

THE EXPECTATIONS OF A GROUP OF PARENTS
IN A KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM
FOR THEIR CHILDREN

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PREFACE

There is much written on the subject of the parent-child relationship, but little written specifically on parental expectations regarding kindergarten programs. The purpose of this study was to determine what expectations a particular group of parents had for their children in a kindergarten program.

The writer wishes to acknowledge her indebtedness to the parents whose cooperation made this study possible. To Josephine Hoffer, whose interest and assistance was a source of inspiration, the writer is sincerely grateful. Appreciation is also expressed to Girdie H. Ware for her critical reading of the manuscript and helpful suggestions.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. THE PROBLEM AND ITS IMPORTANCE.	1
Need for the Investigation.	1
Hypothesis	3
Assumptions.	3
Purpose of Investigation	3
II. PROCEDURE.	5
The Letter and Open-end Questionnaire	5
The Subjects.	7
Identification of Objectives for a Kindergarten Program	11
Objectives as Reported by Organizations.	12
Objectives as Reported by Individuals.	12
Classification of Responses	17
III. ANALYSIS OF DATA.	19
Classification of Parents' Responses.	20
IV. SUMMARY	24
Findings.	24
Implications for Parent Education	25
Recommendations for Further Study	26
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	28
APPENDIX A	30
APPENDIX B	34
APPENDIX C	39
APPENDIX D	42

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Occupations of Fathers and Mothers.	8
II. Educational Level of Parents	9
III. Description of the Subjects' Families	10
IV. Age of Kindergarten Children.	10
V. Ten Selected Objectives to Be Used as Categories Supported by Heffernan, Todd and Others	16
VI. Percentage of Agreement Obtained by the Two Raters.	18
VII. Summary of Statements of Parental Expectations by Raters	20
VIII. Number of Pairs of Parents Responding to Each Category in Rank Order	22
IX. The Category Others.	23
X. Frequency of Age of Parents	38

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS IMPORTANCE

The kindergarten teacher, as a part of an educational system that supplements the home and bridges the gap between home and first grade, has many personal conferences with the parents of the children enrolled in the kindergarten. One of the purposes of the conferences is the sharing of experiences of the teacher and parent to enable each to understand and guide the child more effectively. During these conferences the parents have indicated that there is a lack of understanding concerning what should be provided in a kindergarten program. Few of the parents have had kindergarten experience as young children themselves, and their information from other parents has not alleviated their confusion regarding what the kindergarten should provide for their children. An understanding of the parental expectations should help the kindergarten teacher plan a better kindergarten program for the children, and an educational program for the parents. This investigation was designed to ascertain the expectations of a group of parents for their children in a particular private kindergarten program.

Need for the Investigation

Little research has been conducted on the parental expectations of the kindergarten experience that will aid the kindergarten teacher in understanding the parents' values and ambitions for their children.

Hymes (11) stated when writing about the kindergarten that "each of these children comes carrying with him a certain baggage of family expectations." (p. 336)

Lambert (14) supports the point that "every child brings his home and family with him to school. He carries them with him in his knowledge and general background, in his beliefs, about himself and others, in his ideas about religion, and in his other attitudes." (p.295)

Berson (2) stated that:

A child sometimes lives in two separate worlds; the world of home and the world of school, and in this divided existence he encounters different styles of adult authority as well as conflicting values and expectations. (p. 101)

Gans, Stendler, and Almy (6) support the point that parents and teachers should work together when they wrote that "the school and home can function in relative isolation: but when they do, children often find themselves caught between two sets of standards and values." (p. 403) Lambert (14) said that "parents need to know what the parents' goals are for their children." (p. 295) The Cooperative Parents' Group of Palisades Pre-school Division (4) report that "we have a real need to examine the worth of our ambitions for our children." (p. 24)

Lambert (14) believes that if children are to realize their full potentialities, all agencies concerned with their health, education, and welfare should work together. Because the home is one of the most important of these agencies, teachers must be concerned with parent-school relationships.

The education of a child requires continual careful planning based on the pooled experience and intelligence of the school and the family, so that development can proceed in the desirable ways, in harmony with the demands of society and with the potentialities of the individual. Parents are the best source of information about their children. Working as partners of the school, they can help greatly to further the goals of education. (p. 294 - 295)

Peterson (17) stated that the "parents and teachers are jointly

responsible for the happy adjustment of the child from the home to the kindergarten." (p. 40) Wills and Stegeman (20) support this same point when they say that "the wise teacher, the wise parent, and the growing child working together form an unbeatable team." (p. 301)

The findings from this investigation aside from the contributions to the investigator's own understanding of the parental expectation of the children whom she teaches should provide a basis for planning a parent education program that will help in meeting of individual children's needs.

Hypothesis

A hypothesis will not be tested in this investigation since the writer is interested in finding what a particular group of parents expect of a kindergarten program for their children and any point of view in the parents' response is an acceptable answer or response.

Assumptions

This investigation is based on certain assumptions which are that:

Parents believe that five-year-olds can profit from a planned educational experience.

Parents have some expectations of what the kindergarten program will do for their child.

Purpose of Investigation

The purpose of this investigation is to ascertain what a group of parents expect the kindergarten program to do for their children.

Expectation in this investigation means that which is anticipated

or looked for in the children's behavior by the parent. Specifically it means in this study what the parents want the kindergarten program to do for their child.

Children past four years of age were accepted into this private kindergarten to meet the needs of the parents. The enrollment was comprised mainly of the children of military personnel and they request this service since many states to which they may be transferred require kindergarten before first grade and the enrollment age is lower than that in Oklahoma.

CHAPTER II

PROCEDURE

The reader will recall that the purpose of this investigation was to ascertain the expectations of a group of parents for their children in a particular private kindergarten.

The following steps in the general procedure were followed: (1) the development of a letter and an open-end questionnaire and contacts with the parents to secure the written expressions; (2) identification of objectives for a kindergarten program from the literature; (3) classification of the parents' responses into categories corresponding to the objectives; and (4) the analysis of the data. The first three steps in the procedure will be discussed in this chapter. The fourth step will be reported in Chapter III.

The Letter and Open-end Questionnaire

The investigator assumed that the parents of the children enrolled believed that five-year-olds would profit from a planned experience when they enrolled their children in a private kindergarten, and that these parents had some expectations of the kindergarten program in terms of what it would do for their child. This study is based on these two assumptions.

A letter was constructed to obtain the written expressions of the parents in open themes. This method was chosen because other

investigators had found this an acceptable procedure. Taba and Elkins (19) state that the "open themes, in which children are asked to write freely is one way of getting clues about values and standards." (p. 10)

The investigator anticipated the open-end questionnaire would encourage parents to express attitudes and interests as well as specific learnings they expected for their children from the kindergarten program. Good (7) states that the "open-end or free-response questionnaire frequently goes beyond statistical data or factual material into the area of hidden motivations that lie behind attitudes, interests, preferences, and decisions." (p. 198)

Jahoda, Deutsch and Cook (13) wrote that the outstanding advantage of free-response questions, sometimes called "open-ended" questions, "is that they can provide a more adequate picture of what the respondent has in mind, what is important to him in respect to the topic under discussion, how intensely he feels about it, what the question means to him, within what frame of reference he is answering." (p. 427) These authors also state that the "open theme gives opportunity for spontaneous, unanticipated responses rather than confining the respondent to a choice among alternatives imposed by the question." (p. 427)

The investigator, approximately one week after the completion of fall enrollment, sent a letter by each child to his parents requesting that they (both parents) complete the open-end questionnaire by indicating their expectations of the kindergarten for their child. The written responses concerning their expectations were to be returned to the investigator as early as possible. A sample of the

letter and open-end questionnaire may be found in Appendix A.

The Subjects

The subjects for this investigation were the parents of fifty children enrolled in two kindergarten groups, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, in a private kindergarten in which this investigator was the teacher. There were fifty-two pairs of parents, but only fifty responded to the open-end questionnaire. Nineteen of the written responses were written in the handwriting of the father and thirty-one responses were written by the mother with the inclusion of the father's comments. One parent responded by telephone, but her response was to learn the qualifications of the investigator as a kindergarten teacher and to state that she would not bother to write anything, that the teacher should know what she was doing. At the time of the child's enrollment, this parent made no inquiries as to the qualifications of the teacher. The other pair of parents did not respond and the family moved to another state before a second request could be sent; therefore, the sample for this investigation was fifty pairs of parents.

The investigator recognizes that this sample is representative of only one select group; however, this sample did comprise a large majority of the parents who could have responded in this situation. The sampling for the purpose of this investigator's needs was adequate. The investigator felt that the responses from fifty pairs of parents would be an aid in meeting the needs of the parents through the parent programs, and the children's needs in school.

A face sheet (Appendix A) which the parents completed at the time their child was enrolled supplied information concerning the age

range of the mothers and fathers, the occupation of mothers and fathers, the educational level of the mothers and of the fathers, the number of children in the family, the kindergarten child's ordinal position, the number of siblings in the family that had kindergarten experience, the age of the kindergarten child, and the previous school experience of the child. This information is presented in Tables I, II, III, and IV.

The ages of the fifty fathers ranged from twenty-five to forty-seven years with an average age of thirty-four. The fifty mothers ranged in age from twenty to forty-six years with an average age of thirty-one years. Appendix B

TABLE I

OCCUPATION OF FATHERS AND MOTHERS

50 Pairs of Parents

Occupation of Father	Number	Occupation of Mother	Number
Military			
Officers	32	Homemaker	50
Non-commissioned Officers	12		
Banker	1		
Restaurant Manager	1		
Salesman	1		
Automotive Electrician	1		
Plumber	1		
Presser for Dry Cleaners	1		

The fifty mothers were full-time homemakers. The fifty fathers had the following occupations: forty-four were in the armed services, (twelve were non-commissioned officers and thirty-two were commissioned officers) one of the fathers was a banker, one was a restaurant manager, one was a salesman, one was an automotive electrician, one was a plumber, and one was a presser in a dry cleaning plant. (Table I)

The educational level of the parents ranged from four fathers and one mother who completed grammar school to two fathers and one mother who had held advanced degrees and one father who was a doctor of internal medicine.

TABLE II
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF PARENTS

Father's Schooling	Total Years	Mother's Schooling	Total Years
Grammar School	4	Grammar School	1
High School	16	High School	29
		High School and Specialized Training	2
Less than One Year College	6	Less than One Year College	1
One to Two Years College	6	One to Two Years College	10
Three to Four Years College	2	Three Years College	1
College Degrees	13	College Degrees	5
Advanced Degrees	3	Advanced Degrees	1
TOTAL	50	TOTAL	50

This sample of fathers was predominantly military in choice of occupation with a large group being commissioned officers. (Table II) A large group of the fathers were in the process of continuing higher education. (The military has available college courses that are especially recommended for officers.)

The fifty pairs of parents who responded had from one to five children. One pair of parents had one child, nineteen had two children, twenty-one had three children, six had four children and three had five children. Seventeen pairs of the parents were responding to the open-end questionnaire about their eldest child, sixteen about their second child, and fourteen about their third child, two about their fourth child and one about their only child. (Table III)

TABLE III
DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBJECTS' FAMILIES

Characteristic	Classification	Total Families
Number of Children in Family	one	1
	two	19
	three	21
	four	6
	five	3
TOTAL		50
Ordinal Position of Child in Family	oldest	17
	second	16
	third	13
	fourth	3
	only child	1
TOTAL		50

Six of the children enrolled had had nursery school experience previously and two children had had kindergarten experience. Twenty-two of the siblings had had kindergarten experience.

TABLE IV
AGE OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN
Boys - 22 Girls - 28

26 Four-Year-Olds			24 Five-Year-Olds		
Number of Children	Years	Months	Number of Children	Years	Months
1	4	1	4	5	0
1		3	2		1
1		4	3		2
2		5	2		3
8		8	1		4
4		9	2		5
5		10	3		6
4		11	4		7
			1		8
			2		9

The age range of the children was four years and one month to five years and nine months as of September 1, 1960. Twenty-six of the chil-

children were in the age range of four years and one month to five years. Twenty-four children were in the age range of five years to five years and nine months. The average age of the children enrolled was four years and eight months. (Table IV)

Indentification of Objectives for a Kindergarten Program

There are conflicting points of view even among educators concerning the value of a kindergarten program. Herrick (10) stated, "the kindergarten, while accepted in theory as a necessary part of the educational programs for young children, is still far from being part of general practice." (p. 111)

There are those who think that kindergarten is little more than a place where five-year-olds play, learn nursery rhymes, listen to stories, sing songs, dance and make pretty things to take home. There are still others who see the kindergarten year as settling down, of adjusting to sitting still and following directions, so that the child will be better prepared for a more rigorous attack on the "3R's" during the first grade. There is yet another group that believe that the kindergarten is good for five-year-olds because they are ready for specific kinds of learning experiences.

To better understand what the kindergarten is, there is need to understand the purposes of the kindergarten. From an early beginning, Froebel, (5) the father of the kindergarten, wrote, about 1840, "It (the kindergarten) shall give them employment suited to their nature, strengthen their bodies, exercise their senses, employ their waking minds, make them acquainted judiciously with Nature and society, cultivate especially the heart and temper, and lead them to the foundations

of all living-- to unity themselves." (p. 337) This has not basically changed today; however, the means to the end is different.

A review of the literature related to kindergarten programs revealed that individuals and organizations had published objectives for kindergartens. These objectives were sometimes called contributions, purposes, and goals.

Objectives as Reported by Organizations.

The Association for Childhood Education International 1961 (1) gives the following purposes of the association for kindergartens:

- To help children feel adequate in the new world of school
- To help children learn to understand and live intelligently in their world
- To facilitate sturdy growth through providing the space, freedom, and equipment needed
- To protect children from hazards to health and safety
- To teach the children to manage themselves, their materials, the routine of the day, to have initiative in planning and doing things. (p. 1-3)

The 1955 Conference on Good Schools for Children under Six in Florida (3) reported the following goals for kindergarten:

1. Gaining control over body movements
2. Establishing good health habits
3. Seeing and understanding relationships
4. Learning to make friends and to get along with others
5. Acquiring good attitudes and feelings
6. Learning to face and solve problems. (p. 17-18)

These two foregoing publications are representative of handbooks for parents, teachers, and opinion writings.

Objectives as Stated by Individuals.

The objectives as stated by individuals could be classified into those for teachers of kindergarten and those for children in the kindergarten.

Berson (2) defined the kindergarten curriculum as follows:

The kindergarten curriculum is a design for the education of the five-year-old. It is not a mere course of study where all children must achieve a bare minimum of measurable traits to arrive at a group of itemized goals. Curriculum involves the more subtle and extensive processes of strengthening physical powers, deepening emotions, developing greater social warmth and sensitivity, and elevating intellectual achievement and competence. Broadly, like any other curriculum, the one for kindergarten must be designed to cultivate values and refine behavior while it nurtures intellectual depth and skills. (p. 54)

Sherer (18) supported Berson in her belief that the school for young children should be a planned educative environment which provides experiences and guidance for each child in harmony with his potentialities and needs--experience that will enable him to participate as intelligently as possible in important human activities, help him to develop values and patterns of behavior appropriate to the democratic way of life, and yield him personal satisfaction in being with his fellows. (p. 24)

Mensing (15) stated that in planning a kindergarten program these objectives should be kept in mind:

1. To develop in the children the ability to work well with others
2. To teach them to take turns graciously and to respect the rights of those working with them
3. To help them feel a degree of responsibility in keeping properties. (p. 62-63)

Imhoff (12) had nine objectives for kindergarten and primary teachers:

1. Physical development and body care
2. Individual social and emotional development
3. Ethical behavior, standards and values
4. Social relations
5. The physical world
6. The social world
7. Esthetic Development
8. Communication
9. Quantitative relationships (p. 75)

Polly Hargis (8) gave these as her "specific objectives" for the kindergarten teacher:

Mental

1. To help the child to do independent thinking
2. To help the child to broaden his range of interest
3. To help the child to develop language powers
4. To help the child grow in ability to concentrate
5. To help the child improve his skills

Physical

1. To help the child to participate in a variety of motor activities
2. To help the child to establish desirable health habits
3. To help the child to know and follow simple rules of safety

Social

1. To help the child to grow in ability to work and play with others
2. To help the child to respect personal and property rights of others
3. To help the child to develop an attitude of kindness, cooperation, courtesy, and helpfulness toward others
4. To help the child to accept appropriate individual and social responsibility

Emotional

1. To help the child to gradually mature in emotional responses
2. To help the child to properly express emotional response
3. To help the child to face and overcome emotional problems. (p. 13)

Another educator, Peterson, (17) wrote that the curriculum should offer experiences that contribute significantly to the child's development:

1. In understanding himself and his world
2. In working as an individual and with the group
3. In changing attitudes and habits of thinking
4. In improving skills and information in solving problems of every day living.
5. By giving satisfactions
6. By creating the feeling that life at school is fine. (p. 20)

Heffernan and Todd (9) in their "ten significant contributions" feel that the kindergarten should help the child to:

1. Maintain and develop optimum health
2. Further his physical development
3. Extend his understanding of the social world

4. Enter into his scientific world
5. Grow in understanding of spatial and quantitative relationships
6. Expand his control of language
7. Know and enjoy his literary heritage
8. Express himself esthetically through art media
9. Become acquainted with and learn to enjoy his musical heritage
10. Establish satisfying relationships with children and adults. (p. 71)

The goals, contributions, purposes, and objectives obtained from the literature revealed four large categories which were mental development, physical development, social development and emotional development. These were too broad and inclusive in which to classify the parents' responses. Heffernan and Todd's (9) list of objectives ("ten significant contributions") embodied the goals and objectives which the individuals and organizations had presented in the literature. (Table V) The investigator arbitrarily accepted Heffernan and Todd's objectives as categories for the classification of the parents' responses. This was done for two reasons, (1) Heffernan and Todd's objectives encompassed all objectives found in the literature, and (2) the parents' responses seemed to fall naturally into these categories.

TABLE V

TEN SELECTED OBJECTIVES TO BE USED AS CATEGORIES
SUPPORTED BY HEFFERNAN, TODD AND OTHER EDUCATORS

<u>OBJECTIVE 1</u>	<u>OBJECTIVE 2</u>	<u>OBJECTIVE 3</u>	<u>OBJECTIVE 4</u>	<u>OBJECTIVE 5</u>
Develop and Maintain Optimum Health	Further His Physical Development	Extend His Understanding of Social World	Enter into His Scientific World	Grow in understanding of Spatial and Quantitative Relationships
Heffernan and Todd Imhoff Hargis Peterson *Florida Conference **ACEI	Imhoff Hargis Heffernan and Todd Florida Conference	Imhoff Hargis Peterson Heffernan and Todd ACEI	Hargis Heffernan and Todd	Imhoff Heffernan and Todd Florida Conference
<u>OBJECTIVE 6</u>	<u>OBJECTIVE 7</u>	<u>OBJECTIVE 8</u>	<u>OBJECTIVE 9</u>	<u>OBJECTIVE 10</u>
Expand His Control of Language	Know and Enjoy His Literary Heritage	Express Himself Esthetically Through Art Media	Become Acquainted with and Learn to Enjoy His Musical Heritage	Establish Satisfying Relationships with Children and Adults
Imhoff Hargis Heffernan and Todd	Heffernan and Todd	Imhoff Heffernan and Todd	Heffernan and Todd	Heffernan and Todd Imhoff Hargis Peterson Mensing Florida Conference ACEI

*Florida Conference for Good Schools for Children Under Six (1955)

**The Association for Childhood Education International (1961)

Classification of Responses

The investigator and a second person trained in the field of Family Relations and Child Development reviewed the responses in the original form and recognized the need to allow for flexibility in classifying the responses. A category of Others was added to the ten classifications of Heffernan and Todd, thus, a total of eleven categories were used by the raters in classifying the responses of the fifty pairs of parents.

The categories with a definition, and an example to clarify the definition, were placed on eleven separate envelopes to facilitate the the raters classification of the parents' responses. The parents' responses had been numbered, typed in duplicate form, making two complete sets of responses, and cut with only one response on a slip of paper to enable the two raters to work independently and at the same time.

The percent of agreement, for the raters who worked independently, was computed by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{number of agreements}}{\text{number of agreements plus number of disagreements}} (13)$$

The agreement of the two raters for all categories combined as calculated by this method was .95. The individual categories and the raters agreement is presented in Table VI.

The following chapter contains an analysis of the data which was obtained and classified by the foregoing description of procedure.

TABLE VI
PERCENTAGE OF AGREEMENT OBTAINED BY THE TWO RATERS

Categories	Agreements	Disagreements	Percent of Agreement
Maintain and Develop Optimum Health	32	6	84
Further His Physical Development	3	1	75
Extend His Understanding of The Social World	7	1	87
Enter into His Scientific World	1	0	100
Grow in Understanding of Spatial and Quantitative Relationships	1	0	100
Expand His Control of Language	7	0	100
Know and Enjoy His Literary Heritage	1	0	100
Express Himself Esthetically through Art Media	3	0	100
Become Acquainted with and Learn to Enjoy His Musical Heritage	1	0	100
Establish Satisfying Relationships with Children and Adults	87	1	98
Others	72	4	95
TOTAL	215	13	95

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The investigator for the purpose of re-orienting the reader presents a brief summary of the steps preceding the analysis of the data. The overall purpose was to ascertain the expectations of a group of parents for their children in a particular private kindergarten program.

To achieve the foregoing objective the following procedure was followed: (1) the development of a letter and an open-end questionnaire and contacts with the parents to secure the written expressions, (2) identification of objectives for a kindergarten program from the literature, and (3) classification of the parents' responses into categories corresponding to the objectives.

The subjects were the parents of fifty children enrolled in two kindergarten groups, one in the morning and one in the afternoon in a private kindergarten in which this investigator was the teacher. The subjects ranged in age from twenty to forty-seven years, and had an educational range from four who had completed grammar school to four who held advanced degrees.

The responses were classified in eleven categories (Heffernan and Todd's (9) ten objectives plus the addition of the category of Others).

Classification of Parents' Responses

The reader will recall from an earlier discussion that the investigator and another person trained in Family Relations and Child Development independently had classified the total responses used in this investigation into the eleven categories to facilitate analyzing the parents' responses.

TABLE VII

SUMMARY OF STATEMENTS OF PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS BY RATERS

Total Number of Responses 220

50 Pairs of Parents

Category	Number of Statements		Mean % Total Number Responses	
	Rater 1	Rater 2		
Maintain and Develop Optimum Health	35	35	35	15.9
Further Physical Development	3	4	3.5	1.6
Extend His Understanding of Social World	8	8	8	3.6
Enter into His Scientific World	0	0	0	0
Grow in Understanding of Spatial and Quantitative Relationships	1	1	1	.5
Expand Control of Language	7	7	7	3.1
Know and Enjoy His Literary Heritage	1	1	1	.5
Express Himself Esthetically through Art Media	3	3	3	1.4
Become Acquainted with and Learn to Enjoy His Musical Heritage	1	1	1	.5
Establish Satisfying Relationships with Children and Adults	87	88	87.5	39.8
Others	74	73	73.5	<u>33.2</u>
TOTAL				100.0

There was a total of 220 responses and Table VII presents a summary showing how many responses of the pairs of parents fell into each of the eleven categories. One-third of the number of responses fell in the category of ESTABLISHING SATISFYING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN AND ADULTS. The next highest number of responses or almost one-third of the statements were in the category OTHERS. More than one-sixth of the responses fell into the category MAINTAINING AND DEVELOPING OPTIMUM HEALTH. No responses were placed in the category ENTERING INTO SCIENTIFIC WORLD. The categories of GROW IN UNDERSTANDING OF SPATIAL AND QUANTITATIVE RELATIONSHIPS, KNOW AND ENJOY HIS LITERARY HERITAGE, and BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH AND ENJOY HIS MUSICAL HERITAGE received the least number of responses of parental expectations. The categories EXPAND CONTROL OF LANGUAGE and EXTEND HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE SOCIAL WORLD combined composed less than one-tenth of the statements of parental expectations. The categories FURTHER PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT and EXPRESS HIMSELF ESTHETICALLY THROUGH ART MEDIA had little more than one-twentieth of the total of all responses of the parents.

More than three-fourths of the fifty pairs of parents indicated some expectations in the category ESTABLISHING SATISFYING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN AND ADULTS. The category OTHERS had almost two-thirds of the pairs of parents with some expectations other than those of the ten categories which are representative of the educators and organizations in the field of child development. Almost one-half of the parents had some expectations concerning the category MAINTAINING AND DEVELOPING OPTIMUM HEALTH. No pair of parents had expectations

TABLE VIII

NUMBER OF PAIRS OF PARENTS RESPONDING TO EACH CATEGORY IN RANK ORDER
50 Pairs of Parents

Category	Number of Parents
Establish Satisfying Relationships with Children and Adults	44
Others	33
Maintain and Develop Optimum Health	23
Expand His Control of Language	7
Further His Physical Development	3
Extend His Understanding of the Social World	3
Express Himself Esthetically through Art Media	3
Grow in Understanding of Spatial and Quantitative Relationships	1
Become Acquainted with and Learn to Enjoy His Musical Heritage	1
Know and Enjoy His Literary Heritage	1
Enter into His Scientific World	0

that were classified into the category ENTER INTO HIS SCIENTIFIC WORLD. Three categories had only one pair of parents' response, these categories were: (1) BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH AND LEARN TO ENJOY HIS MUSICAL HERITAGE, (2) KNOW AND ENJOY HIS LITERARY HERITAGE, and (3) GROW IN UNDERSTANDING OF SPATIAL AND QUANTITATIVE RELATIONSHIPS. Seven pairs of the parents indicated some expectations in the category EXPAND HIS CONTROL OF THE LANGUAGE. Two pairs of parents of foreign birth especially stated that they wanted their child to learn the English language. Five pairs of parents expressed expectations in the category of EXTEND HIS UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL WORLD.

After the two raters had classified the parents' responses into eleven categories, the investigator for her personal use subdivided the category OTHERS into two divisions: (1) Broad and Inclusive Expectations

TABLE IX
THE CATEGORY OTHERS
72 Statements

Category	Number of Responses
Broad and Inclusive Learnings	19
Specific Learning	53
TOTAL	72

expectations that could include a variety of objectives--Example: "Get the child ready for first grade." and (2) Specific Learnings--expectations of a particular skill--Example: "We want him to learn to write his name." Nineteen responses fell in the Broad and Inclusive Expectation subdivision of the category OTHERS. There were fifty-three statements for Specific Learnings.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

This investigator studied the expectations of a group of parents for their children in a kindergarten program. During the parent-teacher conferences the parents had indicated that there is a lack of understanding concerning what should be provided in a kindergarten program.

The purpose of this investigation was to ascertain the expectations of a group of parents for their children in a particular private kindergarten in which this investigator was the teacher.

To collect data the investigator used responses to an open-end questionnaire. The responses were classified into eleven categories representative of the objectives as found in the literature for a kindergarten program.

Findings

Findings which are significant for both parents and teachers are summarized below:

(1) Parents were more interested in the kindergarten providing opportunity for interpersonal relationships for their children than any other expectation. Respondents more often stated that they wanted their children to have satisfying relationships with both children and adults. This objective was also most often stated by the edu-

cators as found in a review of the literature.

(2) The statements which were classified under the category OTHERS (next largest number of responses) indicates that parents often do not understand what to expect of the kindergarten program. This is in keeping with findings from the literature (14,17) which indicated that there is a need for a parent education program to parallel the kindergarten experience.

(3) Parents were interested in the kindergarten providing opportunities for their children to maintain and develop both physical and mental health. This objective was second highest in importance in the literature according to the educators' objectives. (Table V)

(4) The parents did not often state expectations in regard to language development, however this category was listed as fourth in expectations.

(5) Seldom did parents have expectations for their children in the areas of music, literature and specific learning related to subject matter content.

(6) Science as an area for learning expectations was not stated by any pairs of parents.

Implications for Parent Education

The findings from this study would indicate that in planning the kindergarten program the kindergarten teacher should include in her program the following for parents:

(1) A parents' meeting early in the school year so that parents will have an opportunity to know what the teacher plans for the chil-

dren in the way of experiences as they are related to the objectives of a kindergarten and the needs of the children.

Note: The investigator had a parents' meeting for each kindergarten group, the morning group and the afternoon group, the last week in September.

The program was planned to interpret the objectives of the kindergarten and the learning experiences planned for October.

(2) A parents' meeting that would have as its goal to interpret to parents learning values of the educational experiences for children, such as: science, art, music and literature and to recognize the opportunities for valuable early learning experiences in everyday living experiences at home and in the kindergarten.

Note: The investigator planned parents' meetings for the remaining months based on the interests and needs of the parents and children.

The investigator planned parent participation days for Tuesday and Thursday of each week. A parent was encouraged to attend school with their child and participate in the day's activities. Near one-hundred percent of the parents participated.

Parents were encouraged to share their abilities with the children and plan an activity for them. Several mothers shared music with the children. One mother brought ceramic clay for her child's group. No fathers could participate because of military responsibilities.

The investigator planned excursions that included the parents in which the parents accompanied their child, provided transportation. One father planned an excursion to the animal farm at Fort Sill for his child's group.

Recommendations for Further Study

(1) The investigator recommends the procedure used in this study as a means by which teachers, at any level of teaching could employ to deepen their understanding of the children and the parents' expectations for their children.

(2) Further research needs to be done to measure the kindergarten program's capacity to meet parents' expectations for their children.

(3) A follow up study of this same group of parents or a similar group with more permanency of residence should be studied. (This study consisted mostly of military personnel.)

(4) A study to ascertain the parents' expectations of school at any grade level would be of value to teachers and those persons working with children and their families.

(5) The results of this study could be compared with a similar survey of parents' expectations of children enrolled in a public kindergarten.

(6) The investigator would need to add to the findings of this study each year to gain a better understanding of the children and their parents' expectations in her kindergarten groups.

The investigator felt the findings of this study motivated her to be more sensitive to both parents and the children's needs. The success of the parent education program, based on the findings of this study, could be evidenced by the change in the verbally stated expectations of the parents as they realized and understood the values of kindergarten experiences. As the year progressed there were no requests for children to have formal education and many requests for the parents to help them understand the children's needs for social experiences.

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APPENDIX A

September 14, 1960

Dear Parents:

Welcome to the Kindergarten Parents Group. Parents have much to contribute to a teacher's understanding of an individual child's need and interests. During the coming year there will be opportunities for us to share knowledge about your child.

You have given me general information about your child on the registration forms. I would like to know more about what you as the mother and father want the kindergarten program to do for your child. This information will aid me in understanding and helping him.

Attached is a page on which you may write the expectations you have for your child to achieve through attendance in the kindergarten program. Please discuss it with your child's father. I would like to have it returned as early as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation. Your contribution will be of value in my planning for your child's needs and the needs of his classmates.

Sincerely,

"Miss Carol"

Please write in your own words what you want the kindergarten program to do for your child.

Date _____

Class _____

INFORMATION

Name _____ Nickname _____ Sex _____

Date of birth _____ Age (years, months, days) _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Previous school attendance _____

Transportation: (underline) school bus, taxi, automobile, walk

Mother:

1. Maiden name _____ Date of birth _____

2. Birthplace _____

3. Education: (underline) grammar school, high school, college (if college, give degree) _____

4. Occupation before marriage _____

5. Do you do any work outside your home? _____ What? _____

6. Christian? _____ Church member? _____ Where? _____

7. Church and civic activities _____

Father:

1. Name _____ Date of birth _____

2. Birthplace _____

3. Education: (underline) grammar school, high school, college (if college, give degree) _____

4. Occupation _____

5. Christian? _____ Church member? _____ Where? _____

6. Church and civic activities _____

Brothers and sisters (List even if not living and give date of death):

Name _____ Date of birth _____

Who are the members of your present household? (Include parents, children, other relatives, roomers, maids, etc.) _____

Do you live in an apartment? _____ In rooms? _____ Do you occupy a whole house? _____ Does the child have a room of his own? _____

How much play space does he have? _____

How much of his time at home does your child stay outdoors? _____

Does your child have an allergy? _____ How does it manifest itself? _____

What are the ages and sexes of the children with whom your child gets along and played during the past year? _____

What type of play do they engage in and how does your child get along with others? _____

Condition of your child's general health so far as you know? _____

What serious illness, if any, has your child had? _____

Give all information you can on the following: (Use back if necessary)

Toilet habits _____

Sleep and nap habits _____

Eating habits and difficulties _____

FEARS _____

Behavior habits (biting nails, sucking fingers, tantrums, biting, etc.) _____

Discipline (list modes of discipline used with the child) _____

APPENDIX B

SPECIMENS OF OPEN RESPONSE

September 16, 1960

We would like and would be extremely pleased if ^{*}Blank could learn:

1. To free herself from shyness and reserve
2. To express herself freely and clearly
3. To achieve some degree of patience in working toward a goal
4. To cooperate with other children working as a group
5. To respect the importance of promptness in meeting a schedule
6. To gain self-confidence
7. To willingly participate in group endeavors

Written by father

Signed by both parents

* Blank is used for the names of the children.

Miss Carol,

My husband says that he would like for the kindergarten program to start preparing Blank for a B. S. Degree!

Seriously, we want kindergarten to prepare him for the first-grade. He wants him to learn how to work and play in a group. We hope that he will develop into a leader, but if he does not have leadership qualities, we would hope for him to be a good follower.

Also that the program would whet his curiosity and his appetite for knowledge.

All in all, we hope the kindergarten will be a pleasant experience, one that will make him look forward to school and learning.

Written by Mother

As Blank's parents, we do not expect much in the way of formal education from her kindergarten experience. What we do have in mind is pleasant surroundings and a teacher with an understanding of five-year-olds to give her an introduction to the schoolroom situation and group activity. Blank has always seemed eager and able to learn, and we are more interested at this stage in providing her with surroundings in which her interest in "school" can grow than in cramming her with knowledge.

In seeking a kindergarten suitable for her, we looked for a physical set-up that would appeal to a five-year-old, a teacher who seemed to show imagination and interest in children. We were impressed that you do not try to handle 40 to 50 children at a time, devote time and energy to creating equipment (and no doubt stories, games, etc.) to suit the needs and interests of the group--and out of materials at hand. The fact that the little school bus was having its horn and brakes checked indicated that you are conscious of safety measures for the children, and the sending of this sheet further shows that you are most interested in the children you handle daily.

We visited several Lawton kindergartens, and not only were we convinced that your school would best prepare Blank for entrance into first grade next fall, but she "chose" you over the others herself!

TABLE X
 FREQUENCY OF AGE OF PARENTS

50 Pairs of Parents

Number of Fathers	Age	Number of Mothers
	20	1
	22	1
	23	2
	24	3
1	25	5
4	26	3
6	27	4
4	28	4
2	29	2
3	30	6
4	31	2
3	32	3
1	33	1
1	34	1
3	35	3
3	36	
5	37	3
2	38	1
	39	2
1	40	
2	41	
1	42	2
3	43	
	46	1
1	47	

APPENDIX C

Instructions to Raters for Sorting Statements

(from open-end responses) into categories

This problem is concerned with the expectations the parents say they have for their children in a kindergarten program. The categories are typed on the separate envelopes with the definition and an example. There is a category called "Others" to provide flexibility for the raters.

1. Please study the definitions of each category and become familiar with the examples on each envelope before making your decision.
2. After you have read each statement, place it in the category where you feel this statement belongs.
3. Place in the "Others" category any statement which does not seem to fit in one of the other categories.
4. Do not be concerned with how few or how many may fall into each category.

SPECIMEN OF ENVELOPES

CATEGORY I

MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP OPTIMUM HEALTH -- means activities which strengthens both the physiological and psychological aspects of the child's development.

EXAMPLE: "The kindergarten program should help to develop a child into a healthy child in body."

"We want the kindergarten to help his ability to think."

APPENDIX D

CATEGORIES WITH DEFINITIONS AND
EXEMPLIFYING STATEMENTS

1. MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP OPTIMUM HEALTH--means activities which strengthens both the physiological and psychological aspects of the child's development.
 EXAMPLES:
 1. The kindergarten program should help the child to develop into a healthy child in body.
 2. We want the kindergarten to help his ability to think out.
 3. We want her to begin to think for herself in regards as how to behave.

2. FURTHER HIS PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT--means providing activities which promote optimum large muscle and limited or small muscle development.
 EXAMPLES:
 1. Make some progress in the refinement of muscular control in preparation for writing.
 2. Concerning physical things, I would like for her to learn to tie her shoes.

3. EXTEND HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE SOCIAL WORLD--means providing activities which help the child learn to understand the world in which he lives.
 EXAMPLES:
 1. We want the kindergarten to broaden his knowledge of his environment.
 2. We want the kindergarten to arouse our child's interest in a variety of subjects.

4. ENTER INTO HIS SCIENTIFIC WORLD--means providing opportunities for the child to satisfy his curiosity in his environment.
 EXAMPLES:
 1. Encourage the child to explore the world of insects, water and the world of mechanical devices.

5. GROW IN UNDERSTANDING OF SPATIAL AND QUANTITATIVE RELATIONSHIPS--means providing opportunity to learn concepts such as space, time, number and quantity.
 EXAMPLE:
 1. We want him to gain a general knowledge of numbers.

6. EXPAND HIS CONTROL OF LANGUAGE--means experiences which enable the child to develop vocabulary and to understand concepts they attach to verbal symbols.

EXAMPLES: 1. We would like for Blank to learn to speak a little more clearly if possible.

2. We would like for her to be able to express herself.

7. KNOW AND ENJOY HIS LITERARY HERITAGE--means opportunity to enjoy good books by listening, looking and telling.

EXAMPLES: 1. We would like for him to learn nursery rhymes.

8. EXPRESS HIMSELF ESTHETICALLY THROUGH ART MEDIA--means opportunity for the child to manipulate, explore, to experiment with materials using his own thoughts and feelings to express his ideas.

EXAMPLES: 1. Please give him a chance to work with paints, chalk, clay and et cetera.

2. We would like for you to offer varied and stimulating materials so she can learn to express her creative abilities.

9. BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH AND LEARN TO ENJOY HIS MUSICAL HERITAGE--means opportunity to extend the musical experience through opportunity for singing, rhythms, listening to good music and learning through experimenting with musical instruments.

EXAMPLES: 1. I think Blank would like singing.

10. ESTABLISHING SATISFYING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN AND ADULTS--means opportunity for living and learning as a group.

EXAMPLES: 1. I'd like the kindergarten to teach him how to get along with others as a group.

2. We hope the kindergarten program will help our child to be socially acceptable to adults.

11. OTHERS--means that the statements did not seem to fit into any of the other categories.

PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS

CATEGORY 1

MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP OPTIMUM HEALTH--means activities which strengthens both the physiological and psychological aspects of the child's development.

Agree

She can learn to do things for herself

To learn to put his working time to good use

To further develop confidence in himself

To gain some self-confidence

To grow and develop to the highest level of his abilities

To become accustomed to going to school at a certain time

The kindergarten program should help the child to develop into a healthy child in body

Develop increased self-reliance and self-confidence

Use of his own initiative

To become well adjusted and satisfied to spend time away from home

To achieve some degree of patience in working toward a goal

To gain self-confidence

Develop a sense of confidence and self assurance

Begin to think for herself in regards as to how to behave

We want kindergarten to accustom Blank to the routine of school life

To help her overcome some of her shyness

Give our child some idea of what to expect when she begins first grade

Help her to become more self-reliant

To free herself from shyness and reserve

To learn to make the most of his time and materials

Achieve a sense of independence from her two older sisters

To improve himself whether he is coloring or crossing the street

Develop a proper adjustment to the school atmosphere

Help him to be more independent

Think for himself

Learn to make small decisions of her own without having to rely on us

Give her new responsibilities

The kindergarten program should help the child develop a healthy mind

To learn to be an individual and gain independence from us

To gain a little more confidence in himself and his abilities

To help his ability to think out

Disagreements

To give her experience that she would not ordinarily obtain until her first year of grammar school

To gain recognition for her efforts

Help him to get over the habit of whinning when he can't have his own way

The main thing we would like for Blank to gain from kindergarten is to overcome his shyness

Become accustomed to group discipline

Give her a chance to "go it alone" so to speak, without mother or relatives to interfere

CATEGORY 2

FURTHER HIS PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT--means providing activities which promote both optimum large and small muscle development

Agree

Concerning physical things, I would like for her to learn to tie her shoes

Make some progress in the refinement of muscular coordination in preparation for writing

To become accustomed to the routine of a daily schedule of activities "work time" and "play time"

Disagree

Care and responsibility of her personal belongings

CATEGORY 3

EXTEND HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE SOCIAL WORLD--means providing activities which help the child learn to understand the world in which he lives

Agree

We hope the kindergarten will be a pleasant experience, one that will make him look forward to school and learning

To arouse our child's interest in a variety of subjects

To provide her with surroundings in which her interest in school can grow

Give a pleasant idea of school and challenging

Broaden his knowledge of his environment

I hope, too, it will provide a good foundation to learn love of country

Disagree

We hope the program will whet his appetite and curiosity for knowledge

CATEGORY 4

ENTER INTO HIS SCIENTIFIC WORLD---means providing opportunities for the child to satisfy his curiosity in his environment

CATEGORY 5

GROW IN UNDERSTANDING OF SPATIAL AND QUANTITATIVE RELATIONSHIPS---means providing opportunity to learn concepts such as space, time, number, and quantity

Agree

Gain a general knowledge of numbers

CATEGORY 6

EXPAND HIS CONTROL OF LANGUAGE---means experiences which help the child develop vocabulary and to understand concepts they attach to verbal symbols

Agree

I would like for you to correct my daughter to speak the proper way

I think she should be free to express herself as to what she likes and does not like

Our main interest in Blank while she is attending your kindergarten is the understanding and speaking of the English language

Speaking the English language

Blank has trouble in talking fast and pronouncing words wrong

We would like for Blank to learn to speak a little clearer if possible

CATEGORY 7

KNOW AND ENJOY HIS LITERARY HERITAGE---means opportunity to enjoy good literature (books) by listening, looking and telling

Agree

Learn nursery rhymes

CATEGORY 8

EXPRESS HIMSELF ESTHETICALLY THROUGH ART MEDIA---means opportunity for the child to manipulate, explore, to experiment with materials using his own thoughts and feelings in expressing his ideas

Agree

Give him a chance to work with paint, chalk, clay and et cetera

Offer varied and stimulating materials so she can learn to express her creative abilities

Learn the colors and color schemes

CATEGORY 9

BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH AND LEARN TO ENJOY HIS MUSICAL HERITAGE---means opportunity to extend the musical experience through opportunity for singing, rhythms, listening to good music and learning through experimenting with musical instruments

Agree

I think Blank would like singing

CATEGORY 10

ESTABLISH SATISFYING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN AND ADULTS---means opportunity for living and learning as a group

Agree

Play with children without having his own way

He should respect the teacher

I expect Blank's kindergarten program to show (or teach) her how to share

We simply want Blank to learn to play

Learn to get along with others

Like for Blank to learn how to get along with children her own age

Blank needs to learn the discipline and responsibility of playing and working with other children

Work with other children

I'd like it to teach him how to get along with others as a group

I don't think he should be left to do things he only likes to do

Conduct himself in somewhat an orderly manner

In all I guess I want him to have supervision and guidance

To be able to follow directions of someone other than his parents

To help him learn to work with others

To learn to get along with his classmates

To learn to get along with his teacher

Play or get along with others

Foremost, I believe, as do most parents, that kindergarten will teach my child to play and associate with other children

Learn how to share

We would be very happy if she learned to listen while other people are speaking

To give him an opportunity to work with children his own age

If he does not have leadership qualities, we would like for him to be a good follower

To give him an opportunity to play with children his own age

To take more interest in group activities

Learn how to get along with other children

Learn to show respect to adults such as teachers

To take part in group activity enthusiastically

To learn to share

I want her to get together with the other girls and get to understand everyone of them

We want him to learn how to work in a group

We want him to learn how to play in a group

Learn to get along with people outside his immediate family

We want him to learn to get along with other persons his age

To be a good friend

To be able to play with others his own age

We want Blank to learn to get along in a group

To learn how to share

I want Blank to learn group rules

I want Blank to learn to play with others

I hope Blank can learn to share ideas with others

Learn to share

Have fun

I hope that Blank can learn to play with others

To provide Blank with the opportunity to participate in supervised activities as an individual apart from family

An opportunity of learning to do things as a group for reasonably periods of length

Help her to learn to share and give instead of take all the time

Help her to learn to mix a little more

Teach our child to cooperate with others

We would like for him to learn to share

We would like for him to learn to play well with others

We would like for him to learn to listen

To respect the importance of meeting a schedule

She can learn to play with other children

We want her to enjoy her contact with the other children and teacher
 We would like for her to get used to playing with other children
 The basic elements of citizenship and cooperation
 Ability to accept corrective criticism
 To learn to get along with others
 To give her an introduction to the schoolroom situation and group activity
 We would like her to get used to perhaps working with other children
 Learn to respect and mind his teacher
 To cooperate with other children working as a group
 Learn fair play
 To willingly participate in group endeavors
 My husband and I would be very pleased if Blank learns to play with other children her own age
 Her father and I feel that she should learn to speak to grown-ups when spoken to
 We hope the kindergarten program will help our daughter to overcome some of her shyness
 We hope the kindergarten program will help our daughter to be socially acceptable to adults
 Be a part of a group and participate in group activities
 To learn to respect other's property and the significance of sharing
 Learn to cooperate with the teacher and children
 Teach her to share things with others
 Improve his understanding and acknowledgement of the rights of others
 Gain acceptance by his contemporaries as an equal
 Learn to share toys
 To learn the fundamentals of obeying others than that of her parents
 Learn to share with children
 How to cooperate with others, maybe in groups
 Learn to participate in group activities as games
 Child-teacher relationship
 Learn to work with a group
 Group participation
 To participate in group activity
 Learn how to get along with other children

We hope the kindergarten program will help our daughter to be socially acceptable to children

To gain recognition for her efforts

To give her experiences that she would not ordinarily obtain until first grade of grammar school

Disagree

To learn the fundamentals of obeying others than that of her parents

CATEGORY 11

OTHERS---means that the statements did not seem to fit into any of the other categories

Agree

She can learn to mind

She can learn to listen to her teacher

To learn to enjoy passive activity

She can learn to mind

We hope that he will develop into a leader

Begin to prepare her in the fundamentals of school

Learning in a formal way

In kindergarten Lucy can prepare to start to school next year

We are interested in the other opportunities that you would offer her

How to organize his work

We hope that the kindergarten experience will provide some guidance as to the type of school best suited to John's needs

Learning to play quietly

To desire more education

We hope the program would ready her for first grade

Be able to count to a hundred

To desire more education

Learning to play quietly

We hope the program would ready her for first grade

Be able to count to a hundred

To help her in every way possible

Learning to follow instructions

Emphasis on religion, however small it may be

Help her to understand that she is to follow instructions in her daily work

Prepare him for first grade

I expect for the kindergarten that she get the fundamental base for first grade

As much preparation in numbers and letters as possible

How to follow directions

Gain a general knowledge of letters

Be a stepping stone to grade school

To learn the fundamentals of obeying others

To accomplish in numbers and word recognition what is desired by the first grade teachers in Lawton

To be given instruction

To be able to make the numbers to ten

To be able to print her name

Prepare my child for first grade

Bridge the gap between "home" and first grade

To be prepared for first grade

To be able to sit still

To learn to follow directions

To be ready for first grade

Read the alaphabet

He should be able to print his full name

That the first day she does not have to be afraid

Following orders

Know his ABC

3 R's as you deem necessary

Counting

Printing name

Write Alaphabet

Follow instructions

Prepare him for first grade

Follow directions

Write some of her numbers

Print full name

Learning ABC's and to count are ok

Learn classroom behavior

The pace setter for the rest of his education

To count and write abc's

Ready her for first grade

Learn school discipline

Learn counting

I want Blank to be able to print his full name

Make Blank happier in grade school

For him to obey

Prepare for the study and discipline that will come with school

Learn to obey instructions

Preparation for first grade we cannot give him at home

Learn counting

Stimulate his want for learning

Learn a division of work and play

Disagree

Care and responsibility of his personal belongings

VITA

CAROL ANN LOVEALL

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: THE EXPECTATIONS OF A GROUP OF PARENTS IN A KINDERGARTEN
PROGRAM FOR THEIR CHILDREN

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