ANALYSIS OF PARENTAL GOALS FOR NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN

A THESIS

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BY

SYLVIA KLINGMAN, B. S.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
	LIST OF TABLES.	v
I	INTRODUCTION.	1
	Review of Literature.	1
	Historical Background	2
	Developmental Characteristics of the Pre-School Child.	4
	Emotional Development	8
	Influence of the Family	9
	Statement of Problem.	14
II	PROCEDURE	16
III	PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA	23
	Part I: Goal Preference.	24
	Part II: Influence of the Parental Background.	31
	Part III: Influence of Factors Concerning Children	40
IV	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	48
	LITERATURE CITED	51

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
I.	PARENTS' SELECTION OF GOALS FOR THEIR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN.	25
II.	DISTRIBUTION OF MOTHERS AND FATHERS ACCORDING TO AGE GROUPINGS	32
III.	ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING GOALS FOR 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN RELATION TO AGE OF THE MOTHER.	35
IV.	ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING GOALS FOR 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN RELATION TO AGE OF THE FATHER.	36
V.	HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF MOTHERS AND FATHERS OF 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN. .	37
VI.	ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING GOALS FOR 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN RELATION TO EDUCATION OF THE MOTHER.	39
VII.	ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING GOALS FOR 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN RELATION TO EDUCATION OF THE FATHER.	41
VIII.	CHOICES OF NINE GOALS BY PARENTS OF 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN.	42
IX.	ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING GOALS FOR 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN ACCORDING TO SEX OF CHILD	43
X.	ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING GOALS FOR 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN ACCORDING TO AGE OF CHILD	45
XI.	ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING GOALS FOR 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN ACCORDING TO ORDINAL POSITION OF CHILD IN FAMILY.	46

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The need for the private nursery schools, kindergartens, and day-care centers in the state of Texas is increasing (19). In order to meet this demand, older centers have expanded, new centers and more community-supported centers have been established. With expansion of centers comes greater competition among the schools. The schools or centers have attempted to cope with this competition by special services, longer hours, enriched curriculum, and enrollment of larger groups of children. The belief of parents in the community about a school is the major issue in the parent's decision to enroll the individual child in a particular school.

The present study was undertaken to examine parental goals for the nursery school for young children. Education, age, and employment of parents as well as the age, sex, and ordinal position of the child have been related to the goals of the parents.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of pertinent literature is relevant to developmental characteristics of nursery school age children.

The literature pertaining to the parental attitudes as an influencing factor on the child is presented.

Historical Background

Interest in schools for young children is not a modern innovation. Hammond (6) reported that in 1657 Comenius advocated the Mother School for the first six years of life. In 1792, Rousseau's Emile gave great impetus to the importance of beginning education early. Rousseau emphasized that education should commence at birth. Rousseau stressed natural development and considered that sense perception was the primary foundation of human knowledge.

Frobel (7) advocated early childhood education reforms in the nineteenth century. Disciples of Frobel were highly instrumental in the establishment of kindergartens in America, Germany, and England.

The increased demand for pre-school programs and day-care centers can be accounted for, in part, by the increased number of mothers working outside the home. Daniel Bell (12) gave the following statistics in relation to the number of working mothers in the United States.

> In 1940 only 7.0 per cent of mothers of children under five held jobs . . . since 1948, a "normal" point because it falls between World War II and Korea, the number had risen 66 per cent . . . by 1955 the number had jumped 18.2 per cent.

Another factor that has increased the need and demand for pre-school programs has been the increased mechanization of the home that leaves a mother more free time to achieve personal freedom and satisfaction in accomplishment either in a job or by returning to school, or by increased time spent in volunteer groups. There is a recognized need for satisfying accomplishments in a woman's life during her child-bearing years and increased opportunities for women are being made available on a continuing basis. These mothers are requiring more and better programs for their children.

There is an increased need for money in the present society. The income of one person is often inadequate for the support of a family on the level the family expects to maintain. The usual solution for this problem is the working mother. The mother that works only half a day or plans to work for only a few months to assist in a financial crisis has also increased the need for pre-school programs for children.

Isaacs (7) stated that the modern nursery school as distinguished from the day nursery or the informal pre-kindergarten group is in its origin an English institution. In 1907 the Consultative Committee of the English Board of Education suggested the new institution.

Isaacs (7) further stated that the American nursery school is one of the outgrowths of an interest in

pre-kindergarten education which may be traced in the main to two principal sources: 1) experimental efforts in the field of mental hygiene, and 2) a scientific interest in early childhood resulting from new emphasis in the sciences of biology, physiology, psychology, and medicine.

The present century has witnessed a shift to intensive early childhood research due to many theoretical points of view concerning the importance of the early years to the later development and behavior of the individual.

Hammond (6) stated that in the early 1950's very little emphasis was focused on the area of early childhood education. Interest in pre-school programs could be accounted for by recent Head Start programs in the United States. Noting the needs of young children in today's world, delegates to the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth (6) stressed that nursery schools, kindergartens, day-care and other pre-school centers be opened to children of all socio-economic levels, creeds, and national origins. The White House Conference further recommended that every organized group of young children away from home have supervision by at least one person qualified in the field of early childhood education.

Developmental Characteristics of the Pre-School Child

Data based on a study by Watson and Lowrey (20) stated that by the age of three years, the average boy stands about

38 inches tall and weighs about 33 pounds. The average girl is almost as tall (37.6 inches), and nearly as heavy (32.5 pounds).

As a result of gradual increases, the average five-year-old boy has attained a height of 43.6 inches and a weight of 42.8 pounds. At age three, the average girl's measurements are roughly comparable, although the boy is slightly taller and heavier.

Watson and Lowrey (20) further stated that in addition to these increases in height and weight, the child's body form becomes more mature. As the upper parts of the body begin to approximate adult size, growth slows down and eventually stops, giving the lower extremities a chance to develop accordingly by continued growth. Thus, during the pre-school years, head growth is slow, limb growth is rapid, and trunk growth is intermediate.

Along with these changes in body proportions, the child's skeletal, muscular, and nervous systems are becoming more mature. More and more of the cartilage in the child's skeletal system is being replaced by bone; the size and number of bones in the body increase, and the bones become harder. Between two and three years of age, the child's set of temporary teeth is generally completed, and he is adequately equipped to eat adult food.

Thompson (17) cited significant changes in muscular development during this period. Until about four years of age, growth of the muscular system is roughly proportional to the growth of the body as a whole. Thereafter, the muscles develop at a faster rate. About 75 per cent of the child's weight increase during the fifth year can be attributed to muscular development. Throughout this period, however, the larger muscles remain better developed than the small, fine muscles, partly accounting for the fact that the young child is more skillful in activities involving large movements. Needless to say, individual differences in strength and constitution, general health, and habits of eating, sleeping, and activity occur.

Gesell (5) observed that other physiological changes also increase the child's endurance and enable him to participate in more strenuous activities. During this period, respiration becomes deeper and slower; heart rate slows down and becomes less variable; conversely blood pressure increases steadily.

Gesell (5) recognized that progressive maturation of the pre-school child's neuromusculature lays the foundation for increased skill in psychomotor activities. Learning plays an increasingly greater role in these improvements, but as with younger children, expansion of the repertoire of motor skills must await neuromuscular development.

Gesell (5) indicated that the average three-year-old's expanding psychomotor development includes his ability to build a tower of nine or 10 cubes as opposed to the two-year-old's six or seven cubes. In drawing, his strokes are becoming better defined, less diffused, and less repetitive. He can fold a piece of paper vertically or horizontally.

By four, the child's psychomotor skills have increased still further. Gesell (5) stated that the typical four-year-old can run smoothly, and is better able to break up the regular rhythms of his stride. Unlike the three-year-old, who is usually able merely to jump up and down, the four-year-old is a moderately good runner. He can skip, although he is still unable to hop. The child's new athletic feats are partially a function of greater independence of leg musculature.

Thompson (17) described a five-year-old in this manner. The average child has a fairly mature sense of balance, which is reflected in a more self-reliant abandon in motor behavior. Fine movements have become better differentiated. The five-year-old still has some awkwardness in drawing diagonal lines; however, he is capable of straight strokes in all directions; can copy a square and a triangle; and can do a recognizable picture of a man.

Emotional Development

Read (14) stated that a child must learn to trust others and then he can learn to trust himself. A child that is surrounded by "help" at all times cannot develop the confidence in himself that he needs. Read further emphasized that adults around a child must accept their own behavior as well as accept, interpret, and understand that a child's behavior is a sign of feelings. Urging children from one stage to another hinders rather than helps a child.

In discussing the role of security for a child and the role of the nursery school, Read (14) stated that security refers to the feelings that come with having had many experiences of being accepted as a person rather than rejected, and of feeling safe rather than threatened. The nursery school is the first contact outside the home for many children and the acceptance or rejection they receive there can greatly affect their feelings of security.

In a discussion about the educational goals of a school, Hammond (6) stated that the focus should be on the child and all his relationships as a center of planning for learning experiences rather than on the child's acquisition of subject matter content as an end in itself. The goal of a good school is to provide a succession of experiences whereby each child may have the opportunity to develop at his own rate as he becomes an individual.

Levine (9) emphasized that in the study of development, careful consideration must be given to the climate in which the child is reared. This climate is primarily the family. Development results from the interaction of physical growth, maturation, and learning. Parents who attempt to teach skills before the child can attain the degree of growth and maturation necessary will meet with little success. Behavior is influenced by growth in the areas of motor skills, sensory development and genetic factors.

Influence of the Family

Like sex-typing, other aspects of personality are learned as a consequence of experiences in the total family setting. On the basis of the principle of generalization, it would be predicted that responses learned at home would be evoked in other situations which present stimuli similar to those encountered at home. Thus, careful analysis of parental behavior and attitudes toward the child should give a person some basis for understanding which of the child's responses are likely to be rewarded, learned, and generalized.

Montgomery (12) discussed the effects of the age, sex, race, maternal formal education, and child rearing knowledge on 59 different aspects of behavior characteristics in boys and girls from three to five years of age. The greatest number of significant differences occurred between races with some differences between age and sex groups noted in behavior

characteristics. In consideration of fears, girls had more fears than did boys. Negro children had more speech problems and emotional reaction problems than did Caucasian children who, in turn, had more problems in the areas of social adjustment, routine habits, and overt behavior. In regard to maternal formal education, children of mothers who had acquired high school or less education had significantly fewer behavior problems than children of mothers with some college education. However, in comparing only mothers of university nursery school children, the lower the education, the more behavior problems there were present. There was no correlation between knowledge of child rearing practices and behavior of the children.

The effects of the mother working outside the home were studied by Skard (16). The findings indicated that children are happiest when the arrangement is permanent and the mother is happy. There seemed to be little difference in the emotional stability of children whether the mother stayed in the home or worked, provided the mother was doing what she considered to be most important and rewarding. Skard (16) also pointed out that the needs of the children vary from one developmental stage to the other and from one age level to the other. More well adjusted children are found with mothers who are discontented with outside work.

McMillan (12) studied the aspirations of low-income mothers. He evaluated their aspirations for their realistic nature. The study showed that these mothers perceived their problems of status as a hindrance toward progress. The solutions were examined for their workability and realism. The group studied was not satisfied with their present conditions, economically or socially. The mothers desired better education and better social standing in society for their children. The aspirations and the solutions were both shown to be realistic.

Kohn (8) examined the relationship between social class and parental values for the purpose of gaining some understanding as to social class differences in child rearing practices. Two groups of families consisting of 200 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 children's behavior. Findings indicated that middle and working-class mothers shared a broad, common, but not identical, set of values. Working-class mothers were more likely to value obedience, whereas middle-class mothers were more likely to value both consideration of others and self-control. Middle-class mothers were

also more likely to consider curiosity as a prime virtue. By contrast, working-class mothers placed emphasis on neatness and cleanliness, valuing the imaginative and exploring child relatively less than did the middle-class mothers. Kohn (8) concluded that value concepts have different meanings for parents of different cultural backgrounds.

Adams (1) evaluated a program for a parent group with emphasis on the understanding of child behavior and the use of disciplinary techniques. The author concluded that the school gave a more positive approach to discipline than did the home. The children showed more emotional stability to disciplinary techniques used at school than at home. Socially acceptable behavior was more often viewed at school with positive guidance than at home with a more negative approach.

Borke (3) found that four variables emerged from a study involving the transmission of interaction and relating patterns over three generations. The variables were: 1) ordinal position, 2) husband, wife choice, 3) cultural impact, and 4) the conscious and unconscious motives of an individual. Two approaches to the study of the transmission of interaction patterns were necessary. Interviews and questionnaires were used as well as observations of behavior. The evidence suggested that a continuity in interaction and behavior does exist from one generation to the next. However, an individual may be quite like one parent in behavior

and quite different in attitude. An individual may also be quite like one parent and quite different from the other. They may also differ or be alike in one area and not in another.

Sears, Maccoby and Levine (15) obtained information from 379 American mothers concerning child rearing practices from birth to kindergarten age. Lengthy personal interviews were used to allow the mothers to talk freely and fully about the joys and problems experienced in the child rearing process. In comparison with working-class mothers, middle-class mothers were less punitive toward changeworthy behavior in their children, and less restrictive about vigorous activity in the home. Findings indicated that middle-class mothers were warmer toward their children and more comfortable with themselves.

Milner (11) examined the relationship between reading readiness in grade one and patterns of parent-child interaction. A high relationship was found between low-scoring and lower-class status and high-scoring and middle-class status. The author suggested that the high-scoring children appeared to have had more opportunities for emotionally positive interaction with their parents than did the low-scoring children.

Eshleman and Hunt (4) examined the effects of social class and the family adjustment patterns of married college

students. The important differences such as employment, choice of curriculum, number of children, attitude toward marriage, and extent of employment of the male were found to vary with the social class level. Influence of the social class decreased from the freshman to the sophomore year. In a university that was not a prestige school, the married students were slightly more lower-class than the single students. Although there was some variation by status levels, there was a pronounced tendency for marriage to end the wife's education. This has implications for children in university nursery school programs.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The sample was composed of 50 children enrolled in Texas Woman's University Nursery School, Denton, Texas, during the academic year 1968-1969. A survey was taken to correlate the goals and background of the parents to the age, sex, and ordinal position of the child.

The success of a school program is dependent on the parents of the children in that school. Parental goals were examined and the types of children that come from these families were described. Specific questions used for investigation were: 1) What is the most important benefit that the parents of a child in Texas Woman's University Nursery School wish for their child to receive? 2) What is the age, sex, and ordinal position of the children enrolled? 3) What is

the family background of the child in relation to their education, age, and employment? 4) Are any of these factors significantly related to each other?

The purposes of the present study were to identify the parental goals in relation to their children and to determine possible reasons for these goals.

CHAPTER II

PROCEDURE

The present study was undertaken to determine the type of goal the parents had for enrolling the child in the Texas Woman's University Nursery School Program. The sample was composed of 50 children enrolled in the nursery school program and their parents.

Background data for each child were taken from the "Nursery School Application," Form II, submitted by the parent at the time of enrollment of the child. All the necessary information was transferred to the information card designed by the investigator.

The "Parental Goal Sheet" was designed by the author to include the answers to a question on the application form that read: "Why do you want your child to attend nursery school?" Applications dating since 1964 were reviewed and the nine goals listed on the "Parental Check Sheet," Form I, for this study were compiled from the most frequent responses to the above question. The wording of the nine goals are not the exact wording of the parents but are representative of the opions most frequently expressed. The utilitarian type goals were not listed as this study is curriculum oriented.

Each mother included in the study was contacted by telephone or by mail. The parent was asked to rank five goals most like her own from the nine listed below: 1) Improve physical coordination, 2) Improve speech development, 3) Increase ability to accept directions from adults, 4) Increase ability to cooperate with children, 5) Develop leadership abilities, 6) Develop creative talents, 7) Foster the enjoyment of reading, 8) Increase ability to accept group routine, and 9) Foster development of art and music appreciation. Responses were recorded on the "Individual Information Card" with the child's name and the background information.

The study was conducted under the assumption that the younger the parents, the higher the educational level of the parents, particularly the mother, the more likely it would be that the goal of the parents would be more socially oriented. It was also assumed that the parents of an only child, especially a boy, would be more likely to choose obedience or skill oriented goals.

The technique of rank correlation was used to compare the variables. After the choices were made by each parent, the number of choices was totaled for each variable. The investigator applied a relative score to each ranking. A choice ranked in first position was given five points; a second position choice, four points; a third position choice, three points; a fourth position choice, two points; and a

fifth position choice was given one point. The values obtained by this procedure were ranked from one to nine for each goal with a rank of nine representing the highest value.

PARENTAL CHECK SHEET

(Form I)

Please check one of the following statements which most describes your reasons for enrolling your child in the Texas Woman's University Nursery School.

_____ 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.

NURSERY SCHOOL APPLICATION

(Form II)

This blank should be filled out and filed in the Nursery School Director's Office in order to place your child on the waiting list.

Child's Name_____ Date of Birth_____

Home Address_____ Home Phone_____

Information about Parents Father Mother

Name _____

Employed by _____

Address and Phone Number _____

Education - Name of college or colleges _____

Degree

Dates attended _____

Date of birth _____

Mother, are you or will you be attending TWU? _____ Have you had a child in TWU Nursery School before?_____

When would you like to have your child enter nursery school?

_____

Why do you want your child to attend nursery school?_____

_____

Will you be willing to be an active participant in our present parent program that has monthly meetings?_____

If your child is enrolled in nursery school, are you willing to furnish information regarding him over an extended period of time?_____

Any known handicaps of applicant?_____

What doctor do you wish called in case of emergency?_____

Other members of the Family Group:

NAME	BIRTH DATE	SEX

INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION CARD

CHILD'S NAME_____

AGE_____ SEX_____ ORDINAL POSITION_____

MOTHER'S AGE_____ EDUCATION_____

FATHER'S AGE_____ EDUCATION_____

GOAL:

_____

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of the present study was to identify the parental goals that prompted the parents to enroll their children in the Texas Woman's University Nursery School. For the purposes of analysis of data and discussion, the study was divided into three parts. Part I is concerned with the goals chosen by the parents. Part II pertains to the analysis of parental goal preferences in relation to the background information concerning the parents. Part III is related to the influence of the child's age, sex, and ordinal position in the family on the choice of parental goals.

An instrument entitled "Parental Check Sheet" (Form I) developed by the author included nine items or goals. The nine goals were as follows: 1) Improve physical coordination, 2) Improve speech development, 3) Increase ability to accept directions from adults, 4) Increase ability to cooperate with children, 5) Develop leadership abilities, 6) Develop creative talents, 7) Foster the enjoyment of reading, 8) Increase ability to accept group routine, and 9) Foster development of art and music appreciation. Each mother was requested to

select the five most important reasons for enrolling her child in the nursery school and to rank the five reasons in order of their importance.

Background information concerning each child and his parents was obtained from the Texas Woman's University Nursery School Application (Form II). This form was completed at the time of enrollment of the child.

The sample consisted of three- and four-year-old boys and girls who attended the Texas Woman's University Nursery School in the spring of 1969 and/or the summer of 1969. A total of 50 children, 25 boys and 25 girls, were included in the study. Four families had two children each, making a total of 46 fathers and 46 mothers.

PART I: GOAL PREFERENCE

Four sets of parents had two children per family enrolled in the nursery school. When requested to indicate the rank order of goals for their pre-school children, these mothers related the goals differently for the two children. Therefore, data analysis in Part I is based on goals of parents of 50 children rather than on the basis of 46 sets of parents. The percentages of parents of 50 children selecting each goal as one of their five choices are shown in Table I.

TABLE I

PARENTS' SELECTION OF GOALS FOR THEIR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

Goal Number	Goal	Parents of Children	
		Number	Per Cent
I	Improve physical coordination	13	26
II	Improve speech development	15	30
III	Increase ability to accept directions from adults	33	66
IV	Increase ability to cooperate with other children	50	100
V	Develop leadership abilities	18	36
VI	Develop creative talents	36	72
VII	Foster the enjoyment of reading	30	60
VIII	Increase ability to accept group routine	27	54
IX	Foster development of art and music appreciation	28	56

Goal I, "Improve physical coordination," was chosen a total of 13 times. Goal I was not the first choice of any parent, but was the second choice of one parent, the third choice of three parents, the fourth choice of three parents, and the fifth choice of six parents. This goal was chosen the fewest number of times of any goal listed.

One of the goals of all nursery schools is to improve physical coordination. The Texas Woman's University Nursery School provides outdoor equipment that fosters the development of large muscles. The "Jungle Gym," large slide, and climbing boxes provide opportunity for arm and leg muscles to work together for large muscle coordination. The easel, clay, building blocks, and colored crayons provided indoors give the child's hand and arm muscles an opportunity for practice of fine coordination.

Goal II, "Improve speech development," was named by a total of 15 mothers. Two of the parents selected Goal II as the first choice, none as a second choice, and three as a third choice. Two parents ranked this goal in fourth position, and eight ranked Goal II in fifth position. This goal was selected a fewer number of times than any goal listed except Goal I.

Speech development progresses rapidly at ages three and four. Therefore, the improvement of speech development is an important goal of the nursery school. Story time and

discussions are designed to give each child an opportunity to hear words and phrases clearly spoken and correctly pronounced. Adults encourage each child to express himself verbally. New expressions are learned from songs and poetry introduced by adults as well as by other children. Adults responsible for the pre-school environment introduce new concepts and objects which aid in increasing a child's vocabulary.

Goal III, "Increase ability to accept directions from adults," was the third most popular goal being chosen a total of 33 times or by 66 per cent of the parents. Five of the parents ranked Goal III in first position, 12 in second place. Six parents ranked Goal III in third place, four in fourth position, and six in fifth position.

The child is a part of an in-progress program involved in training students to relate to young children. Positive directions and acceptance of behavior by adults increases the child's ability to cooperate willingly and happily. Increased contact with adults improves the child's acceptance of new persons and new ideas.

Goal IV, "Increase ability to cooperate with children," was selected as one choice by all of the parents included in the study. A total of 29, or over half of the mothers listed this as their first choice. Ten of the mothers chose Goal IV as second choice. Thus Goal IV was

a first or second choice of 78 per cent of the parents or over three-fourths of the total. Five parents ranked Goal IV in third position, four parents in fourth position, and only two parents placed this goal in fifth position.

The groups of children in the nursery school are small, usually 12 to a group. Each child is given an opportunity to meet new children his own age. An adult is always present and ready to assist the children in finding a workable solution to any disagreements that may arise. Each group is given numerous opportunities to plan and work together and are encouraged to work and play together in a friendly and harmonious atmosphere.

Goal V, as stated on the "Parental Check Sheet," was to "Develop leadership abilities." A total of 18 parents, only 36 per cent of the total, chose this goal. Only three parents ranked Goal V in first position, one parent in second position, three parents in third position, two parents in fourth position, and nine parents in fifth position.

For many children, nursery school is the first experience away from mother. The child discovers the other children and the responses of the other children become meaningful. A child can learn to relate effectively to other children in one of several areas. The experiences of success increase a child's confidence in himself. The

child's confidence in his ability to lead becomes more apparent. The nursery school, by providing a variety of areas of interest and adult guidance, can increase the child's development of leadership abilities.

Goal VI, "Develop creative talents," was the second most popular goal being chosen by a total of 36 parents or 72 per cent. Five of the parents ranked Goal VI as their first choice. This goal was the second choice of nine parents, the third choice of nine parents, the fourth choice of seven parents, and the fifth choice of six parents.

A wide variety of creative media is available to the children each day at the nursery school. Easel painting, crayons, scissors, and clay provide opportunities for creative art activities. Music is presented every day in the form of singing, dancing, or rhythm development. Building blocks and a work bench give an opportunity to the more active child to express his creativity. A realistic child-size kitchen gives the child an opportunity to create life as it appears to him.

Goal VII, "Foster the enjoyment of reading," was checked by a total of 60 per cent or 30 mothers. One parent chose Goal VII as the first choice, 10 parents ranked Goal VII as second, seven as third, nine as fourth, and three as fifth choice.

A reading center is provided in the nursery school classroom for the children. Low shelves, comfortable chairs and an assortment of children's literature is available at all times for the children to use by themselves. Adults are always ready to read a favorite book aloud or discuss a story with a child. The story hour or the time when the entire group of children gather for a story and discussion is one of the most enjoyable parts of each day at the nursery school.

Slightly over half or 54 per cent of the mothers chose Goal VIII as one of their five choices. This goal was "Increase ability to accept group routine." Four parents ranked Goal VIII first, five parents ranked this goal second, and four parents ranked it third. Nine parents ranked Goal VIII as their fourth choice and five ranked Goal VIII as fifth choice. Thus a total of 27 parents named Goal VIII as one of their five choices.

Positive adult guidance allows each child to finish a chosen activity. An established routine assists in the understanding that group activities follow individual activities. Well planned simple transition activities prevent confusion and long periods of unplanned activities. An established routine aids each child in realizing what is expected of him. Several adults are always available at the

nursery school to offer assistance and guidance to the individual child if such guidance is required.

Goal IX, "Foster development of art and music appreciation," was selected by slightly more than half of the mothers as one of the five choices. A total of 28 mothers or 56 per cent favored Goal IX. One parent ranked Goal IX first, two parents ranked Goal IX second, 10 ranked this goal third, 10 parents ranked it fourth, and five parents ranked Goal IX in fifth place.

A wide variety of art activities is available to the nursery school children every day providing opportunities for creative manipulation. A display of the children's creative art work as well as appropriate illustrations are always present. A wide variety of musical instruments allow for the child's expression of music. A large library includes a variety of music for listening, singing, dancing, and rhythm accompaniment. Special music and art activities are available during special seasons such as Christmas.

PART II: INFLUENCE OF THE PARENTAL BACKGROUND

The ages of the parents ranged from 23 to 49 years. More fathers than mothers were over 35 years of age. A total of 53.3 per cent of the parents were under age 35 and 46.7 per cent were over 35 years of age (Table II). In the age

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF MOTHERS AND FATHERS

ACCORDING TO AGE GROUPINGS

Age Group	Mothers Number	Fathers Number	Total	
			Number	Per Cent
20-29 Years	15	6	21	22.9
30-34 Years	15	13	28	30.4
35-39 Years	8	14	22	23.9
40-44 Years	7	9	16	17.4
45-49 Years	1	4	5	5.4
Total	46	46	92	

range of 20 to 29 years, a total of 15 mothers and six fathers were included. This group comprised 22.9 per cent of all the parents. The age range from 30 to 34 years included 15 mothers and 13 fathers. This age range contained the largest percentage of parents, 30.4 per cent of the total. Ranging in age from 35 to 39 years were eight mothers and 14 fathers. This constituted 23.9 per cent of the total number of parents. Seven mothers and nine fathers, 17.4 per cent of the parents, ranged in age from 40 to 44 years. The smallest category was composed of parents ranging in age from 45 to 49 years. Only 5.4 per cent of the total, one mother and four fathers, were included in this age category.

For the purpose of data analysis both the mothers and the fathers were divided into two age groupings, namely "35 years and under" and "36 years and over." Mothers of 30 children and fathers of 18 children were in the younger age category. Responses concerning first, second, third, fourth, and fifth choices for each goal were tabulated according to the two age groupings for mothers and for fathers.

The data were analyzed by the method previously described. A predetermined value was assigned each of the five rank orders of choices for each of the nine goals. A total value for each goal for each age group was determined. The assigned values were then ranked for each group. The rank correlation technique was used to determine the

significance of relationships in the rank order of values for both mothers and fathers. Data concerning the mothers may be seen in Table III. The correlation coefficient 0.817 for mothers was highly significant and positive in the direction indicating that the two age groups were quite similar in their relative ranking of goals for their nursery school children.

Table IV shows the analysis of data concerning fathers. The rank correlation value of 0.942 was positive and highly significant indicating that the goals selected for the children were not influenced by the age of the fathers.

In general, Goal I, "Improve physical coordination," and Goal II, "Improve speech development," ranked lowest in values for children regardless of the age of the parents. Goal IV and Goal VI ranked in first and second places, respectively, for both age groups for mothers and also fathers. Mothers of 39 children rated Goal IV as either first or second choice. Children for whom Goal IV was selected as a first choice tended to have fathers in the younger age group.

The educational level of the parents ranged from the completion of high school to completion of advanced degrees including medical degrees, law degrees, doctorate of philosophy degrees, and master's degrees in a number of areas. Table V shows the educational level of the parents.

TABLE III

ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING GOALS FOR 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN RELATION TO AGE OF THE MOTHER

Goal	Age Groups			
	35 Years and Under		36 Years and Over	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank
I	10	1	15	3
II	21	2	10	2
V	34	3	7	1
VIII	43	4	29	6
IX	52	5	16	4
III	60	6	35	8
VII	61	7	26	5
VI	76	8	32	7
IV	150	9	60	9

$r' = 0.817$; $df = 7$; $P < .01$.

TABLE IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING GOALS FOR 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN RELATION TO AGE OF THE FATHER

Goal	Age Groups			
	35 Years and Under		36 Years and Over	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank
I	8	1	17	1.5
II	14	2	17	1.5
IX	21	3	42	5
V	22	4	19	3
VIII	36	5	37	4
VII	44	6	49	6
III	51	7	55	7.5
VI	53	8	65	7.5
IV	99	9	111	9

$r' = 0.942$; $df = 7$; $P < .01$.

TABLE V

HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF MOTHERS AND FATHERS OF 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN

Highest Educational Level	Mothers Number	Fathers Number	Total	
			Number	Per Cent
High school graduate	2	5	7	7.6
Vocational training	3	0	3	3.3
Some college	16	6	22	23.9
College graduate	18	15	33	35.9
Advanced degree	7	20	27	29.3
Total	46	46	92	

All of the participating parents were high school graduates. Seven parents, two mothers and five fathers, had no formal education beyond high school. This constituted 7.6 per cent of the total. Three mothers reported vocational training following the completion of high school. A total of 22 parents, 16 mothers and six fathers, had received some college training. This constituted 23.9 per cent of the total number of parents. A total of 69 parents, 25 mothers and 35 fathers, were college graduates. Of this number, 33 had not completed any advanced degrees. A total of seven mothers and 20 fathers had completed advanced degrees, 29.3 per cent of the total number of parents.

For the purpose of data analysis, the mothers and fathers were divided into two groups, those who had obtained one or more college degrees and those who had not graduated from college. The educational level of the mothers did not significantly influence the choice of goals. The rank correlation coefficient indicated a similarity between the groups (Table VI). The mothers with a college degree rated Goal III, "Increase ability to accept directions from adults," as more important than did mothers who were not college graduates. Conversely, mothers without a college degree chose Goal VIII, "Increase ability to accept group routine," more frequently than did mothers who were college

TABLE VI

ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING GOALS FOR 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN RELATION TO EDUCATION OF THE MOTHER

Goal	Educational Level			
	Not a College Graduate		College Graduate	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank
I	7	1	18	2
II	16	2	15	1
V	18	3	23	3
III	25	4	80	8
IX	31	5	33	5
VII	40	6	47	6
VI	49	7	59	7
VIII	51	8	24	4
IV	98	9	112	9

$r' = 0.713$; $df = 7$; $P < .05$.

graduates. All other goals were ranked similarly by the two groups of mothers.

When data were analyzed on the basis of the father's education, the rank order correlation coefficient was significant (Table VII). Goal VI, "Develop creative talents," was more frequently indicated for the group of children whose fathers had obtained a college degree. Goal III, "Increase ability to accept directions from adults," and Goal VIII, "Increase ability to accept group routine," were rated higher for the children whose fathers were not college graduates than for those whose parents were graduates.

PART III: INFLUENCE OF FACTORS CONCERNING CHILDREN

The study was composed of 25 boys and 25 girls. The five choices of each goal by the mothers of both boys and girls were determined and are shown in Table VIII. In general, the total number of choices for each goal were quite similar for mothers of both boys and girls. The greatest difference in choices for boys and girls was Goal VIII, being selected more frequently for girls than for boys. When the data were analyzed on the basis of sex differences using the rank correlation technique, the relative rank order of goals for boys and girls were quite similar (see Table IX).

TABLE VII

ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING GOALS FOR 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN RELATION TO EDUCATION OF THE FATHER

Goal	Educational Level			
	Not a College Graduate		College Graduate	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank
I	3	1	22	1
II	6	2	25	2
IX	10	3	58	5
V	11	4	30	3
VI	15	5	93	8
VII	16	6	71	6.5
VIII	20	7	55	4
III	34	8	71	6.5
IV	52	9	158	9

$r' = .787$; $df = 7$; $P < .05$.

TABLE VIII

CHOICES OF NINE GOALS BY PARENTS OF 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN

Goal	Number of Choices					
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Total
Goal I						
Girls	0	0	1	3	3	7
Boys	0	1	2	0	3	6
Total	0	1	3	3	6	13
Goal II						
Girls	0	0	0	1	5	6
Boys	2	0	3	1	3	9
Total	2	0	3	2	8	15
Goal III						
Girls	1	6	4	2	2	15
Boys	4	6	2	2	4	18
Total	5	12	6	4	6	33
Goal IV						
Girls	16	5	2	1	1	25
Boys	13	5	3	3	1	25
Total	29	10	5	4	2	50
Goal V						
Girls	2	0	1	2	5	10
Boys	1	1	2	0	4	8
Total	3	1	3	2	9	18
Goal VI						
Girls	2	5	4	4	4	19
Boys	3	4	5	3	2	17
Total	5	9	9	7	6	36
Goal VII						
Girls	1	5	3	3	2	14
Boys	0	5	4	6	1	16
Total	1	10	7	9	3	30
Goal VIII						
Girls	2	2	3	7	2	16
Boys	2	3	1	2	3	11
Total	4	5	4	9	5	27
Goal IX						
Girls	1	2	6	5	1	15
Boys	0	0	4	5	4	13
Total	1	2	10	10	5	28

TABLE IX

ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING GOALS FOR 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN ACCORDING TO SEX OF CHILD

Goal	Sex			
	Girls		Boys	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank
II	7	1	24	3
I	12	2	13	1
V	22	3	19	2
VII	42	4.5	45	6
IX	42	4.5	26	4
VIII	43	6	32	5
III	47	7	58	8
VI	54	8	54	7
IV	109	9	101	9

$r' = 0.904$; $df = 7$; $P < .01$.

The ages of the children ranged from two years 11 months to five years 11 months. For the purpose of analysis the group was divided into two categories. The first category containing 15 children was composed of all children under four years of age. The second category containing 35 children was composed of all children above the age of four years one month. The technique of rank correlation showed the relative rank values were similar for both age groups (Table X). The greatest difference in rank order was for Goal V, "Develop leadership abilities." This was the lowest ranking goal for younger children and the third lowest ranking goal for older children.

The ordinal position of the children in the family was determined. There were 11 children who were the oldest of two or more children, eight only children, 28 who were the youngest of two or more children, and three children representative of other ordinal positions within the family. The 50 children were divided into two groups. The oldest children and only children composed one category. All other children were included in the second category. (Table XI.) The rank order correlation technique yielded a rho value 0.929 which was highly significant regardless of the ordinal position of the child in the family, the relative importance assigned to the nine goals was similar. The data do not support the assumption that younger parents and more highly

TABLE X

ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING GOALS FOR 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN ACCORDING TO AGE OF CHILD

Goal	Age of Child			
	Less than Four Years		Four Years and Over	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank
V	6	1	35	3
I	10	2	15	1
II	15	3	16	2
VIII	18	4	57	4.5
IX	26	5	42	4
VII	30	6	57	4.5
III	32	7	73	8
VI	43	8	62	7
IV	57	9	153	9

$r' = 0.904$; $df = 7$; $P < .01$.

TABLE XI

ANALYSIS OF DATA CONCERNING GOALS FOR 50 NURSERY SCHOOL CHILDREN ACCORDING TO ORDINAL POSITION OF CHILD IN FAMILY

Goal	Ordinal Position in Family			
	Oldest or Only Child		Youngest of Two or More Children	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank
I	10	1.5	15	1
II	10	1.5	21	2
V	19	3	22	3
IX	20	4	48	5
VIII	30	5	45	4
III	33	6	72	8
VII	38	7	49	6
VI	41	8	67	7
IV	77	9	123	9

$r' = 0.929$; $df = 7$; $P < .01$.

educated parents, particularly mothers, would more likely choose socially oriented goals, nor the assumption that parents of an only child, especially a boy, would be more likely to choose obedience or skill oriented goals.

Possible reasons for the higher ranking of Goal III by parents with older children might be the increased need for obedience in the home situation or possibly a recognized need arising from the comparison between children. The higher ranking of Goals VI, VII, and VIII by parents of only children and oldest children could have been attributed to a need for enrichment outside the home. Possible influence of older brothers and sisters can be recognized by observing the first two goals listed on the "Parental Check Sheet," "Improve physical coordination," and "Improve speech development." Twelve of the 30 children, about 40 per cent, considered these two goals important. Only 25 per cent, that is five out of a possible 20 children, chose the same goals for oldest or only children.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the present study has been to determine the type of goal the parents had for enrolling the child in the Texas Woman's University Nursery School, Denton, Texas. Certain background factors concerning the parent and the child were analyzed in relation to the goals. The goals of the parents were obtained and recorded on the "Parental Check Sheet" (Form I), designed by the investigator. Included in the background information concerning the parent was the age of the mother and the age of the father. Data information also included the highest education level reached by both the mother and the father. Background information for each child included age, sex, and ordinal position of the child in the family. The background information was obtained from the Texas Woman's University "Nursery School Application" (Form II).

Each mother was contacted by telephone and asked to complete the "Parental Check Sheet" by checking the five goals that were most like her own reasons for enrolling her child in the nursery school. In all instances the mother gave this information.

Each choice was given a relative score. A choice ranked in first place was given a score of five, second place a score of four, third place a score of three, fourth place a score of two, and fifth place a score of one. The goals were ranked in the following order by the mothers. Goal IV, "Increase ability to cooperate with other children," was ranked highest; Goal VI, "Develop creative talents," was second; and Goal III, "Increase ability to accept directions from adults," was ranked in third position. Goal VII, "Foster the enjoyment of reading," was rated in fourth position; Goal IX, "Foster development of art and music appreciation," was fifth; and Goal VIII, "Increase ability to accept group routine," was sixth. Ranked in the last two positions by the parents were Goal I, "Improve physical coordination," and Goal II, "Improve speech development."

The technique of analysis used was that of rank order correlation. Each choice was given a relative score. The variables compared were: age of mother, age of father, educational attainment of mother, educational attainment of father, and age, six, and ordinal position of the child in the family. The variables were highly correlated showing that there was little difference in ranking the goals by the parents.

The sample consisted of all middle-class or upper-middle-class parents. The small sample size necessitated

the combining of data that did not allow for as fine an analysis as might have been possible with a larger group. Had it been possible to use more than one type of nursery school situation, more definite difference could have been a result. More specific variables such as occupation of the mother and father could have been more revealing.

The author investigated only a small facet of the area of parental goals. Parental goals in relation to the behavior of the child could show significant differences not found in the present study. The satisfaction of parental goals by a particular type of situation could contribute to research in this area.

The present study points out the necessity of having a knowledge of parental goals and the adjustment of the curriculum accordingly. It also points out the necessity for ample opportunity for the development of social skills on the pre-school leve.

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