

Analysis of Parental Goals and  
Involvement in Their Chil-  
dren's Preschool Program

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A Thesis

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We hereby recommend that the Thesis prepared under  
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## Chapter I

### Introduction

In the early days of nursery education, parents were accepted but hardly welcomed by teachers. Parents were tolerated, and from time to time they might expect reports on the progress of their children. Parents were oftentimes blamed for the child's shortcomings and were criticized when they did not accept the good advice which was readily forthcoming from these seemingly all-knowing teachers. Parents were often intimidated by teachers who succeeded in making them feel that only teachers knew about children. If a child was difficult to manage, the parents were blamed. All the damage that had been done by the parents, teachers were expected to have to correct. Mothers were made to feel apologetic for the injuries they had wrought, and fathers might as well have been nonexistent (Beyer, 1968). Thus, educators thought that parents had no right to voice their expectations of their children's education. That parents were extended honorably intended and well-meaning but limited gestures were reflections of the current set of "importances" of that era.

Today, there is an increasing awareness in nursery school education that more is to be shared than the reporting

of assorted physical facts of life. There is the feeling that parents have an important contribution to make to the teacher's understanding of the child, and the nursery school has an obligation to share its knowledge of children with parents (Beyer, 1968; Gordon, 1971).

#### Statement of the Problem

The overall purpose of the study will be to investigate and analyze low-income and middle-income parental goals for their children in preschool, and to ascertain their level of involvement in the preschool program. The hypotheses for the study are:

- 1) Middle-income parents will have higher goals for their preschool children and a higher level of involvement than low-income parents.
- 2) Middle-income and low-income parents will have higher goals for their preschool children than teachers.

#### Delimitations

The investigation was delimited to the following:

- 1) Parents participating were twenty low-income black parents of four-year-old children and twenty middle-income black parents of four-year-old children; 2) teachers participating were from three schools; 3) the duration of the project was four weeks.

### Limitations

Limitations inherent in the study were: 1) generalizations of findings, 2) degrees of cooperation of day care centers, and 3) reluctance of subjects to participate.

The delimitations will restrict the generalizations of findings that may be applicable to other areas in the United States. The investigator was also limited by the degree of cooperation of an administrator-parent interaction. Consequently, the St. John Montessori Day School was also selected for the black middle-income subjects with four-year-olds, in order to acquire the needed twenty subjects for the project.

## Chapter II

### Review of Literature

#### Values of Early Experiences of the Preschool Child

Many researchers agree that the earliest years of every child's life--his formative years--are unquestionably the most vital to the sound development, education, and overall life chances since these first five years will have tremendous and lasting effects during his life span. Butler (1970) in Current research in early childhood education has reviewed Benjamin Bloom's observations on the crucial importance of early environment: 1) The rapid growth of selected characteristics comprising the variations in the early environment shape these characteristics in most rapid periods of formation. 2) Development in the early years provides the base upon which later development depends. 3) Learning something new is much easier than stamping out one set of learned behaviors and replacing it by a new set. Butler has also restated Bloom's conclusion from his summary of one thousand research studies: "Put in terms of intelligence measured at age 17, from conception to age 4, the individual develops 50 per cent of his mature intelligence, from ages 4 to 8 he develops another 30 per cent, and from ages 8 to 17 the remaining 20 per cent" (p. 25).

Mukerji (1966) emphasized that the early years of childhood are the foundation years for beginning intellectual concepts, for a foundation of oral language, for beginning self-concepts in a world of people, and for creativity. Nimnicht and Meier (1970), the developers of the new nursery school concept, firmly believed that the early years in the lives of children are the most crucial in human development: "The seeds of creativity, inquiry, critical thinking, effective problem solving, independence, emotional stability, and security are planted and extensively cultivated during this time. Furthermore, just as seedlings develop best in fertile soil, so do children develop best in enriched surroundings" (Meier, p. 91).

That early education has definite value is evident in the work of such key psychologists as Hunt, Bruner, Bloom, and Piaget who have indicated the importance of the early years for intellectual growth (Gordon, 1970). Many of these researchers agree that early intervention is an effective means by which to lessen or eradicate later educational, sociological, and psychological problems.

#### Black Family Environmental Influences--Social Class

In a recent paper, Ward (1972) reviewed the structure of many black families: some are nuclear, with only a parent and child generation included; others are extended, with several generations involved; and others, particularly those

of low-income, have from one adult to more than two living in the same environment. In many of these families a grandparent, an older sibling, or some other relative takes full responsibility for child rearing. The young black child often has many adult models to emulate, thereby developing his self-concept through exposure to a variety of adult images. Thus, the influence of a child's environment during the first five years will have a tremendous effect on his developmental process.

The home environment has been studied as a means of understanding the factors which influence the development of children. Studies repeatedly show that the home is the single most important influence on the intellectual and emotional development of children, particularly in the pre-school years. Bloom's (1965) research revealed that the home environment seems to affect most significantly the child's level of measured intelligence as well as his school learning. He emphasized that the way parents spend time with their children at meals, in play, and at other times during the day is a central factor in developing skills which prepare children for school. The objects in the home and the quality of time spent in conversation and general learning have been found to be significant influences on cognitive development, development of interest in learning, attention span, and motivation of the child.

Bereiter and Engleman (1966) have concurred that the child is very susceptible to environmental influences during the early years, and that deprivation can have a disastrous effect, leading to failure and possibly a limited future.

Language is the primary avenue for communication, absorption, and interpretation of the environment according to Duetsch (1965). Language reflects style of thought and the formation of ideas for solving problems. The child's language skills and verbal behavior are affected by the socio-economic status of the whole family.

Lewis (1951) found that one of the greatest handicaps for culturally deprived children was the crowded condition in which these children reside. The desire to question, to ask, "What's that?" is often thwarted by either no answer to the child's question or an answer that is so punishing that questioning is inhibited. Parents are too preoccupied with problems associated with poverty to answer many questions asked by young children.

The middle-class child is surrounded by words and experiences of "largest," "smallest," "this comes next," and as he grows he will sort these experiences and from them find workable concepts. A four-year-old without rich and varied experiences of the middle-class child and, without a vocabulary to think about them or talk about them, is in a different situation (Meier, 1970).

Wattenberg (1964) described the culturally deprived child as being different from the "advantaged" in language development, self-concept and social skills, as well as in attitudes toward school and society. The deprived child has few interests and gestures; sounds and local words are the method used for communication. The linguistic skills of expression and receptive skills are inadequate. The deprived child does not hear sounds as the middle-class child pronounces them. The deprived child tends to "close-out" many noises. The words heard do not necessarily have the same meaning for the deprived child as for the middle-class child.

Sears (1957) obtained information from three hundred and seventy-nine American mothers concerning child rearing practices from birth to kindergarten age. Lengthy personal interviews allowed the mothers to talk freely about the joys and problems experienced in child rearing. In comparison with working-class mothers, middle-class mothers were less punitive toward change-worthy behavior in their children, and less restrictive about vigorous activity in the home. Findings also indicated that middle-class mothers were warmer toward their children and more comfortable with themselves. Such attitudes are more often reflected in positive self-concepts of middle-class children.

Kohn (1959) later examined the relationship between social class and parental values in order to gain understanding of social class differences in child rearing practices.

Two groups of families consisting of two hundred in each group were included in the study. One group was composed of families in which the father had a professional occupation and the other group was composed of families in which the father had a manual occupation. Inquiry was focused on the values that parents would most like to see embodied in their child's behavior. The results indicated that middle-class and working-class mothers shared a broad common, but not identical set of values.

Class differences in the socialization practices of black mothers were researched by Kamii (1967) in the context of their child rearing goals. A total of forty black mothers of four-year-old children living in Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor, Michigan were involved in the study. Half of the sample was of lower-lower-class mothers, defined as those receiving public assistance, and the other half was of middle-class mothers, defined as those having husbands with middle professional occupations. Kamii obtained three types of data: 1) child-rearing goals; 2) observations; and 3) interviews.

The findings were consistent with the Kohn study in that the lower-class tends to control children by appealing to status or authority. Middle-class mothers were more unilateral in their techniques. They rewarded their children considerably more often for behaving in desirable ways than did disadvantaged mothers and they gratified their children's socio-emotional needs.

In a more recent review, Streissguth (1972) referred to Hess and Shipman's lengthy study on mother-child interaction. It consisted of one hundred and sixty-three black professional and welfare mother-child pairs that were followed over a four year period, beginning when the children were four-years-old. The results showed very substantial and consistent differences between social class groups in the mothers' teaching strategies with the children. In comparison to the lower-class mothers, middle-class mothers more often gave reasons with their instructions, more praise, oriented the child to the task with more care, and gave more specific response to the child. Streissguth (1972) related further that more important than social class differences was the significant relation between the mother's teaching strategies and the child's cognitive functioning.

The Parker and Kleiner (1966) study on Characteristics of black mothers in single headed households stressed that mothers in the broken-home situation (most prevalent among the black population) manifested poorer psychological adjustment and lower goal-striving for themselves and for their children than black mothers in households with a male figure. Earlier studies reported that mothers in father-absent homes tended to be particularly protective and authoritarian in the training of their children. Thus, it is agreed by several investigators that these socialization characteristics

exert depressing influence on the goal-striving behavior of the children.

### Parent-Teacher Relationships

Today, educators recognize that both the home and the school have important functions to serve in educating the child. Neither can work effectively without the understanding, support, and assistance of the other. Guiding the development of the child is a cooperative endeavor. The parent and the teacher need to see the whole child as he reacts in life, at school and at home, in order to provide a complete program for young children. The quality of teacher-parent relationships during the early years will have an important influence on children throughout their formative years.

During the past decades, recognition of the importance of the changing role of parents in their relationships to the school has been pointed out by many educators. Hymes (1953) stated that home-school relations have two broad goals: "To bring about a better understanding" to "parents and leaders of what children are like and to bring about a better understanding" to "teachers and parents of good education" (p. 9). Hymes stated further that when these goals are achieved, parents and teachers work together and youngsters gain in two ways: they have a richer, fuller, more nourishing life, in school and out, than otherwise would be

open to them; and they have more consistent guidance in school and out; they stand a better chance of living up to the peak of their powers.

Beyer (1969) restated Dorothy Baruch's philosophy from her classic book Parents and children go to school: "Without parents entering vitally into the picture, a nursery school is not a nursery school" because parent education should not focus solely on the child, but should aim also at building confidence in parents. In summary, she felt that helping parents gain a greater feeling of security in themselves as parents was much more important than showering them with techniques for managing their children.

As professionals began to interact with parents in Head Start, follow-through, and various research projects, Gordon (1971) noted that they are now recognizing that some homes and many schools lack the characteristics associated with good learning environment. Educators have discovered that creating an effective learning environment is dependent on a new alignment and a new relationship between the home and the school.

Liddle (1967) emphasized the importance of enlisting the support, interest, and cooperation of parents in helping to motivate the child to develop his interest and abilities. King (1972) stated that "Involvement of parents in educational experiences of the child may represent a most

significant development in education" (p. 15). She indicated that it is an impossibility for either school or home to work alone: "The school may develop a good learning experience for a child only to have it destroyed by lack of interest or support in the home."

Head Start, which began as part of the Community Action Program of the Office of Economic Opportunity, has as one of its basic tenets the "maximum feasibility participation" of the poor in every aspect of planning and operating programs. Stearns (1971) reported that the intention was to take the low-income people out of their dependent and powerless position--to have them "do for themselves." Within Head Start, the community action philosophy also included the assumption that if poor people were able to exercise control over aspects of their own lives and their children's, they would presumably pass on to their children the confidence gained and the feelings of control by serving as competent, achieving, powerful models.

Stearns (1971) continued by asserting that Head Start is the only large-scale public preschool program with the following broad scope: 1) It involves low-income residents in the planning, establishment, management, and continued direction of the program. 2) It affords opportunities for employment, and career development is provided. 3) It increases the amount and nature of other participation by parents and the direct services to the family members.

The Child Study Association of America (1967) maintains that Head Start is unique in attempting the broad scope of involvement of parents in their children's pre-school education. Many positive effects on both parents and children have been reported through evaluative studies around the nation. These studies range from specialists in education to the many scores of people throughout the various communities involved daily in the Head Start programs.

## Chapter III

### Methodology

#### Subjects

The subjects for this study were forty black parents of four-year-old children enrolled in three different day care centers in Dallas. Twenty of the subjects were middle-income: defined as those fathers with professional occupation (Kohn, 1959). Fourteen of the middle-income families participating were from the St. John Montessori day care center. The other five middle-income families were from the Aldersgate Methodist Church day care center. The two middle-income schools are located in the south Oak Cliff section of Dallas.

The two schools were selected to participate in order to acquire twenty subjects for the research project, after the parents of children from the originally selected school (Aldersgate) responded poorly, returning only three sets of surveys out of twenty distributed. The St. John Montessori day care center was then selected to participate along with the Aldersgate school. Another set of survey forms was sent to the same twenty parents of Aldersgate school from which only two were returned. The same set of survey forms was sent to the twenty subjects at the St. John Montessori school from which sixteen were returned. Two of the sixteen surveys

returned were from parents who were also teachers at the school. Hence, data from those two forms were not included along with the other parents because the parent-teachers' goals for their preschool children and the parent-teachers' level of parental involvement may have influenced the results of the findings.

The second twenty subjects were from the East Dallas Head Start day care center located near downtown Dallas, the inner city. All of these families were low-income as defined by the national Office of Economic Opportunity poverty guideline scale. Ninety-five per cent of these families received Aide to Families With Dependent Children as evidenced by the personal data form in their files at the Head Start center office. The response of these families was one hundred per cent because of the constant communication with these families by the center director.

### Instruments

Three instruments were administered to collect information considered necessary to achieve the purposes of the study. The "Personal Data Card" and the "Parental Involvement Survey" were developed by the investigator. The "Personal Data Card" revealed pertinent data on parental backgrounds to determine their social class status. The "Parental Involvement Survey" was utilized to ascertain the parents' level of involvement in their children's preschool program.

The third instrument (Form Number II) was the "Parental Check Sheet" developed by Klingman (1969) with some revision to fit the needs of this study. This instrument was utilized to acquire parents' goals for their preschool children's education, as well as the teachers' goals for these same children. The objectives of this study were reviewed for the three directors individually. They were requested to attach a cover letter encouraging parental responses to the set of survey forms. The teachers of the four-year-olds of the families participating in the research project were also requested by the directors to respond to the "Parental Check Sheet."

#### Analysis of Data

The three instruments for this study yielded data for statistical analysis (See Appendix A). A rank test for two group concordance was given to determine any significant differences between the middle-income and the low-income parents' goals as well as the teachers' goals for their four-year-old preschool children (Schucany and Frawley, 1973). Hotelling and Pabst's Spearman, and Friedman's test for association in a group (Bradley, 1968) was employed for test numbers two, three, four, and five.

To compare the middle and low-income parental involvement on committees at their respective schools (Fihney, Latscha, Bennet, Hus and Pearson, 1963), 2 x 2 contingency

tables were used for the two questions on the "Parental Involvement Survey." Fisher's Exact test (Finney et al., 1963) was used to discover any significant differences in formal and informal parental involvement between the two groups of parents.

Chapter IV  
Presentation of Data, Analysis, And  
Discussion of Results

Statistical analysis has determined any significant differences in the goals of parents for their preschool children, and their level of involvement in the preschool programs. The hypotheses for the study were: 1) that middle-income parents would have higher goals and a higher level of involvement than low-income parents, and that 2) middle-income and low-income parents would have higher goals for their children than have the children's teachers.

Data used for the investigation were collected from a sample of forty parents of forty four-year-old preschool children. Twenty parents of the sample were of middle-income with income over ten thousand dollars annually (See Appendix B). The other twenty parents of the sample were of low-income as defined by the Office of Economic Opportunity's poverty scale (See Appendix C).

Information was collected on three instruments: 1) Personal Data Card, 2) Parental Check Sheet, and 3) Parental Involvement Survey. Data were obtained in the following areas: (a) general background information of parents, (b) goal rankings for the preschool child's education, and (c)

the level of parental involvement--formal and informal in the preschool program.

Parental Check Sheet

After the data from the Parental Check Sheet were summarized and reviewed, the statistic L, Schucany and Frawley (1973) A rank test for two group concordance was utilized to test agreement within each of the two groups of interest as well as between the two groups. L is defined by:

$$L = \frac{10}{i = 1} S_j T_j$$

$S_j$  and  $T_j$  are the respective sums of the rankings of the goals in the first and second groups under consideration.

Table 1 shows the groups compared and the significance found by using L.

Table 1  
Statistical Analysis of Agreement Within  
and Between Groups

Test #	Groups	Results
1	Montessori teachers vs Montessori parent-teacher	Not significant
2	Montessori parents vs Aldersgate parents	Not significant
3	Montessori teachers vs Montessori parents	Significant .05 level
4	Head Start teachers vs Head Start parents	Significant .05 level
5	Head Start parents vs Montessori parents	Significant .05 level

Of course, these five tests are not independent, and the fact that the computed statistic exceeded the .05 level of significance (critical point) indicated agreement. As a result of the first test's failing to indicate agreement between groups, the Hotelling and Pabst's Spearman (Bradley, 1968) rank order correlation statistic defined by:

$$D = \frac{10}{i = 1} (S_i - T_i)^2$$

was computed for both groups. This statistic was significant at the .05 level for the middle-income teachers at St. John Montessori school. Both groups of teachers generally agreed in their ranking of goals. For this reason comparing the two middle-income teachers to the middle-income parents--test number three--would be meaningful.

The investigator suspected that the Aldersgate and Montessori parents did not necessarily share the same general feelings about goals for their children. The outcome of the second test verified this suspicion. Consequently, as a result of the second test's being non-significant, Friedman's test for association in a group (Bradley, 1968) was given to both groups. Friedman's statistics is defined by:

$$F = \frac{10}{i = 1} (S_i - 5.5p)^2$$

The Montessori parents generally agreed on their goals for their children when P is the number of people in the group.

Because F was not significant at the .05 level for the Aldersgate parents, the middle-income group of Montessori parents was compared with the Montessori teachers. Tests three, four, and five showed a general agreement between groups which can be indicated by their average ranking of goals.

Table 2  
Average Parental Ranking of Goals for  
Their Preschool Children

Goals	Groups			
	Montessori		Head Start	
	Teachers	Parents	Teachers	Parents
I	5.0	5.4	4.7	5.0
II	7.0	5.5	3.5	4.3
III	9.0	4.7	5.3	5.2
IV	3.0	4.0	4.0	6.5
V	4.0	7.3	7.3	5.5
VI	1.6	4.2	5.7	5.5
VII	5.0	5.4	9.2	5.9
VIII	9.5	5.2	5.8	6.3
IX	8.5	9.1	8.5	6.8
X	2.5	3.1	1.0	4.0

For Goal I, (to improve physical coordination) rankings were evenly distributed among the four groups, although the low-income parents ranked it more frequently than the middle-income parents.

One of the goals of quality day care centers is to improve physical coordination. Many opportunities should be provided such as equipment for activities of climbing, jumping, bending, lifting, shoving, and pulling for gross motor development; ladders, stairs, boards, boxes, wagons, and climbing frames to offer children a variety of physical stimuli; a variety of equipment to encourage finer motor development; easel painting and water coloring, drawing, coloring, or working with wood, pasting and cutting, using peg boards, working with clay, and manipulating various small toys such as cars and trains for the development of manual dexterity.

Goal II (to improve speech development) was ranked more often by the Head Start parents and teachers, but for the most part the rankings were evenly distributed.

Because speech development progresses rapidly at ages three and four, the improvement of speech development is an important goal of the nursery school. Story time and discussions should be designed to give each child an opportunity to hear words and phrases clearly spoken and correctly pronounced. Adults should encourage each child to express himself verbally. New experiences are learned from songs and poetry introduced by adults as well as other children. Materials in the child's environment can be used as aids to increase the child's intellectual development.

Goal III (to increase ability to accept directions from adults) was ranked less frequently by the Montessori teachers.

Positive directions and acceptance of behavior by adults increases the child's ability to cooperate willingly and happily. Teachers must relate to children on their level: to bend down and develop eye to eye contact with the child facilitates communication. Increased associations with adults also improves his acceptance of new persons and new ideas.

Goal IV (to increase ability to cooperate with children) ranked most frequently among Montessori teachers, parents, and Head Start parents.

People working with young children need to realize the value of assisting children to live effectively with other children, and to value their own rights as well as the rights of others. This socialization process, when learned, will be a great asset to the child as he/she moves throughout life. Adults must always be ready to assist children in discovering workable solutions to any disagreement that may arise. The small group technique for working and planning together as well as dramatic play offer many opportunities for assisting young children in learning to cooperate.

Goal V (to develop abilities of leadership) ranked slightly more frequently by the Montessori teachers.

Under the guidance of the teacher, each child may have an opportunity to play different roles in group play. The child should be encouraged to be a leader, and also a follower, not taking any one role to the exclusion of the other. The natural courses of events, taking turns, playing different roles in dramatic play, and sharing in responsibilities or in demonstrating a particular accomplishment usually provide sufficient opportunities for each child to act in various roles. Experiencing success increases a child's confidence in himself. Thus, under the wise and skillful teacher's guidance, a young child can develop qualities of leadership.

Goal VI (to develop creative talents) was ranked more often by the Montessori teachers.

A wide variety of creative media should be offered to children daily. Many simple unimaginative activities offer opportunities for creative expressions. Because creativity is often related to the arts, crayons, scissors, paste, and clay provide opportunities for creative activities. Music should be presented to young children every day in the form of singing, or in rhythmic movement. Building blocks and a work bench provide opportunities for the more active child to express his creativity. Early childhood is exciting because of the natural creativity young children possess. Children who are free of inhibitions respond freely, creatively, and naturally.

Goal VII (to foster the enjoyment of reading) was ranked less frequently by the low-income teachers.

Literature can be included in the environment in many ways. Stories and poetry should be read to children either in groups or individually. Children may be read to upon request, in connection with a particular activity, or at a designated time. Books should be available so that children may look at them as they wish.

Goal VIII (to increase ability to accept group routine) ranked fewer times by the Montessori teachers.

Positive adult guidance and well planned, simple transitional activities, and the security of an established daily routine prevent the confusion of unplanned activities. An established routine aids each child in realizing what is expected of him. The adult should always be available to offer assistance and guidance to the individual child if such guidance is needed.

Goal IX (to foster development of art and music appreciation) ranked less frequently by all groups.

Fostering the artistic in a preschool child's development would encourage in him his capacity to enjoy art experiences, such as a pleasurable response to beauty. In the early years of a child's life the teacher's goals should be to foster desirable attitudes rather than to stimulate performance or achieve products. In music, for instance, the

child not only sings, but also plays a musical instrument, and explores many of the forms of compositions for a single instrument and a combination of instruments. In art, for instance, pictorial and graphic art created with the help of water colors, crayons, clay, pastels, etchings, or photographs are only a few possibilities.

Goal X (to foster self-identity and self-pride) was ranked more frequently by all groups than any of the other goals.

Self-identity or self-concept is what one knows, feels, and accepts about himself. Hurlock (1964) defines self-concept as the thoughts and feelings which constitute a person's awareness of his individual existence; his conception of who and what he is--an image or picture that the individual holds of himself. This self-image has two aspects: the physical and the psychological. The physical self-image consists of the individual's concepts of his physical appearance, all parts of his body, and his ability to use them. The psychological self-image is based on the individual's thoughts, feelings and emotions.

An essential goal of all nursery schools should be fostering the self-concept of young impressionable children (encouraging high self-esteem) in order for children to do well in school, at home, and in the community.

### Involvement

A comparison between middle and low-income parental involvement was made by using the 2 x 2 contingency tables (Finney, et al., 1963) for each of the two questions on the "Parental Involvement Survey." Due to the apparent differences between the Montessori and Aldersgate parents with regard to parental goals, the author felt that there might be a difference with regard to parental involvement. Thus, the two middle-income groups were separated and two sets of crosstabulations were made.

To test if there was a significant difference with regard to a particular form of involvement between the low-income parents and the Aldersgate/Montessori parents, Fisher's Exact test (Bradley, 1968) was used. A significant difference between the low-income and Aldersgate parents was indicated at the .05 level on two of the involvement questions--II.3b and II.4 (See Table 3, Tables, Appendix D). The low-income parents were more involved. Although none of the Montessori versus low-income parents showed significant differences at the .05 level for any of the questions, the answers to question II.1, indicated that low-income parents tended to be more involved than Montessori parents.

Chapter V  
Summary, Conclusions, and  
Recommendations

In summary, there seem to be no significant difference between the low-income and the Montessori parents with regard to either goals or involvement as measured by the inventories. The Aldersgate parents seemed to have no clear general feeling about goals for their children. However, they did show significantly less parental involvement in two instances than did the low-income parents. There are several variables that could have possibly influenced findings for Aldersgate parents. Aldersgate, recently, experienced a traumatic turn-over in staff for the day care center, from the director on down to several teachers. At the first parent meeting the acting director expected many questions to be raised about the problems the center was facing. No specific questions were raised, however, by the total parent body. The atmosphere appeared to be full of apprehensions and one or two non-specific questions were raised, only to have the acting director very carefully answer them leaving no room for further inquiry. There was no evidence of real interaction on the part of the staff and parents. The Aldersgate parent teachers association meetings appeared to be meetings of parents only, because of the direction of the meetings

and of no genuine interactions between the parents and teachers. In other words, the parents appeared to be completely independent of the staff, instead of exchanging ideas with and working with the staff. Finally, the fact that all of these parents are professional working mothers and fathers may be the major cause of their infrequent participation.

The Montessori school is new to the community, but the staff has as one of its goals more parental involvement as the program develops. On the other hand, Head Start is well established although it may be somewhat transient because of the frequent turnover in families enrolled. One aspect of the Head Start program is parental involvement. Parent workers plan goals and programs along with the parents, their purpose being to serve as a resource to assist the families in reaching their ultimate goals. No significant differences distinguish low-income and middle-income parental involvement--except for the two previously cited instances--possibly because (1) the general unemployment of the low-income parents allowed them more time for involvement in the preschool programs; and (2) the geographic location of the Head Start center in the neighborhood of these parents afforded them easy access to the center.

Longitudinal research and other follow-up studies may provide meaningful information for analyzing parental goals

and involvement in preschool education. Additional research may be undertaken to determine parental attitudes towards preschool goals and involvement in program planning and implementation.

The investigator explored only a small facet of the area of parental goals. Therefore, an indepth study of the curriculum developed by parents and teachers together, using a larger cross-section of the different ethnic social classes, may prove indispensable to improving nursery education.

The present study points out the necessity of quality teacher-parent relationships, with the teacher as initiator. It also points out the necessity for providing a quality program in self-development for young children.

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Appendix A  
Instruments

## Personal Data Card

## Form I

Child's Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Age \_\_\_\_\_ Education \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Income Level:

\$ 6,000 - \$10,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$10,000 - \$14,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$14,000 - \$18,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$18,000 - \$22,000 \_\_\_\_\_ Above \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Age \_\_\_\_\_ Education \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Income Level:

\$ 6,000 - \$10,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$10,000 - \$14,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$14,000 - \$18,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$18,000 - \$22,000 \_\_\_\_\_ Above \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Children in Family \_\_\_\_\_ Age Range \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: Married \_\_\_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_\_\_

Separated \_\_\_\_\_ Single \_\_\_\_\_

If child is living with person other than parents, give

relationship: Step Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Step Father \_\_\_\_\_

Grandparents \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Income Level \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Education \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Total Family Income \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Government Check \$ \_\_\_\_\_ A.F.D.C. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Pension \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of persons living in the home \_\_\_\_\_

## Parental Check Sheet

## Form II

Please select the five most important statements that most describes your expectations for your child while he/she is enrolled in this preschool program. After selecting your five most important statements, then rank them numerically (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5) in order of their importance to you.

- Improve physical coordination
- Improve speech development
- Increase ability to accept directions from adults
- Increase ability to cooperate with children
- Develop leadership abilities
- Develop creative talents
- Foster the enjoyment of reading
- Increase ability to accept group routine
- Foster development of art and music appreciation
- Foster self-identity and self-pride.

Finally, would you please rank the remaining five numerically, in order of their importance to you, just as you did the first five. Continue with 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10.

## Parental Involvement Survey

## Form III

		Fre- quently	Sel- dom	Never
I.	<u>Formal Contact and Participation</u>			
1.	Parent meeting	_____	_____	_____
2.	Visit with child's/children's teachers	_____	_____	_____
3.	Observation of classroom and/or school	_____	_____	_____
4.	Meet with coordinator, director	_____	_____	_____
II.	<u>Informal Contact and Participation</u>			
1.	Visit with child's/children's teachers	_____	_____	_____
2.	Observation of classroom and/or school	_____	_____	_____
3.	Participate in special events			
	a. Field trips	_____	_____	_____
	b. Children's programs, parties	_____	_____	_____
4.	Help out around school with repairs, painting, volunteered as teacher aide, cook's aide, babysitter at naptime so staff might meet, etc. Specify _____	_____	_____	_____
III.	Please check Yes or No to the following:		Yes	No
	Worked with any committee of the parent group?		_____	_____
	Served as officer of any program committee at your child's school?		_____	_____

"Thank you kindly for your invaluable participation."

Sincerely, Gwen Chance

Appendix B

Personal Data on Middle-Income Parents

Personal Data on Middle-Income Parents

Education Completed	Number	Occupations	Number	Total Family Income Level	Number
<u>Mothers</u>					
High school	20	Teachers	12		
College		Counselors	2		
One year		Dietitian	1		
Two years	2	Librarian	1		
Three years	1	Claims Representative	1		
Four years		Social Worker	2		
Undergraduate degree	17	Supervisor Southwestern Bell	1		
Graduate degree	6				
				\$ 7,000 - \$10,000	3
				\$11,000 - \$14,000	2
				\$15,000 - \$18,000	6
				\$19,000 - \$22,000	5
				\$23,000 and above	4

Personal Data on Middle-Income Parents (Continued)

Education Completed	Number	Occupations	Number	Total Family Income Level	Number
<u>Fathers</u>					
High school	19	Teacher	8		
College		Hospital Administrator	1		
One year	1	Social Worker	1		
Two years	1	Supervisor	1		
Three years	3	Service Technician	1		
Four years		Salesman	2		
Undergraduate degree	14	Machinist	1		
Graduate degree	4	Marine Officer	1		
		U.S.P.S.	2		
		Parts Analyst	1		

Appendix C

Office of Economic Opportunity Index of Poverty

Office of Economic Opportunity Index of Poverty\*

Family Size	Non-Farm	Farm
1	\$1,600	\$1,100
2	2,600	1,400
3	2,500	1,700
4	3,200	2,200
5	3,800	2,600
6	4,200	3,000
7	4,700	3,300
8	5,300	3,700
9	5,800	4,000
10	6,300	4,400
11	6,800	4,700
12	7,300	5,100
13	7,800	5,400

\*Head Start--A Manual of Policies. Washington, D.C.:  
Office of Economic Opportunity (Summer, 1967).

Appendix D

Tables



Table 5  
Middle-Income Age of Parents

Age Group	Mother	%	Father	%	Total	%
Less than 26	1	5		1		2
26 - 30	8	38	5	24	13	31
31 - 35	5	24	6	28	11	27
Exceed 35	7	33	9	43	16	38
*Not applicable			1	5	1	2

Low-Income Age of Parents

Age Group	Mother	%	Father	%	Total	%
Less than 26	12	57			12	28
26 - 30	4	19	3	14	7	17
31 - 35	3	14			3	7
Exceed 35	1	5	1	5	2	5
*Not applicable	1	5	17	81	18	43

\*Not applicable--parent is not living in the household.

Table 6

## Sex of Children Participating in Study

Sex	Low-income	%	Middle-income	%	Total	%
Male	14	67	13	62	27	64
Female	7	33	8	38	15	36