child should be given considerable leeway in exploring the home environment; and finally Subscale 4) beliefs regarding talking and reading to their children (three items), with high scores indicating their importance.

The Parents' Opinion Survey has four subscales that are on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Subscale 1, perceived contingency, had six items; high scores indicated that the Head Start mothers perceived that the developmental outcomes of their children were based on their parenting practices (alpha = .75 and mean inter-item correlation = .33).

Subscale 2, perceived competency, had two items; high scores indicated competency (alpha = .82 and mean inter-item correlation = .70). Subscale 3, perceived importance of extra-familial influences, had six items; high scores indicating strong extra-familial developmental influences occurred that was beyond their control (alpha =. 68, and mean inter-item correlation = .27). Finally, Subscale 4, fatalistic versus nonfatalistic outlook on child's future, had nine items; high score indicated fatalistic outlook on the future of their child (alpha = .63 and mean inter-item correlation = .24).

AGS Early Screening Profiles

The AGS Early Screening Profiles (AGS-ESP) (Harrison et al., 1990) scores were taken at pretest and posttest time intervals on these children. This assessment is a preschool screening instrument that is used to identify children who may be developmentally at risk or who may have behavioral or learning problems. Only one of the three components of this instrument was used – Cognitive/Language Profile.

The AGS-ESP scores for the Cognitive/Language Profile were based on base scores for the subtests. These point scores were then placed on a domain scale similar to it. The corresponding raw score was then transformed to an aged based point score scale that had a mean of 10 and standard deviation of 3 (Kaufman & Kaufman, 1990). The normed alpha and the pretest and posttest were both above .80. The validity was only calculated for the Level II standard score, which was not used in this research study.

Adapted Clay's *Concepts about print*

Concepts about print is an assessment tool that was adapted from An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement by Marie M. Clay (1979). This measure was developed "to describe children's understandings of the conventions of books, such as how a book is held and directionality of print" (McNaughton, 1999, p. 5). This study used an adapted form from the Michigan Literacy Progress Profile. The maximum possible score of this adapted version that a child can obtain is 22 points.

Limitations of the study

The methodological limitations of the study included the selection and number of the informants, generalizability of study, missing phenomena, and time conflicts for face-to-face interviews.

Researcher's Selection of Informants, generalizability of study, and missing phenomena

Participant selection was one of convenience in that all Head Start mothers in the Wexford and Harley Franks programs were invited to participate. But there was an unequal number of participating and non-participating Head Start parents who volunteered were contacted for an interview and each was sent a self-administered survey to complete and return.

The ethnic breakdown of the Head Start population for this area at the time of the study was 27% African American, 43 % White, 14% multiethnic, 11% Hispanic, 3% Asian and 1 Native American. While all parents from Wexford and Harley Franks Head Start programs were invited to participate, the only two racial groups that participated were Blacks and Hispanics. The relatively small sample size was not enough to be representative of all Head Start mothers in the Greater Lansing Area. Because of this, phenomena might have been missed, and generalizability of the Head Start population is not possible. A larger sample size would allow for greater confidence in the findings and strengthened the study.

Time Conflicts for Interviews

On many occasions, the researcher had to reschedule face-to-face interview appointments due to conflicting appointments or work schedules and unexpected family emergencies of the participants. The time conflict seemed to reappear particularly while working with families who tended not to participate.

Summary

In order to measure the relationship between Head Start parent participation and non-participation in a preschool literacy acquisition program and their children's school readiness, both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used. Nine Head Start parent-child pairs from two local Head Start programs in Lansing, Michigan who enrolled in the literacy acquisition program were interviewed in their homes and completed a Parents' Opinion Survey. School readiness assessments for the children- the AGS-Early Screening Profile and Clay's *Concepts about print,* were administered. Finally, five limitations of the study were discussed – the selection and number of the informants, generalizability of the study, missed phenomena, and the time conflicts for the parental face-to-face interviews.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter contains the quantitative and the qualitative results of the

thesis study. The research questions tested used the Parents' Opinion survey,

the face-to-face interview for parents, as well as the AGS-ESP and *Concepts'*

about print for the children. The purpose was to measure the Head Start child's

school readiness and its relationship to Head Start parent participation and non-

participation in a preschool literacy acquisition program.

The research questions tested were:

School Readiness

1   How do children's school readiness scores differ among those whose
parents participated in the literacy acquisition program versus those who chose
not to?

2   Do participating and non-participating parents differ on self-efficacy as
measured by the Parents' Opinion Survey?

3   How do parental educational aspirations for t heir children differ among
participating and non-participating Head Start parents?

4   What factors, if any, were barriers to Head Start parents participating in
the readiness acquisition program?

<u>Q1 – Participating vs. non-participating Head Start Children's school readiness scores</u>

<u>Concept about print scores</u>

The research question that was tested was how do children who participated in the literacy acquisition program's posttest school readiness scores differ from those whose parents chose not participate. Tables 3 and 4 highlight the group mean scores for pretest and posttest school readiness. As shown in Table 3, the mean posttest Clay's *Concepts about print* scores (6.83) improved for the children whose parents participated (pretest mean score was 5.17). The difference in the average posttest scores of participating children was about 3.87 from the mean for participating and 2 from the mean for non-participating. There was an actual decline in the non-participating group.

When individual scores were examined, child 1 was the only one in group 1 that did not improve, and child 3's scores remained unchanged. Child 2 stands out also, in that he made the largest gain (4 points) in his posttest score. When you look at the non-participating posttest group mean (8), this showed no improvement from the pretest group mean score (9.33). Child 8 was the only one that showed improvement in their test score, the other two children showed no gains; they actually showed lower scores.

Table 3

Participating Head Start Children's Group Sum and Group Mean for Pretest and Posttest *Concepts about Print*

Child	Concepts Pretest	Concepts Posttest	X - X	$(X - X)^2$
1	6	5	-1.83	3.35
2	10	14	7.17	51.41
3	4	6	-0.83	0.69
4	3	3	-3.83	14.67
5	3	5	-1.83	3.35
6	5	8	1.17	1.37
Sum	31	41	10	74.84
Mean	5.17	6.83		
S.D.				3.87

Table 4

Non-Participating Head Start Children's Group Sum and Group Mean for Pretest and Posttest Concepts about Print

Child	Concepts Pretest	Concepts Posttest	X - X	$(X - X)^2$
7	8	6	-2	4
8	6	8	0	0
9	14	10	2	4
Sum	28	24	-4	8
Mean	9.33	8		
S. D.				2

The graph below (Figure 3) shows another picture of the posttest mean score between the participating and non-participating Head Start children. The non-participating group started higher and ended higher than the participating group.
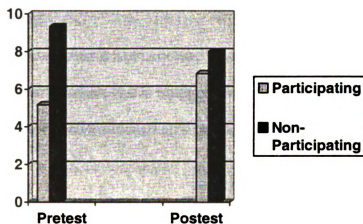

Figure 3 Pretest & Posttest Concepts about print Means

The question answered correctly most frequently in the adapted *Concepts about print* test was when the child had to point to "a small letter." Questions that related to identifying the children's understanding of the conventions of books (parts of the book - front and back, title, direction in reading, first word on the page, one word/two words) came next in the correctly answered category.

<u>AGS-ESP</u>

As shown in Tables 5 & 6, the mean posttest AGS-ESP scores (99.33) improved for the children whose parents participated (pretest mean score was 95.17). The difference in the average posttest scores of participating children was about 17.82 from the mean for participating and 12.70 from the mean for non-participating.

Child 1 and Child 3 both showed no improvement in their posttest scores, while all the other children in this category showed gains. Also, there was one child (child 5) that showed remarkable gains in their posttest score (27 points).

Table 5

Participating Head Start Children's Group Sum and Group Mean
for Pretest and Posttest AGS-ESP

Child	AGS-ESP Pretest	AGS-ESP Posttest	$X - \bar{X}$	$(X - \bar{X})^2$
1	94	90	-9.33	87.05
2	115	119	19.67	386.91
3	86	78	-21.33	454.97
4	94	96	-3.33	11.09
5	96	123	23.67	560.27
6	86	90	-9.33	87.05
Sum	571	596		1587.54
Mean	95.17	99.33		
S. D.				17.82

Table 6 showed the non-participating Head Start children's AGS-ESP

posttest group mean score (104.33) was higher than the participating group's

mean score (99.33). Child 7 was the only one that remained the same, while the

other two children in this category improved their scores.

The results indicated that there was a positive difference in the

participating children scores as opposed to the non-participating children. The

participating children's scores improved as a result of participating in the literacy

acquisition program.

Table 6

Non-Participating Head Start Children's Group Sum and Group Mean
for Pretest and Posttest AGS-ESP

	AGS-ESP Pretest	AGS-ESP Posttest	$X - \overline{X}$	$(X - \overline{X})^2$
Child				
7	97	97	-7.33	53.73
8	91	97	-7.33	53.73
9	115	119	14.67	215.21
Sum	303	313		161.33
Mean	101	104.33		
S. D.				12.70

The graph below (Figure 4) shows another picture of the posttest mean

score between the participating and non-participating Head Start children. Both

graphs show that the posttest group mean scores for the non-participating Head

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Start children were higher than the participating Head Start children. They also show that there was improvement in the posttest group mean scores of the participating Head Start children, but the non-participating group's posttest scores were higher.
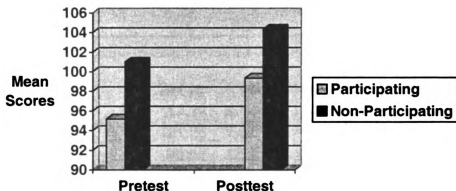

Figure 4 Pretest & Posttest AGS-ESP Means

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations for Parents' Opinion Survey

Variable	Participating Parents (n=6)		Non-Participating Parents (n=3)	
	X̄	SD	X̄	SD
Parental Beliefs Survey				
Spoiling	14.26	5.99	6.86	5.7
Floor Freedom	17.33	8.14	9.33	4.46
Discipline	21.25	7.37	11.33	6.23
Talk/Read	26.67	12.7	17.67	0.58
Perception of Parental Efficacy				
Contingency	29.83	5.91	18	0
Competency	30	2.24	16.5	2.12
Extrafamilial Influences	22.5	5.1	3.5	1.25
Fatalism	16.33	7.89	7.67	6.92

Q2 – Differences in Parental Efficacy

The construct of self-efficacy was tested by a group of questions from the Parents' Opinion Survey (Luster, 1993). These were based on Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory. The purpose for asking these questions was to determine if the parenting behaviors of the participating parents differed from the non-participating parents. The means and standard deviations for the Parents' Opinion Survey are presented in Table 7. Participating parents scored higher (mean score = 26.67) than non-participating parents (mean score = 17.67) on all

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the questions on the Parents' Opinion Survey. Results found that participating parents scored higher than non-participating parents on the parental efficacy questions (7 and 16).

Q3 – Parental Educational Aspiration differences

The research question that was tested was how do parental educational aspirations differ among participating and non-participating parents for their children. Three questions (questions 38, 46, and 57) were asked about talking and reading to your child in the Parents' Opinion Survey (Luster, 1997). The participating parents scored higher (mean score = 26.67) than non-participating parents (17.67), indicating that they agreed that education was very important.

During the face-to-face interviews, one parent stated that:

> high school is just not enough any more. Before, when I got out of school, it was barely enough. So, I know that they would have to go to college and I teach them that...I keep telling [them] the importance of school and the importance of education. This same mom expanded her lesson and utilized her capital and further explained to her children that in order to purchase the things, the house, the toys, clothes and shoes, well, mama had to go to school to get a good job to get that stuff...I know that they are little...[but I] try to explain to [them] when you do something then you go and will be able to do this or that.

Additionally, during the face-to-face interviews, each parent suggested that reading, going to the library, talking to child and teaching their child were all-important. Another parent stated, "Reading sparks interest and causes the child to think. Even looking at pictures. I talked, read and sang to my child while I was still pregnant and after he was born".

Q4 – Barriers to program participation

Shortly after the first two weeks of each session, attrition presented itself as a barrier to participation in the literacy acquisition program. The suggested list of barriers were attrition; family obligations; location of intervention meetings; parent themselves; time of year program offered; transportation; personal and family illnesses; lack of child care arrangements; perceived benefits of intervention; appointment conflicts; time requirements of intervention; and the impact of welfare reform.

Summary

The qualitative results were presented in this chapter. Evidence was found that the research question was not supported, in that the children whose parents participated did not score higher than those with non-participating parents in school readiness skills and concepts. However, they improved in their posttest group mean scores.

On the construct of parental efficacy, the participating parents scored higher on all of the questions than the non-participating parents indicating that

they were more efficacious. Also, on the parental educational aspirations

portion, the participating parents agreed that education was very important.

Lastly, in regards to barriers to participation, it was reported during the

face-to-face interviews that at times, parents were the barriers themselves.

Other barriers that were reported were personal and family illnesses,

appointment conflicts, family obligations, time of year that program was offered,

lack of child care arrangements, transportation, the age and marital status of

Head Start mothers, and the impact of welfare reform.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

After looking at the results of the study, there was a key component missing - white families did not participate in the study. An invitation was extended to all parents through the monthly parent meetings, as well as flyers that were sent home to parents on two separate occasions with their Head Start child. Although race was not a variable that was considered, the factor of race is one of the first exchanges when people assemble. According to Geertz (1963), the "senses of ethnicity and interpersonal affinity based on ethnic commonality" of the researcher working with an ethnic minority sample should be considered (p.109 [as cited in Lerner, Sparks & McCubbin, 1999]), especially since "some parents have strongly held positions for or against [professionals] of another race" (McAdoo, 2001, p. 101).

Facilitators, who create a more inclusive learning environment, must develop the cultural competency to manage the contexts of diverse perspectives, histories, cultures and identities, all of which influence the dynamics of teaching and learning (Alfred, 2002). These influences are highlighted in the literature on adult education, along with the need for educators to foster an inclusive learning environment that accommodates the multiple worldviews that learners bring with them (Alfred, 2002).

During the face-to-face interviews, one of the questions was "What drew you to register for the program? Was it something that I said during the presentation, something that the Head Start teacher said, friend or one of the other parents?" There were several responses. One was presentation, in that the information that was given would help parents to achieve the educational, personal and familial goals for their children.

The only grandmother in the study felt that she needed some refresher pointers in raising her granddaughter, since her children were now adults in their late 20's and 30's. She stated, "You gave me something that peaked my interest...tools needed to prepare [my] granddaughter for kindergarten." Another parent stated, "You gave me the interest to be involved."

Another enticement was rapport. Research has shown that when a good rapport was established between the facilitator/examiner, performance of Black children was significant (Zigler & Butterfield, 1968; Zigler, Abelson, & Seitz, 1972). This was not found with the sample of white middle-class children. Along with rapport, was the personality of the researcher. One parent commented during the interview that "you are a magnet type person," you are friendly and because "we are immigrants, a lot of people discriminate [against] us....[it]...did not matter what I was, you just give advice... and you did not care what we [were]."

Two additional enticements were the trust and comfort level of the parents with the researcher. One year prior to the study, the researcher worked in the school on another project. This set the tone for trust and relationship building

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especially since I was one of four ethnic minority professionals in the building –

two were teachers (one African American female and one Mexican American

female) and one paraprofessional (African American female). "When parents feel

empowered to effect positive change in their children's academics, they no

longer feel like unwelcomed onlookers who are merely tolerated but rather liked

value members of the team whose mission is to ensure success for their

children" (Strutchens, Thomas, Perkins, 1997, p. 235). Overall, the parents

unanimously agreed that it was the experience that counted more than what was

presented at the parent recruitment meeting.

Overall the strategies used in the literacy acquisition program were found

to have a positive outcome on the cognitive and language development of the

participating Head Start children. This was based on the posttest scores, which

showed improvements in school readiness (AGS-ESP & Clay's *Concepts about*

print) as a result of participating in the literacy acquisition program. Also, there

were improvements in participating parents' behaviors, in particular parental

efficacy, and parental education aspirations.

Q1 – Participating vs. non-participating Head Start Children's school readiness

Child 1

Peggy's son's (Child 1) school readiness scores did not improve in either

school readiness area. The scores on the AGS and Concepts about print scores

decreased (4 points and 1 point). This was surprising due to the fact that Willie is

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such a bright and articulate child. The decrease may be due to other random variation factors (time that posttest was taken, testing fright, or illness). Absenteeism at the Head Start program overall was high at the time of the posttest, and Willie was absent due to flu symptoms and asthma conditions.

The mother's education and competency level were never in question, since she attended Michigan State University with credits towards a bachelor's degree in Family and Child Ecology, with a minor in child development. At the time of the study, she was a single parent, who was injured at work, out on medical leave for an extended period of time, and unemployed.

Child 2

Child 2 stands out also, in that he made the largest gain in his posttest scores. His AGS-ESP and Concepts about print scores both increased 4 points. This did not come as a surprise considering that while him and his mother participated in the literacy acquisition program, she spent a great deal of time with him and his sister. Factors that played a role in this child's school readiness gains were that Maria was a very committed Mexican mother, who reinforced the transmission of Mexican cultural values of ethnic pride, through her retention and use of the Spanish language in the home, through the preparation of traditional meals, and through her efforts of shattering the "monolithic portrayal of Mexicans as ignorant, [and] powerless failures" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993, p. 393).

Maria also limited the amount of television watched, encouraged reading to the point that at 3 years of age, her son read one of the Dr. Seuss books to his

Head Start class without assistance. He also wrote his first and last name without assistance, which is one of the basic skills for kindergarten. Maria encouraged her children to color and play games and do arts and crafts. Both children were helpful to each other and showed that they were progressing well in school.

Child 8

Child 8 was the only non-participating Head Start child that showed improvement in their Concepts about print posttest score. During the parent interview, his mother stated that Child 8 loved to read, especially when his father came over and read to him. "Whenever [he saw his] daddy with his book...he read to [him]. It is getting to the point now that [child 8] is reading to him. Or they will take turns. I think that is where [he] get[s] it from". These findings were consistent with the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten and first grade (ECLS-K), which found that Hispanic children were more likely than Black children to demonstrate reading proficiency.

Overall, the results indicated that the research question was not supported, in that the participating children scores were not considerably larger than the non-participating children; their scores showed improvement only over time. It is suggested that, "all the artificial boosters of achievements did not equip the participating Head Start children to score higher than the non-participating children "(Hale-Benson, 1986, p. xxv).

Child 3

Child 3 showed no gains on the AGS-ESP posttest scores. This came as no surprise to the researcher in that throughout the time that him and his mother participated in the literacy acquisition program, there were frequent parent-teacher conferences regarding his classroom behavior. Several times throughout the program, Byrd, his mother would have to leave and attend to him. There were also discipline problems at home as a result of his father being recently incarcerated. It is evident that this family is in need of some family counseling and other needed interventions so that they do not continue along a path that could lead to more negative social problems.

Another factor that may have attributed to his low performance was that as a toddler he had multiple ear infections to the point that he had to have tubes placed in his ears. Also, this child had been absent a lot during testing week, due to illness and school suspension. These factors may have impacted the low posttest score too.

Child 5

Child 5 showed remarkable gains in the AGS-ESP posttest scores. This child was one of three children; his mother was very quiet, attended the literacy acquisition program, asked few questions and completed the assignments. The reason for an increase of this magnitude for this child was not clear. But it is suggested that there are many influences that could attribute to this remarkable gain. First, the mother was aware that research showed that there was low

educational attainment amongst Mexican Americans, especially since she was one of statistics, i.e. completed only the 11th grade. But despite her limited education, she did not allow those obstacles to hinder her nor her child's success. This determination along with this parent-child interaction might have promoted her son's academic achievement. Also, she indicated during interview, that education was key in equipping her child with the necessary skills for kindergarten entry. It is further suggested that somehow those messages were transferred to the child and those influences affected his test taking abilities.

Girl in Study – Child 6

This study had only one Head Start girl who participated. According to the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS), there are gender differences in some literacy related skills. This study found that females were more likely to recognize words by sight and understand words in context than males. Males and females were equally likely to be adding and subtracting; females were more likely to be reading and males were more likely to be successful at advanced mathematical operations (NCES p. x).

Child 6 did score above the mean (8, mean=6.83) in the *Concepts about print* assessment; however, she did not score above the mean in the AGS-ESP assessment, although she did improve (X = 99.33 (group), X = 90 (child 6)). According to Barbarin (2002), boys as a group exhibit lower performance on a variety of dimensions compared to girls. The discrepancies may "reflect an amplification of prior differences in the precursor skills of letter recognition and

phonemic awareness that characterize children's prekindergarten experiences, rather than differential effects of teaching in itself" (p.3).

In addition to the fact that she was the only girl, another variable might have influenced her improved scores and that was she was the only Head Start child raised by a grandparent. "Researchers have established that grandparents are instrumental in the transmission of family values and beliefs" (Wright, 2002, p. 27). Also, the transmission of family values is crucial to the maintenance of culture and the socialization of children within families. Therefore, the issue of transgenerational values transmission and its impact on the socioemotional growth and development of grandchildren is consistent with Hannon's (1998) promoting literacy through literacy learning contexts.

This grandmother practiced an authoritarian-rejecting child rearing, which was also nurturing, and caretaking (Hale-Benson, 1986). Both of which benefited her granddaughter. This was consistent with Diana Baumrind's (1972) study regarding family patterns of Black and White preschoolers and their parents, where by white standards, this style of child-rearing would be regarded as change-worthy by many child-rearing experts (Hale-Benson, 1986). "Black daughters of authoritarian parents were exceptionally independent and at ease in the novel, nursery school setting" (Hale-Benson, 1986, p. 67). These Black girls were socially mature and demonstrated a wide range of adaptive behavior when compared to White girls. I would add these other names to this participating Head Start grandmother – mentor, role model, and griot.

Hale-Benson (1986) went on further and stated that Black females were imbued with a strong work orientation, which had its roots in early childhood socialization. Regardless of their social class, they were taught that they would probably be expected to contribute to the support of the family. According to Robert Hill, one of the strengths of the Black family is that Black women can be counted on to contribute to the support of the family.

Q2– Differences in Parental Efficacy

Based on the findings, the participating parents were empowered and they viewed themselves as having a high level of self-efficacy. Their experience went "beyond learning more about reading aloud to their children....[They] made personal decisions to seek more education, used literacy to express their opinions publicly...,and were offered employment based on their new confidence and skills" (Edwards, 1995, p. 563).

Peggy was an example of this type of parent, in that she used her strengthened parent voice, had a more active role in the classroom as a parent, became active in the local PTA, and then was appointed a committee chairperson.

Maria was shy and quiet, spoke Spanish fluently and English was a second language for her. She chose not to allow the language barrier to hinder her; rather she moved forward and utilized her capacity by accessing the Learning Resource Center and took advantage of the make-and-take activities

for her children. These actions were good examples of the old Chinese saying, "tell me, I'll forget. Show me, I may remember. But involve me and I'll understand".

Q3 – Parent Educational Aspirations

The results indicated that participating parents agreed that education was very important. According to Washington (1999), education has a long-standing faith within the Black community, and it is a primary means to support upward mobility. Because of this, high educational aspirations especially for children are well documented.

Anna, a Mexican American mother, valued education so much that she took it to the next level after being married, divorced and becoming a single parent, in that she went back to school through her job at the credit union. She is currently a teller trainer and always thought that she didn't have time to go to school because of the kids, but "everybody there has kids, they encourage it… so much that everybody is going to school".

Maria is currently enrolled in English classes in the local community to be better equipped to speak English more fluently. Her plans are to later attend a local community college to further her education.

Peggy took it to the next level in that she accessed community resources by enrolling in the *Closing The Gap Program*. The mission of the non-profit *Closing The Gap Program* is to provide Head Start, Work-First, Transitional Housing, and other low-income participants in the Lansing, MI area, an

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opportunity to earn training in basic computers and the Internet. Participants are entitled to: a free one day training at a local computer-learning center, take an introductory Internet training session, take six credits at Lansing Community College and use these credits towards an associates degree, and finally, to use Lansing Community College resources for further career and educational advice. Peggy is currently employed at *Closing the Gap*, is a VISTA Volunteer, and developed a web page.

Q4 – Barriers to program participation

Factors that were identified as barriers to participating in the readiness acquisition program were attrition, family obligations, location of intervention meetings, parent themselves, time of year that program was offered, transportation, personal and family illnesses, lack of child care arrangements, perceived benefits of the intervention, appointment conflicts, time requirements of the intervention, and impact of welfare reform. These findings were consistent with the National Center for Early Development & Learning (2000) and Markell's (2000) participants' reaction to the intervention program study.

Attrition

Shortly after the intervention program began, some parents who volunteered discontinued participation even though they seemed very interested. Sample size still decreased despite the numerous follow-up attempts by the

researcher in the forms of phone calls, letters and/or occasional face-to-face visits in the Head Start classroom. Further, parents who voluntarily participate in parent training programs and were satisfied, have a greater tendency to complete the program than the dissatisfied ones (Stringfield, 1991).

Family obligations

This category represented reasons that interviewed parents gave for non-participation due to family obligations. They were as followed: having to take care of other family members; running errands; and making sure that they were available to complete their volunteer hours in the classroom.

Location of intervention meetings

Due to space limitations at the beginning of the study, the school agreed to make the conference room available for the parents to meet for the intervention program. For some parents, location of the intervention was a barrier, and this was closely related to the transportation barrier. At the time these parents volunteered, they had access to a means of transportation. But during the course of the intervention, problems arose which prevented them from participating in the intervention program.

Perceived benefits of the intervention

During the recruitment and orientation meetings, it was clearly stated what the benefits of the literacy acquisition program would be: giving parents tools that would help them with home activities that would help build literacy related skills necessary for school readiness. Home activities were supplemented with free books, games, and other materials that helped to achieve these goals. The perceived benefits were: more quality parent and child interaction, weekly parent meetings, parent training, and gained school readiness skills. These perceived benefits, for some parents linked directly to another barrier – time requirement at home that will be discussed later on.

Time of year that program offered

Although more parents volunteered in the beginning, some parents had set work schedules, and their places of employment were not flexible in granting them time off to attend their children 's school events.

Transportation

The transportation barrier had an indirect effect on parent participation, and transportation was identified as a barrier: lack of transportation, or car broke down, or someone else was using the car at the time of the intervention program. These transportation deficits can be major deterrents for low-income parents served in early intervention programs (Unger, 2001).

Personal and family illnesses

Some Head Start mothers were not able to attend the literacy acquisition program because they were the primary caregivers. This role required at times caring for ill children, other family members, and themselves, which prevented their attendance to PACT.

Lack of childcare arrangements

Lack of childcare was a major barrier in this study. The volunteer support staff that had originally consented to assist in this capacity did not follow through with on site services. There were times when participants had to bring their Head Start and other children to the weekly meetings, which was very disruptive at times and which defeated the purpose of the intervention. The weekly sessions were set up with the intent of working with the parents, and the Head Start children and other children would be entertained in a separate room.

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During the recruitment and orientation meetings it was clearly stated what the benefits of the literacy acquisition program would be: giving parents tools that would help them with home activities that would help build literacy related skills necessary for school readiness. Home activities were supplemented with free books, games, and other materials that helped to achieve these goals. The perceived benefits were: more quality parent and child interaction, weekly parent meetings, parent training, and gained school readiness skills. These perceived

benefits, for some parents linked directly to another barrier – time requirement at home that will be discussed later on.

Appointment conflicts

Most of the parents in this population dealt with a limited time frame to take care of personal and family related business. There were times when doctor appointments, job interviews or caseworker appointments conflicted with the literacy acquisition program. Most times these conflicts could not be avoided and they took priority over participation in the intervention program.

Time requirements of the intervention

Some parents misinterpreted the purpose of the literacy acquisition program and thought that the researcher was going to work with the child. Doing home activities daily was problematic. Time compliance, which required frequent parent/child interaction, was problematic for some parents. This barrier also links back to three other barriers to non-participation – attrition, perceived benefits of the intervention and parents as obstacles.

Impact of welfare reform

The impact of welfare reform was also a barrier, in that some mothers who registered had to re-enter the workforce and had little support for their changing needs as parents. Some of the work was done in shifts or during irregular hours that limited Head Start mothers "time and capacity to be as actively involved in their children's Head Start program activities as they once were or would like to

be" (NHSA, 2000, p 24). These unintended consequences of welfare reform, created new social problems that conflicted and competed with the other goals that the government set policy for that related to low-income populations ("That's Not What We Meant To Do," 2002; & Medicaid, 1999).

Summary

This study explored the question, what are the differences between participating and non-participating Head Start mother-child pairs in a literacy acquisition program? This problem was addressed through both qualitative (face-to-face interviews) and quantitative methods (Parents' Opinion Survey, AGS-ESP, and Clay's *Concepts about print)* from parent-child pairs, who attended Wexford and Harley Franks Head Start programs in Lansing, Michigan.

The Parents' Opinion Survey revealed that participating parents scored higher than non-participating parents on all the questions, especially the parent education aspirations and parental efficacy questions. Two concepts – education and self-efficacy were found to be very important in the results.

The AGS-ESP pretest and posttest group mean scores revealed that the participating Head Start children's AGS-ESP posttest scores improved from the pretest group mean scores. Also, the non-participating Head Start children's AGS-ESP posttest group mean was higher than the participating group mean. With regard to Clay's *Concept about print*, it was revealed that the participating Head Start children improved, but the non-participating group mean score was slightly lower. This study provided evidence that early intervention programs that

involve parent training improves the language development of their Head Start children.

The face-to-face interviews gave voice to the participants. Their stories told about the barriers that contributed to the high attrition level, the reasons why they enrolled in the intervention program, what they gained as a result of being involved, how they were empowered and there access to resources within the community.

Implications

Implications for Future Research

Based on the results of this study, the following implications for future research are discussed and recommendations made:

1. Since little is know about the book reading behavior of low-income families, in particular the potential for encouraging as well as supporting mothers who engage in book reading interactions, more research is needed aimed at this. These shared reading programs embrace a new avenue of communication, and they present new opportunities for success for these parents and their children (Edwards, 1998; &1995c). This research should be supported through private foundations and/or other funding sources.

2. Longitudinal studies of storybook reading and descriptive research in the area of emergent literacy should be done as opposed to quick studies (Teale, 1986 [as cited in Edwards, 1989]). The reason for this is because research has shown that in order "to assess the impact and longevity of different intervention strategies and their components and to determine how those factors interact with later instruction and experience, in school and out" (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998, p. 338). More time is needed than what non-longitudinal studies allow (Hart & Risley, 2000).

3. More research is needed that assesses why some families are more likely to participate than others, and which factors promote involvement. Participants that remain after some participants are lost or who do not complete a study may not represent the intended population.

4. Longitudinal studies of storybook reading and descriptive research in the area of emergent literacy should be done as opposed to quick studies (Teale, 1986 [as cited in Edwards, 1989]). The reason for this is because research has shown that in order "to assess the impact and longevity of different intervention strategies and their components and to determine how those factors interact with later instruction and experience, in school and out" (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998, p. 338). Also, theses studies will give researchers a better understanding as to why some families are more likely to participate than others, and which factors promote involvement.

More time is needed than what non-longitudinal studies allow (Hart & Risley, 2000).

Implications for Practice

Based on the results of this study, the following implications for practice are discussed and suggestions are made.

1. More mainstream culture programs, as well as shared reading   .

    programs are needed for low income families (Hart & Risley, 2000,

    Edwards, 1989, 1995a, and Cronan, Cruz, Arriaga & Sarkin, 1996). These

    shared reading programs embrace a new avenue of communication and

    they present new opportunities for success for these parents and their

    children. Included in these programs would be insights into the lower SES

    home environment, opportunities to enhance the literacy development of

    the families in that population, and validation of parental involvement and

    flexible solutions to the reading problems and instructional strategies.

    These programs would keep in mind the total environment of the child and

    would go beyond telling lower SES parents to help their children with

    reading, instead they would show parents how to participate in parent-

    child reading sessions (Edwards, 1989).

2. Focus groups would be set up and Head Start parents would be given the opportunity to voice their opinions, as to how family literacy programs should be structured based on their evaluation of past programs, and the high success rate of identified effective parent involvement programs (Edwards, 1995b, 1995c). This collaborative trust building initiative accepts parents "as outside experts who [want] to change practices" (Yaden & Tams, 2000, p. 10). Also, this enhances the social networks within the community, as well as empowers the parents and uses them as a knowledge base (Yaden & Tams, 2000). Parents who participated in programs of this nature and who lacked the necessary skills to engage in book reading interactions would be encouraged.

3. Create restructured programs designed for parents and children. These programs would include continuous intervention or booster sessions in order to maintain the long lasting adult behavior changes and the children's improved test score levels (Cronan, Brooks, Kilpatrick, Bigatti & Tally, 1999). The involvement activities would be tailored to better suit Head Start families by providing a variety of additional resources for parents (Driebe & Cochran, 1996). These programs would also reduce the current cost of low literacy and its associated consequences (Cronan, Cruz, Arriaga & Sarkin, 1996). These programs would also study and identify previous barriers and then recommend new strategies that are beneficial as they relate to participation.

4. Create individual family service plan family outcomes that help families

to change in their community by emphasizing consumer competencies

and build on existing strengths towards self-sufficiency (Foster-Fishman,

Salem, Allen & Fahrbach (2001). These outcomes would improve the daily

lives of the entire family and they would draw attention away from blaming

parents for the literacy failure of the children.

To further support this idea, Edwards (1995a) suggested that both parents

and teachers become what Giroux (1991) [as cited in Edwards, 1991] calls

border crossers. This concept provides both groups opportunities to engage in

multiple references that construct the different cultural codes, experiences and

the histories of each of the groups. The participants of each group have to cross

over into the others cultural zone and be able to rethink how the relationships

and reactions of the other group was organized. Researchers and teachers could

benefit from this collaborative initiative by understanding the multiple literacy

environments that students come from. They could use this information to foster

better home school-connections (Edwards, 1995a).

5. Create strategies that would keep the retention rate of participants in

intervention programs to a minimum. These would include organized

childcare, more phone contacts, a parent-to-parent buddy system,

reminder calls for upcoming meetings, incentives for those who complete

weekly activities and post this to encourage other parents to come out and

participate in the intervention. "It appears that continuous

supplementation of the education supplied by schools will be necessary if

how-income children are to approximate their full potential" (Cronan et al, 1999, p. 441).

Conclusions

Young children entering school ready to learn is an important issue today and even more for those who fall into the lower socioeconomic status category. Efforts are needed to help parents to better understand their children's individual learning readiness and interests. In addition, these efforts need to make a better connection between low-income parents and effective family literacy training programs. These programs must be exemplary of quality; more smooth and secure, and not portray alienation in any form. We must be careful not to "downplay the exercise of book reading and reading aloud at home" to parents, because if we do this we might "stagnate the potential in parents and children to expand their capabilities" (Edwards, 1995, p. 562).

There is no easy answer, no quick fix type solution or formula. When parents are able to take advantage of their children's readiness to learn, and with the continued support of educators, parents will be able to create activities and interactions, and promote their children's learning. This will be a time consuming process, a great deal of patience and persistence will be exercised. Efficiency will be necessary, as well as being confident and positive that change will come about, and gains made. As Marian Wright Edelman said, "be courageous: it will

take a long time to build a world fit for children, but we must begin at home"

(Allen & Mason, 1989, p. 318).

APPENDIX A

Human Subjects Approval Letter

MICHIGAN STATE
U·N·I·V·E·R·S·I·T·Y

February 13, 2002

TO: Anne SODERMAN
107 Human Ecology
MSU

RE: IRB # 00-669 CATEGORY: 1-A 1-B EXEMPT
RENEWAL APPROVAL DATE: February 11, 2002

TITLE: P.A.C.T. (PARENTS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER): SUPPORTING EARLY LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN HEAD START CHILDREN: A COMMUNITY SCHOOL APPROACH TO SCHOOL READINESS

The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects' (UCRIHS) review of this project is complete and I am pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and methods to obtain informed consent are appropriate. Therefore, the UCRIHS APPROVED THIS PROJECT'S FIVE-YEAR RENEWAL.

This letter also notes approval for Revision 1 (new parents' opinion survey, revised consent form, new introduction letter).

RENEWALS: UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year, beginning with the approval date shown above. Projects continuing beyond one year must be renewed with the green renewal form. A maximum of four such expedited renewal are possible. Investigators wishing to continue a project beyond that time need to submit it again for complete review.

REVISIONS: UCRIHS must review any changes in procedures involving human subjects, prior to initiation of the change. If this is done at the time of renewal, please use the green renewal form. To revise an approved protocol at any other time during the year, send your written request to the UCRIHS Chair, requesting revised approval and referencing the project's IRB# and title. Include in your request a description of the change and any revised instruments, consent forms or advertisements that are applicable.

PROBLEMS/CHANGES: Should either of the following arise during the course of the work, notify UCRIHS promptly: 1) problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects or 2) changes in the research environment or new information indicating greater risk to the human subjects than existed when the protocol was previously reviewed and approved.

OFFICE OF
RESEARCH
AND
GRADUATE
STUDIES

University Committee on
Research Involving
Human Subjects

Michigan State University
246 Administration Building
East Lansing, Michigan
48824-1046

517/355-2180
FAX: 517/353-2976
Web: www.msu.edu/user/ucrihs
E-Mail: ucrihs@msu.edu

If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at 517 355-2180 or via email: UCRIHS@pilot.msu.edu.

Sincerely,

Ashir Kumar, M.D.
UCRIHS Chair

AK: br

cc: Hester Hughes
1451-B Spartan Village
E. Lansing, MI 48823

The Michigan State University
IDEA is Institutional Diversity:
Excellence in Action.
MSU is an affirmative-action,
equal-opportunity institution.

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APPENDIX B

Human Subjects Approval Letter

MICHIGAN STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

October 26, 2000

TO: Anne SODERMAN
        203 Human Ecology
        MSU

RE: **IRB# 00-669   CATEGORY:1-A 1-B**

        APPROVAL DATE: October 19, 2000

TITLE: P.A.C.T. (PARENTS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER): SUPPORTING EARLY
        LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN HEAD START CHILDREN: A COMMUNITY
        SCHOOL APPROACH TO SCHOOL READINESS

The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects' (UCRIHS) review of this project is complete and I am pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and methods to obtain informed consent are appropriate. Therefore, the UCRIHS approved this project.

RENEWALS: UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year, beginning with the approval date shown above. Projects continuing beyond one year must be renewed with the green renewal form. A maximum of four such expedited renewals possible. Investigators wishing to continue a project beyond that time need to submit it again for a complete review.

REVISIONS: UCRIHS must review any changes in procedures involving human subjects, prior to initiation of the change. If this is done at the time of renewal, please use the green renewal form. To revise an approved protocol at any other time during the year, send your written request to the UCRIHS Chair, requesting revised approval and referencing the project's IRB# and title. Include in your request a description of the change and any revised instruments, consent forms or advertisements that are applicable.

PROBLEMS/CHANGES: Should either of the following arise during the course of the work, notify UCRIHS promptly: 1) problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects or 2) changes in the research environment or new information indicating greater risk to the human subjects than existed when the protocol was previously reviewed and approved.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at 517 355-2180 or via email: UCRIHS@msu.edu. Please note that all UCRIHS forms are located on the web: http://www.msu.edu/user/ucrihs

Sincerely,

Ashir Kumar, MD
Interim Chair, UCRIHS

AK: br
cc: Hester Hughes
    1451-B Spartan Village
    E. Lansing, MI 48823

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University
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CONSENT COVER LETTER

Dear_____:

First of all, I would like to thank you for your past participation in the Parent And Child Together (PACT) program in Head Start this past year. As a participant in the program, you are asked to participate one more time. I would like to interview parents who registered for the weekly sessions for approximately one hour, and I would like for you to complete the attached Parents' Opinion Survey, which should take no more than 20 minutes. By participating in this project, your comments, suggestions, and recommendations will help Head Start to improve young children's school readiness.

Attached, you will find a permission slip for you to agree voluntarily to participate in this interview. Filling out the permission slip does not obligate you to participate in the interview, and may discontinue at any time. The information gathered from this study will be used for the purposes of this project only, and the confidentiality of all participants will be maintained. Each family would receive a $25 gift certificate after the completion of this interview. This will be conducted during February 2002.

I would very much appreciate your cooperation and assistance with this project. Please take a moment to fill out the attached permission slip if you wish to participate and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided no later than one week after you receive it. If you have any questions about this project, or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant please feel free to contact Dr. Ashir Kumar, Chairperson of Michigan State University's Human Subjects Committee on Research (355-2180) if you have questions or have questions or concerns about this project.

Sincerely,

Hester M. Hughes

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Form

Permission Slip

I have read the letter explaining the project where researches are looking at potential differences parents' can make in a child's school readiness skills. I understand that I can destroy my involvement in this project at any time without explanation and also that I can withdraw my child's participation in the readiness assessments at any time.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this project

_____   _____

Parent/Caregiver Signature   Date

I choose not to participate in this project at this time.

_____   _____

Parent/Caregiver Signature   Date

APPENDIX E

PARENTS' OPINION SURVEY

Instructions:

The following statements are commonly held opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. You will probably agree with some items and disagree with others. We would appreciate your honest opinions as parents on these matters. Your insights as a parent will be very helpful to us.

Read each statement carefully. Then indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by circling one of the possible answers listed below the statement.

First impressions are usually best. Read each statement, decide if you agree or disagree and the strength of your opinion, and then circle the appropriate. Responses range from " strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

Give Your Opinion on Every Statement

If you find that the responses to be used in answering do not reflect your own opinion, select the one closest to the way you feel. Thank you.

1. It is important for the development of infants that they get out of the house several times per week with a parent or caregiver.

    strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
    disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

2. It is likely that you will spoil your baby if you respond t most of his/her cries.

    strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
    disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

3. Babies need to learn to play by themselves and therefore should spend a few hours each day in the playpen with little adult interruption.

    strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
    disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

4. Parents should be strict with their year old babies or they will be difficult to manage later on.

    strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
    disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

5. There is much a parent can do to make his/her child smarter.

    strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
    disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

6. The way children turn out often has little to do with how their parents raise them.

    strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
    disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

7. I am a more competent parent than most other parents I know.

    strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
    disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

8. When my child is in school, his/her behavior will probably be influenced more by his/her friends than by my expectations.

    strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
    disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

9. I am convinced that my child faces a very bright future.

    strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
    disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

10. Children's learning results mainly from being presented basic information again and again.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

11. A mother can spoil her baby by giving him/her a great deal of attention.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

12. As long as the infant is sage and the object will not be damaged, he/she should be allowed to play with almost any object in the home that interests him/her.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

13. The most important task of parenting is disciplining the child.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

14. A baby is spoiled when he/she gets into the habit of being held and rocked frequently.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

15. I believe that the way I treat other people will greatly influence the way in which my child behaves toward others.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

16. I am more confident about my parenting skills than most other mothers I know.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

17. After my child has been in school for a while, his/her teachers will probably influence his/her thinking more than I will.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

18. I believe that my child will have an opportunity to get a college degree at a good college or university if that is his/he goal.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

19. Responding quickly to an infant's crying encourages him/her to be demanding.

strongly disagree   disagree somewhat   slightly disagree   slightly agree   agree somewhat   strongly agree

20. In order to keep a baby out of mischief (that is, pulling things out of their proper places, playing with things that aren't toys, etc.) mothers should strictly limit the area of the house in which the baby is allowed to play.

strongly disagree   disagree somewhat   slightly disagree   slightly agree   agree somewhat   strongly agree

21. One of the best ways to prepare a preschool child t be a good student is to teach him/her to be obedient.

strongly disagree   disagree somewhat   slightly disagree   slightly agree   agree somewhat   strongly agree

22. Once my child is in school, the school has the main responsibility for his/her education.
23. Successfully rearing a child has much to do with luck.

strongly disagree   disagree somewhat   slightly disagree   slightly agree   agree somewhat   strongly agree

24. A year old infant can learn a great deal by watching television.

strongly disagree   disagree somewhat   slightly disagree   slightly agree   agree somewhat   strongly agree

25. I worry about spoiling my child by being an overly attentive mother.

strongly disagree   disagree somewhat   slightly disagree   slightly agree   agree somewhat   strongly agree

26. Children should learn as infants that a parent's desire to have a neat and orderly house must be respected.

strongly disagree   disagree somewhat   slightly disagree   slightly agree   agree somewhat   strongly agree

27. It is more important for a child to learn to think for himself/herself than to learn to obey adults.

strongly disagree   disagree somewhat   slightly disagree   slightly agree   agree somewhat   strongly agree

28. Often it is difficult for me to stay interested when playing with my child.

strongly disagree   disagree somewhat   slightly disagree   slightly agree   agree somewhat   strongly agree

29. I worry that some of the people who live in my neighborhood could be a bad influence on my child.

   strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
   disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

30. The occupational opportunities available to my children will depend largely on the economic policies of the government.

   strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
   disagree   · somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

31. I believe that involving my infant in activities that are challenging for him/her now will improve his/hr ability to learn things once he/she is in school.

   strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
   disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

32. I am not very knowledgeable about child development.

   strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
   disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

33. I believe that the less my child watches television during the preschool years the better off he/she will be.

   strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
   disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

34. I believe that my child will have the opportunity to get a high salary, high responsibility job if he/she wants such a job.

   strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
   disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

35. Babies cry sometimes shortly after they have been fed and changed; if there is no apparent reason why they are crying, it is generally best to ignore these cries.

   strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
   disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

36. Infants will learn more if they do not spend much time in a playpen.

   strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
   disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

37. Since children cannot be trusted to do the right thing, their chances to misbehave must be limited.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

38. I believe that it is important to spend a lot of time talking to my children even before they can understand whatever it is I am saying.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

39. Many of the young parents I know seem to have adjusted to the demands of parenting more easily than I have.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

40. I am concerned that the examples set by some of the other children in my neighborhood will be a bad influence on my child, as he/she grows older.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

41. If my child ends up taking a dead end job that he/she does not enjoy, that is his/her fault because other opportunities are available to almost everyone.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

42. When children feel that family rules are unreasonable, they should be encouraged to tell their parents that they disagree with the rules.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

43. There is not very mush that a parent can do to influence the development of her child's intellectual abilities before the child's second birthday.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

44. I think that it is important for parents to imitate the sounds their babies are making before the babies can talk.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

45. Children who are held to firm rules grow up to be the best adults.

strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

46. Talking to a baby who can't talk may keep the parent occupied but it probably has no effect on the baby.

strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

47. If my child mixes with bad company in school, I will have a difficult time keeping him/her out of trouble.

strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

48. I thing that my child's chances of being successful as an adult are better than those of the majority of other children who are his/her age and sex.

strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

49. Mothers who are very affectionate toward their babies are likely to have children who grow up being overly dependent on the mother.

strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

50. A family like other organizations needs a list of clearly defined rules that everyone must follow without exception.

strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

51. I am concerned that ideas and values contrary to my own will be adopted by my child after he/she is in school for a while.

strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

52. Because schools and courses have changed so much in recent years, it will be difficult for me to help my child learn what is being taught in the elementary schools.

strongly   disagree   slightly   slightly   agree   strongly
disagree   somewhat   disagree   agree   somewhat   agree

53. Infants are often spiteful to their mothers.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

54. The most important difference between children who are good students and children who do poorly in school is the amount of ability they are born with.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

55. It is important for a baby's development that parents consistently respond to the babbling sounds the baby makes before the baby begins to talk.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

56. Some children are born with undesirable personality characteristics and there is not much that a parent can do to change these characteristics.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

57. Reading to a child before the child is two years old probably has little effect on the child.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

58. If children watch violence on television, they are more likely to behave aggressively (hitting, kicking, name calling) toward other children.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

59. Parents who emphasize school achievement are likely to have children who worry too much about not meeting their parents' expectations.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

60. Parents should limit how much they express the affection they feel towards their baby by limiting the amount of rocking, cuddling and holding they do.

| strongly disagree | disagree somewhat | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree somewhat | strongly agree |

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