

PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE
IN AN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Mary Ellen Douglas entitled "Parental Perceptions of Developmentally Appropriate Practice in an Early Childhood Program." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Child Development.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this paper to Mary Fern Heiller. She has not only supported my studies financially but has inspired me to live my life as an example to others.

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I am very grateful to my family and circle of friends who have supported my continuing education efforts. I also appreciate the insight and guidance of Dr. Elaine Goldsmith. Dr. Ron Fannin and Dr. Jo Ann Engelbrecht contributed many helpful suggestions. I could not have completed this effort without the personal and professional support of Sandy Gorham.

ABSTRACT

Parental Perceptions of Developmentally Appropriate Practice in an Early Childhood Program

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This research examined parental perception of developmentally appropriate practice in a program accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The 79 parents surveyed had children enrolled in an accredited corporate child-care center in the North Texas area. Five key areas or dimensions of developmentally appropriate practice were examined through a revised Developmentally Appropriate Practice Survey created by Wise (1993). The revised edition (1997) of Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs provided five interrelated guidelines or key areas that "inform the practices of early childhood educators" (p. 16). The revised survey grouped the 24 statements into the following five areas: Establishing reciprocal relationships with families; Creating a caring community of learners; Teaching to enhance learning and development; Constructing appropriate curriculum; Assessing children's learning and development.

The purpose of the survey was to determine the parents' levels of understanding.

The Likert Scale scoring resulted in a mean score between 1.0 and 4.0 for each survey statement. Scores also were averaged for each of the five key areas. Results indicated the highest level of understanding in the area related to establishing reciprocal relationships with families. The area with the lowest level of understanding related to assessment of children's learning and development. The highest mean score for an individual statement was 3.88 related to "hands-on learning." The lowest individual score of 2.02 was related to the use of workbooks and worksheets as a learning tool. The findings will be used to plan and develop parent programs to increase understanding in these areas.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1987 the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) published its landmark consensus document Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children Birth Through Age 8 (Bredekamp, 1987). This document detailed appropriate and inappropriate educational practices. These customary routines, activities, and interactions were defined as developmentally appropriate practice, or DAP. An updated, revised edition was published in 1997. Today, DAP is the basis of early childhood programs on an international scale (Hoot, Parmar, Hujala-Huttenen, Cao, & Chacon, 1996). The NAEYC criteria have become the basis for a national accreditation system for early childhood programs. To date there are over 5,600 accredited programs in the United States (Whitebrook, 1997).

A longitudinal study of Texas prekindergarten programs conducted from 1989 to 1994, that examined classroom practice (Texas Education Agency, 1995), indicated positive trends in academic performance of preschoolers who had

attended programs identified as developmentally appropriate, as defined by NAEYC standards. By the third-grade level, students from developmentally appropriate preschool programs were less likely to be retained, more likely to be on grade level in reading comprehension, and less likely to be referred to special education programs.

Early childhood teachers and administrators must become familiar with the constructs of DAP as the accreditation process is carried out. Parents of children in these programs also must become informed about DAP if they are to understand the array of choices in academic versus developmental programs. If parents do not understand the nature of developmentally appropriate classrooms, they may pressure teachers into inappropriate practice (Black & Puckett, 1987; Charlesworth, Hart, Burt, & Hernandez, 1991). Parents need many sources of information to address their particular concerns (Long, Wilson, Kutnick, & Telford, 1996).

It is important for parents to be involved in the education of their children from the beginning (Lynch, 1991). Indeed, parents are the child's first and foremost teachers (Gullo, 1992). Parents who are more involved in their children's education during early childhood demonstrate sensitivity to the children's developmental

needs and acceptance of their children's behaviors and emotions (Morrison, 1978). Fiene (1992) believes that parental assessment of a child-care setting is an appropriate monitoring tool. In a cross-cultural study conducted in 1996, Hoot et al. found that there is a need to involve parents in educational programs to enhance their knowledge and support of DAP. These parent education programs must address specific needs and concerns of parents. In order to understand parental perceptions, program administrators must work to educate parents through carefully planned educational and informative methods. In an open-ended survey conducted by Long et al. (1996), 63% of the respondents stated that they would appreciate more access to information.

Problem

Not all early childhood educators agree on the definition of developmentally appropriate practices or even that DAP is what is best for children (Dunn & Dasandra, 1995; Elkind, 1986). There may be varied interpretations by early childhood programs (Black & Puckett, 1987). There are also myths about developmentally appropriate programs in the educational community (Kostelnik, 1993). These myths include (a) academics have no place in developmentally appropriate

programs, (b) there is only one right way to implement developmentally appropriate programs, and

c) developmentally appropriate programs are inappropriate for culturally diverse groups. If there is confusion among educators, the concept of DAP may be even more confusing and open to misunderstanding with parents of young children. Educators have a forum for discussion of developmentally appropriate practice through informal and formal means. Parents often make judgments about what they observe in their child's classroom based on an adult interpretation of "learning" which often translates to be "academics equals learning; play equals fun." Parents may erroneously assume that if children spend much of their day in play, learning is not taking place. Parents need a forum in which to discuss their questions and concerns about early childhood educational practices. To effectively meet parents' needs, parent education efforts must first explore parental understanding of DAP.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the amount of understanding parents have concerning developmentally appropriate practices. This is important for several reasons. By measuring the parents' perceptions of DAP, areas

of misunderstanding may be identified. These areas can become the basis for increased understanding, better communication and a stronger partnership between caregiver and parent. Building an interest in the educational process can become the basis for the following school years. A pattern of trust and open communication can help to avoid the potential for confrontational situations.

Research Questions

What are parental perceptions of developmentally appropriate practice? Are there gender differences in parental perceptions of DAP?

Definition of Terms

The term developmental appropriateness was conceived in 1987 in a position statement issued by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). That definition has two dimensions: age appropriateness and individual appropriateness: Age appropriateness refers to knowledge of typical child development milestones which provide a framework from which teachers prepare the environment and plan learning experiences. Individual appropriateness is defined as responsiveness to each

individual child's unique personality and developmental abilities. These two constructs form the basis for the term developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp, 1987).

For this research, developmentally appropriate practice is operationally defined as the standards or criteria which make up the fundamental components of a NAEYC accredited child-care program. The components are curriculum, staff-child interactions, relations between home and the program, and developmental evaluation of children.

Accredited program: An early childhood program (preschool, child care center, lab school, nursery school) which has met the standards or criteria established by the NAEYC. The lengthy process of accreditation includes a self-study done by the program, parent questionnaire, staff questionnaire, administrators report, and an on-site validation visit. Final determination of accreditation is made by a panel from the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. Accreditation is granted for 3 years, at which time the process is repeated.

Early childhood: The period from birth through age eight.

Parents are operationally defined as the adults who have custodial care and legal custody of the child. This may

be a single parent, grandparents, legal guardian, or a two-parent family.

Assumptions

1. Parents want what is best for their children.
(Black & Puckett, 1987)
2. Parents care about and are concerned with how their children learn.
3. Parents want to be kept informed about their child's care.
4. Parents want to share in any decisions about their child's early education.
5. Parents may not have first-hand knowledge of DAP.
6. There is a gender difference in parental perceptions of DAP.

Delimitations

In order to understand how parent education can meet those needs, parental perception of developmentally appropriate practice must first be measured. For purposes of this study, parental perception was measured in an NAEYC accredited early childhood program in an on-site corporate setting. However, developmentally appropriate practices can

be found in quality programs which are not accredited through the NAEYC. Examining parent perceptions in an accredited child care center as opposed to a non-accredited center will be a limiting factor of this research.

Summary

As professionals continue to debate the best kind of early childhood educational setting, parents must make informed decisions about care for their children. Parental understanding of the elements considered developmentally appropriate may enhance the parent partnership between home and school.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) within the theoretical frameworks provided by Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, and Lev Vygotsky is examined in Chapter II. Further explanation of DAP provides a deeper understanding of its application in the classroom. The concepts of parental involvement and parental perceptions will be explored. A review of relevant literature indicates a multicultural scope in research, but there is a lack of directly related survey research to measure parental perceptions of DAP.

Theoretical Framework

Piaget: Theory of Cognitive Development

To understand the basis of developmentally appropriate practice the cognitive development of a young child must be understood. It is important to understand how children think, know, and learn in order to plan an appropriate environment.

Jean Piaget provided a theoretical foundation for understanding of stages of cognitive development with

research studies. Piaget formulated four levels or stages of cognitive development, two of which occur from birth through age 5. The sensorimotor stage encompasses children from birth to approximately age 2. The pre-operational stage takes children from age 2 up to 5-7 years. Piaget believed that all children learn through active exploration of their environment. Children need to act on things to learn, and need to have concrete interactions (Ginsburg & Opper, 1988). Children must actively explore, interact, observe, and make choices (Dodge & Colker, 1992).

During the sensorimotor stage, intellectual growth can be estimated by the manner in which children sense their environment, (sensori-) and the manner in which they act upon it (motor) (Piaget, 1964). Compare this elementary description of the sensorimotor stage as expanded by Bredekamp's (1987) elaboration that infants and toddlers learn by experiencing the environment through their senses, by physically moving around, and through social interactions. Piaget believed that each child's "genetic time schedule" determines level of maturity, or readiness for the next level of cognitive functioning (Piaget, 1964).

The child must be able to obtain suitable direct experiences in life-- experiences that bring developmental potential "to life". This complements the "individually

appropriate" thrust of the understanding of DAP, meaning that age alone cannot determine how educators plan learning activities. The individual child's unique characteristics must be observed and honored. Through observation and within a Piagetian framework, two basic responsibilities of the teacher include (a) diagnosing the current stage of development using observation, and (b) offering learning activities that are appropriate to that stage and that challenge the child to advance to the next higher step.

The implications of Piagetian theory have had far-reaching effects in the education field, including curriculum planning, assessment of intellectual functioning, and teaching methodology. Regarding the latter, Piaget believed teachers need to actively guide the thinking patterns of young children. The NAEYC position confirms the concept through the definitive three-part approach to DAP: "Child-initiated, child-directed, and teacher-supported" (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 3). "Child-initiated" refers to an activity which the child begins, or attempts because of an interest, or intellectual curiosity. Child-initiated activities allow children to take an active role in constructing their learning (Texas Education Agency, 1995). "Child-directed" refers to the direction and duration of a child's interest, and shapes the overall curriculum plan.

"Teacher-supported" activities place the teacher in the role of guide and facilitator of learning. The effective Piagetian teacher is one who achieves a proper balance between actively guiding and directing children's thinking patterns ("teacher-supported"), and providing opportunities for children to explore by themselves ("child-directed"). In planning learning activities for young children, educators should understand the Piagetian idea of promoting optimal cognitive development appropriate to each level of growth. These experiences must be varied, concrete, and relevant to the child (Elkind, 1991).

Vygotsky: Spontaneous Concepts and Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky theorized that there is a difference between spontaneously learned concepts and school-learned concepts. Understanding of the difference is provided by his framework for categorizing and understanding the nature of knowledge acquisition.

Vygotsky's theory of spontaneous concepts parallels Piaget's theory of how children construct knowledge (Wise, 1993). Spontaneous concepts are mastered in the course of everyday life and acquisition is neither deliberate nor conscious. Spontaneous concepts are learned with "little or no awareness" (Berk & Winsler, 1995).

The "teacher-supported" component of developmentally appropriate practice relates to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, or ZPD. The ZPD is defined as the distance between "the actual developmental level and the level of potential development as determined through adult guidance" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 210). In the ZPD tasks that children cannot do individually are able to be accomplished with help from others. A teacher-supported, developmentally appropriate classroom helps to invoke those mental functions that are already in the process of development.

According to Vygotsky the role of education, or in the case of DAP, the role of early childhood education, is to provide children with learning experiences that can be accomplished through sensitive "adult guidance." Vygotsky believed that instruction must be "aimed not so much at the ripe, as at the ripening functions" (1987, p. 211). A parallel can be seen between this idea and the idea of the teacher as a guide or support, and the child as the initiator and director of learning.

Erikson: Theory of Psychosocial Development

The psychosocial stages of early childhood theorized by Erik Erikson also aid in understanding of DAP. The first three stages, which occur during the first 5 to 6 years, are

(a) trust vs mistrust, (b) autonomy vs shame and doubt, and (c) initiative vs guilt (Erikson, 1950).

Children first need to feel safe and secure as they explore their learning environment. The sense of trust children acquire begins shortly after birth. Erikson (1950) states that "consistency, continuity and sameness of experience" are critical in ego-identity formation (p.247). In the developmentally appropriate childcare program, infant-toddler teachers provide an atmosphere of safety, security, and trust. Of the many things that contribute to this sense of trust, one of the most important is the relationship between the infant and the mother or other primary caregiver (Darley, Glucksburg, & Kinchla, 1988). The primary caregiver philosophy of DAP provides the "secure base" mobile infants and young toddlers need to freely explore their environment (Bredekamp, 1987).

At about age 2 children begin to develop a sense of their own autonomy, which is Erikson's second stage. Teachers and parents of toddlers are familiar with the "No!" and "Mine" stage as toddlers begin to develop a sense of autonomy or self-government. An understanding of a toddler's growing sense of independence and self-control is essential. The crisis of this period is often centered around toilet-training issues, but other issues, such as biting, are also

common. It is important for children to be allowed to make choices and have opportunities to become self-reliant. Toddlers need to experience success as they master their growing sense of self in Erikson's second stage of development, when they learn to handle their feelings, make choices, and see tasks through to completion.

At about age 4 or 5, children develop a sense of initiative (stage 3) when provided with ample opportunities to work independently, express their creativity, and learn to solve problems. Erikson (1950) refers to the child's "exuberant enjoyment of new locomotor and mental power" during this stage. The theory of psychosocial development within the critical period of early childhood has direct implications for how a teacher plans the schedule and sets up the environment, as well as teacher-child interactions. In a developmentally appropriate classroom, children are allowed ample time for spontaneous and uninterrupted play, spend their time in small groups or playing independently, and learn to problem-solve as they share their discoveries with each other (TEA Report, 1995). This fits with the DAP premise of learning which is "child-initiated and teacher supported" (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 3).

Review of Related Literature

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Bredekamp (1987) edited a historically significant document with the publication of Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth through Age 8. Revised in 1997, this publication provides the specific information teachers and administrators need in order to understand the constructs of DAP and implement it in a practical way. Bredekamp defined DAP within 2 dimensions: Age-appropriateness (i.e., using knowledge of typical child development to provide a framework for planning) and individual appropriateness (i.e. the responsiveness to each individual child's unique personality and developmental abilities). Bredekamp gave three guidelines for measuring activities: child-initiated, child-directed, and teacher-supported.

A Texas Education Agency longitudinal study conducted from 1989 to 1994 examined the general state of public school prekindergarten programs in Texas. The NAEYC guidelines for DAP were used as the framework of the programs in this study by the TEA. Results indicated positive trends in the academic achievement of children who had participated in developmentally appropriate

prekindergarten programs. The students were less likely to be retained, were closer to being on grade level, and were less likely to be referred for special education programs than students who had not attended the prekindergarten program (Texas Education Agency, 1995).

Research today indicates that developmentally appropriate practices may be a global practice, but it is not univervally accepted among educators (Hoot et al., 1992). Although scholarly debate exists, the early childhood field is relatively united in advocating child-directed learning as the optimal way to teach young children (Dunn & Dasandra, 1995). The scholarly debate in the field today concerns the issue of an academic curriculum structure versus a developmental approach (Rescorla, 1991). Academic preschools are considered more rigid, structured, and teacher-directed in learning activites, and feature whole-group instruction (Hyson, 1991). In developmentally appropriate preschools, children learn through play and active exploration. The curriculum is guided by children's interest, and children make choices about their learning activities during the day through learning centers (Dodge & Colker, 1992). While educators and teachers overwhelmingly agree on the principles of DAP, there is confusion as to the implementation of DAP. Teachers may find it challenging to

redefine their role "teacher" in a developmentally appropriate classroom. This may be due in part to a lack of professional training to help teachers learn "this core knowledge" (Carter & Curtis, 1994, p.9). In view of this need for adequate teacher training, many colleges are becoming more aware of this need, addressing it through training and through on-going professional development (Carter & Curtis, 1994).

Parent Attitude and Perception

The number of all types of childcare centers and preschools has steadily increased. As of February 1997 the total number of state licensed center-based programs in the U.S. was 96,507 (Whitebrook, 1997). More parents must make a choice in childcare arrangements as the number of working mothers continues to grow (Long, 1996). The number of NAEYC accredited centers has also steadily increased to 5,618 as of November 1997.

Developmentally appropriate practice is the theoretical framework for the curriculum development in all NAEYC-accredited programs and some non-accredited also (Kostelnik, 1993). The number of parents exposed to this approach has grown proportionally. Considering the time spent on teacher training and staff development of DAP, the need to educate parents on DAP must not be overlooked. In order to plan for

parenting education, the parental knowledge and understanding of DAP must be measured.

A review of research of parental understanding of DAP shows a limited amount of literature within this area. Previous to the publication of Bredekamp's definitive work, Hess, Price, Dickson, and Conroy (1981) compared parental and teacher attitudes. Findings indicated a disagreement about academic skills. At the kindergarten level, teachers favored independence and curiosity in children, whereas parents placed greater emphasis on acquiring academic skills. In more recent research, Knutsen-Lindauer and Harris (1989) found that parents were more likely than teachers to expect pre-kindergarten children to acquire formal academic skills.

Rescorla, Hyson, Hirsh-Pasek, & Cone (1990) examined parental and teacher attitudes toward early academics in a longitudinal academic environments study. Findings indicated that virtually all mothers surveyed felt that social experiences were crucial for young children, but maternal opinion on academic vs non-academic instruction "varied widely." One determining factor in preschool selection was the parental value placed on early academics. Interestingly, the mothers in the study placed greater value on early skill experience than did the teachers themselves.

Outside the United States, Long et al. (1996) conducted research in the United Kingdom using a survey technique to understand parental choice of childcare arrangements. The findings dealt more with factors that influenced the decision-making process rather than with parents' understanding of the principles of early learning. However, responses to one portion of the survey indicated that parental expectations of childcare included a major component of educational development (82%). Parental expectations of educational development of their children were not consistent with onset guidelines for developmental milestones of preschool age children.

Research also has been conducted in Thailand (Dunn & Dasandra, 1995). The Thai government has articulated developmentally appropriate guidelines for private early childhood programs. In Thailand, kindergartens are expected to conform to government standards. Findings of this research conducted at two private kindergartens indicated that location was the most important reason for the choice of a childcare program, not the curriculum structure, which was ranked second in importance. The instrument used in this research was adapted to fit the Thai culture. Because of this, an overall score for parental attitudes about practice

was not summed or recorded. Thus the findings are not useful for purposes of relating to parents in the U.S.

In Singapore, parental expectations for preschool children are very high, and parents are anxious to give their children the necessary start (Sharpe, 1991). Frequently there is miscommunication and misunderstanding between parents and teachers. Sharpe investigated types of parent-teacher cooperation. The research concluded it would be beneficial to provide workshops in children's cognitive development, to match activities in the preschool to the child's developmental level, and to support these activities in the home.

The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) issued a report (Bentley, 1988) with a key recommendation of parent-teacher collaboration. This emphasis reflected an increasing awareness in the field of education that family involvement in children's learning is a crucial factor. This includes the area of preschool education as well as formal education. This is a challenge because of two-career families, divorce, and other social factors (Rescorla et al., 1991). As professionals continue to debate issues of early childhood education and the number of accredited programs increases, parents must

continually be encouraged to participate and to understand the why of developmentally appropriate practice.

Summary

Piaget, Erikson, and Vygotsky provide a theoretical framework for understanding early learning and development in the current study. The early childhood stages of both Piaget and Erikson support the components of DAP: child-initiated, child-directed, teacher-supported. Research in Thailand, Singapore, and the United Kingdom demonstrate the global application of DAP. There is research to support the importance of parent involvement in a child's early education. There is less research measuring parental understanding of the nature of appropriate educational practices.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the method in which a survey of parental perceptions of developmentally appropriate practice was conducted. The survey was conducted at a large on-site corporate childcare center. Selection of subjects is described. The instrument used was an adaptation of the "Survey of Developmentally Appropriate Practice" designed by Wise (1993). An explanation of the design of the research will be followed by a detailed procedural description. Data analysis is discussed.

Design

This study was a one-shot case study which was a pre-experimental design. One group of parents was selected from an existing, intact population. The survey measured beliefs and attitudes one time with one group of parents. The research questions were: What are parental perceptions of developmentally appropriate practice? Are there gender differences in parental perceptions of DAP?

Subjects

The participants for this study were a convenience sample consisting of parents who returned their survey from the entire parent population at an on-site corporate childcare center. The corporation was located in a suburb approximately 15 miles north of Dallas, Texas. The center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Enrollment of 229 children from ages 6 weeks through kindergarten age equaled a parent population of approximately 400 adults.

Methodology

The childcare center in this study was operated and managed by a nationwide childcare management corporation, subsequently referred to as CMC. The childcare center was on the campus of the corporate headquarters of a nationally known retailer. Therefore, permission to undertake this study was obtained from both CMC (see Appendix A) and the corporation (see Appendix B). This was accomplished by working through the Human Resources Department of the corporation and the regional management of CMC. Approval was also secured from the Texas Woman's University Human Subjects Review Committee.

After permission had been granted for the study, parents were sent an informative letter (see Appendix C). The letter was sent to both parents of each child, if applicable, even though in most cases (89%) only one of the parents works at the corporate site. Parents were given information on the nature of the research, described as assessing parental knowledge in order to plan for better parent education.

In order to maximize the number of respondents, all interested parents were invited in an informative letter to complete the research questionnaire (see Appendix C). Both male and female parents were encouraged to participate in order to analyze results for gender differences. Parents were notified of the time frame for collecting the questionnaire through posted notices. To facilitate participation, a conference room was available at the drop-off and pick-up times. During this time a table also was set up near the front area of the center. Blank survey forms, pencils, and a slotted collection box were on the table. Reminder signs were posted outside each of the 18 classrooms during the entire survey collection period. Parents were able to complete the questionnaire in a comfortable setting with minimum distractions. Parents also were able to return the completed survey through interoffice mail.

Due to constraints related to anonymity, it was not possible to follow up on any non-respondents. Following the survey completion deadline, completed surveys were removed from the collection box for data analysis.

Instrument

The demographic information on the Revised SDAP questionnaire was amended to include only information on the gender of the respondent and the number and ages of children (see Appendix D). Research in the type of survey to be used indicated several instruments to measure teacher perception of DAP. In order to understand parental knowledge of developmental issues, the survey of Developmentally Appropriate Practice was selected. This survey was designed in 1993 by Carol Wise to assess parental attitudes toward developmentally appropriate instructional practice compared to traditional skill-based instruction in the preschool classroom. The original questionnaire had 40 statements reflecting varying beliefs about child development. The revised instrument had 24 statements. The questionnaire used a Likert-type scale with options ranging from 1.0 (strongly disagree) to 4.0 (strongly agree).

A pilot study was conducted with 20 randomly selected interested parents at a similar accredited corporate child care center. No revisions were made as a result.

The 24 questions on the survey are grouped in 5 areas. The 1997 revised edition of Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs identifies 5 interrelated dimensions of early childhood professional practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). For maximum understanding of developmentally appropriate practice, ideally teachers and parents both should have an understanding of these key areas. The five key guideline areas were defined and elaborated in order to clarify decisions about developmentally appropriate practice.

Key Area 1. Establishing Reciprocal Relationships with Families

There is a complex relationship between parents and teachers. Children can only be fully understood in the context of their familiar setting. This is the foundation of the family-centered approach. Educators cannot view themselves as experts who "know" more than the parents, and professionals cannot abdicate their responsibilities to parental dictates. Rather, a subtle balance must be sought which stresses communication, and sharing (see Table 1).

Table 1

Survey Statements for Key Area 1

Statement Number	Establishing Reciprocal Relationships with Families
5	Daily communication is necessary to build trust and mutual understanding between caregiver and parents.
10	When assessing children, teachers study children as individuals as well as in relationship to groups by documenting group projects and other collective work as well individual work.
22	Caregivers should communicate that they view parents as the child's primary source of affection and care.

Key Area 2. Creating a Caring Community of Learners

The early childhood classroom is one of relationships: between teachers/children, children/children, and parents/teachers. In the context of this "community," teachers must create a safe, organized, yet dynamic learning environment. Survey statements which measure perception of this guideline are shown in Table 2.

Key Area 3. Teaching to Enhance Development and Learning

As teachers make decisions about the educational practices in their classrooms, a balance of child-initiated

Table 2

Survey Statements for Key Area 2

Statement Number	Creating a Caring Community of Learners
1	Children learn concepts and solve problems best by working cooperatively in small groups.
7	Developing communication and interpersonal skills should receive a high priority in a child's education.
8	Character education should not be taught.
12	Whole group time is used as an opportunity to build a sense of shared purpose such as story-telling, book-reading, or problem-solving.
19	Children should sometimes work on group activities that all can identify with such a class mural.
21	At various times during the day children have opportunities to work individually, in small groups, or with the whole group.

and teacher-supported activities must be sought. Creating an environment which is engaging and yet responsive to each child's individual needs is one which requires teachers to use a wide variety of teaching strategies. Survey statements which relate to this guideline are show in Table 3.

Table 3

Survey Statements for Key Area 3

Statement Number	Teaching to Enhance Development and Learning
3	Children need opportunities to design and evaluate their own learning experiences with teacher support.
4	Children's interest should be given a high priority when planning for curriculum.
6	Workbooks and worksheets are valuable learning tools.
11	Teaching methods should be adapted to children's stages of development.
13	Hands-on activities are valuable learning experiences.
16	Classroom programs should meet the needs of children possessing a wide range of skills, abilities, and maturity.

Key Area 4. Constructing Appropriate Curriculum

NAEYC does not endorse one particular curriculum but offers guidelines to use as a framework for designing and implementing appropriate curriculum. Developmentally appropriate curriculum not only provides for all areas of a child's development but also builds upon what they already know, and allows them to make meaningful connections as

subject matter is integrated and presented in a stimulating manner. Survey statements which reflect this guideline are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Survey Statements for Key Area 4

Statement Number	Constructing Appropriate Curriculum
2	A child is reading when he/she has memorized words.
14	Preschool curriculum should focus on in-depth projects that interest the children and are appropriate to their abilities.
15	Oral reading by the teacher to children is appropriate and valuable.
17	Play should be an important part of a child development program.
18	Phonics drillsheets are the best way to practice reading skills.
24	Children develop as readers in developmental stages in much the same way as they develop oral language.

Key Area 5. Assessing Children's Development and Learning

The purpose of assessing young children is to improve teaching and learning. Due to the age and experiences of

young children, teacher and parent observation remain the optimal tool for assessment. Often assessment measures have been inaccurate and inappropriate because children's learning is difficult to measure in standard ways (see Table 5).

Table 5

Survey Statements for Key Area 5 Statement

Statement Number	Assessing Children's Development and Learning
9	Student assessment should be based on teacher observation and work samples rather than achievement testing.
20	In early childhood education, letter or numerical grades are an adequate relection of a child's ongoing progress.
23	Children's progress can best be measured by how well they perform on standardized tests.

Analysis

Scores from the surveys were summed to indicate the level of understanding. Mean scores were determined for each question to reflect the levels of understanding of the respondents. A mean score between 1.0 and 4.0 was determined for each of the 24 statements, as well as each of the five

key areas being examined. Areas that reflect a lack of parental understanding were identified by low scores, and could become the basis for planning of parent education. The higher scores reflect a greater level of understanding of the key area.

Summary

This chapter described subjects, procedures, instrument, and data analysis for this research. The results or findings of the Survey of Developmentally Appropriate Practice were analyzed in order to provide the basis for future teacher training sessions and parent education opportunities.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was to determine the level of parental understanding of developmentally appropriate practices in an accredited early childhood program. In this chapter, the subjects/respondents of the research survey are described. The results of the survey are discussed in each of the five areas of developmentally appropriate practice guideline areas as they relate to each research question. Finally, a description of the data analysis is included.

Description of Subjects

Each parent of the 229 children enrolled in this child care center was asked to participate in the research survey (see Appendix C). The student population included 82 siblings, for a total of 188 families. Taking into account 2 single parent families, there were a possible 374 respondents. The informative letter sent to each family prior to collecting the data included information on the reason for the research; the voluntary, anonymous nature of the research; and the intended use of the results.

The potential sample was the parent population at a corporate childcare center located at the North Texas Home Office of a national retailer. The only demographic information asked of the respondents was the number and ages of their child(ren) and the gender of parent returning the survey (see Appendix D). A total of 5 men and 74 women returned the survey for a total of 79 or 22% of eligible parents.

Research Questions

For each survey statement, there were four possible ratings of degree of agreement. Each was scored from 1.0 to 4.0, with 4.0 always being the highest for level of appropriateness. The determination of level of appropriateness was based on the review of literature and the accepted definition of developmentally appropriate practice. Six statements were scored in reverse order: Statements 1, 6, 8, 18, 20, and 23. Each statement was scored by determining the mean score for each key area. Percentages were calculated for each of the rating selections for each statement. For each of the 5 areas being examined, scores from statements within each area were averaged for a mean score. In this way, the five areas could be ranked according to amount of parental understanding.

Research question 1: What are parental perceptions of developmentally appropriate practice?

According to the results of the survey, parental understanding was highest in the key area of "Establishing a reciprocal relationship with families". The average score for the six questions in this area was 3.49. The lowest average score of 3.02 was found in the key area of "Assessing children's learning and development". The rankings and mean scores for key areas follow in Table 6.

Table 6

Mean Score for Each Key Area

Key Area	Mean Score
1. Establishing Reciprocal Relationships	3.49
2. Creating A Caring Community of Learners	3.36
3. Teaching to Enhance Development and Learning	3.26
4. Constructing Appropriate Curriculum	3.22
5. Assessing Children's Learning and Development	3.02

Possible range of scores = 1.0 to 4.0; Actual range = 3.02 to 3.49

In the first key area of "Establishing a Reciprocal Relationship with Families" the highest mean score of 3.49 was found (see Table 7). Within this area actual scores

ranged from 3.83 for the statement "Daily communication is necessary to build trust and mutual understanding between caregiver and parents" to 3.25 for "Caregivers should communicate that they view parents as the child's primary source of affection and care." The third statement in this area had a score of 3.40 for the statement "When assessing children, teachers view children as individuals as well as in relationship to groups by documenting group projects and other collective work."

Table 7

Mean Scores for Key Area 1: Establishing Reciprocal Relationships with Families	Mean Score
	3.49
Daily communication is necessary to build trust mutual understanding between caregiver and parents	3.83
When assessing children teachers study children as individuals as well as in relationship to groups by documenting group projects and other collective work.	3.40
Caregivers should communicate that they view parents as the child's primary source of affection and care.	3.25
Possible range of scores = 1.0 to 4.0; Actual range = 3.25 to 3.83.	

The second highest mean score was 3.36 for the key area of "Creating a Caring Community of Learners" (see Table 8).

Table 8

Mean Score for Key Area 2

Creating a Caring Community of Learners	Mean Score
Children learn concepts and solve problems best by working cooperatively in small groups.	2.94
Developing communication and interpersonal skills should receive a high priority in a child's education.	3.64
Character education should not be taught.	3.15
Whole group time is used as an opportunity to build a sense of shared purpose such as story telling, book reading, or problem solving.	3.49
Children should sometimes work on group activities that all can identify with, such as creating a class mural.	3.41
At various times during the day children have opportunities to work individually, in small groups, or with the whole group.	3.58

Possible range of scores = 1.0 to 4.0; Actual range of scores = 2.94 to 3.64

There were six statements in this area with a range of scores from 3.64 for "Developing communication and interpersonal skills should receive a high priority in a child's education" to a score of 2.94 for the statement "Children learn concepts and solve problems best by working cooperatively in small groups." The statement "Character

education should not be taught" had a mean score of 3.15. The other statements and mean scores were: "Children should sometimes work on group activities that all can identify with, such as creating a class mural" (3.41); "Whole group time is used as an opportunity to build a sense of shared purpose such as story-telling, book reading, or problem-solving" (3.49); "At various times during the day children have opportunities to work individually, in small groups, or with the whole group" (3.58).

The Key Area of "Teaching to Enhance Development and Learning" had an average score of 3.26 (see Table 9). This area ranked third in level of parent understanding. The scores ranged from 3.88 for "Hands-on activities are valuable learning tools" to 2.02 for "Workbooks and worksheets are valuable learning tools".

Other statements and their scores within this area were "Teaching methods should be adapted to children's stages of development" (3.63); "Classroom programs should meet the needs of children possessing a wide range of skills, abilities, and maturity" (3.53); "Children's interest should be given a high priority when planning curriculum" (3.48); "Children need opportunities to design and evaluate their own learning experiences with teacher support" (3.20).

Table 9

Mean Scores for Key Area 3

Teaching to Enhance Development and Learning	3.26
Children need opportunities to design and evaluate their own learning experiences with teacher support.	3.20
Children's interest should be given a high priority when planning curriculum.	3.48
Workbooks and worksheets are valuable learning tools.	2.02
Teaching methods should be adapted to children's stages of development.	3.63
Classroom programs should meet the needs of children possessing a wide range of skills, abilities, and maturity.	3.53
Hands-on activities are valuable learning tools.	3.80
Possible range of scores = 1.0 to 4.0; Actual range = 2.02 to 3.88.	

A mean score of 3.22 was found in the fourth key area of "Constructing Appropriate Curriculum" (see Table 10). In this area actual scores ranged from 2.58 for "Phonics drillsheets are the best way to practice reading" 3.79 for "Oral reading by the teacher to children is appropriate and valuable." The other statement in this area with a score less than 3.0 was a score of 2.97 for "A child

with a score less than 3.0 was a score of 2.97 for "A child
Table 10

Mean Scores for Key Area 10

Constructing Appropriate Curriculum	3.22
A child is reading when he or she has memorized words.	2.97
Preschool curriculum should focus on in-depth projects that interest the children and are appropriate to their abilities.	3.25
Oral reading by the teacher is appropriate and valuable.	3.79
Play should be an important part of a child development program.	3.60
Children develop as readers in developmental stages in much the same way as they develop oral language.	3.18
Phonics drillsheets are the best way to practice reading skills.	2.58

Possible range of scores = 1.0 to 4.0; Actual range of scores = 2.58 to 3.79

is reading when he or she has memorized words." Another reading-related statement of "Children develop as readers in developmental stages in much the same way as they develop oral language" scored a 3.18. The other two statements in this area were "Preschool curriculum should focus on in-depth projects that interest the children and are

appropriate to their abilities" (3.25) and "Play should be an important part of a child development program" (3.60).

The key area with the lowest mean score (3.02) was "Assessing Children's Learning and Development" (see Table 11). There were three statements in this area, with the highest score of 3.16 for "Children's progress can best be measured by how well they perform on standardized tests."

Table 11

Mean Scores for Key Area 5

Assessing Children's Learning and Development	3.02
In early childhood education, letter or numerical grades are an adequate reflection of a child's ongoing learning.	3.00
Student assessment should be based on teacher observation and work samples rather than achievement testing.	2.91
Children's progress can best be measured by how well they perform on standardized tests.	3.16
Possible range of scores = 1.0 to 4.0; Actual range of scores = 2.91 to 3.16.	

The two other scores were 3.00 for "In early childhood education, letter or numerical grades are an adequate reflection of a child's ongoing learning" and a score of 2.91 for "Student assessment should be based on teacher

observation and work samples rather than achievement testing."

Research question 2. Is there a gender difference in the parental perception?

A total of 5 men, or 2.8% of eligible parents, returned a completed survey. This figure represents approximately 6% of the total returned surveys. This number was deemed too low to reflect the actual number of male parents. For that reason, this research question was eliminated in an analysis of results.

In summary, the parent population of an accredited corporate child care center provided the female sample for completing this research survey. A comparison of average scores in the 5 key areas indicates the highest score for an individual statement was found in the area relating to building reciprocal parent partnerships. The area with the lowest average score related to assessment of learning and development.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This research examined parental perceptions of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) in an NAEYC accredited early childhood program. The 84 parents surveyed had children enrolled in an accredited corporate child-care center in the North Texas area. Five key areas or dimensions of developmentally appropriate practice as defined by Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) were examined through a revised Developmentally Appropriate Practice Survey created by Wise (1993). The 24 revised survey statements were grouped into the following five areas: Establishing Reciprocal Relationships with Parents; Creating a Caring Community of Learners; Teaching to Enhance Development and Learning; Constructing Appropriate Curriculum; and Assessing Children's Learning and Development. The purpose of the survey was to determine the parents' level of understanding.

The Likert Scale scoring resulted in mean scores between 1.0 and 4.0 for each survey statement and for each of the five key areas. Results indicated the highest level

lowest level of understanding related to assessment of children's learning and development. The highest mean score for an individual statement was 3.88 related to "hands-on learning." The lowest individual score of 2.02 was related to the use of workbooks and worksheets as a learning tool, and indicated that some parents feel this would be appropriate practice, even though this center does not do so. The findings will be used to plan and develop parent programs to increase understanding in these areas.

Discussion

Research Question 1

Key Area 1: Establishing Reciprocal Relationships with Families. The key area which had the highest average score of 3.49 was "Establishing reciprocal relationships with families." Considering that the philosophy of the management corporation in this study centers around "the family center" concept, it is not surprising for this particular center to have the highest score in this area. The assumptions listed in chapter one, which are not necessarily exclusive to an accredited center, reflect this same philosophy.

1. Parents want to be kept informed about their child's care.
2. Parents want to share in decisions about their child's early learning.

The three statements in this key area recognize that children cannot be seen as separate from their family. Vygotsky believed that social and cultural influences have an effect on child development (Berk and Winsler, 1995). When assessing the child's development, the observations made in relation to the family setting will be important. For statement 5, 100% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree with this statement. Clearly this is significant.

Sharpe (1989) found in a study of 935 sets of parents of preschool age children that they "want to be more involved" (p. 54) with the education of their children. They also asked for more surveys to continue to assess their needs. Elkind (1986) found that regardless of socio-economic level, parents are eager to receive the support they need. Building a strong reciprocal relationship would accomplish both these needs.

Key Area 2: Creating a Caring Community of Learners.

The key area with a mean score of 3.36 for the 6 statements was "Creating a Caring Community of Learners." One statement in this area appeared to have been a confusing one. For the statement "Character education should not be taught," only 55 out of 79 parents responded. The mean score of 3.15 was calculated from this smaller group of respondents, but it

indicated there was misunderstanding. The statement "Children learn concepts and solve problems best by working cooperatively in small groups" had the lowest mean score (2.94) within this key area. Along with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, it is by interacting in small groups that children comfortably move on to another stage of their developing abilities (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). By contrast, "Developing communication and interpersonal skills should receive a high priority in a child's education" had the highest score of 3.64 in this key area. Piaget believed that social interaction between children promotes intellectual growth (Ginsberg & Opper, 1988). It would seem that the best way for children to develop these communication and interpersonal skills would be through "working cooperatively in small groups." It is interesting to note the disparity in the scores for two related statements.

Key Area 3: Teaching to Enhance Development and Learning. The key area of "Teaching to Enhance Development and Learning" had an average score of 3.36. This key area contains both the highest and lowest individual mean scores. There may be varied explanations for this, although the definitive explanation cannot be obtained from the research instrument.

Parental understanding of the importance of "hands-on learning" reflects the Piagetian construct of active learning. Erikson also believed that children need the opportunity to explore the world and undertake projects "on their own" (Elkind, 1991) or with child-initiated activities as defined by DAP. Educators understand that early childhood instruction must revolve around child-initiated, concrete learning experiences. This should be especially obvious in accredited centers. The mean score of 3.88 for the statement "Hands-on activities are valuable learning experiences" indicates parents in this particular accredited center have an understanding of the importance of active learning. Previously mentioned research by Rescorla (1990) indicated that parents choose preschool programs based on their beliefs about early education. One explanation might be that parents chose this accredited center because of a personal belief in the value of a non-didactic setting.

By contrast, the lowest individual mean score of 2.02 for "Workbooks and worksheets are valuable learning tools" reflected the least understanding in the area of the use of workbooks and worksheets. The fact that 52% agreed and 24% strongly agreed with this statement indicated a lack of understanding the inappropriateness of such an activity. Although academically oriented early childhood education

programs might use such a teacher-directed method, worksheets would not be appropriate in this particular center. If 76% of the respondents agreed to some degree that "workbooks and worksheets are valuable learning tools", this would indicate an area in which to expand efforts in parent-teacher communication regarding children's learning experiences. A second explanation of the low score for this statement could simply be that parents misunderstood this statement. If referring to elementary age or older children, it would be easier to understand the score of 2.02. This statement might have been clarified by stating "Workbooks and worksheets are valuable learning tools in an early childhood program." Based on the information gathered through this instrument, there is no way to determine this. Research conducted by Wise (1993) found that "a majority of parents" indicated they believed that workbooks were valuable learning tools.

Phonics drillsheets, worksheets, and workbooks reflect a teacher-directed, academic environment. Knutsen-Lindauer and Harris (1989) found that parents were more likely than teachers to expect their preschoolers to acquire such formal academic skills before entering school. Rescorla (1990) found that "many parents" felt it necessary for their children to acquire formal skills before kindergarten.

Key Area 4. Constructing Appropriate Curriculum. This key area measured parental understanding of how teachers in a DAP center construct curriculum using appropriate guidelines. Within this key area, the statement "Phonics drill sheets are the best way to practice reading skills" had a score of 2.58 and 11 non-responses. There is no way to determine the reason for this lack of response. Of those who did respond, 50% disagreed with this statement. Using drillsheets instead of an active-learning activity could possibly be found in a more academic preschool setting such as studied by Resorla (1990) but would not be found in a setting such as this. The highest mean score (3.79) for an individual statement in this key area reflected "strong" agreement (74%) that oral reading by the teacher is valuable. One explanation for this high percentage could be that this is a highly observable educational practice in this center. The respondents were 100% in agreement with this statement, marking either agree or strongly agree.

Key Area 5. Assessing Children's Learning and Development. Assessment of children's learning and developmental level was the area with the least amount of parental understanding judging by the lowest mean score for all 5 key areas (3.02). At this accredited center, testing

of any kind is not done, nor are any numerical or letter grades assigned, even at the kindergarten level.

The results indicated that parents may not understand the inappropriateness of standardized tests or grades for the early childhood years. There is no way to determine if parent answers reflected ideas about later elementary years. The lowest score in this area (2.91) demonstrates that parents may not understand the value of teacher observation and work samples as a means of assessing children and their development. NAEYC has a strong position on the use of standardized tests for preschool age children. Galinsky (1991) writes that using test scores for placement or other important decisions is "deplorable." The appropriateness of assessing young children by anecdotal record keeping and portfolio assessment must be communicated through parent-teacher communication and conferences.

Research Question 2. Is there a gender difference in parental understanding of developmentally appropriate practice?

Due to the small sample (5 respondents) of males who returned the survey, no results could be analyzed for this research question. The data from the men were not considered.

Conclusions

Based on the responses of the subjects in this study, the following conclusions can be drawn.

1. While parents' perceptions of the reciprocal relationship between the center and the parents is high, the area of curriculum content could be the basis for efforts to aid in parental understanding.

2. The area of evaluation and assessment of learning had the least amount of understanding. The parents' perceptions of this key area do not match appropriate preschool practice. Further communication and explanation is needed to enhance parental understanding.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions above, these are the types of parent programs that would be indicated: Appropriate curriculum for each age-level; teacher-supported learning as opposed to teacher-directed learning; appropriate assessment and evaluation of young children; the inappropriateness of workbooks, worksheets, and drillsheets.

Developmentally appropriate practice, while representing the criterion standard for NAEYC accreditation, may also be observed in non-accredited child care centers

(Kostelnik, 1993). For that reason, a comparison of the survey results between an accredited and non-accredited center would be valuable.

Due to the fact that two statements had at least 10 non-responses, it would appear that either further explanation is needed for those statements or the statements need to be revised or deleted.

For further research continued exploration on the topic of gender difference in parental understanding of DAP is suggested. Obtaining a substantial sample of male responses must be accomplished.

Limitations

Using a convenience sample of on-site parents was a limiting factor of this research. The sample size, the lack of male responses, and conducting the survey in an accredited center also were limitations of the research. The significant number of non-responses to statement number 8 and statement number 18 indicated a lack of clarity.

Summary

The efforts of organizations such as the NAEYC to promote and improve the standard appropriate practice for early childhood programs must not extend only to teachers

and educators. Knowledge must be shared, so that all parents can recognize, understand, and seek out the best practice for their children.

Each child's experience is significant. "From the past will come the future, what it holds, a mystery" (Sleeth, 1986). Parents and educators must stand together for the right of each child to grow and develop in the best possible environment.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Written permission from the Child Care Management
Corporation

December 15, 1997

Mary Ellen Douglas, Coordinator
Childcare At Legacy
6501 Legacy Drive
Plano, Texas 75024

Dear Mary Ellen,

I received your letter with the information regarding your planned parent survey on the topic of Developmentally Appropriate Practice. Please consider this letter as representing the approval of CorporateFamily Solutions for you to proceed with your research.

I would appreciate it if you would keep me informed throughout this process. Please let me know the date when you will be doing the survey. I would like the opportunity to discuss the results with after you have analyzed the data.

Please call me if you have any other questions or requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cay Hayes", written in a cursive style.

Cay Hayes, Regional Manager
CorporateFamily Solutions
2409 Lake Ridge
Glenn Heights, TX 75154

Appendix B

Written Permission from the Sponsoring Corporation

November 25, 1997

Mary Ellen Douglas
Childcare at Legacy
6501 Legacy Drive
Plano, TX 75024

Dear Ms. Douglas,

I received your letter asking permission to conduct your parent survey at the child care center. I understand the survey is to be voluntary and anonymous and will involve those parents currently enrolled. Under those conditions, you may proceed with your research.

I would appreciate the opportunity to share the results when your research is complete. Please advise me of how you plan to use your findings in future parent education efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon Saunders".

Sharon Saunders
Director of Diversity, JCPenney
6501 Legacy Drive
Plano, TX 75024

Appendix C

Informative Letter to Parents

January 18, 1998

Childcare at Legacy
6501 Legacy Drive
Plano, TX 75024

Dear Parents,

Over the past 16 months that I have been working here at the Legacy Center as the Infant-Toddler Coordinator I have had the opportunity to get to know many of you. My time here has been an educational experience as we continually try to improve the services we provide to families.

At this time I am nearing completion of my Master's Degree in the field of child development at Texas Woman's University. The final requirement is a research project to be submitted as a thesis. My topic is "Parental Perception of Developmentally Appropriate Practice." To complete this research I am requesting that both parents voluntarily complete a questionnaire.

A total of 24 statements will be included in the questionnaire. Please take a moment to fill out the questionnaire anonymously during one week in February. For your convenience, a table will be set up for you to complete the brief form. The questionnaires will be kept in a locked file cabinet for two years, and will be destroyed after that time.

The purpose of my research is to measure parental perception of our educational practices in our NAEYC accredited center. I will share the results when all the data has been collected and analyzed. If there are areas of misunderstanding identified, we will use that as the basis for further "Brown Bag Lunches" in the future. I would also like to identify areas for increased communication between teachers and parents in order to build a stronger partnership. Please call me at 431-8595 if you have any questions.

With sincere thanks,



Mary Ellen Douglas
Infant-Toddler Coordinator

Appendix D

Revised Survey of Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Developmentally Appropriate Practice: A Questionnaire
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Please check one:

Gender of parent filling out this questionnaire: Male Female

Age of child (ren) enrolled at Childcare At Legacy

6 wks to 12 mo.	<input type="checkbox"/>
12-24 mo.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 - 3 yrs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 - 4 yrs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 - 5 yrs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kindergarten	<input type="checkbox"/>

I understand that the return of my completed questionnaire constitutes my informed consent to act as a subject for this research.

Please answer the following questions from your point of view of a parent. Mark the appropriate response:

AS = Strongly Agree
 A = Agree
 D = Disagree or tend to disagree
 SD = Strongly Disagree

	SA = Strongly Agree	A = Agree	D = Disagree	SD = Strongly Disagree
1. Children learn concepts and solve problems best by working cooperatively in small groups.	—	—	—	—
2. A child is reading when he/she has memorized words.	—	—	—	—
3. Children need opportunities to design and evaluate their own learning experiences with teacher support.	—	—	—	—
4. Children's interest should be given a high priority when planning for curriculum.	—	—	—	—
5. Daily communication is necessary to build trust and mutual understanding between caregiver and parents.	—	—	—	—
6. Workbooks and worksheets are valuable learning tools.	—	—	—	—
7. Developing communication and interpersonal skills should receive a high priority in a child's education.	—	—	—	—
8. Character education should not be taught.	—	—	—	—
9. Student assessment should be based on teacher observation and work samples rather than achievement testing.	—	—	—	—
10. When assessing children, teachers study children as individuals as well as in relationship to groups by documenting group projects and other collective work as well as individual work.	—	—	—	—
11. Teaching methods should be adapted to children's stages of development.	—	—	—	—
12. Whole group time should be used as an opportunity to build a sense of shared purpose such as story-telling, book reading, or problem-solving	—	—	—	—

SA = Strongly Agree
 A = Agree
 D = Disagree
 SD = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	D	SD
13. Hands-on activities are valuable learning experiences.	—	—	—	—
14. Preschool curriculum should focus on in-depth projects that interest the children and are appropriate to their abilities.	—	—	—	—
15. Oral reading by the teacher to children is appropriate and valuable.	—	—	—	—
16. Classroom programs should meet the needs of children possessing a wide range of skills, abilities, and maturity.	—	—	—	—
17. Play should be an important part of a child development program.	—	—	—	—
18. Phonics drillsheets are the best way to practice reading skills.	—	—	—	—
19. Children should sometimes work on group activities that all can identify with, such as creating a class mural.	—	—	—	—
20. In the early childhood education, letter or numerical grades are an adequate reflection of a child's ongoing learning.	—	—	—	—
21. At various times during the day children have opportunities to work individually, in small groups, or with the whole group.	—	—	—	—
22. Caregivers should communicate that they view parents as the child's primary source of affection and care.	—	—	—	—
23. Children's progress can best be measured by how well they perform on standardized tests.	—	—	—	—
24. Children develop as readers in developmental stages in much the same way as they develop oral language.	—	—	—	—

Appendix E

Raw Data

**SUBJECT DATA FROM
SURVEY OF DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE**

Subject	Key Area 1			Key Area 2							Key Area 3							Key Area 4							Key Area 5		
	5	10	22	1	7	8	12	19	21	3	4	6	11	13	16	2	14	15	17	18	24	9	20	23			
1	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	2	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2			
2	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	4	4	4	2	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	3			
3	4	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	2	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	3			
4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3			
5	4	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	2	3	3	3	2	4	3	2	3	2	2	2			
6	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	2	2	4	2	4	4	3	4	3	3	3		3	2	2	3			
7	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	4		4	3	2	4	4	4	3	4	4	4		4	3	3	4			
8	4	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	4	1	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	3			
9	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	1	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	2	3	4	4	4			
10	4	3	2	3	3		3	3	3	3	3	2	4	4	3	2	3	4	2	1	3	3	2	3			
11	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	1	3	4	4	2	4	4	4	2	3		3	3			
12	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	2	3		3	3			
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33	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	4			
34	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	3	4	2	1	3			
35	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	2	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	2	4	4	4	3			
36	4	4	4	2	3	2	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	3			
37	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	2	3	4	2	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3			
38	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	2	1	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	3	3			
39	4	4	3	3	4	2	4	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	2	3	4	3	3			

