PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN CHILD CARE: AN EXAMINATION

AND COMPARISON OF CURRENT PRACTICES

IN CHILD CARE CENTERS

AND FAMILY CHILD

CARE HOMES

By

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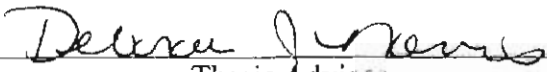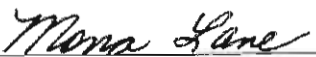Oklahoma Baptist University

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The importance of involving families in children's school experiences is widely accepted. The push for parent involvement is very strong from a number of influential sources and has resulted in a growing number of programs and initiatives that are quite varied and widespread. Specifically, the Department of Education's Goals 2000: Educate America has as one of its eight goals the formation of partnerships with parents, and teachers are now required to meet its standards by accreditation agencies (Lazar & Slostad, 1999). Under this initiative, each state must develop its own policies that will help to increase parental involvement in local schools by the year 2000 (Keith, Keith, Quirk, Cohen-Rosenthal, & Franzese, 1996).

The re-authorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1994 also has made parent involvement a national priority, encouraging a reexamination of parent involvement policies and programs in schools nationwide for the sake of obtaining Federal dollars (Baker & Soden, 1998). Title 1 funding for districts in high poverty areas is now contingent upon the development of specific involvement strategies called "compacts," or partnerships between schools and families which require mutual acceptance of responsibility for the children's learning (Baker & Soden, 1998).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children, which promotes developmentally appropriate practice, emphasizes the importance of parent involvement

in early childhood education, stating that "appropriate practices derive from deep knowledge of individual children and the context within which they develop and learn" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 22). This knowledge is obtained through relationships with the child's family and subsequently the collaboration between families and educators in the development of program goals (Powell, 1998). NAEYC maintains that regular, frequent communication must occur between early childhood educators and families, and that parents and teachers must share the responsibility of understanding and promoting each child's development (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

The Head Start early childhood program, from its inception as a central element of the War on Poverty, has consistently promoted parent involvement as an intricate part of its overall success. The design of Head Start has helped to further an overall view of parents not only as people involved in their children's education in the traditional ways, but as decision-makers in programming as well (Powell & Diamond, 1995). In addition, with the emergence of Oklahoma's "Reach for the Stars" program, more emphasis has been placed on parent involvement in child care programs, as centers and homes are expected to meet certain requirements regarding parent involvement strategies to qualify for different levels in the "Stars" program (Oklahoma Department of Human Services, 1998).

Also in recent years, many early childhood programs across the United States have adopted philosophies that are adapted from ideologies found around the globe. One such philosophy is the Reggio Emilia approach, based on the principles and practices of preschools in Reggio Emilia, Italy. In this approach, family involvement is an intricate part of programming. Teachers work to establish a climate of openness using consistent

two-way communication. This is done by involving them in monthly meetings and other avenues that ultimately move them into the inner circle of the program's network, making them true partners in the learning process of their children. In addition, as programs in the United States work to implement the practices of Reggio Emilia into all aspects of programming, all of the considerations must be processed with parents along the way (Using ideas from Reggio Emilia in America, 1995).

This study explored current parent involvement opportunities generally present in child care centers and family child care homes. Comparisons between the two types of programs attempted to discover differences in the type and frequency of parent involvement strategies employed. In addition, associations between type and level of director or provider education, ages of children served, and size of center were assessed in terms of their associations with parent involvement strategies currently in place. These are research issues because little is known about the parent involvement practices of child care directors and family child care providers. Specifically stated by Powell, "there is not a recent national profile of the ways in which parents participate in early childhood programs." (1989, p.56)

The body of evidence demonstrating the effects of parent involvement in child care, although growing, is relatively thin. Recent debate has arisen concerning whether the importance placed on parent involvement in child care has been misplaced or misunderstood (Shpancer, 1998). However, there is a convincing theoretical base, as well as empirical data from sound studies showing the positive effects of parent involvement on even very young children. This paper begins by providing a theoretical framework, based primarily on the six types of family-school partnership practices

outlined by Epstein (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Then there is a review of relevant child care parent involvement literature, which provides research based evidence for this investigation. Finally, a summary of literature findings and the hypotheses that guided the research are given.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The following review of the literature begins with a discussion of the theoretical framework for this study. This framework provides the basis for the investigation, and also serves to define the term "parent involvement" as it is referred to in this report. Following this will be a review of relevant parent involvement literature that guided the focus of the study.

Theoretical Framework

Powell and Diamond (1995), writing from the perspective of the early childhood educator or practitioner, have recognized that there are three basic assumptions that underlie the emphases placed on parental involvement in early childhood. At the same time, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), writing from the perspective of the parents, have identified three constructs that need to be developed by parents for them to involve themselves in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). From both perspectives, parents must be believed (by practitioners and parents themselves) to have a profound influence on child outcomes. There must be the sense that it is within the parents' power and ability to make a difference in their child's education (Powell & Diamond, 1995; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

An additional assumption that finds agreement from both perspectives is the need for a variety of opportunities and experiences. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997)

describe these as general invitations, demands, and opportunities for involvement provided by the school, as perceived by the parents. The underlying assumption that support from the family for out-of-home educational experiences is necessary for long term benefits (Powell & Diamond, 1995) provides the basis for the understood need for schools to provide a wide variety of parent involvement opportunities and experiences.

Six major types of family-school partnership practices have been outlined, based on the results of many studies of family involvement in elementary and secondary schools. The six practices are based on the theory of overlapping spheres of influence, which seeks to find out which areas or practices of shared responsibilities of schools and families overlap with one another. This framework is meant to assist educators in the design of their programs, as well as to guide researchers in studying the forms and results of partnerships between families and schools (Bornstein, 1995). Rather than focusing on the results of these family-school partnerships, this study looked at which forms of partnerships currently existed in various non-familial child care situations.

A brief description of the six family-school partnerships outlined by Epstein will be given here. As the basic framework for this study, the descriptions will also serve to define "parent involvement" as it is referred to in this paper. The first type of family-school partnership described involves basic obligations of families, such as parenting. Schools can provide information to families about many parenting issues, such as health and safety, discipline and guidance, nutrition, and so on. In addition, they can also provide information and support to help families build home conditions that serve to support student learning (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Bornstein, 1995). One could argue that schools vary considerably with regard to what efforts are made to provide this

type of information, and that this is possibly related to the school's overall belief about parents' efficacy in building a positive home condition.

Recent evidence demonstrates that centers that employ more parent involvement policies center-wide have individual caregivers that encourage parents to participate in school activities. Reported findings from a study by Dunn and Norris (2000) indicate that caregivers who encouraged parent participation in school activities were more likely to work in centers implementing more center-level parent involvement policies. Swick and McKnight (1989) found that "administrative support correlated significantly with active teacher support (r=.29, p<.05)" of parent involvement (p. 27). It could be argued from this that when a program director has a strong belief in parental efficacy, and thus employs more parent involvement policies, caregivers tend to involve parents more frequently as well.

The second type of family-school partnership is referred to as basic obligations of schools or their communication. These communications take the form of notices, phone calls, memos, report cards, newsletters, visiting opportunities such as open house, and so on. Not only do schools vary greatly in the form and amount of this type of information given, they also have a large effect on families' abilities to understand the information given (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Bornstein, 1995).

Although much of the inviting of parents to participate comes from the children themselves, parents must also feel that their child's school is welcoming and proactive in their attempts to involve them in the educational process. In terms of the second construct described above (general invitations, demands, and opportunities for involvement), this may be particularly true for parents whose role construction or sense

of efficacy does *not* prompt them to be involved, thus underscoring the importance of school-generated invitations to participate. A 1991 study reported that "most parents were deterred from involvement in their children's schools because of feelings of inadequacy, prior negative associations with and perceptions of the school, and administrator and teacher attitudes toward parents" (Curtiss & Olive, 1997, p. 20).

In a study that built upon Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's work, Moshe Tatar documented that keeping parents informed through providing more information about schools and opportunities for involvement was a "crucial ingredient" for the development of more effective involvement programs (Tatar, 1998, p. 101). He stated that researchers have found positive relationships between the amount of parent information given and the parents' attitudes toward the school (Tatar, 1998).

The third type of family-school partnership is parents' involvement at school, such as volunteering. This could include volunteering at school functions or in the classroom, and attending student performances or sports events. An expansion of this type of involvement is providing avenues for parents to contribute time or talents, even taking the form of mentoring or coaching (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Bornstein, 1995).

The fourth type of family-school partnership is involvement in learning activities at home. This is an area in which teachers can help parents monitor and assist their child at home in learning activities that are coordinated with their schoolwork. This type of involvement is especially helpful in making families more knowledgeable about the school curricula and teacher methods and expectations (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Bornstein, 1995).

The fifth type of family-school partnership is at the level of involvement in decision making, governance, and advocacy. The role of the school for this type is to provide opportunity for and encourage participation in organized parent groups such as PTA, school advisory councils, improvement teams, and so on (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Bornstein, 1995).

The sixth type of family-school partnership has been recently added, and is collaborations and exchanges with the community. This occurs when schools partner with outside agencies, business organizations, religious organizations, and other groups that share a sense of responsibility for children in the community. This could include simply an effort to inform students of what community and support services are available (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Bornstein, 1995).

While the framework described above was formulated primarily for application and research in elementary and secondary education situations, this study looked at these same family-school involvement types in early childhood education settings, namely child care centers and family child care homes. The focus was on practices in child care centers and child care homes that relate to five of the six types of family-school relationships described above. The sixth type of partnership (collaborations and exchanges with the community) was not examined. Expected outcomes included differences between center-based and home-based formal care arrangements in all five of the types that were observed.

<center>Parent Involvement Literature</center>

The following is a review of relevant literature on parent involvement. Divided into sections, specific attention will be given to the links between parent involvement in

early childhood and subsequent involvement, factors found to be determinants of various types of parental involvement, associated factors with regard to characteristics of the director, and studies on the frequency of parent involvement.

The Links Between Early Childhood Parental Involvement and Subsequent Involvement

Reynolds et al. (1996) performed a follow-up study seven years after participants had been in a Chicago preschool program for low-income families that emphasized parent involvement. In addition to expected program benefits for school retention and achievement, another benefit found was continued parent involvement (Marcon, 1998).

Marcon (1998) studied a total of 221 children, 22% who had attended Head Start, and 78% who had attended pre-kindergarten in the public school system. After controlling for economic differences in families, and entering other influences on parent involvement into stepwise regression analysis, it was found that in years 8 and 9, parents whose children had attended Head Start (which places heavy emphasis on parent involvement) were significantly more involved in their children's education than the other group. Also found was that parents whose child attended a child-initiated preschool also tended to be more involved at year 8 and 9 (Marcon, 1998).

Because parent involvement in early childhood experiences has been shown to predict future involvement during elementary and even secondary years, this study focused on those early experiences of parents.

Determinants of Parental Involvement

Several associated factors have been discovered which will guide the expected outcomes in terms of frequency of the five types of family-school involvement observed

in the child care programs. Results from a 1991 Epstein study indicated that the presence of type 4 activities in inner-city elementary and middle schools was predictive of other types of involvement being present. Because type 4 activities (involvement in learning activities at home) are more difficult to implement, it was surmised that the other types of activities had been implemented first, although this was not always the case. Type 2 activities (basic communication from schools) were found to be the most prevalent and not predictive of the other types. The authors suggested that further study was needed to identify which practices were strongest for each grade level and which were weakest (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). This study sought to identify the frequency of parental involvement practices on a level prior to elementary school-- in child care centers and family child care homes.

Research has also examined how varying levels of parent involvement have been related to variations in qualities of school settings, specifically the educational level of the teacher. Results have shown that teachers' average degree level was significantly correlated "with three criterion variables, most notably parent-teacher conferences" (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987, p. 427). Dunn and Norris (2000) reported that overall parent involvement scores were higher for caregivers that had higher levels of specialized education in early childhood education or child development.

Reported in Epstein's 1991 study was the finding that teachers who had fewer years of teaching experience had more parent volunteers in their classrooms, but that teaching experience was not related to any other types of activities (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). However, in studies of overall center quality, director experience has been found to have a significant positive effect (Shpancer, 1998). With regard to frequency of home-

school communication, caregivers most likely to engage in home-school communication worked in centers led by directors with more experience (Dunn & Norris, 2000). It was predicted that a slight positive correlation would be found between higher education, more specialized education and more years of experience of the director and more frequent parent involvement practices.

Parent Involvement Frequency

Frequency of parent involvement strategies was a major focus of this study. Some parent involvement investigators have concerns as to the nature of most parent-caregiver interactions, finding that much of the discussion, although child-related in content, was not of a significant depth (Shpancer, 1998). A ten-month child care home observational study revealed that there was actually very little information exchanged about the children in regular home-school communication (Powell, 1992). However, strong evidence showed that a higher frequency of these practices does have a positive effect on the overall nature of the communication. A 1977 study revealed a positive relationship between frequency of parent-caregiver contact and diversity of topics discussed. This included an increase in the number of topics discussed, including the number of parent/family related topics (Powell, 1977).

With regard to frequency of communication in center based care, the highest frequency of communication has consistently been found to occur at the transition point when parents drop off and pick up their children at the center (Dunn &Norris, 2000; Powell, 1977; Shpancer, 1998). The telephone has been found to be used with moderate frequency, and parent conferences used very infrequently. Home visits by center staff are hardly existent (Powell, 1977).

In a comparison of child care centers and family child care homes, an interview study with 35 homes and 38 centers revealed that "center providers spent an average of 13.7 minutes a week and home providers an average of 54.7 minutes a week with each parent" (Powell, 1992, p. 173). These findings should be interpreted in light of the setting differences between centers and homes, most notably the higher staff-child ratio present in center based child care (Powell, 1992). This interpretation agrees with Swick and McKnight's (1989) report that small class size was positively correlated with teacher support of parent involvement.

<center>Summary and Hypotheses</center>

As demonstrated in the literature review, few studies have been done that successfully explore the parent involvement strategies of child care directors and family child care providers. However, increased attention is being given to the promotion of certain types of parent involvement in these early childhood settings (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Powell, 1995; Oklahoma Department of Human Services, 1998). The research reviewed here explored parent involvement strategies currently found in child care centers and family child care homes. An essential component of the study was a comparison between the two types of child care in light of five of the six levels of parent involvement outlined by Epstein (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). These levels have only previously been explored in terms of elementary and secondary education.

This research addressed the following hypotheses related to current parent involvement strategies as reported by center directors and family child care providers. The hypotheses address issues that have yet to be specifically explored, as well as issues put forth in the preceding literature review.

Hypothesis 1. There will be a significant difference between child care centers and family child care homes in total frequency of reported parent involvement practices. Child care centers will have a higher overall frequency of reported parent involvement practices.

Hypothesis 2. Differences will be found between child care centers and homes in examining each of the first five types of family-school partnerships in the model described above:

A) Basic obligations of families.

B) Basic obligations of schools.

C) Parent involvement at school.

D) Parent involvement in learning at home.

E) Parent involvement in decision-making, governance, and advocacy.

Hypothesis 3. Centers will be found to have more structural (bulletin boards, handbook, parent resource area) opportunities than homes.

Hypothesis 4. Homes will be found to have more process (communication at drop off and pick up, phone calls, notes home) opportunities than centers.

Hypothesis 5.

A) Director's education level will have a positive influence on frequency of parent involvement strategies.

B) Administrative and management training (specified by the Department of Human Services) will have a stronger association than general formal education.

Hypothesis 6. Director experience will have a positive influence on the frequency of parent involvement strategies.

Hypothesis 7. Smaller size of center will have a positive association with process opportunities.

Hypothesis 8. Younger age group enrolled in center will have a positive association with overall frequency of parent involvement strategies.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Selection of Subjects

A total of 198 child care center directors and 282 family child care providers across the state of Oklahoma participated in this study. The sample was secured by a stratified random sampling procedure in which the state was divided into its six licensing areas, and 40% of child care centers and 25% of family child care providers were randomly chosen to participate. The proportion of centers was greater because there were fewer child care centers in existence but they served more children than family child care homes. This sampling procedure provided a more accurate distribution of the children.

Table 1 gives a summary of the director/provider educational characteristics along with a breakdown of full time program enrollment. The highest level of education for directors and home providers averaged between the completion of some college and having a two-year degree. Over half of the sample had at least some college education. Greater than 7% of both center directors and home providers reported having a graduate degree.

Both child care center directors and family child care home providers reported that they received an average of 22 - 25 number of hours in administrative training approved by the Department of Human Services in the last 12 months. A little over 3

times that amount was reported for training received within the last five years for both centers and homes. Child care centers and family child care homes each had the largest enrollment in the preschool age group, followed by school-age children, kindergarten children, toddlers and infants.

Research Instruments

Directors and providers responded to demographic questionnaires requesting information on their education, number of hours in early childhood education/child development, experience in the field, membership in professional organizations, and caregiver salary. Descriptive information about the organization of the center, enrollment, and number of staff was also obtained by the questionnaire.

Center-level parent involvement policies were assessed by asking directors and providers to indicate which of seven practices were present in their center. Questions specifically asked if parents were welcome in the center at all times, if a parent resource area was available, if there was a bulletin board, if there was a parent handbook, if parents were engaged in fund-raising, if they helped establish policy, and if they participated in program evaluation.

Classroom parental involvement practices were measured with a 16 item scale developed by Dunn, Kling, Monroe, and Norris (1998). Each item was rated using a 7-point Likert scale with 1 equaling almost never and 7 equaling daily/weekly. Range of scores for total scale was 16 – 112. Caregivers were asked to rate how often they engaged in each of 16 parent involvement practices described in the scale. The items include typical practices found in early childhood programs and advocated by the field such as use of newsletters, notes home, parent conferences, contacting parents regarding

problems, informing parents of when their child is doing well, encouraging parents to work in the classroom, and parent meetings. A description of the scale items can be found in Table 2.

The author has reported one reliable factor consisting of all 16 items (Dunn, 1999). A total score was created by summing all 16 items as well as three subscale scores, as suggested by identified categories present in the instrument, namely home-school communication, parental participation in school activities, and parent education. In the study reported, which included responses from parents and caregivers, internal consistency for the total scale score was good for both parent and caregiver ratings. The communication and school activities subscale scores were also reliable for both parent and caregiver ratings. Internal consistency alpha for the total scale score for this study was .85.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Total Frequency of Parent Involvement

The results of this study did not support the hypothesis that child care centers would have a greater frequency of overall parent involvement strategies than family child care homes. The average total parent involvement score for the 198 child care centers and the 282 family child care homes differed by only 1.28 (62.10 for homes, 63.38 for centers). Results of a t-test were nonsignificant (t=.76(423),p>.05). A complete report of the comparison of these means as well as means for each of the 16 individual parent involvement scores is given in Table 2. For both centers and homes, the practice reported at the greatest frequency was talking at drop-off and pick-up times. Reported to be offered at the least amount of frequency was holding parent meetings with guest speakers or special events, which averaged less than 2 on a scale of 1 to 7 for both homes and centers. Home visits, which are frequently found to be almost nonexistent, were done with little more frequency than parent meetings for both types of programs. These findings, which are shown by order of frequency from greatest to least in Table 2, are consistent with child care parent involvement literature (Dunn & Norris, 2000; Powell, 1977; Shpancer, 1998).

Five Family-School Partnerships

Although it has not been previously explored, it was anticipated that differences would be found between child care centers and family child care homes in each of the five levels of family-school partnerships outlined in a previous chapter. A summary of the questionnaire items that created variables for the study of each of the five levels tested is presented in Table 3. The reported internal consistency for the level 2 variable was .76. The alpha was .70 for the level 3 variable, and .57 for the level 5 variable.

Table 4 presents the means, standard deviations, and ranges for each of the five levels explored. This study's results showed no significant differences in any of the five levels. Opportunities provided in the Level 1 category (basic obligations of families) were compared by means (3.90 for centers, 3.99 for homes), and results of a t-test were nonsignificant (t= -.45(458),p=.65). For Level 2 activities (basic obligations of schools), means for centers and homes were again strikingly similar, the mean for centers being 35.46 and homes being 34.82. T-test results were nonsignificant (t=.68(428),p=.49). Level 3 activities (parent involvement at school) were reported at a mean of 13.21 for centers and 12.51 for homes, and were also compared using a t-test. Results showed no significance (t=1.24(439),p=.22).

Level 4 (parent involvement in learning activities at home) was represented by only one item from the 16-item scale: Suggest activities for parents to do at home. Centers reported a mean of 4.16, and homes a mean of 4.25. A t-test run on this variable showed no significant difference (t=-.48(454),p=.63). The fifth level tested (parent

involvement in decision making, governance, and advocacy) for which both centers and homes averaged less than 1 (.66 for centers and .62 for homes), t-test results were nonsignificant (t=.56(477),p=.58).

Structural Opportunities and Process Opportunities

To further investigate possible differences between parent involvement practices of child care centers and family child care homes, an alternative breakdown of the various types of parent involvement strategies offered was devised. Centers were expected to have a greater frequency of structural opportunities (bulletin board, resource area, parent handbook) than homes. The results of this study showed that on average, child care center directors were no more likely than family child care home providers to offer these types of opportunities. Table 5 presents a summary of the results of these chi square tests.

Sixty-one percent of the child care center directors reported having bulletin boards in their center, while 58.3% of family child care home providers reported having bulletin boards. The slight difference did not prove significant in a chi-square test $(\chi^2(1)=.47,p=.49)$.

There was a trend toward statistical significance for the use of a parent handbook, in that 8.4% more centers reported having a handbook than homes (50.8% for centers and 42.4% for homes). The greater difference between percentages proved to be nonsignificant at the .05 level in a chi-square test $(\chi^2(1)=3.27,p=.07)$. There was no real difference found between centers and homes in the availability of a parent resource area. This type of help for parents was reported present in just over half of child care centers

and family child care homes, with centers reporting this at 55.3%, and homes at 52.7%. Chi square results showed no significance ($\chi^2(1)=.34, p=.56$).

An additional comparison was done between the centers and homes with regard to total frequency of process opportunities (sending notes home, phone calls, etc.). Six items from the parent involvement measure were summed to create a total process score. A full list of the items that make up the process variable is found in Table 6. The mean process score for centers was 27.57, with a standard deviation of 7.06, and a range from 12 to 42. The mean process score for homes was 27.14, with a standard deviation of 7.21, and a range from 6 to 42. Results from a t-test showed that there was no overall significant difference between centers and homes and the amount of process opportunities reported present in the program.

<div align="center">Director Education Level</div>

Hypothesis five suggests that Director's education level will have a positive influence on the frequency of parent involvement strategies offered for both homes and centers. It was also anticipated that administrative and management training (specified by the Department of Human Services) would have a stronger association than general formal education. Table 1 presents a breakdown of each level of education reported, with numbers, percentages, means and standard deviations.

As reported above, the means for the highest level of education were very similar for child care centers and family child care homes. As anticipated, amount of total parent involvement was positively correlated with director education ($r=.34, p<.01$), DHS approved administrative training in the last 12 months ($r=.13, p<.05$), and DHS approved

administrative training in the last 5 years ($r=.17, p<.05$). The magnitude of the correlations was not in the anticipated direction.

Director Experience

Hypothesis 6 predicted that Director experience would have a positive association with the frequency of parent involvement strategies, as was suggested by the literature. Testing of this hypothesis was not possible in this study.

Enrollment and Frequency of Parent Involvement

It was anticipated that a smaller size of center, as measured by total enrollment, would have a greater number of parent involvement strategies in place, specifically the process opportunities (Table 6). This result was suggested by previous research that found that parents of children enrolled in larger centers reported an average of 13.7 minutes per week in communication with caregivers. while parents of children enrolled in smaller centers reported an average of 54.7 minutes per week (Powell, 1992).

The opposite was confirmed regarding this hypothesis for two of the six process opportunities, sending notes home about child or program ($r=.37, p<.01$) and sharing information between home and child care with a written system of communication ($r=.26, p=<.01$). The larger the size of center, the more written communication was utilized. No other significant differences were found.

Also suggested was that a younger average age of overall enrollment would have a positive effect on the overall amount of parent involvement practices in place. Findings support that the greater the toddler full time enrollment, the greater the overall amount of parent participation ($r=.38, p<.01$). Patterns in the magnitude of the correlation were in

the expected direction of the hypothesis, however, group comparisons were not made.

The complete correlation table for each of the age groups is presented in Table 7.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

A summary of the major findings, their interpretations and applications are presented in this chapter. The chapter begins with summaries of the findings as they relate to the eight hypotheses, organized by topic. Following this will be an interpretation of the research findings and applications or implications for child care providers and other practitioners. Following a discussion of the limitations of this study, the Discussion section will conclude with directions for future research related to the present work.

Summary of Major Findings

Total Frequency of Parent Involvement

A major focus of this study was the prediction that child care centers would have a greater overall frequency of parent involvement strategies as compared to family child care homes. The results of this study do not confirm this hypothesis. The overall average score measuring total parent involvement practices was surprisingly similar for centers and homes. Although the numbers show centers to have slightly more practices in place, the difference is not significant.

In terms of which individual strategies occurred most frequently, it was found that talking to parents at drop-off and pick-up times occurred most frequently. The next most frequent strategy employed by both centers and homes was informing parents when

children do well, followed by informing parents of problems. Sending notes home, making phone calls, sharing information using a written system, suggesting activities to do at home with children, encouraging parents to work with children in the classroom, and providing educational materials or information were all reported at similar frequencies, with the range between them being 3.9 to 4.6 (Table 2). On the scale, 3 represents "every six months" and 4 represents "3-11 times a year." Occurring with the least amount of frequency were visits to children's homes and holding special parent meetings, which averaged between "almost never" and "once a year" for both centers and homes. Of the small amount of research that has studied parent involvement at this level, these results are consistent with other findings (Dunn & Norris, 2000; Powell, 1977; Shpancer, 1998).

Five Family-School Partnerships

An additional focus of this study that received heavy emphasis was the examination of parent involvement practices as they are divided into five of the six levels put forth by Joyce Epstein. Comparisons were made in each of the five levels between child care centers and family child care homes. Of the five levels examined, no significant differences were found between settings. For all five levels, results were strikingly similar. Consistent with previous studies (Epstein & Dauber, 1991), Level 2 activities (basic obligations of schools, Table 3) were found to occur with the greatest frequency. Level 5 activities (parent involvement in decision-making, governance, and advocacy, Table 3), considered to be the most difficult to implement (Epstein & Dauber,

1991), were reported at an average of less than 1 for both centers and homes on a scale of 0 – 3.

Process and Structural Opportunities

In an additional attempt to discover differences between the centers and homes in terms of what types of involvement are most often occurring, parent involvement strategies were divided into two categories: process and structural. Tables 3 and 6 depict the breakdown of variables for these categories. It was found that centers were no more likely to employ structural type strategies (bulletin boards, resource area, parent handbook), than were homes. For the total sample including both centers and homes, bulletin boards were present in a little over half of the programs reporting, with centers reporting slightly more at a difference of 3.1%.

Overall, parent handbooks were present in slightly less than half of both types of programs, and a parent resource area was present in slightly more than half of programs. Centers were found to employ all three strategies at a percentage only slightly greater than the percentage for homes, with a trend toward statistical significance for the parent handbook variable.

Results were similar for process opportunities, with centers and homes reporting each item at a comparable frequency. Averages ranged from daily/weekly talking to parents at drop-off and pick-up times, to 3 – 11 times a year sharing information with a written system. For both centers and homes, the process opportunities were reported at a greater frequency than the structural opportunities. Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations for each of the 16 items.

Director Education and Experience

It was hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between director education and experience and total frequency of parent involvement strategies employed. Director education was divided into formal education (1-6 scale), DHS approved administrative training in the last 12 months, and DHS approved training in the last 5 years. Results showed that education did have a significant positive impact on the frequency of parent involvement opportunities employed, with formal education having the greatest effect, administrative training in the last 5 years having the next greatest effect, and administrative training in the last 12 months having the least effect. The experience variable was not testable.

Enrollment and Frequency of Parent Involvement

It was anticipated that smaller size of center would have a positive effect on the frequency of process opportunities, such as talking to parents at drop-off and pick-up times, making phone calls, etc. Results actually showed the opposite to be true for two of the opportunities, both representing written communication between home and program. No other significant differences were found. With regard to age of children enrolled, the hypothesis was confirmed in that the greatest significance was found for toddler full time enrollment, with infant and preschool enrollment also significant.

Interpretation of the Results

Many of the anticipated outcomes for this study were not confirmed by the research. The exploration of child care centers and family child care homes which sought to find out how often each of them employ particular types of parent involvement strategies found that, in actuality, the two types are very similar. These findings could be interpreted in several different ways.

The underlying assumption was that child care centers and family child care homes are fundamentally different in their make-up (facility, age grouping, size, staffing, curriculum, etc.), and therefore, must be different in the ways in which they promote parent involvement. This assumption may need to be changed to reflect a more equal view of the two types of programs with regard to parent involvement practices.

Alternately, because there is a significant difference between child care centers and family child care homes in many aspects, the tendency to expect more parent involvement practices and more varied parent involvement practices from centers may be somewhat justified. The results presented here could be interpreted to mean that many child care centers are not providing enough opportunities for parent involvement. One could argue that bulletin boards, parent handbooks, and parent resource areas should be available in more than just over half of all centers. In addition, while both centers and homes often employ type 2 activities (basic obligations of schools, Table3), possibly centers should surpass homes in level 3 (parents' involvement at school, Table 3) and 5 (parents' involvement in decision-making, governance, and advocacy, Table 3). This is especially true in light of research which shows parent involvement in preschool

experiences to be positively associated with later parent involvement in elementary and secondary school (Marcon, 1998).

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of this study include the lack of an observational component and the lack of specific definitions for several of the items of the questionnaire. Participants responded to a written questionnaire describing their own practices as a director or provider. The ability to clarify terms (such as "parent resource area") was not available, nor was an observation made to confirm the report of the participant.

However, for a large, randomly selected sample size, results were not only internally consistent, but consistent with previous research as well. This indicates that the reported results were generally reliable.

Applications and Recommendations

The exploratory nature of this study indicates that application should be cautious. However, the results can be useful in providing a picture of what is currently done in child care centers and family child care homes in Oklahoma in terms of parent involvement practices. Programs such as Oklahoma's Reach for the Stars and other accreditation entities could benefit from this information in deciding what parent involvement strategies should be required and what can reasonably be expected from child care centers and family child care homes.

Training for child care center directors and family child care home providers could be based on an examination of this data as well. A clearer understanding of what

program directors are currently involved in could provide insight into what areas are most in need of improvement overall.

Recommendations for further research include identical studies with different population samples and adding an observational component. In addition to exploring the amount or frequency of parent involvement practices, future research might explore the qualitative nature of the interactions between parents and caregivers or directors. Some additional questions to be explored may be whether or not the experience of teachers varies from what directors think they are. Also, what variations are there related to a particular child or family? Do teachers, directors, and caregivers direct all of the strategies to all of the parents?

Summary and Conclusions

This exploratory study sought not only to provide a picture of current parent involvement practices of child care centers and family child care homes, but to discover differences between the two types of programs in their employment of the various parent involvement practices. The underlying assumption was that because of the differing natures of child care centers and family child care homes in terms of facility, grouping of children, number of children, staffing, etc., differences would also be found in the ways in which they involve parents in their program. Additionally, identifying these differences would be helpful in guiding the development of policies that stipulate how and to what extent each of these types of programs are required to involve parents.

The results, which indicate a striking similarity between the two types of programs, give room for differing interpretations. Besides the realization that child care

centers and family child care homes are comparable in their parent involvement practices, further interpretation could include stipulation that child care centers are not doing as much as could be done in a center-type setting. Further study should seek to identify whether or not a different sample would yield similar results, and then move from there to make recommendations about what actions need to be taken.

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TABLES

Table 1

Background Characteristics of the Directors/Providers and Program Enrollment

Characteristic	Centers				Homes			
	n	%	Mean	SD	N	%	Mean	SD
Director/Provider								
Highest Level of Education	194		3.13	1.63	275		2.98	1.60
High School	47	24.1			74	26.9		
Vocational School	17	8.7			30	10.9		
Some College	65	33.3			81	29.5		
Two-Year Degree	12	6.2			27	9.8		
Four-Year Degree	36	18.5			43	15.6		
Graduate Degree	18	9.2			20	7.3		
missing	3				7			
Hours Formal Training (last 12 months)	134		22.49	24.56	184		24.20	26.12
Hours Formal Training (last 5 years)	65		77.18	63.29	92		71.83	72.96
Program Enrollment								
Infant FTE	112		3.43	3.98	137		2.22	2.53
Toddler FTE	127		5.13	6.17	167		4.17	4.94
Preschool FTE	148		14.12	19.89	211		12.28	17.82
Kindergarten FTE	95		6.21	8.21	122		5.87	6.74
School – age FTE	79		10.03	14.99	116		7.64	12.64

FTE = Full Time Enrollment

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Parent Involvement Scale

	Centers		Homes	
	Mean	sd	Mean	sd
Total Parent Involvement Score[a]	63.38	17.37	62.10	16.92
Talk to parents at drop-off and pick-up times.[b]	6.87	.72	6.84	.85
Inform parents when children do well.	6.75	.73	6.55	1.20
Contact parents about children's problems.	5.59	1.85	5.50	1.86
Send home notes about child or classroom.	4.55	2.48	4.61	2.35
Make phone calls to parents.	4.57	2.25	4.55	2.19
Share information with a written system.	4.40	2.55	4.15	2.44
Suggest activities to do at home with children.	4.15	2.10	4.25	2.09
Encourage parents to work with children in the classroom.	4.19	2.43	3.99	2.39
Provide educational materials or information.	3.9	2.05	3.99	2.08
Ask parents to assist with field trips or parties.	3.46	2.07	3.25	2.00
Send home newsletters.	3.27	2.06	3.34	1.95
Hold special days in my program.	2.83	1.69	2 83	1.66
Hold parent conferences.	2.73	1.99	2.67	1.97
Ask parents to make things for the program or class.	2.80	2.04	2.49	1.80
Visit the homes of children in my class/program.	1.96	1.63	1.79	1.32
Hold parent meetings with guest speakers or special events.	1.69	1.34	1.57	1.12

[a] Possible range on total score was 16 – 112.

[b] Possible range on individual items was 1 – 7.

Table 3

Summary of Variables for the Five Family-School Partnership Levels

Level and Individual Variables	Range
Level 1: Basic Obligations of Families	1 – 7
Provide educational materials or information for parents.	
Level 2: Basic Obligations of Schools	9 – 63
Send home newsletters.	
Send home notes about child or classroom/family child care home.	
Make phone calls to parents.	
Hold parent conferences.	
Hold special days in my program (ex: Mom's day, picnics, breakfasts).	
Hold parent meetings with guest speakers or special events.	
Contact parents about children's problems.	
Inform parents when children do well.	
Talk to parents at drop off and pick up times.	
Share information between home and child care with a written system.	
Level 3: Parents' Involvement at School	4 – 28
Ask parents to assist with field trips or parties.	
Encourage parents to work with children in the classroom (read, art, etc).	
Hold special days in my program (Mom's day, picnics, breakfasts).	
Ask parents to make things for the program or class.	
Level 4: Parents' Involvement in Learning Activities at Home	1 – 7
Suggest activities for parents to do at home with their children.	
Level 5: Parents' Involvement in Decision-Making, Governance, and Advocacy.	0 – 3
Parents serve in an advisory capacity or on a board of directors to help set program policy.	
Parents are involved in fundraising activities for the program.	
Parents complete questionnaires and surveys to help improve the program.	

Table 4

Range, Means, and Standard Deviations for Five Family-School Partnership Levels

Partnership Level	Centers			Homes		
	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD	Range
Level 1	3.90	2.05	1-7	3.99	2.08	1-7
Level 2	35.46	9.46	15-61	34.82	5.76	9-57
Level 3	13.21	6.05	4-28	12.51	5.76	4-25
Level 4	4.16	2.10	1-7	4.25	2.09	1-7
Level 5	.66	.92	0-3	.62	.85	0-3

Table 5

Chi Squares for Structural Opportunities

Opportunity	Total Sample	Centers	Homes	Results
Bulletin Board	286 (59.6%)	121 (61.4%)	165 (58.3%)	$\chi^2 (1) = .47, p = .49$
Handbook	220 (45.8%)	100 (50.8%)	120 (42.4%)	$\chi^2 (1) = 3.27, p = .07$
Resource Area	258 (53.8%)	109 (55.3%)	149 (52.7%)	$\chi^2 (1) = .34, p = .56$

Table 6

Summary of Process Variable

Variable	Range
Process Opportunities	6 – 42

    Send home notes about child or classroom/program.

    Make phone calls to parents.

    Contact parents about children's problems.

    Inform parents when children do well.

    Talk to parents at drop off and pick up times.

    Share information between home and child care with a written system.

Table 7

Correlations between Process Opportunities and Age Group Enrolled

Variable	Total Enrollment	Infant FTE	Toddler FTE	Preschool FTE	Kinder-garten FTE	School-agers FTE
Total Parent Involvement Score	.32**	.30**	.38**	.31**	.24**	.25**
Notes home about classroom	.39**	.37**	.39**	.33**	.31**	.30**
Phone calls to parents	.15**	.09	.14*	.14*	.09	.04
Contact parents about children's problems	.16**	.12	.18**	.14**	.06	.09
Inform parents when children do well	.07	.02	.08	.05	-.07	.04
Talk to parents at drop-off and pick-up times	.07	-.08	.03	.08	-.00	-.01
Share information with a written system	.29**	.26**	.32**	.25**	.20**	.23**

$* p < .05.$ $** p < .01.$

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide descriptive detail about the child care

programs in the state. Questions pertain to staffing, classroom activities, and parent

involvement. All information is confidential and will be discussed as a group and not by

individual program.

Title of Person Completing the Survey:_____

Type of Child Care Program:
    non-profit   for-profit (independent)   for-profit (chain)   corporate/employer

Type of Operating Permit:
    two-year license   provisional license   three-month permit

Please provide the most current enrollment information for your program.

	Classroom Capacity (# of spaces)	Part-time Enrollment (# of children)	Full-time Enrollment (# of children)	DHS Enrollment (# of children)
Infants (0-9 months)				
Toddlers (10-23 months)				
Preschoolers (2-5 years)				
Kindergartners				
School-agers (6 years and older)				

Please provide the following current staffing information about your program by indicating the number of employees you have in each category. Teachers and Assistant Teachers are reported in the grid at the bottom of the page.

_____ Director

_____ Assistant Director

_____ Teacher/Director (both teaching & administrative duties)

_____ Supervisory Teacher (assigned to more than one classroom)

       Indicate age groups assigned:_____

_____ Floater (regular paid staff person not regularly assigned to one room)

_____ Other (please explain)_____

Please provide the total number of teachers and assistants employed to work with each age-group listed below.

	# of Full-time Teachers	# of Part-time Teachers	# of Full-time Assistants	# of Part-time Assistants
Infants				
Toddlers				
Preschoolers				
Kindergarteners				
School-agers				

Does your center have a specific curriculum approach based on a particular philosophy?

1. No
2. Yes, Montessori
3. Yes, High Scope
4. Yes, NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practices
5. Yes, Piagetian
6. Yes, a particular religious orientation
7. Yes, other (please specify)_____

Ia your center accredited by an national accrediting body?   Yes   No

Has your center been evaluated with the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale?   No   Yes

Has your center been evaluated with any other quality rating instrument or scale?

No   Yes   (please identify)_____

Please provide the following information about the center director.

Indicate the highest level of education completed by the Director:

High School	Vocational School	Some College	Two-Year Degree	Four-Year Degree	Graduate Degree

Indicate the highest level of specialized education in early childhood or child development completed by the Director:

12 college hours in ECE/CD	Two-year degree in ECE/CD	Four-year degree in ECE/CD	Graduate Degree in ECE/CD

Indicate the number of hours of formal training in administration and management content areas specified by the Department of Human Services:

Completed in the last 12 months_____   Completed in the last 5 years_____

Indicate credentials/certifications completed by the Director:

CDA	ECE	Elementary	Certified Childcare	National Director
	(Through 3rd grade)		Professional	Training

Indicate where the director has received specialized formal training (not including on the job training) in child development, child care, and early childhood education. (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

a. in-service workshops at this center

f. courses at vo-tech

b. workshops at professional meetings

g. community college courses

c. workshops in the community

h. four year college courses

d. CDA training

i. graduate level courses

e. courses in high school

j. other (please specify)_____

Indicate the number of years the Director has been employed as the director of this child care program: _____

Indicate the number of years the Director has been employed in the early childhood profession: _____

Indicate where the teachers have received specialized formal training (not including on the job training) in child development, child care, and early childhood education. (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

a. in-service workshops at this center

b. workshops at professional meetings

c. workshops in the community

d. CDA training

e. courses in high school

f. courses at vo-tech

g. community college courses

h. four year college courses

i. graduate level courses

j. other (please specify)_____

How often does the teaching staff in your program receive a written evaluation of their performance by a supervisor or director?

More than twice a year   Twice a year   Once a year   Infrequently   Never

Indicate the salary range paid to full-time teachers employed at your center.

EITHER   Lowest hourly rate_____   Highest hourly rate_____

OR   Lowest monthly rate_____   Highest monthly rate_____

Circle the statements below that describe the salary scale implemented in your program. (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

a. There is currently not a salary scale with incremental adjustments in place.

b. Incremental adjustments in salary are based on levels of education.

c. Incremental adjustments in salary are based on completion of credentials.

d. Incremental adjustments in salary are based on completion of training.

e. Incremental adjustments in salary are based on years of experience in child care.

f. Incremental adjustments in salary are based on successful written performance evaluations.

Please indicate which of the following are present in your child care program. (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

a. Parents welcome in center at all times e.g., to observe, eat lunch with a child or volunteer in program.

b. Parent resource area is available with books, pamphlets, articles on parenting.

c. Parents are informed of the program through a parent's bulletin board.

d. Parents are informed of the program through a parent handbook.

e. Parents serve in an advisory capacity or on a board of directors to help set program policy.

f. Parents are involved in fundraising activities for the program.

g. Parents complete questionnaires and surveys to help improve the program.

Please indicate how often you do the following with parents in your classroom or family child care home.

		Almost Never	Once a Year	Every 6 Months	3-11 Times a Year	Monthly	2-3 Times a Month	Daily/ Weekly
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Send home newsletters.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	Send home notes about child or classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	Make phone calls to parents.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	Hold parent conferences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	Hold special days in my program (ex.: Mom's day, picnics, breakfasts)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	Visit the homes of the children in my class/program.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	Hold parent meetings with guest speakers or special events.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	Contact parents about children's problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	Inform parents when children do well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	Ask parents to assist with field trips or parties.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	Encourage parents to work with children in the classroom (read, play games, cooking, art, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	Ask parents to make things for the program or class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	Provide educational materials or information for parents.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	Suggest activities for parents to do at home with their children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	Talk to parents at drop-off and pick-up times.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	Share information between home and child care with a written system.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The following statements apply to the classrooms in your center serving children two years of age or older.

Please respond to the following items by circling the number that most closely represents how often children in your program participate in the following activities, on the average.

1 Less than Monthly	2 Monthly	3 Weekly			4 2-4 Times a Week		5 Daily

1.	Building with blocks	1		2	3	4	5
2.	Children selecting activity centers	1		2	3	4	5
3.	Participating in dramatic play	1		2	3	4	5
4.	Listening to records, cds, and/or tapes	1		2	3	4	5
5.	Playing with games and puzzles	1		2	3	4	5
6.	Singing songs and doing fingerplays	1		2	3	4	5
7.	Playing with manipulatives, e.g legos, etc.	1		2	3	4	5
8.	Coloring and/or cutting predrawn forms	1		2	3	4	5
9.	Drawing, painting, playdough, other art	1		2	3	4	5
10.	Specifically planned outdoor activities	1		2	3	4	5
11.	Large group teacher directed instruction	1		2	3	4	5
12.	Counting and/or reciting the alphabet	1		2	3	4	5
13.	Listening to and/or looking at books	1		2	3	4	5

You may use the space below to describe other features of your classroom activities and experiences for young children.

APPENDIX B

Thank you very much for promptly completing and returning this survey.
The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide descriptive detail about the child care programs in the state. Questions pertain to provider qualifications, children's activities, and parent involvement. All information is confidential and will be discussed as a group and not by individual program.

Type of Operating Permit:
   two-year license   provisional license   three-month permit

Is your Child care home accredited by an national accrediting body?   Yes   No

Please provide the following current enrollment information about your program.

	Program Capacity (# of spaces)	Part-time Enrollment (# of children)	Full-time Enrollment (# of children)	DHS Enrollment (# of children)
Infants (0-9 months)				
Toddlers (10-23 months)				
Preschoolers (2-5 years)				
Kindergartners				
School-agers (6 years and older)				

Do you have paid assistants working with you in your child care home? Yes   No

If yes, how many?_____

Do you have unpaid assistants working with you in your child care home? Yes No

If yes, how many?_____

Does your program have a specific curriculum approach based on a particular philosophy?
   1. No
   2. Yes, Montessori
   3. Yes, High Scope
   4. Yes, NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practices
   5. Yes, Piagetian
   6. Yes, a particular religious orientation
   7. Yes, other (please specify)_____

Has your program been evaluated with the Family Day Care Environment Rating Scale?   Yes   No

Has your program been evaluated with any other quality rating instrument or scale?

     No   Yes (please identify)_____

Indicate credentials/certifications you have completed:

CDA   ECE   Elementary   Certified Childcare   National Director
             (Through 3rd grade)   Professional   Training

Please indicate the highest level of education you have completed:

High   Vocational   Some   Two-Year   Four-Year   Graduate
School   School   College   Degree   Degree   Degree

Indicate the number of hours of formal training in administration and management content areas specified by the Department of Human Services:

     Completed in the last 12 months_____   Completed in the last 5 years_____

Have you completed pediatric first aid training?   Yes   No

Indicate where you have received specialized formal training (not including on the job training) in child development, child care, and early childhood education. (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

a. in-service workshops at this center   f. courses at vo-tech

b. workshops at professional meetings   g. community college courses

c. workshops in the community   h. four year college courses

d. CDA training   i. graduate level courses

e. courses in high school   j. other (please specify)_____

Indicate the total number of years you have been employed as a family child care provider: _____

Indicate the total number of years you have been employed at other child care centers: _____

Please indicate which of the following are present in your child care program. (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

a. Parents welcome in home at all times e.g., to observe, eat lunch with a child or volunteer in program.

b. Parent resource area is available with books, pamphlets, articles on parenting.

c. Parents are informed of the program through a parent's bulletin board.

d. Parents are informed of the program through a parent handbook.

e. Parents serve in an advisory capacity or on a board of directors to help set program policy.

f. Parents are involved in fundraising activities for the program.

g. Parents complete questionnaires and surveys to help improve the program.

Please indicate how often you do the following with parents in your family child care home.

	Almost Never 1	Once a Year 2	Every 6 Months 3	3-11 Times a Year 4	Monthly 5	2-3 Times a Month 6	Daily/ Weekly 7
1. Send home newsletters.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Send home notes about child or family child care home.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Make phone calls to parents.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Hold parent conferences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Hold special days in my program (ex.: Mom's day, picnics, breakfasts)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Visit the homes of the children in my program.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Hold parent meetings with guest speakers or special events.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Contact parents about children's problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Inform parents when children do well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Ask parents to assist with field trips or parties.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Encourage parents to work with children in the program (read, play games, cooking, art, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Ask parents to make things for the program or class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Provide educational materials or information for parents.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Suggest activities for parents to do at home with their children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Talk to parents at drop-off and pick-up times.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Share information between home and child care with a written system of communication.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The following statements apply to the program you have available for children two years of age or older.

Please respond to the following items by circling the number that most nearly represents how often children in your program participate in the following activities, on the average.

	1 Less than Monthly	2 Monthly	3 Weekly		4 2-4 Times a Week		5 Daily	

1.	Building with blocks		1	2	3	4	5
2.	Children selecting centers		1	2	3	4	5
3.	Participating in dramatic play		1	2	3	4	5
4.	Listening to records, cds, and/or tapes		1	2	3	4	5
5.	Playing with games and puzzles		1	2	3	4	5
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12.	Counting and/or reciting the alphabet		1	2	3	4	5
13.	Listening to and/or looking at books		1	2	3	4	5

You may use the space below to describe other features of the activities and experiences you prepare for young children.

Thank you very much for promptly completing and returning this survey.

VITA

Rebecca Jo Pruitt

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN CHILD CARE: AN EXAMINATION AND
COMPARISON OF CURRENT PRACTICES IN CHILD CARE CENTERS
AND FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES

Major Field: Family Relations and Child Development

Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Grace Christian Academy, Oklahoma City, OK in
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Experience: Director of Child Care Ministries, St. Paul's United Methodist
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University of Oklahoma, Norman, July 1994 – May 1995.