PROFESSIONAL AND PARENT BELIEFS ABOUT ACTUAL AND IDEAL EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF PLAY-BASED STRATEGIES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Current literature in the field of Early Childhood (EC) argues that to improve programming for all children, professional development must address education and care for children with atypical development as well as those considered to be typically developing. Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) are included as a part of these discussions. Examples of the discussions can be found in Hanson and Widerstrom (1993); Kontos and File (1993); National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC/CEC) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBTS) (1996). In addition, these authors suggest that professional training activities must move beyond presentation of information formats to include creative problem solving, which encourages professionals to expand child learning and social opportunities. In other words, training should include an opportunity for professionals to actively integrate the three guiding components of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) as listed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). These components, discussed in later sections, are described in NAEYC's publication Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs – Revised Edition and include

1) age appropriateness, 2) individual appropriateness and 3) sociocultural contexts (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

The risk of inadequate practices due to unprepared professionals and ill-conceived physical settings for typical child and those with special learning and social needs is the concern of the existing best practices controversy in ECE. The controversy of defining best practices for the education of young children challenges existing professional and parental beliefs as well as questioning how the beliefs influence current practices for the general population of children. In turn these same beliefs and the debate of appropriate EC practices influence issues of inclusion for young children with exceptional learning and developmental needs. Whether or not children with exceptional learning needs access services through special education, EC professionals are required by law to address individual learning, social and physical needs within their settings. To adequately address individual child needs in any setting requires a holistic perspective encompassing intense knowledge of child development and individual child qualities along with effective strategies to support practices which facilitate the learning and social interactions of young children.

Background

In the fall of the 1993-94 school year, mandated changes regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), P. L. 101-476, added the special education category Developmental Delays (DD) for children ages 3 - 5 years. The 1997 IDEA Amendments maintain the DD category and allow states

to extend the category for children up to age 9. IDEA protects the individual rights of children with developmental delays and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P. L. 101-336, protects children with any perceived mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as developmental and learning activities. The intent of the laws is to ensure that these children access appropriate modifications and accommodations in an educational or childcare setting (Wolery & Wilbers, 1994); therefore, professionals and the educational or childcare setting must be prepared to provide support for learning and social activities typically expected for young children. In addition, these acts provide for the rights of children with DD to access EC settings with children who are considered typically developing. This right to have modifications while in a learning environment with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent as is appropriate is referred to as Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) in IDEA.

Two specific debates related to the rights of children with DD or other atypical development to access educational and community settings have escalated among researchers and practitioners. One debate includes the appropriateness of segregated versus inclusive special education programming for children identified with DD. Segregated settings are specialized and limited to children with identified DD. Inclusive settings are with children considered to be typically developing peers. The second debate involves the primary use of adult-directed approaches versus developmentally appropriate practices (DAP). Consideration of children with atypical development has stimulated more

intensity to these debates. IDEA and ADA ensure those children with atypical development or conditions have access to preschool and child care settings with their same aged peers. Although the rights of these children and their families to attend typical community settings is supported by law, the assurances that professionals know and provide the physical and learning components that structure a developmentally appropriate environment and that parents support DAP strategies for all children remain in question. More specific concerns include professional skill as well as professional and parental acceptance of the use and support of child-initiated play within an EC setting.

ECE practices have been associated with developmental practices while ECSE practices have traditionally been placed in a behavioristic framework of accomplishing specific tasks related to milestone achievements with adult-direction or guidance. Recently, consideration of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) has encouraged some special education programs to adopt the philosophy and practice of inclusion in which children identified with delays and/or disabilities attend EC settings with typically developing peers. Actual program practices within these settings might include any range of practices from child-directed to adult-directed as evidenced by the way materials, curriculum activities, learning and social interactions are structured in the environment. Structures for preparing the environment are identified by Peters, Neisworth and Yawkey (1985) as:

1. Free discovery in which the adult provides materials and opportunities for children to choose, explore, discover and learn independently.

2. Prompted discovery in which the teacher makes specific props and materials available related to learning goals.

3. Directed discovery in which the teacher guides child observations by presenting specific materials, preparing steps, asking questions and posing problems to help children meet objectives related to content or goals.

Adult-child interactions within the structures can be characterized by differing approaches to curriculum implementation. Free discovery can be associated with child-directed interactions because the goal is to encourage the child to explore freely and learn through their own actions. Prompted discovery can be associated with interactionist approaches because the adult responds to child initiations and cues to achieve learning process goals. Directed discovery involves adult-directed strategies toward specific behaviors or expected outcomes. Although each structure has differentiating qualities, the use of each should be balanced in the environment and integrated within activities to meet child learning, communication and social goals. The authors emphasize that assessing child activity and evaluating one's level of professional skill is required to create an effective balance of free, prompted and directed discovery strategies.

Guidelines to encourage professional development of the skills required to effectively balance the structures in any setting emphasize a natural, holistic and constructivist approach to early childhood learning and intervention for all children. These guidelines refer to developmentally appropriate practice (DAP),

are outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council For Exceptional Children (DEC/CEC) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) (1996). DAP characterizes a more natural approach by providing typical learning experiences for children through sensory exploration and play. A holistic approach is characterized by ensuring social experiences with a variety of peers (both typically and atypically developing), by providing experiences that support growth across domains rather than separating areas of development, and by including families as active team participants during assessment and intervention processes. Finally a constructivist approach is characterized by observing, encouraging and facilitating the learning and growth process of children within child-initiated play and exploration activities rather than those that are performance-driven, product-oriented or adult-directed. These recommended practices emphasize recognition of individual child sequential and unique developmental characteristics, child-focused play-oriented programming, peer interactions to develop social skills, sociocultural considerations, and family collaboration and involvement.

Consideration of instructional planning based on individual child needs and motivations has been emphasized throughout the EC literature for children with typical development. In addition, child-initiated or spontaneous play has been recognized as an important child activity, which both reflects and promotes development (for examples of collective works see Barbour & Seefeldt, 1993;

Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987). On the other hand, individualized planning for children with delays, disorders and/or disabilities has been typical of practices within Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), but systematic use of child-initiated, adult-supported play activity has been limited. This limited use in ECSE situations is in spite of studies that identify the value of play for all children (for examples see Goodman, 1992; Linder, 1994; Safford, Spodek & Saracho, 1994; Yawkey & Pellegrini, 1984). Marchant and Brown (1996) state that new EC settings must be created using play-based strategies because mainstreaming children into current settings is not sufficient to meet the demands of inclusion practices. Similar to the previously described continuum of teaching structures, these authors emphasize a balanced use of strategies in relation to a continuum based on play strategies to include nondirected play (free discovery), guided play (prompted discovery) and directed play (directed discovery). Although many EC and ECSE professionals receive training in generally expected developmental milestone achievements and teaching or intervention techniques to encourage child development, few access in-depth training specifically regarding play development and strategies to support child-initiated or spontaneous play activities (Klugman, 1995; Nourot, 1995).

As mentioned in the previous discussion, the literature provides increasing evidence that training models emphasizing play-based programming offer an avenue for professionals to actively engage in creative problem solving in order

to expand curricular opportunities for all children within a generally accepted format. In fact, according to Marchant and Brown (1996), play-based training is vital to the creation of effective inclusion settings. Two play-based programming models prepared to meet this task are Linder's (1993a & b) Transdisciplinary Play-Based Assessment/Intervention and McCord's (1995) Storybook Journey Curriculum. Together these models provide comprehensive information regarding play development, environmental design and adult facilitation of children who are considered to have typical development as well as children with atypical development (i.e., delays, disabilities, disorders, advanced, etc.). They provide in-depth resources for professionals to actively develop skills in observation of children's play, the use of play facilitation strategies and a curriculum planning process which embraces children at varying levels and with unique differences, including those with atypical development. Although these models provide comprehensive information and program activities, researchers involved with other play-based models indicate that individual beliefs about EC program expectations and the value of play will affect the perceived usefulness and strategy implementation by participants (for examples see Fromberg, 1995; Klugman, 1996; VanderVen, McIntyre, Schomburg & Tittnich, 1995).

Problem Statement

Inclusion opportunities within community settings such as Head Start or privately or agency owned preschools are demanding new skills of EC professionals and creating concerns about general parental acceptance of

developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). Researchers express concern that a limited focus on child development knowledge as a guide for EC practice has invited different interpretations and misinterpretations (Goffin, 1996; Katz, 1996; Lubeck, 1996; Stott & Bowman, 1996). Narrow interpretations and misinterpretations in turn interfere with professional development of the comprehensive knowledge and skills necessary to address individual child and situational diversity. Support for DAP strategies is widely professed among professionals and parents, and play, commonly accepted as a normal part of child development, is generally present in all EC programs. Yet, in spite of recent comprehensive guidelines for EC practices including play-based strategies, actual program differences tend to reflect professional and parent beliefs about actual and ideal practices. These same beliefs influence the receptivity to and level of incorporation of DAP recommendations and play-based strategies in response to training and development (Klugman, 1995; Levin, 1996; Nourot, 1995). Therefore, effective training efforts to update and unify professional knowledge and skills require an understanding of the various beliefs that serve as a foundation for practice. However, studies that explore professional and parental beliefs about EC practices within the context of play-based strategies are limited.

Completing checklists or rating scales is likely to put individuals in a position to profess the use of popularly stated DAP strategies whether or not they use them in actual practice. Q-Methodology is a self-rating technique that allows

the researcher to describe various viewpoints. Statements common to the language of respondents are rank ordered according to the priorities of their viewpoints. The advantage of the Q-Method is that all statements are considered equal until a respondent assigns value in terms of those that represent a viewpoint related to a situation. In this study, Q-Methodology allowed an exploration of beliefs about EC programming to understand potential ways in which play is structured into EC programs.

Before analyzing beliefs of professionals and parents, many issues must be explained within the context of current EC literature. In later sections terminology is defined, currently recommended practices explained, distinctions and similarities between ECE and ECSE made and the range of practices that currently exist between and within EC settings discussed. An understanding of how each professional or parent sees EC programming and the role of play within differing beliefs can help researchers identify unifying concepts to guide professional and program development efforts toward more global application of DAP and inclusion practices.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe professional and parent beliefs about actual and ideal early childhood program practices. Practicing professionals are in a transition between a continuum of recommended developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and practices using traditional behavioristic or adult-directed approaches. In addition, inclusion opportunities

within community settings such as Head Start or privately or agency owned preschools are demanding new skills of EC professionals and creating concerns about general parental acceptance. Current recommendations regarding developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) emphasize the appropriate use of a wide range of teaching and intervention strategies to facilitate individual child, collective group and family needs. The three teaching structures of free discovery, prompted discovery and directed discovery identified in the literature provide a framework from which to implement a balanced use of strategies (Peters, Neisworth & Yawkey, 1985). To adequately meet these professional expectations, professionals require comprehensive knowledge and skills to consider diverse child characteristics and contexts. Consistent with current recommendations, professional and program development activities should emphasize DAP based on age-appropriateness, individual appropriateness and sociocultural relevance. The same consideration of program expectations for children must be given to professionals in recognition of their diverse practices and beliefs within the context of professional development and program implementation. Studies to identify specific strategies that affect child growth and development in varying domains and recommended practices while working with children using a family focused perspective exist throughout the field. However, studies to explore professional and parental beliefs about EC programming within the context of play-based strategies are limited. The issues of focus in this study are based on the general belief in the EC field that DAP, including child's play,

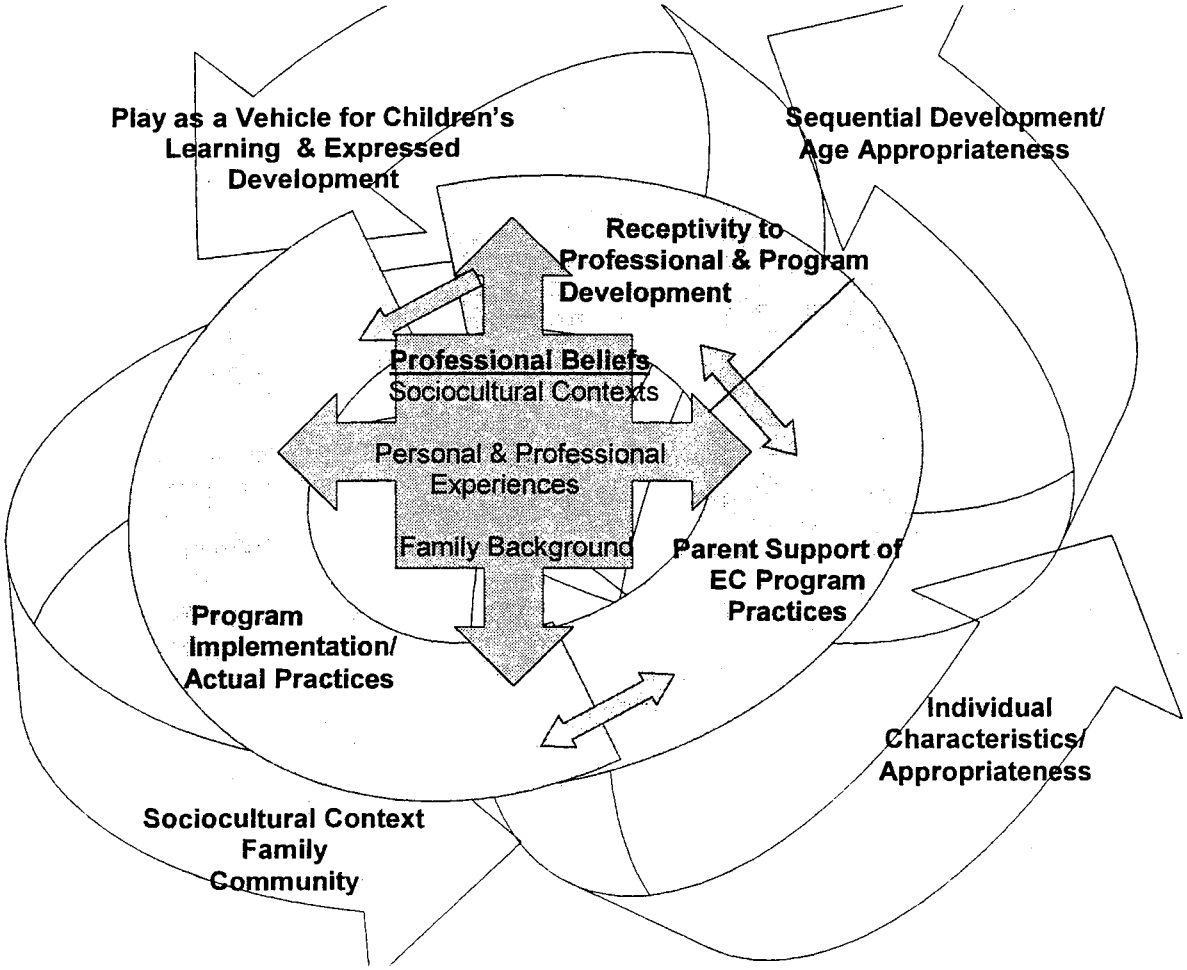
provides an guiding framework for professional and program development.

Objective of the Study

EC professionals and parents frequently profess the developmental importance and value of children's play. Even though they recognize the value of play, their receptivity to training of children's play development and incorporation of strategies to develop an environment conducive to child-initiated, teacher-supported play will be influenced by their beliefs about EC programming and activities (Klugman, 1995; Klugman, 1996; Nourot, 1995). Because of current recommendations, it is important to describe professional and parent beliefs about EC programming within the context of DAP emphasized play-based strategies. The literature suggests that professional beliefs are based on sociocultural contexts, family backgrounds and personal and professional experiences (for examples see Barrera & Kramer, 1997; Klugman, 1995; Lakin, 1996; Lubeck, 1996). These authors note that professional beliefs influence parent attitudes, expectations and support of EC programming. In turn parent beliefs, attitudes and program support influence professional practices. Therefore, despite existing DAP guidelines, individual beliefs about EC programming in the context of what play means will affect professional receptivity to professional development efforts, compliance with site program implementation and parent support of the program and practices (Figure 1).

Figure 1.

Interaction of professionals' beliefs with professional and program development, program implementation and parent support of EC programming within the context of recommended DAP guidelines.



Research Questions

Recognition of the impact individual beliefs have in affecting professional and program development is consistent with concerns throughout the EC literature and considered significant in that it is necessary to acknowledge but difficult to measure diverse beliefs among professionals and parents (Goffin, 1996). The following questions guide the focus of this research within the context of the free, prompted and directed discovery teaching continuum and play-based strategies:

1. What do professionals and parents believe best represents professional practices in supporting children's learning and development?

2. What do professionals and parents believe best represents ideal practices in supporting children's learning and development?

3. In what ways do actual and ideal beliefs differ?

ECE/ECSE Terminology Defined

To explore the issue of preparing EC professionals and parents to support child-initiated, teacher-supported play, we must first define and identify components of early childhood education (ECE), early childhood special education (ECSE), early intervention (EI), curriculum, assessment, and other broadly defined concepts which are intended to guide professional practices. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a nationally recognized professional organization that has addressed early childhood education practice and policy issues since the 1920's. Other organizations and researchers in the field of EC respond to various development and learning issues consistent with the philosophy, guidelines and definitions of NAEYC (for examples refer to Barbour & Seefeldt, 1994; Odom, McLean, Johnson & LaMontagne, 1995; Peck, Odom & Bricker, 1993; Safford, Spodek & Saracho, 1994). It has become a common professional practice to use NAEYC definitions with support from other resources. For the purposes of this study, when terms are not specifically defined by NAEYC, position statements from NAEYC will be used to support definitions from other sources.

The NAEYC definition of Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a conceptually unifying definition to include all children (NAEYC, 1994). NAEYC states that ECE involves adults (e. g., teachers, parents, childcare providers, etc.) who "...make decisions about the care and education of young children" (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 1) and is defined to include "... any part-day or full-day

group program in a center, school, or other facility that serves children from birth through age 8, including children with special developmental and learning needs" (NAEYC, 1994, p. 68). Under the single definition for ECE, children are recognized as uniquely developing individuals without qualification of separate categories such as typically developing versus atypically developing children unless to support the inclusion of children with DD and/or disabilities into settings with typically developing peers.

NAEYC's position statement and guidelines regarding recommended practices is based on three interrelated, guiding components reflecting the field's current knowledge and shared beliefs about attributes of high-quality early childhood programming. The components are inclusive of all children. These recommended practices are labeled Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) and include 1) age-related characteristics of development (age appropriateness), 2) individual variations of strengths, interests, and needs (individual appropriateness), and 3) knowledge of social and cultural (sociocultural) contexts of children and their families (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Characteristics of practices considered developmentally appropriate include age appropriateness, interactive learning and teaching, and curricula activities individualized to emphasize child-initiation and independence (Bredekamp, 1993). Age appropriateness is based on expected sequences of growth and change typically related to chronological age. Age appropriateness is a concept that provides a sequential framework of development to identify mastered and emerging thinking

processes and skills to design challenging and interesting learning experiences. The age appropriateness component allows for the identification of possible delayed, atypical or advanced child development in terms of expected sequences related to age, but assessments about age appropriateness are determined by individual settings, not the DAP guidelines. Beyond age-related expectations, the age appropriateness concept provides a framework for identifying sequentially identifiable mastered and emerging thinking and developmental skills to aid in preparing reasonably challenging materials, interactions and activities to children. Individual appropriateness recognizes each child with unique internal and external characteristics including pattern and timing of growth, strengths, needs and interests. Knowledge of each child's social and cultural contexts ensures relevance and respectfulness of children and their families when planning activities and facilitating learning experiences (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Child-initiated, child-directed, teacher-supported play is considered an essential component of DAP because play is a "primary vehicle for and indicator of" children's learning and development (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 3).

Although the NAEYC's definitions of ECE and curriculum do not separate exceptional developmental and learning needs into the special education category of Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), the organization and other researchers refer to the field of ECSE as they work with other disciplines toward "converging the perspectives" of ECE and ECSE (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 4). ECSE is frequently used interchangeably with the term early

intervention (EI) to refer to children with developmental disorders, delays and/or disabilities. This study will use the terms developmental delays (DD) and atypical development to refer to a broad category of children's identified delays, disorders and/or disabilities. A precise definition of ECSE/EI is difficult to find even though many articles provide descriptions, recommended practices and listed advantages of mandating the special education of children birth to 5. A summary of the intent of ECSE/EI in a statement by Diamon, Hestenes and O'Connor (1994) identifies the broad mandates:

> "Early childhood special education developed from a recognition of the importance of providing intervention for children with disabilities to prevent or reduce the effect of a disability on a child's development. Early Childhood special education emphasizes the importance of a range of services and individualized teaching plans." (p. 69)

This study refers to ECE and ECSE separately to maintain consistency with current discussions in the field as well as those disciplines outside the field (e. g., therapists, families, pediatricians, psychologists, etc.) and to assist in comparing and contrasting the effectiveness of early childhood practices. This categorization of ECE and ECSE is not intended to lead to further segregation of the fields rather to maintain the strengths of both in the movement toward comprehensive programming for all children.

Because the position statements and guidelines from NAEYC provide for all children without segregating individual learning and social needs into labels

(e.g., autistic, mentally retarded, attention deficit disordered, etc.) or categories (e.g., disabled, developmentally delayed, special needs, etc.), the issue of inclusion has come to the forefront in EC. Inclusion is a guiding philosophy assuming that all children should be together and those with DD should participate in the settings they would attend if they were considered typically developing (Wolery & Wilbers, 1994). The term inclusion is frequently interchanged with the terms mainstreaming, integration and least restrictive environment (LRE). Inclusion is qualified by the terms full or total inclusion, partial inclusion or reverse inclusion (D'Alonzo & Ledon, 1992; Odom & McElvoy, 1988; Wolery & Wilbers, 1994; Yell, 1995). Integration is considered a broader term indicating that children with disabilities attend settings with children without disabilities and may refer to any of the possibilities of mentioned here. Mainstreaming indicates children with disabilities attend settings in which the majority of children enrolled do not have identified disabilities. Least restrictive environment (LRE), on the other hand, is the term used in IDEA to ensure that children with disabilities are educated with nondisabled peers to the greatest extent possible (Wolery & Wilbers, 1994; Yell, 1995). To determine a child's LRE, individualized educational planning teams must consider three factors. Consideration must include a continuum of placement options to address each child's specialized educational needs and modifications, placement with nondisabled peers, and the effects on the nondisabled students (Yell, 1995). For example, a child who is disruptive and even physically aggressive to the other

children may require a majority of the teacher's time even with supplemental services such as a teacher aide. This disruptive behavior causes the other children to suffer from fear of the disruptive child and lack of learning interactions with the teacher. Although it is a guiding philosophy for EC and ECSE programming rather than a legal term, the term inclusion will be used in this study to describe children with DD participating in settings with children considered to be typically developing peers.

Curriculum is the structure for organizing teaching and learning practice and is comprehensively defined by NAEYC as "an organized framework that delineates the content that children are to learn, the processes through which children achieve the identified curricular goals, what teachers do to help children achieve these goals, and the context in which teaching and learning occur." (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1995, p. 16). Rosegrant and Bredekamp (1992) previously identified four phases in the process of designing a curriculum: 1) the theoretical phase in which teachers understand why they make the decisions they do, 2) the planning phase provides the framework to guide what those decisions become, 3) the implementation phase is when the learning is occurring and 4) the assessment phase allows teachers to review and revise the curriculum based on the children's learning (p. 66). Assessment, the fourth phase, is further defined by NAEYC as "the process of observing, recording, and otherwise documenting the work children do and how they do it, as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child, including planning for groups

and individual children and communicating with parents." (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1995, p. 16). Throughout the literature there is general agreement regarding the components of a curriculum that support NAEYC's comprehensive definition and phases of development. Other definitions consistently identify a curriculum as an organizing structure, or framework, from which to plan child learning experiences, content knowledge and assessment (Barbour & Seefeldt, 1993; McLean & Odom, 1993; Richarz, 1993; Wolery & Fleming 1993).

Although there is general agreement in the field regarding the definition of a curriculum, NAEYC's 1987 publication of their position statement and guidelines of developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) for the education and care of young children caused much debate over the implementation of an appropriate curriculum (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Approaches to curricular implementation can be adult-directed in which teachers, parents or therapists initiate and direct child performance; child-directed in which adults follow the cues of children to provide learning and social experiences; or interactionist in which both adults and children initiate and follow one another's cues within a range of explorations and learning experiences (Barbour & Seefeldt, 1994). Bredekamp (1993) and others (Fromberg, 1995; McCollum & Catlett, 1997; Wolery, 1994) remind us that professionals in both ECE and ECSE maintain diverse perspectives and theoretical orientations regarding appropriate educational practices. Bredekamp further states that generalizations made about each field typically identify ECE professionals as developmentalists and ECSE

professionals as behaviorists, but in reality the range of actual practices exists both within and between each field. The next section will expand on the controversy over the diversity of professional practice within the context of a continuum ranging between those identified as behavioristic versus those considered developmentally appropriate.

Controversial Debates Become Differentiated Practices

DAP position statements and guidelines published by NAEYC (Bredekamp, 1987) have inspired both supportive and critical discussions among professionals. NAEYC's statement of DAP guidelines "reflects a constructivist, interactive approach to learning and teaching strongly influenced by Piagetian theory, emphasizing play and active, child-initiated learning" (Bredekamp, 1993, p. 261). The revised NAEYC guidelines acknowledge that "no one theory is sufficient to explain the complexity of development and learning" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) and invite open debate among researchers and practitioners in the field to explore many ways DAP can be implemented. By encouraging the convergence of EC and ECSE strategies through discussions of recommended practices to include "both/and" and move beyond the "either/or" debates (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. vi), the revised DAP guidelines highlight the debate over constructivist approaches versus behavioristic approaches.

This debate over the convergence of strategies can be exemplified by Bricker and Cripe (1992) suggesting that behavioristic principles provide a sound basis for educational programming, but the application of behavioristic strategies

should be integrated into each child's functional, daily activities (i.e., play, home routines, etc) rather than in highly structured, one-on-one, adult-directed training. Bredekamp (1993) clarifies misconceptions of statements within DAP guidelines explaining that highly structured, teacher-directed and large group instruction are considered appropriate practice as long as they are not used "exclusively" or "most of the time" within an ECE setting (p. 260). She further reminds the reader that DAP guidelines acknowledge the interactive nature of each child's learning and social development. This interactive nature similarly defined earlier by Barbour and Seefeldt (1994) requires both child and teacher to initiate activities placing teaching behaviors on a continuum ranging from nondirective to directive with facilitative strategies in the center. Nondirective behaviors are those which involve minimal or no intrusion into child activities by adults, whereas directive behaviors involve highly intrusive and determining adult behaviors of child activities. Facilitation, on the other hand, includes supporting child activities by scaffolding or building on their interests and strengths to encourage the emergence of learning and social interaction skills (Linder, 1993a & b). The implication of this continuum of teaching behaviors is that teachers must be aware of the range of strategies in order to discriminate and effectively employ them based on individual child needs, varying group situations and within a wide range of activities. Again, the intent of the DAP guidelines was to avoid the exclusive use of, not eliminate, adult-directed strategies. The transition from a primarily adult-directed approach to DAP is designed to systematically

incorporate techniques to ensure curriculum planning that recognizes individual child needs and interests, child opportunities for authentic peer interactions and communication, and an expansion of activities to invite a wider range of developmental interests and abilities beyond the group's chronological age.

In the literature, DAP and the constructivist approach to teaching is generally contrasted with behavioristic practices that emphasize adult-direction. Behavioristic practices according to DeVries and Kohlberg (1987) are related to the "cultural transmission ideology" in which the environment provides information to the learner (the stimulus) and the learner, in turn, demonstrates the learned behavior (the response). The process of this teaching approach involves presentation of information to a passive responder who is then rewarded or punished in order to modify the behavior to a predetermined objective. Characteristics of behavioristic teaching typically involve a highly structured curriculum, adult-directed instruction, and performance-based training and evaluation activities. Bricker and Cripe (1992) list behavioristic techniques to include carefully structured antecedents, specified precise responses, and tangible consequences (p. 3). The applied behavioral model of practice for children with DD and/or disabilities is based the following four beliefs:

1. Specific experiences and subskills must be directly taught and learned before a child can develop competency,

2. The skills are taught in specific skill activities are often isolated from other activities,

3. Adult-directed instruction is needed to promote higher learning levels,

4. To grow and develop, children must be directed to learn those skills they cannot do (Mahoney & Wheatley, 1994, p. 131 -132).

These contrasting constructivist versus behavioristic practices are generally conceptualized and debated in a seemingly polarized context (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Richarz, 1993). This debate, which has escalated in ECE and ECSE is interchangeably referred to in terms of best practice or recommended practices. As stated in the NAEYC revised edition of DAP, the debate must move into a "both/and" debate to encompass the many ways DAP can be implemented to support children's development (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. vi). The term "recommended practices" to replace the term "best practice" reflects the field's encouragement to discuss a range of effective strategies appropriate for the diversity of children, families and situations in EC settings. In addition, the continually evolving knowledge base within the field may replace what is considered best practice in a single period of time (DEC Task Force on Recommended Practices, 1993; Odom, McLean, Johnson & LaMontagne, 1995). For example, "best practice" for one child may not be for another child because of different temperaments, different family goals or recent research identifying more information about a specific intervention strategy.

Preparing an Interactive Environment for All Children

Recommended practices must be skillfully structured in each setting to serve the collective and individual characteristics of children within the natural context of child development. The Transdisciplinary Play Based Assessment/Intervention (Linder, 1993a & b) and Storybook Journey Curriculum (McCord, 1995) models promote environmental design and interaction strategies to stimulate child-initiated and spontaneous play activities that in turn facilitate each child's competent development of cognitive, communication, sensorimotor and social skills. Regardless of a child's level of development or any limiting conditions, these models consider a goal of the environment is for the child to conceptualize, organize and act out ideas without modeling or prompting from others. Children's spontaneous play activities and social interactions reflect optimal levels of development as they demonstrate functional use of mastered concepts, skills, organization and problem solving techniques. Linder (1993b) refers to the previously mentioned free, prompted and directed discovery structures as a framework for preparing the environment and the adult-child interactions within activities. To encourage professionals to expand their use of strategies, Linder (1993b) reminds the reader that directed discovery reflects more adult control and is considered the primary strategy for previously described traditional behavioristic approaches.

Knowing that DAP guidelines provide a framework to design EC programming (i.e., curriculum, assessment and intervention) based on Piaget's

constructivist theory further supports children's play as central to the development of effective programs. The constructivist approach to educating young children, as explained by DeVries and Kohlberg (1987), bases practices on acknowledging children as active learners who construct their knowledge through experiences within the environment. Rather than instructing children toward correct answers or good performance, teachers who practice constructivism adjust their teaching methods so that children can invent their own knowledge including learning from errors or "wrong ideas" (p. 15). The constructivist teacher recognizes that children are motivated to learn from their interests and teaching practices involve designing conditions to acknowledge each child's current understanding and skill level. DAP guidelines require the EC environment and curricular activities to be flexible, but organized to acknowledge the strengths of each child, the qualities of others with whom the child interacts (i.e., peers, teachers and caregivers) and the various home and community environments accessed by the child (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

In order for children to initiate and engage in active learning and social interactions promoted by constructivism they need to be able to adapt or adjust to varying situations and people (i.e., peers and adults). For example, one goal listed in NAEYC guidelines states "... that all children learn to function well in society as a whole and move comfortably among groups of people" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 13). Children with DD, disabilities or other conditions interfering with typically expected development may require adult mediation to

support their development of these social interactions and the ability to actively engage in a variety of activities in varying situations. Research indicates that characteristics of children with delays or other atypical developmental concerns affect play and social interactions (Goodman, 1992; Linder, 1993a & b). Children with delayed developmental sequences generally demonstrate shorter attention spans and spend more time in unoccupied behavior while children with visual impairments generally demonstrate increased solitary play and delayed physical exploration of toys and the environment. All of these characteristics interfere with the motivation to initiate and master a variety of tasks and social exchanges affecting functional social interactions and activities needed to construct new knowledge. To both recognize a lack of and to facilitate the development of active constructive learning and social interactions requires EC professionals to skillfully structure free, prompted and directed discovery methods and specialized intervention strategies (Allen, 1992; Bricker & Cripe, 1992; Guralnick, 1994; Linder, 1993b; Mahoney & Wheatley, 1994; Odom & Brown, 1993; Wolery & Fleming, 1993; Wolery & Wilbers, 1994).

Significance of the Study

Current guidelines indicate that child mastered and emerging skills are demonstrated and observed within the context of individual play activities and interactions with others. In response to knowledge of sequences of development, as well as individual child and group characteristics, professionals must use a wide range of activities and facilitation strategies to promote learning and social

interaction. DAP guidelines and other researchers suggest that play provides an avenue in which to comprehensively address individual and collective child needs in both general and special populations (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Klugman & Smilansky, 1990; Linder, 1993a & b; McCord, 1995; Phillips, 1996). As one interprets the original and the revised DAP guidelines, skills required for professional implementation of DAP include the ability to observe, identify and interact with children based on generally accepted and individual knowledge of child development and learning.

To be consistent with current recommendations, professional and program development efforts must include a holistic and dynamic perspective while providing consistent concepts of child development and expanding on individual and cultural diversity within EC situations (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children [DEC/CEC] & National Board for Professional Teaching Standards [NBPTS], 1996). Therefore, rather than segregating children into the categorical labels found in special education, or even normal versus abnormal development, a more comprehensive and functional EC training approach needs to be adopted.

Due to various values and beliefs about EC programming held by professionals and parents, training efforts require skill in design, presentation and evaluation. Models and philosophies provide a framework for professional and parent training and EC programming, but actual practices vary in response to

professional, parental beliefs and experiences. As the EC field is in a transition with its general support for developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) as more effective than traditional adult-directed behavioristic practices, professionals and parents are experiencing their own individual transitions. Studies are needed to acknowledge professional and parental beliefs as practitioners experience professional training and program development toward the implementation of DAP and play-based strategies. Application of the results of this study will assist in clarifying efforts to support professionals and families through comprehensive training and program models to encourage comprehensive and effective ECE.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a nationally recognized professional organization that has addressed early childhood education practice and policy issues since the 1920's. The NAEYC position statement entitled Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age 8 (Bredekamp, 1987) was the field's first consensus document providing definitions and guidelines for early childhood professional practice. The publication was in response to two societal trends: 1) increasing numbers of infant and toddler group care and 2) the concern that kindergarten and pre-kindergarten programs inappropriately emphasized teacher-directed academic skills. In 1987, two dimensions defined the developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) concept: age appropriateness and individual appropriateness. Age appropriateness referred to young children's universal and predictable sequences of growth and change while individual appropriateness included individual patterns and timing of growth, personality traits, learning style and family background. Although the publication provided an extensive description of developmental practices appropriate to ages birth to 8 years and the importance of considering individual and background differences, challenges to child development knowledge as a base for EC care and education were presented by researchers and practitioners

throughout the literature. In these discussions, researchers emphasized that EC professionals must be prepared to reflect on their beliefs, knowledge and practices to be effective practitioners and not limit the EC profession to child development knowledge. Within this challenge to the dominant child development knowledge and practice as a sole base for EC, issues of diversity and group dynamics were brought to the forefront for consideration in professional development and practice in the field (Goffin, 1996; Graue & Marsh, 1996; Katz, 1996; Lubeck, 1996, Stott & Bowman, 1996).

Challenges to Child Development Knowledge as a Base for EC Practice

Goffin (1996) discusses these recurring issues and general debates questioning the reliance on child development knowledge and theories to guide EC professional development and practice. She emphasizes the need to give greater credence to the knowledge base of practitioners by challenging the use of child development knowledge as a "sole, directional guide for practice in early childhood care and education" challenges (p. 124). Goffin and other researchers throughout the field stress consideration of the following issues as important to the field's expansion of professional knowledge base and practice:

1. Professionals frequently misinterpret and misuse of child development knowledge.

2. Extending a child-centered focus to consider the child within diverse family and community contexts is reflective of a whole child concept.

3. Deciding whose view or theory of child growth and development should be the basis for classroom practice is difficult to determine.

4. Professionals lack knowledge about play limiting the educational value given to children's play affecting attitudes in schools and communities.

5. Training needs to occur across disciplines to ensure a consistent knowledge base and to prepare EC settings and professionals to access a range of strategies and resources to include children with delays, disabilities or disordered development. For examples of these discussions see Katz, 1996; Klugman, 1995; Lubeck, 1996; Stott & Bowman, 1996; Wolery & Wilbers, 1994. Also refer to collective works by Klugman & Smilansky, 1990; Phillips, 1996; Safford, Spodek & Saracho, 1994.

Goffin (1996) recognizes that the DAP position statement provides a focal point to promote the EC profession. The DAP position statement has allowed professionals and policy makers to: 1) advocate professional development, 2) seek program improvements, 3) give credibility to the work of EC educators, 4) provide EC professionals with a sense of confidence and 5) give policymakers a tool for addressing program quality in legislation and policy. In spite of this guidance, she suggests that the existing gap between the guidelines for effective practice and the empirical characteristics of EC practitioners is not surprising when considering that EC educators do not have specified standards to enter early child care and education outside of a public setting. She strongly suggests that for the field's guidelines to effectively promote substantial practices, an

emphasis on the professional knowledge base must support and encourage EC professionals to extend their knowledge and practice beyond the developmental framework. Professionals such as EC care givers and teachers, special education teachers, speech-language pathologists, physical therapists or psychologists in public agencies or school systems are not required to have EC training to participate in EC or ECSE programs. The range of practitioners' knowledge base extends from no pre-service EC training to those with specialized degrees and/or state certification or licensure. Hence, the varied and frequent demonstration of questionable interpretations and uses of child development knowledge.

Professionals need a structural base from which knowledge, skills and beliefs continue to evolve. Katz (1996) eloquently supports the need for a developmental knowledge base as only an "initial level of competence" (p. 135) then poses a series questions that must be asked in a profession focused on evolving children in evolving families and communities that make-up our evolving society. Questions about how we determine the goals of development and that development is determined by the culture represent challenges to the historical positions and sociopolitical agendas that many attribute to the child development theories established and used. While these questions are important considerations affecting specific interactions with children, they may be overwhelming or seemingly irrelevant to the practitioner focused on day-to-day child interactions in a particular setting. She further acknowledges that over

analysis may paralyze professionals and that we must assume an agreed upon body of knowledge for practitioners to pose questions relevant to their day-to-day situations. More relevant questions to the daily practitioner (and to parents) are likely to include: 1) challenges to day-to-day ritual activities without regard to the child conceptual readiness (e. g., calendar routines), 2) professional decision-making processes in using instructional methods and 3) limiting instructional focus on individual child development without establishing competencies needed in group interactions. Therefore, as stated by Stott and Bowman (1996) "child development knowledge is necessary, but not sufficient" (p. 169) and the various issues affecting professional receptivity and use of DAP and the diverse EC and ECSE practices discussed later under score this need for consistency and continuity from the field.

Although limitations in using child development knowledge as a base for practice arise when considering historical and sociopolitical aspects, individual child characteristics and family and cultural contexts, formal knowledge of child development is necessary for consistency and continuity in professional preparation. In response to the debates among researchers and practitioners, NAEYC published a revision to the original position statement in1997 to extend the guidelines regarding recommended practices to included three interrelated, guiding components reflecting the field's current knowledge and shared beliefs about attributes of high-quality early childhood programming. These components are inclusive of all children. These recommended practices maintain the

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) label and include 1) age-related characteristics of development (age appropriateness), 2) individual variations of strengths, interests, and needs (individual appropriateness), and 3) knowledge of social and cultural (sociocultural) contexts of children and their families (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Characteristics of practices considered developmentally appropriate include age appropriateness, interactive learning and teaching, and curricula activities individualized to emphasize child-initiation and independence (Bredekamp, 1993). Age appropriateness is based on typically expected sequences of growth and change related to chronological age. Age appropriateness is a concept that provides a framework from which to design challenging and interesting learning experiences. Individual appropriateness recognizes each child with unique internal and external characteristics including pattern and timing of growth, strengths, needs and interests. Knowledge of each child's social and cultural contexts ensures relevance and respectfulness of children and their families when planning activities and facilitating learning experiences (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). As demonstrated in these most recent DAP revisions, knowledge of sequential child development provides a skeletal structure from which to base EC knowledge and skills. To effectively apply this basic knowledge of child development, practitioner awareness of internal and external personal and professional issues affecting their own beliefs and practices is important. In addition to developmental knowledge and awareness of issues "professionals

must also be grounded in their ambiguity and supplemented by attention to reflection on practice and self-knowledge" (Stott & Bowman, 1996, p. 169).

Issues Affecting Use of DAP for All Children

Professional and parental attitudes and practices in response to DAP guidelines and the use of children's play to facilitate learning and development will continue to vary (Jones & Reynolds, 1995; McLane, Spielberger & Klugman, 1996). In addition, various professional and parental attitudes and practices regarding the inclusion of children with delays and/or disabilities will be maintained as researchers define effective practices in inclusive settings (for examples see collective works by Peck, Odom & Bricker, 1993; Safford, Spodek & Saracho, 1994; Wolery & Wilbers, 1994). Without a comprehensive framework to address assessment, curriculum, intervention and family issues, actual practices in EC programming are likely to include limited parent participation and support due to unclear program goals and strategies. This inconsistency can limit or confuse the continuity of children's interactions across settings to encourage use and generalization of learned skills. Therefore parent understanding of the program's philosophy as demonstrated in professional practices and environmental design is likely to lead to support of an EC program advocating DAP and play (Bartolini, 1996; Chalufour & Drew, 1995; Fromberg, 1995; Gabriel, 1995). Parent attitudes and beliefs about proper EC care and education will influence practitioner decisions toward implementing DAP with its emphasis on children's play as well as the inclusion of children of children with delays,

disabilities or disordered development into group settings and activities (Cooper, 1996; Stahlman, 1994; Stoneman, 1993). In addition, practitioner responses to DAP guidelines and the use of children's play will be based on their own beliefs and experiences (Klugman, 1995) and will in turn influence parental support.

Current IDEA and ADA laws indicate that EC settings must provide an environment conducive to the learning and care of all children. The rights of children to access settings with nondisabled peers and to engage in activities typically expected for young children implies that EC professionals are involved with the education and care of children with exceptional needs. This involvement does not regard their beliefs or the availability of special education support or intervention services by other professionals (e. g., speech-language pathologists, physical therapists, school psychologists, occupational therapists, etc.). If this responsibility is viewed as a burden rather than an opportunity to expand one's personal and professional growth in the support of a variety of child interactions, the practice of inclusion is not likely to be supported by professionals, parents or the community. Therefore, EC professionals must understand that the process involved in formal intervention (IDEA and ADA) provides professionals with needed support to encourage learning and social interactions of children with identified delays and/or disabilities. In turn, aspects of the process used for developing strategies and supportive plans for children with formally identified intervention needs can be used to support children who do not meet formal eligibility criteria.

Whether or not early childhood settings have formally addressed the issue of including children identified as eligible for special education services may depend on the setting's philosophy, professional beliefs, the philosophy of the school district in which they reside, or the perceived adequacy of professional skills. Some professionals embrace the philosophy of inclusion but feel as though their training is inadequate to effectively address the individual needs of these children within the context of the larger group. Feeling they are spread too thin, they remind us of whole group needs as well as individual child needs. Other professionals embrace the importance of adult-directed or behavioral teaching strategies based on personal experience, especially for children who are not performing within the developmental milestone expectations of their chronological ages. In addition, if inclusion practices for children with exceptional needs through the formality of the special education process, Section 504, or other informal means is to be successful, parents of typically developing children must be supportive. Professionals must be prepared to address parental concerns regarding the effects on typically developing children. They must be prepared to ensure parent satisfaction with the current EC program and confidence that their child will continue to receive the individual attention and appropriate teaching needed to develop even with the addition of children who may require more specialized attention.

As EC and ECSE converge toward implementation of DAP programs that are inviting to children with atypical development or other special needs, these

varying parental and practitioner attitudes and beliefs are likely to maintain the controversy in the field's movement from segregated to inclusive settings. Although it is often assumed that inclusion refers to children eligible for special education services under IDEA or ADA criteria, EC professionals must understand that the philosophy of inclusion involves children who are not eligible for these formal services. This means that when children are considered unsuccessful in a setting due to teacher concerns often labeled as inappropriate behavior, immature speech, short attention span, lack of pre-academic achievement or social immaturity, considerations to exclude or retain a child must be reconsidered in light of specific intervention and accommodation needs. Like the practice of inclusion in childcare or school settings, intervention services through child and family service agencies are not limited to those accessing formal services through IDEA or ADA. Many children access public agencies or private practitioners to support behavior, speech-language, pre-academic or developmental concerns without the benefit of IDEA or ADA. These practitioners and agencies vary in the services they provide in relation to their disciplines and, as with EC and ECSE professionals, their current beliefs and practices will affect actual changes toward effective use of DAP and inclusion of children with developmental delays and/or disabilities.

The intent of IDEA and the diversity of practices will be addressed in the following descriptions of special education eligibility, assessment and programming processes. These descriptions of varying philosophical approaches

and practices to implement the intent of IDEA might help explain possible confusion leading to the resistance of EC professionals to adopt DAP practices that effectively create an inclusive environment. Although an active role of EC professionals within each phase of the special education process is assumed to be beneficial, opportunities for their participation are not always taken or encouraged by school or agency professionals. Therefore, a brief description of EC professional skills needed to participate in and implement the special education process within an EC framework is provided. This description is provided with the reminder that, when needed, the same professional skills benefiting children in the special education process can be used with any child requiring extended support for learning and social success.

Variability in Early Childhood Special Education Programs

The category of Developmental Delays is considered a special education category in which early interventions are provided in order to reduce the negative effects of various delays, medical conditions, psychological diagnoses or environmental conditions on a young child's learning and development. This category was designed to identify children 3 years up to the age of 5 years old with 25% delays (or 1-1/2 standard deviations below a standardized mean) in two or more domains or a 50% delay (or 2 or more standard deviations below a standardized mean) in one or more domains of Cognitive, Communication, Social-Emotional, Adaptive or Physical functioning (Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1990; Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1993, p. 60). The

eligibility criteria for Developmental Delays programming are inconsistent with best practices in interpreting developmental norms versus standardized scores. A 25% delay as determined by a developmental norm on an evaluation instrument is not equal to a 1-1/2 standard deviation below a standardized mean. A 1-1/2 standard deviation as defined by the normal distribution is approximately 40%. If eligible, children can receive early intervention services through the public school district in which they reside. The vehicle used to describe the child's strengths and weaknesses and concomitant programming is the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP is designed to ensure a child's right to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in spite of delays and/or disabilities. As with other categories of IDEA, assessment and programming requirements are broadly defined with stipulations to combine quantitative with qualitative evaluations and to consider Least Restrictive Environments (LRE) when determining the most appropriate placement in which to implement an Individualized Educational Program (IEP). The process steps involved toward the initial development of an IEP include: 1) referral by parent or teacher, 2) evaluation by qualified professionals, 3) eligibility determination by a team, and 4) intervention and goal planning. Required team membership includes an administrative representative, a teacher(s) to provide regular and special education expertise, parent(s) and a professional familiar with the evaluation procedures and results. Optional team members can include other individuals at the discretion of the parents or local education agency such as therapists and

advocates to support family concerns.

Although recent literature and guidelines in the field of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) recommend practices based on developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), differing professional and personal perspectives lead to varying interpretations of how to best plan individualized programs (Wolery, 1994). Educating the whole child by planning developmentally appropriate programs is consistent with recommended practices for individualized planning to ensure a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for children with developmental delays and/or disabilities, but behavioristic practices have traditionally guided assessment and special education programming. As stated previously, behavioristic practices have often limited child learning experiences in order to serve deficits through specialized instruction. These practices typically have included adult-directed instruction, deficit-oriented intervention and sub-skill instruction often occurring in isolation away from a larger group of peers and typical play and exploration activities (Mahoney and Wheatley, 1994).

When considering eligibility and the implementation of an IEP for children under the age of 6-years, schools have not always clearly defined what education is for young children. Therefore consideration of early childhood curricula is necessary before they will adequately be prepared to implement functional assessment techniques, develop individualized goals and objectives, identify curriculum modifications, or provide supports and accommodations for

child learning and social experiences. Common practices in ECSE programs often limit their exposure to typically expected early childhood learning experiences and environmental opportunities by creating curricula using a therapeutic approach which identifies and provides adult-directed training to improve their deficits (e.g., Safford, Sargent & Cook, 1994). Deficits of children are often defined by failed items on any number of norm-referenced tests such as the Battelle Developmental Inventory - BDI (Newborg, Stock, Wnek, Guidubaldi & Svinicki, 1984) or developmental milestone instruments/checklists such as the Hawaii Early Learning Profile and Help for Special Preschoolers - HELP (Furuno, O'Reilly, Hosaka, Inatsuka, Allman & Zeisloft, 1979). Deficits may also be defined by existing or biased practices in community or Head Start preschool programs or by therapists who have identified a lack of skills which require individualized speech-language therapy, physical therapy, or occupational therapy.

In the state of Oklahoma, early childhood special education programming for children ages 3 - 5 years varies from school district to school district. Staff from the Sooner Start Early Intervention Program assist children and their families through a transition from family services to public school services at age 3 years. These staff members consisting of resource coordinators, developmental and nutritional specialists, as well as therapists for physical, occupational and speech-language functioning continually state their confusion and frustration regarding the differing programming approaches for children

across school districts. These professionals are also responsible for sharing concerns with families regarding appropriate community programming options when the children turn 3 years.

According to Fowler and Ostrosky (1994), ECSE programs are diverse in that they rarely function as a system or even adhere to a philosophy that unifies practices. Professionals within individual school districts and agencies define their own approaches to ECSE. Although some access professional guidance or training from experts in the field of ECSE, early childhood training is not required according to the Oklahoma State Department of Education Policies and Procedures for Education, (1993, p. 120). Instead, early childhood certification is an option that many preschool special education teachers have not chosen; therefore, many continue "downward extension" practices based on behavioristic programming. Some districts and agencies develop their programs to include individualized therapy sessions two to eight times monthly leaving the families responsible for the child's learning and social activities. Others choose to implement inclusion practices by enrolling children in community, Head Start or district preschool programs with consultation from special education teachers or related service providers/therapists. Still others prefer to maintain segregated programs including only the children who meet eligibility criteria for Developmental Delays. Segregated programs might also offer related services of Speech-Language Therapy, Physical Therapy or Occupational Therapy by arranging individualized therapy sessions outside an EC setting or integrated into

learning and social activities.

Many school districts provide a continuum of programming options ranging from individualized therapy sessions to full inclusion opportunities with peers in community or public preschools. Some ECSE programs may include therapy interventions in which a therapist from one of the areas mentioned above meets with each child alone or in a small group of 1 to 4 other children to provide intervention activities led by the adult. These therapies might include, for example, practice in making omitted speech sounds or increasing language development through the use of pictures or objects with the Speech Pathologist; practice in using utensils, stacking blocks or writing with a marker with the Occupational Therapist; or practice in climbing stairs, catching balls or hopping with the Physical Therapist. Integrated therapies are those interventions that are built into the child's curricular or family activities and may or may not include direct time with a therapist. Integrated therapies may be provided along with consultation to the teacher and are often recommended in place of adult-directed therapy sessions to encourage generalization of developmental progress and skills beyond therapy situations. Parents or therapists outside of an EC setting are often concerned that the child will not progress in her area of need without adult-directed activities. They are also concerned that therapy integrated into a child's natural activity of play does not "look like" therapy and that the therapist's approach is ineffective because the child is only playing within his chosen activity or with other children rather than completing a specified task to practice a deficit

skill. They often believe that adult-directed activities will "fix" the delay or disability. These differences of philosophy and practice often promote an attitude that EC professionals and specialized experts do not agree as to what the "best" or the "most appropriate" treatment might be. The inconsistency among professional attitudes or beliefs leads to parental confusion, which in turn can increase parental stress and reduce satisfaction with EC programming.

Instructional Programming Comparisons

There are many approaches to intervening with children identified with developmental delays and/or disabilities in a variety of home, community and educational settings. Each program must base program practices on current research and guidelines from the EC field. To understand chosen characteristics of differing approaches and to make comparisons within and between various contexts, practices in the following activities must be justified.

1. Assessment/Evaluation Practices - standardized, criterion, functional, artificial or natural settings,

2. Team Process - multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary,

3. Goals and Objectives addressed on IEPs - functional, developmentally appropriate, versus specific pre-academic or developmental milestone skills,

4. Parent Involvement - participants in or recipients of assessment, goal and intervention planning and intervention implementation,

5. Curriculum activities - behavioristic or developmentally appropriate,

6. Intervention practices - pull-out, integrated, small group,

7. Adult strategies to facilitate learning and development - adult-directed, child-initiated or interactionist,

8. Follow-up assessments - standardized, criterion or linked to the curriculum.

Although all intervention or educational plans should be based on each individual child, not all children with exceptional needs who attend preschool or community child care centers access formal intervention plans such as an IEP through public or private agencies or school systems. For example, parents who have children with identified delays or disabilities may avoid special education consideration or placement for various reasons (e. g., concerns of creating educational and social limitations due to professional stereotyping, preference for inclusive settings with typically developing peers rather than segregated classes with children identified with delays and/or disabilities). Secondly, even with children accessing formal intervention plans, ECSE approaches vary in the range of services provided by different school districts. In fact, few clear models or types of programming beyond philosophical claims or administrative convenience are in practice. Spodak and Saracho (1994) note the different practices of Early Childhood Education (EC) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE). They remind us that the traditional practice of ECSE has been a "downward extension of school-age special education" (p. 243) rather than the developmentally oriented approach found in EC. Mahoney and Wheatley (1994) further define this downward extension practice as a behavioristic model which is established on the belief that children with disabilities do not and will not spontaneously "engage

in the kinds of activities needed to promote learning and development " (p. 122).

Therefore, traditional approaches to assessment and intervention have emphasized children's deficits. Behavioristic models involve interventions that include adult-directed pre-academic or therapy activities to remediate weaknesses and may or may not include early childhood curricular activities. They are designed to include remediation sessions with a special education teacher, aide and/or therapist to address specific delays and weaknesses identified by standardized or criterion-referenced tests. For example, a child who is not using words at age three may spend one hour weekly with a speech-language pathologist to increase his word usage by repeating nouns to identify objects or pictures.

The philosophy of full inclusion ensures that children with developmental delays are involved with typically developing peers in social and curricular activities as designated by the practices of the EC settings in which they are enrolled. Whether attending community or public settings, curricular practices are based on individual preschool center philosophies. These philosophies can range from adult-directed, pre-academic activities which include worksheets such as those teaching the naming of colors to child-directed activities in which adults facilitate the social and learning activities of young children such as exploring cause and effect through sand play. A combination of these approaches may also be put into practice. As designated by each child's intervention plan or IEP, related services of speech-language, physical or occupational therapy may be

integrated into the EC setting's social and curricular activities, involve pull-out sessions with a therapist or be provided through sessions at a clinic.

Other ECSE options are not based on special education or early childhood philosophies or practices. Instead they are designed to fit administrative or funding convenience and often provide limited therapy options with no curricular or social learning opportunities. For example, a child who has been identified with 50% global delays may access speech-language therapy two times weekly with no curricular experiences or interventions in the other four domains of cognitive, social-emotional, motor or adaptive behavior because the public school system does not have a preschool program. Chosen curricula, which are likely to vary between EC centers and even public or private schools provide guides for activities and ideas for supporting child learning, but few are implemented to comprehensively provide a problem-solving framework in which professionals collaborate across disciplines. Team collaboration across disciplines that encourages EC professionals to extend their knowledge and skills beyond developmental content to develop a wider repertoire of strategies addressing the unique qualities of each child is often considered inefficient in time and cost. Implementation of intervention plans that comprehensively address sequential knowledge of development, specific facilitation strategies and skills, as well as professional creativity to appropriately implement strategies without sacrificing enriched learning and social experiences is time consuming. Some administrators and professionals consider these comprehensive practices to

extend beyond the mandates of IDEA or ADA and instead maintain curriculum-focused, adult-directed activities.

Actual professional practices may range from a rigidly implemented behavioristic approach (adult-directed, curriculum-focused) to a laissez-faire approach (child free play with minimal or no adult guidance). Many of these professionals follow developmental guides regarding each child's achieved or unachieved milestones and are satisfied with the chosen activities in their settings, but they may not be confident with their skills to develop or implement a child's individual plan. Even when a professional team develops a plan, the EC professional may be uncertain as to how to write educational or developmental goals within the context of the overall curriculum, how to assess achievement of those goals and how to adjust intervention strategies when necessary. They often rely on developmental checklists to determine failures or deficits leading to attempts to remediate through adult-directed instruction, place the child with younger aged peers, or reward and punish behavior to encourage performance within curricular and group activities. In turn, deficits are reported to parents with broad recommendations for home activities often lacking concrete follow-up assessment of home and school progress beyond milestone achievement. Even when successes are identified, professionals may work toward the child's next milestone from an existing curriculum or checklist with little or no planning of effective facilitation ideas.

Assessment in Early Childhood Special Education

Much of the assessment in ECSE is completed with standardized or criterion-referenced tests such as the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (Sparrow, Balla & Cicchetti, 1984), Brigance (Brigance, 1991), Gesell (Ilg & Ames, 1965) and the Battelle (Newborg, Stock, Wnek, Guidubaldi & Svinicki, 1984). Practices in using these tests may include a single session adult-directed evaluation, be used in conjunction with parent interview or scored through an arena assessment in which all team members participate to observe a child's performance of various tasks. These tests provide information about delayed development, but fail to comprehensively inform teachers and parents about unique aspects of the child's' behavior which are vital to develop effective interventions and programming.

Unstructured observations, parent interviews or arena assessments are often included with the above mentioned instruments, but without a continuous framework linking assessment, intervention, overall programming and parent collaboration/education, the interpretations of each child's play activities and behavior is open to the personal biases of the professionals. Many early childhood special educators have limited training and experience in early childhood education and often use intervention strategies designed for older school-aged children. Some professionals refer to their parenting experiences as guidelines for child development and expectations. Thus, unsubstantiated recommendations for individual goals and intervention strategies may not be

reflective of recommended practices in ECSE.

Although IDEA stipulates quantitative and qualitative evaluation techniques, many early childhood special education programs continue to use quantitative instruments which measure milestone achievements such as the Battelle Developmental Inventory (Newborg, Stock, Wnek, Guidubaldi and Svinicki, 1984), Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development (Brigance, 1979), and the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale (Sparrow, Balla and Cicchetti, 1984) to determine special education eligibility and to plan interventions. While these instruments identify children who have delays in the achievement of developmental milestones as compared to their same-aged peers, a limitation of these instruments is the segregation of items within separate domains rather than the interaction of child performance across the areas of development. Two other limitations include the inability of these instruments to identify each child's unique strengths and to provide effective intervention strategies for families and teachers.

Assessment therefore must be expanded into a systematic and systemic process that is integrated into the proposed curriculum if it is to be efficacious. Once ECSE programming links the on-going process of assessment to specific interventions, professionals are prepared to function across disciplines (transdisciplinary) to more effectively address each child's learning and developmental needs by integrating therapies within natural settings and child activities. Interventions integrated in an on-going fashion by all professionals

interacting with the child are more effective than a single intervention approach in which children may learn expected performance without internalizing or generalizing learned skills beyond the therapy setting.

Professional Efforts in Using A Play-Based Model to Implement DAP

In contrast to previously described EC approaches, details of professional efforts to apply DAP strategies using a play-based model are described. Efforts in shifting to play-based programming have recently been implemented by a variety of EC professionals (i.e., EC and ECSE teachers, child developmental therapists, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, physical therapists and occupational therapists) from various public school and state agencies serving children from birth to 5 years old. They have chosen the Transdisciplinary Play-Based Assessment (Linder, 1993a) and the Transdisciplinary Play-Based Intervention (Linder, 1993b) Model (TPBA/I Model) in conjunction with the Storybook Journey Curriculum (SJC) (McCord, 1995) as a framework for daily activities and interventions in order to develop an effective link between assessment, intervention and curriculum. In addition, the professionals use the models because they provide a guide for continuous development and intervention through children's natural activity of play in a variety of settings regardless of developmental levels or interfering conditions giving rationale to extending the practices into typical EC situations. These advantages of play-based assessment, intervention and curriculum planning practices reflect current guidelines for EC and ECSE as outlined by the National Association For the

Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

In order to systematically provide a program which addresses the issues of whole child development, the professionals implement programming to ensure that children identified with developmental delays and/or disabilities access developmental support through learning and social experiences typically expected for children who are between birth -5 years of age. The play-based programming emphasizes curriculum and intervention planning around developmental sequences listed in the Transdisciplinary Play-Based Assessment (TPBA) (Linder, 1993a) under the four domains of cognitive, communication, social-emotional and sensorimotor to ensure developmentally appropriate practices. This means that each child is identified at a particular sequence based on his/her mastery as demonstrated by spontaneous play behaviors. Then interventions and curricular activities are provided to support children's unique and individual growth through the scope and sequence of play and development provided by the TPBA tables and intervention recommendations. Because the programs are designed to acknowledge the interactive nature of child development across these domains, these professionals are working to establish this early childhood model to intervention through within-staff training and on-going implementation of the TPBA/I and SJC Models. Although the service providers have been trained in the combined models to use developmentally appropriate play-based strategies, actual practices vary from professional to

professional. Professional practices within the use of this model range from those that are considered developmentally appropriate or child-initiated to those that are considered more traditional behavioristic or adult-directed practices.

The combined TPBA/I and SJC Models provide a comprehensive framework for sequences of development beyond milestone achievements for assessment and intervention purposes within a child's natural and motivating activity of play. Within this play-based framework, therapists (i.e., speech-language pathologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists and psychologists) have become consultants to other therapists, teachers, child developmental specialists and parents. This consultation role includes facilitating the planning and intervention process to support play activities and daily routines that encourage specific skill development or accommodations within the framework of each child's overall quality and sequence of development. Integration of therapy interventions with teacher or caregiver support in an EC setting and parent support at home theoretically and practically encourages each child to generalize learned behaviors to various settings and situations.

Another advantage of the TPBA/I Model is that parent participation is systematically built-in to the process. Parent participation includes: natural play interactions, information exchange with professionals regarding typical and atypical child development and discussions of unique child and family qualities within the comfortable framework of child's play and family routines. Natural play interactions between the parent and child during a portion of the play assessment

session allows professionals to support and encourage enriching family interactions. Information exchange with the professional team regards typical and atypical developmental sequences and expectations in relation to the child's and family's unique qualities and are not limited to age milestone expectations or child limitations. This information exchange helps to clarify parent concerns and priorities within the discussions between family members and professionals which in turn ensures identification of typical home behaviors that are consistent or inconsistent with assessment and school behaviors. Parents of children who access these play-based services through public schools or agencies have verbally expressed a greater satisfaction with using the TPBA/I and SJC approach versus previous approaches using psychometric testing and checklists to determine behavioristic oriented goals, objectives and interventions. Some parents expressed their enjoyment and the effectiveness of the more natural interactions with their children through play rather than the previously recommended home assignments to "work" with their children on specific deficit skills based on developmental milestone checklists.

Although parents have verbally reported satisfaction with the play-based programming due to improved child play and social interactions, formal study of their beliefs about supporting child learning and development within the context of play-based professional recommendations and activities have not been attempted. In addition, professionals continue to demonstrate a range of program practices from child-initiated to adult-directed interactions. Therefore, the beliefs

of parents and professionals regarding actual and ideal practices in support of child learning and development when attempting to implement play-based strategies to replace traditional adult-directed behavioristic practices are unclear.

The Role of EC Professionals

The literature has acknowledged a diverse EC professional and parent population. Differences are wide ranging in their knowledge base of EC, child development, intervention, training opportunities, interpretations of recommended practices, interactions with children and personal dispositions when working with a general population of young children (NAEYC, 1994). When EC professionals are also expected to meet the special educational needs of children identified with developmental delays, disordered development or disabilities, these differences intensify the EC knowledge base and practice controversy. Current EC professional practices may not be accommodating individual child differences within the general population of children; therefore, the preparedness of EC professionals to adequately and effectively provide physical, learning and social environments conducive to the development of children with exceptional needs remains of concern (Kontos & File, 1993). Even when early childhood special educators or interventionists play a role in accommodating individual child differences, EC professionals require skills necessary to collaborate with other disciplines as well as to implement and assess the effectiveness of planned interventions. EC professionals must also express confidence in program practices that accommodate child differences to calm parental concerns that the

quality of learning and social interactions will be sacrificed in an inclusive setting (Stahlman, 1994). An emphasis on home-school collaboration and collaboration between professionals from multiple disciplines causes us to examine the various goals and tasks involved in programming to ensure that those both within and outside of the teaching domain are aware of issues in child development and learning (typical and atypical concerns). For example, knowing a child does not have pincer grasp informs the Occupational Therapist of a deficit in fine motor development, but does not inform the family or teacher of engaging activities throughout life routines that are likely to encourage use and mastery of the skill. Nor, does identifying this deficit in the fine motor area provide reasonable expectations for the parents to encourage a child's independence in daily living skills rather than train for development of the deficit skill. Thus, the need to address the professional development of a diverse population of professionals, as well as parent education in EC settings is emphasized throughout the literature (NAEYC, DEC/CEC & NBPTS, 1996; Kontos & File, 1993; Stahlman, 1994).

When working with children that have intervention needs, professionals must demonstrate an ability to facilitate and sometimes skillfully intervene to support two specific programming goals identified as important for their development. These goals include parent involvement (Dunst, 1994) and children's social independence in accessing various play, learning and peer or adult interactions (Linder, 1993b). Although "best" or "most appropriate"

treatments regarding intervention needs are determined individually, the importance of children's social competence has more recently been identified as a vital component to early child development regardless of delays, disabilities or even typically expected development (e. g., Allen, 1992; Goodman, 1992; Miller, 1994). Bondurant-Utz & Luciano (1994) describe social competence as competent use of intentionally directing social behavior to another partner for interaction with adults and peers. They list two social skills that children need to develop. The first is an interactive relationship and attachment to a primary caregiver. The second is to be a part of a social network with peers. Children with delays and/or disabilities are likely to need intervention to develop these skills due to their varying delays or disabilities (e. g., Odom & Brown, 1993; Linder, 1993a & b; Wolery, 1994). Social interactions of all children, regardless of severity of delay or disability, affect the care given to children by parents, teachers and other caregivers as well as social interactions with peers. These opportunities for on-going social interactions in family, school and community settings are affected by positive interactive social expression and competence throughout each child's life (Mallinckrodt, 1992; Peck, 1993; Peterson & McConnell, 1993). Primary use of adult-directed activities interfere with the development of child initiated activities and social competence (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Guralnick, 1994; Mahoney & Wheatley, 1994; Wolery, 1994), but parents and professionals may not be aware of specific strategies to facilitate a child's growth and development using child initiated play.

Identification of child and environmental strengths support the development of social competence and invite parent participation. Child and environmental strengths are best identified within a framework that considers the quality of development, individual characteristics and environmental contexts in conjunction with typically expected sequences regardless of delayed or disordered development (for examples see Bredekamp &Copple, 1997; Bondurant-Utz, 1994; Guralnick, 1994; Wolery, 1994). Often based on personal beliefs as well as community values and definitions, professionals engage in a range of practices across various school districts, classrooms, agencies, EC and ECSE intervention programs (for examples see Graue & Marsh, 1996; Lamorey & Bricker, 1993; Stoneman, 1993; Strain & Smith, 1993); therefore, identification of children's strengths and needs may be inconsistent between programs. Eligibility for early childhood intervention or preschool special education and the implementation of programming should provide a continuous framework for educating children across all developmental areas regardless of delays, disabilities or even typically expected or advanced development. An immediate concern arises when realizing that child and program qualities are often based on various ideological and conceptual interpretations of child development and diversity, leading to discrepancies in practice between agencies and public or private schools (Anastasiow & Nucci, 1994). Knowledge of typically expected development is emphasized in state and federal guidelines through requirements to have a regular education teacher or proof of child development knowledge by

at least one IEP team member. The challenges to child development knowledge throughout this research indicate that a limited focus on age-appropriate development without consideration of individual child and family qualities leads to deficit programming. Current EC guidelines emphasize that children develop at different rates with unique individual and cultural qualities (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Therefore professionals need systematic, but flexible preparation activities beyond traditional assumptions of child development in order to apply the skills needed to make differentiated decisions in planning and facilitating child learning and development activities (for examples see Goffin, 1996; Graue & Marsh, 1996; Katz, 1996; Lubeck, 1996; Stott & Bowman, 1996).

EC professionals must be prepared to play an interactive role in each step of an intervention or special education process. Regardless of personal positions on inclusion or the availability of special education support or outside intervention services, practitioners must realize that they are likely to be responsible for children with exceptional needs. In each phase of the process, EC professionals must be familiar with and use similar terminology to effectively collaborate with professionals from other disciplines (e. g., speech-language pathologists, physical therapists, psychologists, occupational therapists, etc.). They must be skilled in documenting and describing child behaviors and conditions leading to referral concerns whether or not they initiate or even support a referral for special education. For example, if a parent refers a child in hopes of accessing medication to increase a young child's attention span, teacher descriptions may

indicate that the child has an attention span that is considered appropriate when he is engaged in developmentally appropriate activities. In addition to providing information for the referral and eligibility processes, teacher documentation of child behaviors within varying classroom situations (i.e., play, center activities, story time, etc.) will provide vital input into intervention design and effectiveness. For example, a teacher referring a child for an evaluation because he has a short attention span and is disruptive to others more specifically communicates the referral concerns by identifying the activities and the times that reflect the child's longest and shortest levels of attention. In addition, a description of disruptive behavior when the child is not engaged in an activity provides needed information in order to effectively plan and evaluate engaging activities.

These professional responsibilities needed for interactive planning can be complex and overwhelming to unskilled EC professionals. The art of EC programming involves structuring a holistic environment in which skilled professionals take individual responsibility to collaborate with families and other professionals to create comprehensive programming for all children, even those children requiring additional support beyond established curricular or professional expectations. A curriculum, even one that claims DAP activities, cannot provide the art of DAP teaching. The process of developing and facilitating child activities within a DAP framework requires EC professionals to be knowledgeable and skilled in differentiating child needs and situations to discriminate in choosing from an access of a wide range of teaching resources and strategies to support

child learning and development. In other words, they must be confident in their knowledge of development, individual, family and cultural contexts to demonstrate the art of uncertainty in their practices (Goffin, 1996; Katz, 1996). The art of uncertainty in professional interactions with children involves constant personal definition and response to varying situations in which no single structure can provide absolute "right" practices. In order for EC professionals to develop this art in individual practice and in collaboration with professionals from various disciplines, they require a combination of professional and personal skills. These skills include content knowledge of child development and facilitative teaching strategies in conjunction with the creative process of curriculum and intervention planning based on the diversity of child characteristics, group dynamics and various situations (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Goffin, 1996; Katz, 1996; Lubeck, 1996; Stott & Bowman, 1996; Mahoney &Wheatley, 1994).

Issues in Professional Preparation

Regardless of how comprehensive a training model may appear in design, the success of training will be measured by the perceived usefulness and implementation of new knowledge and skills by participants and, in turn, the effects on children. Lubeck (1996) contends that there is an inconsistency between expecting practitioners to accept a constructivist philosophy for children when they, as adults, are not are not given the same opportunity to construct their own understandings about teaching children. Using behavioristic approaches to direct the instruction of adults (i.e., professionals and parents) to

use constructivist or strategies is hypocritical and may lead to resentment from the professionals that successfully implement DAP, as well as from those who resist the constructivist or developmental philosophy. Incorporating token constructivist demonstrations into a behavioristic framework may only address superficial aspects or provide a limited perception the effects of constructivist teaching approaches. On the other hand, adults are more likely to take ownership of their learning when participating in training that uses the attributes of a constructivist framework incorporating direct instruction as appropriate (Cranton, 1990; Knowles, 1980; Wlodkowski, 1993). Professionals then have the opportunity to use their existing knowledge of child development and teaching strategies to interact with real or realistic situations to develop new knowledge and process skills. These learned skills are more likely to then be reflected or demonstrated in authentic interactions with children and families. For example, professionals that observe an actual (or videotaped) child assessment to identify mastered developmental skills during play, then collaborate with a team of other professionals or parents to identify intervention ideas to support a child's emerging skills are practicing communication of child strengths and strategies for supporting growth.

The professional expectations for EC professionals are great due to the comprehensive nature of guidelines for recommended practices, discussions challenging dominant child development knowledge and the inclusion of children with developmental delays and/or disabilities. Curriculum and intervention

models that encourage professional and personal creativity within the framework of sequential development and researched-based strategies are needed to meet this monumental task. Training models must be able to extend into guiding and assessing professional practices, diverse situations and child interactions. Models using DAP and play-based strategies for EC programs need to be considered as appropriate models for adult learning, as well (Klugman, 1995; Lubeck, 1996). Applying characteristics of a DAP environment for children to professional development activities will help accomplish this task (Table 1). Age appropriateness may be redefined for adults as the level of education and training activities (i.e., content understanding and process experiences). Individual appropriateness may relate to individual style and comfort in using personal and professional creativity in conjunction with curricular planning and strategy implementation. The sociocultural context affecting their receptiveness to training and decisions in practice can be redefined as the personal and community beliefs and experiences. These considerations of appropriateness within a training context demand that professional and parent education becomes consistent with DAP strategies, which in turn encourages professional reflection and feedback within the same structure and context of the field's guidelines. The training framework must engage professionals from where they are based on prior knowledge, beliefs and practices to meet a range of needs from those who are resistant to philosophical changes to those who need increased learning opportunities related to their already successful implementation of DAP.

Comprehensive content and experiences, then, must provide a firm foundation in basic knowledge of development, consideration of individual, family and cultural contexts, a wide repertoire of teaching strategies and encourage on-going professional and personal creativity and development at all levels.

Table1
DAP Characteristics: Child-professional comparisons

Children	Professional
Age appropriateness	Prior knowledge based on education and/or training level (i.e., content understanding and experiences in strategy implementation)
Individual appropriateness	Personal and professional experiences in adult-child interactions, individual style and comfort in problem solving, creative curricular planning and strategy implementation
Sociocultural context	Long term life and cultural experiences affecting personal beliefs and practices beyond the EC setting
Interactive learning and teaching	Professionals are exposed to realistic and real situations to combine existing knowledge and practices with new information and skills during group interactions allowing them to challenge new information.
Curricula activities individualized to emphasize child-initiation and independence	Professionals participate in planning activities applicable to their situations.

In order to maintain the continuity of facilitating children's development across home and school settings, parents and professionals must speak the same language and be familiar and skilled with a wide range of strategies. Like professionals, parent awareness of children's mastered and emerging skills is necessary in order to use and exchange strategies with professionals to support and encourage development. DAP emphasizes the avenue of child's play as vital to child growth and development. Play is the most natural avenue in which children practice and spontaneously demonstrate their development (for examples see Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Klugman, 1995; Klugman & Smilansky, 1990; Linder, 1993a & b; Rogers & Sawyers, 1995). Regardless of philosophies and professional practices, early childhood curricular activities typically involve some level of play and social interactions between children. Play creates an opportunity for social exchanges between young children as well as adults creating the groundwork for developing social competence (Bricker & Cripe, 1992; Bondurant-Utz & Luciano, 1994; Cooper, 1996; Guralnick, 1994; Notari & Cole, 1993). Play is also the avenue of development that typically exists in the home and school setting giving more opportunity to extend strategies and activities across environments for continuity and consistency. Child-directed play often appears recreational and chaotic to the untrained eye rather than purposeful and functional. Children explore and practice cognitive, communication, social and motor skills with independent emotional states interacting within each activity and affecting each

developmental domain. This chaotic and seemingly non-academic appearance put EC practitioners at risk for appearing unprofessional and unknowledgeable (Marchant & Brown, 1996;). Therefore, professionals need a training model comprehensive enough to address development, learning and intervention within the natural interaction of play. Play offers a flexible structure to observe and facilitate diverse child characteristics and contexts (for examples see Bracken, 1991; Jones & Reynolds, 1995; Linder, 1993a & b; McCord, 1995; Notari & Cole, 1993) and is strongly supported by DAP guidelines, which emphasize the avenue of child's play as vital to child growth and development. Play is the most natural avenue in which children practice and spontaneously demonstrate their development (Linder, 1993a & b; Bredekamp, 1987, Rogers & Sawyers, 1995). Regardless of philosophies and professional practices, early childhood curricular activities typically involve some level of play and social interactions between children. Play creates an opportunity for social exchanges between young children that provides a structure in which adults facilitate child spontaneous interactions to support children's development of social competence (Bondurant-Utz & Luciano, 1994; Cooper, 1996; Levin, 1996; Linder, 1993a & b; McCord, 1995).

The premise of DAP and incorporating children's play is simple, but the application in actual practice is complex. The DAP premise is simple in that only three components (i.e., age appropriate, individually appropriate and sociocultural relevance) provide general guidance for practice. Complex in that a

wide range of practices is required to meet individual and culturally diverse needs within a developmentally sequential framework. This complexity in the EC profession requires flexibility and reflections in thought and practice (NAYEC, DEC & NBPTS, 1996). Therefore, behavioristic practices are not excluded from DAP even though the emphasis is on constructivist teaching strategies. Instead, professionals are required to have skills to adapt strategies from both philosophical bases to the unique qualities of individuals and interactions between groups in varying situations for maximum effectiveness (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). The emphasis in training must evolve from the field's controversial debates about child development knowledge into the processes and strategies involved in determining and connecting age appropriateness, individual appropriateness and sociocultural contexts in various school, home and community settings (NAEYC, DEC & NBPTS, 1996).

Because play appears to be simplistic and to require little adult involvement, EC professionals are at risk for appearing as though minimal professional skills are needed or used. Therefore, it is important to educate professionals to ensure that they have the skills needed to engage in DAP and play-based strategies, the confidence to collaborate with other professionals and the comfort to communicate interactively with families (Bailey, 1994; Bartolini, 1996; Bicker & Cripe, 1992; Bruder, 1994; Linder 1993; Safford, Sargent & Cook, 1994; Stahlman, 1994). It is also important for parents to understand the framework of play and specific strategies used in the EC setting to address child

needs in what may appear to some as an unstructured environment (Bartolini, 1996; Gabrieli, 1995).

Play as a Framework for Adult Training of Child Development and Intervention

Because play is the most natural avenue in which children practice and demonstrate development of concepts, skills and tasks, play should be considered an appropriate framework for professional development. The TPBA/I and SJC program practices incorporate the components of DAP and NAEYC recommended practices in segregated and typical EC settings using a play-based foundation. More importantly, the models provide a naturalistic curricular and assessment framework to address the needs of all children (i.e., those with advanced development, delays, disabilities, specific talents or development within an expected range). Combined, the models can be used for interactive professional development in community preschool and child care settings to provide comprehensive training in preparing EC professionals for programs that actively support and encourage children from diverse cultures, families, and situations. Combining the TPBA/I and SJC models as a framework for EC training provides activities in the use of facilitation strategies that are more consistent with DAP and the previously described continuum of teaching structures than behavioristic strategies. In the following statement, the term "practitioners" can replace the term "children" to lend more consistency to professional development within DAP guidelines. Behaviorally oriented curricular strategies are developed which "...emphasize educational activities that direct or

guide children to perform behaviors or skills related to their deficits as opposed to activities that encourage behaviors currently within children's behavioral repertoire" (Mahoney & Wheatley, 1994, p. 132). In other words DAP oriented curricular strategies emphasize activities that encourage behaviors within each child's, or practitioner's, repertoire as well as support emerging skills or behaviors using a continuum of teaching structures.

When considering the diverse characteristics of participants in professional development activities, the previously mentioned teaching structures identified for children can provide structure for content knowledge, program implementation and professional practices (Table 2). An appropriate balance determined by participant characteristics between free discovery, prompted discovery and directed discovery teaching structures can support professionals in effectively using EC expertise, developing flexibility to create wide ranging experiences for children and confidently interacting with families and other professionals. Beginning with directed discovery, professionals are given the guidelines from which to build professional expertise, creativity and flexibility. This is the discovery of shared language, concepts and research. Prompted discovery becomes an interaction of existing knowledge and practices with newly learned information and strategies to real or realistic situations. This application level allows professionals to validate, identify gaps in and build on existing knowledge and practices. Free discovery becomes the level in which professionals confidently exchange ideas and expand their practices. With

guidance from and practice in the EC field base of knowledge, professionals then have the expertise to expand and discriminate the use of a wider repertoire of strategies, assess individual and program effectiveness and evolve with the diversity of people and changes within our society.

Table 2
Three teaching structures to consider for EC professional development

Teaching Structure	Benefit to Professionals
Directed discovery	Guidelines for practice and literature from the EC field frame observations, questions and posing problems.
Prompted discovery	Materials, research-based resources and interactions with colleagues are used during professional applications of established and newly learned information and strategies
Free discovery	Self-assessment, self-reflection and interactive colleague assessment provides feedback to compare and contrast established practices with newly learned information and strategies

Professional training that provides intense content knowledge and invites active participation must focus on the strengths of each professional and parent developing their skills and expertise regarding interactions with children. Three common aspects of child development within a wide range of EC settings and home environments include child's play, language and social competence. By

combining EC models that focus on these aspects to educate professionals, a solid framework is provided from which to build more continuous EC practices consistent with DAP for All children. Continuous and consistent practices throughout the field of EC will allow professionals to then convey useful information to parents in simple terms related to the child's natural home play and routine activities (Linder, 1993a & b; Nourot, 1995). Recommendations become a direct result of this parent-professional interaction in which ideas to facilitate child mastered and emerging skills are created together with support for family strengths and needs.

Adults (professionals and parents) are more likely to implement DAP for young children when they are exposed to the same guiding constructivist and play-based approaches to their own learning and development. By experiencing professional development opportunities consistent with recommended practices for children, adults will make a more personal connection to the presented content and process experiences (Fromberg, 1995; Kontos & File, 1993; Nourot, 1995). These personal connections are likely to lead to support for DAP and play-based practices because the professionals have experienced and had the opportunity to build confidence in open dialogues and constructivist activities. This experience in constructivist or DAP learning can lead to a more personal understanding of child construction because the adults have the opportunity to acknowledge and develop comfort with their own personal and professional creativity and strengths. They are then better prepared to confidently access

resources, gather colleague support, and critically assess themselves, colleagues and program effects (Cripe, Hanline, Daley, 1997; Nourot, 1995; Wesley & Buysse, 1997).

Professional Transfer of Learning

A comprehensive EC model for training and programming is vital in establishing a strong framework for practices, but the training model and program guidelines are limited to insure that professionals will apply new information or strategies. Wolfe and Snyder (1997) state that to effectively address this issue of transferring learned information into professional practice four general factors interact to facilitate or impede the transfer. These four factors are 1) characteristics of the participants, 2) the instructional program, 3) the organizational context, and 4) the community. Factor 2 (the instructional program) and 3 (the organizational context) were discussed in earlier sections to describe the models chosen for professional training, but factor 1 (characteristics of the participants) and 4 (the community) are discussed here to narrow the focus of this study. They further acknowledge that within the processes of needs assessment and evaluation to guide successful personnel preparation:

> "An individual or group makes value-based judgments during each phase of the process. Regardless of how needs are defined, whose needs are assessed, and at what levels needs are determined, the identified needs are filtered through and influenced by the perspectives of individuals responsible for translating information into personnel

preparation priorities." (p. 152).

As stated earlier, current literature in the fields of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) argue that to improve programming for all children, professional development must address education and care for children with atypical development as well as those considered to be typically developing. McCollum and Catlett (1997) suggest that individual beliefs must be considered within the context of professional development and desired changes in efforts toward effective early intervention when they state:

> "Qualities and values needed by members of all disciplines also include respect for the collaborative nature of early intervention service delivery. Therefore, beliefs and values must become an explicit focus of training for all early intervention personnel. Dispositions and strategies for handling change also may be relevant in a rapidly changing field, particularly if traditional practice and early intervention practice are not congruent." (p. 109).

Teaching specific beliefs or values to teachers so that they are congruent with expected practices are likely to be felt as intrusive and not likely to be successful. In the current climate of the EC field promoting DAP and support of children's play as "best practice", most professionals will profess the philosophy of DAP practices, especially when their directors/administrative boards seek NAEYC accreditation to promote a safe child care and educational setting for

young children. Therefore self-ratings are likely to profess DAP and observations or critiques by others to create tension. In order to analyze the congruency of professional and parent beliefs and to respect a range of beliefs regarding EC practices during professional development activities and program transition, it is important to analyze them beyond quantitative measures. Consequently, identifying professional and parental beliefs during the professional development process and a setting's transitional phase to implement DAP including play-based strategies provides an opportunity to explore insights into the acceptance or resistance of training activities and program implementation.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore professional and parent beliefs about actual and ideal early childhood program practices. This chapter describes the method, with a rationale for using Q-method, followed by a discussion of the subjects, instruments, procedures, and data analysis.

Q-Method Rationale Related to Study Purpose

Current early childhood (EC) recommendations regarding developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) support the appropriate use of a wide range of teaching and intervention strategies and emphasize child-initiated, teacher-supported play to facilitate child learning and development within the context of individual child, collective group and sociocultural considerations (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). To meet the demands of these current recommendations professionals require comprehensive knowledge and skills to consider diverse child characteristics and contexts. Therefore, professional and program development must be consistent with current recommendations by emphasizing these guiding components of DAP as presented by the National Association for the Education for Young Children (NAEYC). These components are based on age-appropriateness, individual appropriateness, sociocultural relevance and play as a vehicle to facilitate child learning and development. Because professional practices and beliefs vary and because parent beliefs are likely to

influence professional practices, DAP guidelines for children in EC settings must be taken into consideration when planning a framework for program implementation and professional development.

In an article examining the relationship between the current child development knowledge base and EC professional practice, Goffin (1996) challenges the field to consider limitations in the use of objective research methodology to guide recommendations. To emphasize the subjective nature of the EC profession Burman states, "There is now increasing recognition that behind the mask of detached, disinterested objective research lie interpretative and subjective features that, as is the way of repressed material, exert their influences in forms of which we are not aware." (p. 7). Interpretive and subjective features within the context of play-based programming are the focus of this study.

Q-Methodology was used to describe professional and parent beliefs about actual and ideal EC programming. Q-methodology is an analysis of individual subjectivity or perceptions such as beliefs or attitudes about a topic or situation. The method was developed by William Stephenson in 1935 as a way to analyze personal viewpoints (Brown, 1996; McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Q-items are developed as single objects (i.e., statements, pictures, videos, etc.) to reflect the language and concepts of respondents, or P-set (the population responding to the Q-items). The researcher instructs respondents to rank-order, or sort, the Q-items to reflect the statements that represent those that are most like to those

that are most unlike their points of view. This activity is designed to help the researcher understand different perspectives in a situation (Brown, 1980; Brown, 1996; McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Instead of extracting R–factors, or clusters of variables, to validate a concept or point of view established by the researcher as in objective analyses, Q-Methodology uses Q-factors in which to derive factors, or clusters of people in relation to their subjectivity such as attitudes and beliefs. In other words, Q-methodology examines and clusters "relationships among people across variables" (Carr, 1992, p.137). Rather than pre-defined operational definitions, operant subjectivity guides the researcher's interpretation of participant responses. Operant subjectivity is a concept developed by Stephenson and refers to the meaning assigned to statements based on the respondent's distribution of statements relative to a specific viewpoint within the context of a question or situation (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). In other words, respondents communicate individual viewpoints by operating on, or sorting, statements and the researcher analyzes the way the statements are combined to interpret the viewpoint of a single respondent or shared viewpoints of more than one respondent.

Q-Methodology bridges qualitative and quantitative research by applying quantitative analysis to subjectivity involved in a situation or at a point in time (Brown, 1996). The Q-sort technique is consistent with the debates surrounding the EC profession and DAP as they evolve from "either/or" into "both/and" in reference to teaching strategies (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Consistent with

the DAP concept of including a wide variety of strategies, Q-technique involves ranking items on the basis of "more or less" rather than eliminating statements through an "either/or" perspective (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

Participants – P-Set

A total of 9 participants, 5 professionals and 4 parents of children between the ages of 1 – 6 years completed two Q-sorts each according to their individual beliefs about actual and ideal early childhood programming. The participants selected in Q-methodology are referred to as the P-set. Individuals are selected for the P-set based on an expectation that they will have viewpoints relevant to the problem under investigation and will help define a factor (Brown, 1980). The basis for choosing the P-set is to establish a representation of diverse viewpoints; therefore, random and large population sampling does not effectively serve the purposes of Q-methodology. A small P-set is used because the representativeness of points of view is not validated or determined as more relevant by large numbers or invalidated by small numbers of participants (Kerlinger, 1972; McKeown & Thomas, 1988). The P-set is chosen using a theoretical or pragmatic selection process (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). To conduct theoretical sampling of the respondents, the researcher builds theory into the design and respondents are chosen based on an individual's relevance to the study. Pragmatic sampling allows the researcher to access a population of convenience, but may deliberately choose respondents in terms of individual relevance to the study. The P-set in this study was chosen pragmatically to

include professionals and parents with varying experiences who were likely to provide input regarding their beliefs about play and early childhood programming.

Respondents represented a variety of EC experiences including community childcare and preschools, public preschool special education, and home care providers. Participants are described in relation to the data without identifying specific site locations or titles beyond individual roles (e.g., parent, teacher, care giver, etc.) to maintain confidentiality. General demographic characteristics of the participants include ages ranging between 30 and 60 years, household income ranging from the 15,000 – 24,999 range to the 55,000 – 64,999 range and educational level ranging from associate degrees to hours beyond a master's degree. The eight respondents who provided demographic information listed Caucasian ethnicity with one of participants listing African American, Caucasian, Hispanic and Native American ethnicity reported Caucasian ethnicity. Three of the parent participants provided demographic information. All three were mothers in two parent homes with two to five children with no reports of developmental delays or other disabilities. One of the parent participants did not provide demographic information. Roles reported by professionals included two home childcare providers, one child development specialist, one preschool special education teacher and one school psychologist with early childhood experience. All professionals reported EC experiences in a range of four to twenty-four years. Participation was informed and voluntary with invitations extended by the lead professional at each site to participate in the

study. There was no penalty for refusal to participate or later requests to withdraw from the study.

It should be noted that the researcher's Q-sorts are included as professional sorts in this study for two reasons. The first reason is to identify the viewpoint from which the data is interpreted. Secondly, the researcher's perspective as a school psychologist with an emphasis on EC/ECSE programming is relevant to the purpose of this study.

Research Instruments

The instruments used were developed for this study to explore professional and parent beliefs about actual and ideal EC practices. The study packet consisted of consent forms, demographic information and a Q-sort instrument with an open-ended question encouraging respondents to expand on their beliefs. The study packet included:

1. Informed consent from professionals and parents (Appendix A),

2. Demographic questionnaire - professional and parent versions (Appendix B),

3. Q-sort instrument, conditions of instruction, record sheet, items list and directions to identify professional and parent beliefs about EC programming (Appendix C) to be described in the following sections.

Procedure

Q-Methodology

The steps involved in a Q-method, the construction of the Q-sort, a

description of administration procedures and an analysis of data are described in the following sections. Eight steps comprise Q-Method and outline the data collection and analysis for this study:

1. The Statement of Collection includes the concourse or statement of subjectivity (a range of perceptions or opinions) in a situation or point in time

2. A Q-sample is made up of statements from the concourse and is chosen on the basis that it is represents varying perceptions.

3. The P-set is the respondent population chosen to complete the Q-sort.

4. The Conditions of Instruction are designed with the research question in mind and guide participant responses to the Q-sort and the researcher's interpretation to understand the respondent's perspective.

5. Statistical Analysis correlates and factor analyzes Q-sort data among respondents.

6. Factor Rotation allows the researcher to rotate factors to maximize the explained variance of the factors. A varimax rotation may be used or the researcher's manual rotation of the factors based on theoretical judgement using the centroid method.

7. Factor Scores identify the extent that a Q-item represents a factor.

8. Interpretation of the Q-factors helps guide the researcher to better understand the respondent's perceptions.

Construction of the Q-Sort

Concourse Development: Concourse development, in which Q-items are

developed, can occur naturalistically, quasi-naturalistically, through ready-made responses or a combination of the approaches (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Naturalistic development includes items expressed by and reflective of the respondents' viewpoints based on their natural communication or wording. Interviews, talk shows, letters, etc. are examples of accessing naturalistic statements. Quasi-naturalistic development is similar to naturalistic in that statements are developed through natural and reflective communication, but statements are gathered from sources other than the research participants. Ready-made sampling includes items from pre-determined sources other than respondent communication such as pre-developed instruments, standardized scales, etc. Hybrid samples include a combination of naturalistic and ready-made samples. A hybrid sample was used to develop the concourse of statements in this study by combining quasi-naturalistic and ready-made statements. The ready-made instruments, designed for naturalistic observations of EC practices, listed items characteristic of free, prompted and directed discovery methods as well play-based strategies.

Quasi-naturalistic sampling occurred over a one-year span and included professional and parent reactions, questions, comments and discussions during play-based professional development activities conducted and facilitated by this research in various EC settings. Although the activities encouraged openly expressed opinions and varying beliefs about actual and ideal EC programming, the researcher included statements from EC literature to expand the range of

viewpoints to include play-based programming concepts and strategies. The statements were then presented using a Q-sort technique to professionals and parents not involved in the play-based development activities.

Ready-made sample statements were chosen from two non-standardized instruments to concisely state similarly expressed viewpoints. The instruments are consistent with the wording of both professionals and parents in the quasi-naturalistic sampling phase and included concepts consistent with free, discovery and directed teaching structures and play-based programming. The two instruments include an adapted version of The Facilitation Strategies Checklist (Linder, 1993b) and the Protocol for the Structural Analysis of Low-Structure Activities (Strain, 1995). The Facilitation Strategies Checklist (Appendix D) was developed by Linder and presented for training purposes annually at the Transdisciplinary Play-Based Assessment/Intervention Institute. The checklist was chosen because the strategies are consistent with DAP guidelines provided by NAEYC and the instrument was developed in direct relationship to play-based programming for children with typical development as well as those with atypical or delayed development. A panel of three experts reviewed and recommended adaptations to three rating aspects of the existing instrument, but expressed general agreement that the items represented strategies consistent with DAP and support of child-initiated, teacher-supported play. The recommended adaptations were not made because they were not relevant to the purposes of this study. The panel included:

1. A professor of early childhood from a local university also certified as a school psychologist.
2. A speech-language pathologist who implements play-based strategies.
3. An early childhood teacher and supervisor of practicum students from a university-based child development/education center.

The Protocol for the Structural Analysis of Low-Structure Activities (Appendix E) is a semi-structured form on which to document observed characteristics of classroom environments (Research Institute on Preschool Mainstreaming Project Final Report, 1995). The form was developed as part of a study to explore mainstreaming effects on preschool-aged children with developmental delays in developmental integrated settings versus segregated preschools (P. Strain, personal communication, February 10, 1997). The protocol is an observation instrument that provides guiding questions consistent with a range of practices identified in the literature regarding activity structure and content, materials, level of child choice, teacher involvement and group rules. The format allows professionals to check statements that best describe the environment and encourages detailed comments to establish a pattern of practices that support or hinder children's progress in relation to unique characteristics. This instrument was chosen for the study because the items used accurately summarize a range of practices and concepts presented by professionals and parents in wording common to the respondents.

Statement Selection: The statements from the concourse were developed into a Q-sample using an inductive structure sample design. An inductive design allows the structure to evolve from patterns that are observed during statement collection as opposed to a deductive design, which is systematically developed in relation to testing a theory or an unstructured sampling in which no structure is applied (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Emergence of the free, prompted and directed discovery teaching structures (Peters, Neisworth and Yawkey, 1985) in relation to adult involvement and curricular activities was evident throughout the statement collection process. The three teaching structures, presented in earlier discussions to describe a continuum of teaching behaviors, were used to understand teaching method preferences and the role of play in professional and parent beliefs about EC program practices. As discussed previously, free discovery is associated with child-directed activities, prompted discovery is associated with adult arrangement of materials and interactions and directed discovery is associated with adult-directed presentations and interactions. Table 3 reflects the 1 x 3 structural design and lists the number of statements representing methods characteristic of each structure. Appendix C identifies each statement with one of the structures.

The prominent themes in statements and discussions across types of EC activities structure are reflected by equal numbers of statements characteristic of prompted and directed discovery teaching, but fewer statements characteristic of free discovery. The unequal numbers reflect the naturalistic statement collection,

in that more of the free discovery items were developed from EC literature and ready-made materials. Refer to Appendix C for representation of each item with free, prompted or directed discovery characteristics.

Table 3
Unbalanced Design of Q Statements

Types	Free Discovery	Prompted Discovery	Directed Discovery
Number of Statements	12	18	18

Examples drawn from professional and parent discussions are presented to explain the researcher's consideration of the sub-issues of environmental design, curriculum activities, adult-child interactions and assessment activities. Environmental design includes materials and room arrangement. Curriculum activities include play, pre-academics, milestone skill development and social interactions. Adult-child interactions include adult or child directed exchanges. Assessment activities include identification of mastered and emerging developmental skills and facilitation needs. The value of worksheets for writing letters and numbers versus restaurant props in the dramatic play area was an intense discussion among parents and professionals with members from both groups supporting separate activities. Curriculum structures were frequently discussed in terms of learning center activities and the amount of child time and type of performance expected in each prepared area to insure preparation for

kindergarten. Expectations for adult-directed versus child-directed interactions were often differentiated by both parents and teachers in relation to the compliance level of individual children. Assessment practices were often discussed in terms of age-related milestone skills and assumed to be adult-directed rather than observation of child-initiated spontaneous activities.

The researcher attempted to identify these sub-issues into the structure but found it difficult due to the interactive nature of early childhood programming and the interpretive nature given to the statements by respondents. The following Q-items are presented with a variety of possible interpretations based on the sub-issues of environmental design, curriculum activities, adult-child interactions and assessment. Item 1, "Children are given specific materials to complete structured activities so that they master age-appropriate developmental and pre-academic skills", contains environmental design in relation to materials, as well as adult-child interaction and curriculum activities in relation to presentation. Item 18, "Children demonstrate their mastery of concepts and skills when they use them spontaneously in play and their emerging skills when they imitate or model after others" contains assessment of development, interactions with others and curriculum activities. In addition to multiple interpretations, the previous examples are provided to exemplify the holistic nature of discussed practices during concourse development and the noticeable absence of segregating or verbalizing sub-issue categories in discussions.

Two Q-samples were constructed before a structured 48-item sample (Appendix C) was finalized for the purposes of this study. The first Q-sample consisted of 75 items and included statements regarding physical environmental design, curriculum activities, materials, assessment, adult-child interaction, child-child interaction and observations of types spontaneous child play. Items should represent a variety of opinions rather than simply forcing choices between polarized statements (McKeown & Thomas, 1988); thus, items were removed when they represented similar statements in opposing forms. This reduced the second Q-sample to 65 items from which 17 were removed. The items were removed because the researcher determined that the items identifying spontaneous child play activities were not consistent with the conditions of instruction and that many statements were redundant when compared to curriculum activity statements. Conditions of instruction were related to structures of EC programming rather than identifying the developmental levels of play occurring in those activities.

The sample was presented to professional and parent respondents to rank-order items based on their beliefs about actual and ideal EC programming using the Q-sort technique. In Q-methodology, the statements are considered equal until the respondent attaches meaning to them as reflected in the rank-ordered Q-sort. To achieve a representation of perspectives the following criteria were considered: 1) relative lack of ambiguity, 2) non-redundancy, 3) behavior

relevance, 4) apparent validity as revealed by current review of the literature, 5) representative sampling of domains (Montgomery, 1983).

Administration of the Q-Sort

Directions: The 48 items are placed on cards and sorted in a range of 11 columns with numeric values of +5 to –5 including 0 onto a formboard. The 11 column range meets the general rule for the Q-sample size (N) of 40 – 60 (Brown, 1980). A forced sort is used in which respondents use a fixed number of statements to respond to a fixed number of columns (Figure 2).

The range of the Q-sort is reflected by the number of items in each column, which creates the distribution. The statements are arranged in a quasi-normal flattened bell curve. This means that a larger number of items of extreme values are placed at either end of the distribution as compared to fewer extreme values on the ends of a normal distribution bell curve (Figure 3).

Figure 2.
Q-Sort formboard in relation to the distribution of entered data

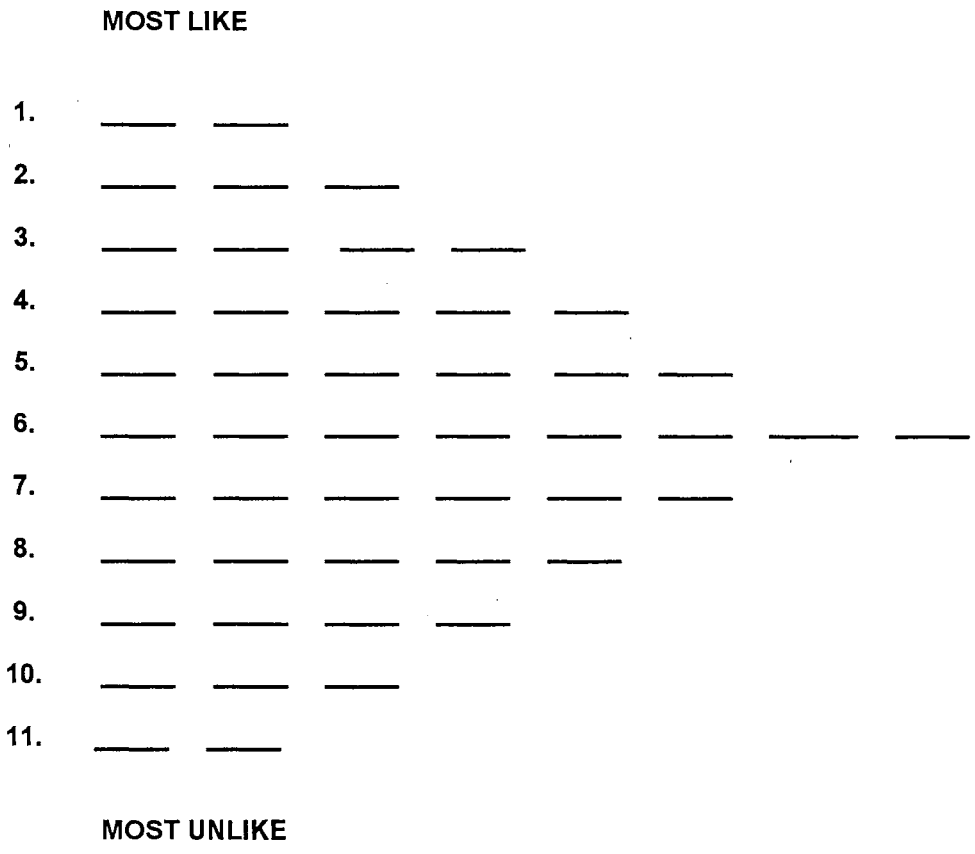
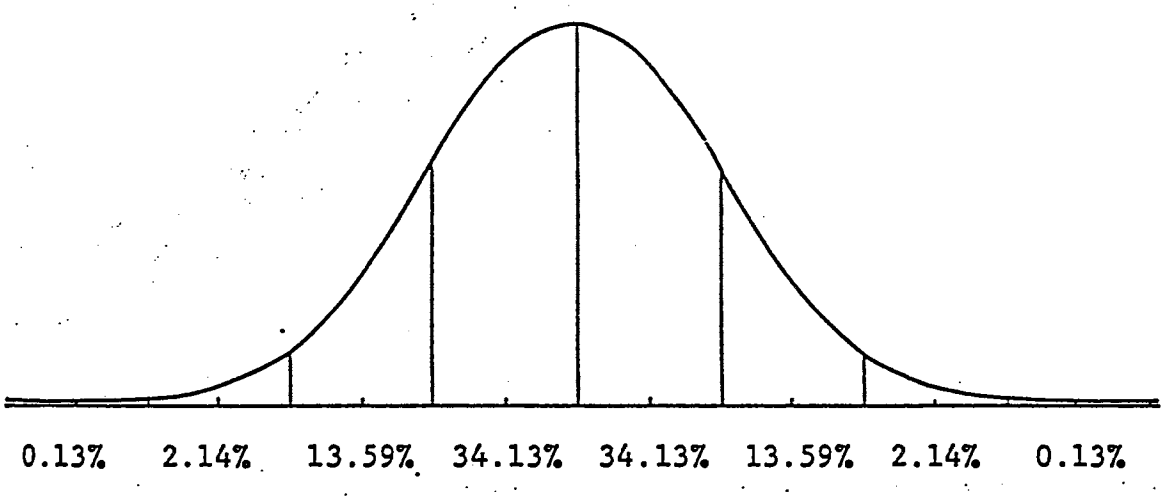
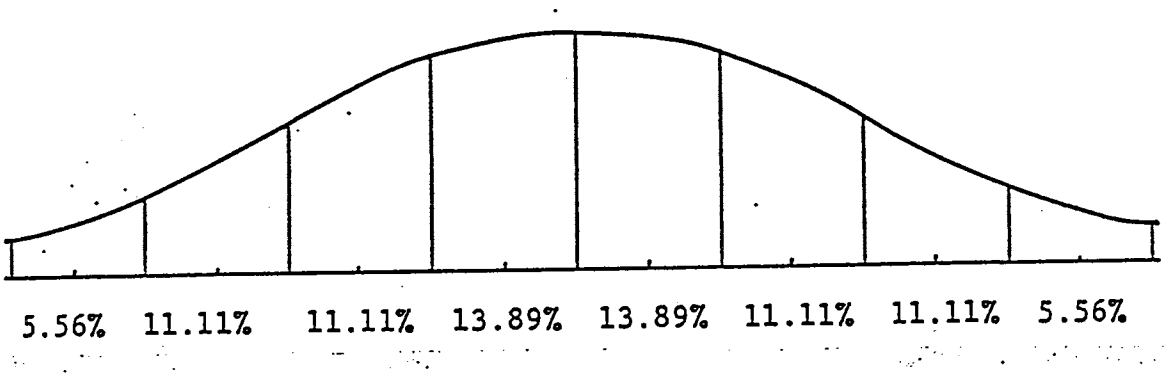


Figure 3.

Normal and platykurtic distribution curves



Normal distribution curve



Platykurtic distribution curve

Instructions: Administration of the Q-sorts included written instructions and response sheets distributed by the lead professionals in each setting (Appendix C). The lead professionals indicated that they understood the process after explanation by the researcher and preferred to administer without the researcher's presence. Participants were instructed to respond to two different conditions of instruction regarding actual and ideal EC program practices. Wording between professional and parent versions varies slightly in that both are responding to professional programming practices. Participants were instructed to read each of 48 statements placing them in three piles (+) strong agreement, (–) strong disagreement or (?) no strong feelings beside the item numbers to a question (condition of instruction). They then used the piles to rank order the statements according to those that are most like what they believe (represented on the record form as column 1, to those that are least like their beliefs (column 11). After they completed the sort, they were to record the item numbers beside the appropriate column numbers on the record sheet. The respondents were instructed to reuse the 48 statements to complete a second Q-sort with a different condition of instruction and return both record sheets with demographic information in an attached researcher-addressed stamped envelope or directly to the lead professional.

Each participant was given two conditions of instruction and recording sheets to represent their beliefs about "actual" practices (the first sort for each group), and to represent their beliefs about "ideal" practices (the second sort for

each group). Professionals were given the two following conditions of instruction:

1. What do you believe are "most like" the ways you support children's learning and development?
2. What do you believe are the "most ideal" ways to support children's learning and development?

Parents were given the two following conditions of instruction:

1. What do you believe are "most like" the ways your child's teacher supports children's learning and development?
2. What do you believe are the "most ideal" ways to support children's learning and development?

After completion of the Q-sort, the researcher requests additional information from the respondent to better understand a subject's point of view. A subject's verbal or written expansion on the Q-sort gives insight into understanding a particular perception by providing additional data for factor interpretation. The additional insights can be obtained through an interview with the subject or a written question about their completion of the sort (Montgomery & Focht, 1998). Therefore, after completing each Q-sort, professionals and parents were asked to further describe their thoughts about the sort in writing so they would have an opportunity to expand on their perceptions and to note if they would be available for an interview with the researcher at a later date. The final question was "What are your thoughts after completing this Q-sort?" The researcher used field notes and interview transcripts to provide further insights

and support for factor interpretation.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred during the spring of 1998. The first level of data collection included informed consent and demographic information. An informed voluntary consent form was presented to participants in conjunction with data collection to outline the purpose of the study, instruments to be completed and guidelines for withdrawing from participation at any time during the research. The second level included a Q-sort technique, in which professionals and parents sorted statements according to their beliefs about actual and ideal early childhood practices.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the Q-samples was completed using the PQMethod 2.0 computer software analysis (Schmolck, 1997) adapted from the QMethod mainframe Fortran program (Atkinson, 1992) to statistically analyze Q-sort data. PCQMethod allows the researcher to enter coded Q-sort data, correlate, analyze and rotate factors and interpret factor scores. In Q-technique, factors evolve from the respondent's beliefs as represented by the Q-sort data. Using PQMethod, the researcher establishes the dimensions of the particular Q-sort, enters the Q-items of each respondent and analyzes the extracted factors, which represent distinct clusters of beliefs. Analysis quantitatively presents correlation and factor matrices and a table of Q-factor scores for interpretation. The researcher can then examine the correlations from different perspectives using a varimax

rotation or manual rotation using the centroid method based on theoretical judgements. Indicated in the table of factor scores is the extent to which each statement characterizes each factor (Brown, 1996).

Professional and parent beliefs about EC program practices were combined into one statistical analysis for two reasons. The first reason for combining the groups relates to the use of similar concepts and wording by both populations during the quasi-naturalistic statement collection and the consistent emergence of the free discovery, prompted discovery and directed discovery structure. The second reason was to ensure that the different viewpoints were represented within the same analysis because of professional and parent interactions regarding program expectations. Data were coded to identify professional and parent respondents. The individual Q-sorts were coded as TA (professional actual), TI (professional ideal), PA (parent actual), PI (parent ideal) to distinguish between professional and parent sorts about actual and ideal EC programming in post hoc analysis.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The purpose of this study was to describe professional and parent beliefs about early childhood (EC) programming and the role of play in the beliefs. Participants were five professionals and four parents of children between the ages of 1 – 6 years who completed two Q-sorts each according to their individual beliefs about actual and ideal EC programming. The Q-sorts were correlated and a principal components factor analysis (QPCA) performed. QPCA is an initial process that produces a factor matrix of loadings for each Q-sort. The PQMethod computer program uses a common rigorous default of .40 to load a Q-sort on a factor. A two-factor solution accounted for 58% of the variance with all Q-sorts loading on a factor. All professionals' actual and ideal sorts loaded on one factor while all parents' actual and ideal sorts loaded on the second factor; therefore, the two factor solution was excluded because of overgeneralization limitations to interpretation for the purposes of this study.

The QPCA matrix was used to perform a varimax rotation, which is built in to the PQMethod computer program. A varimax rotation is a method that maximizes the explained variance of the factors. A varimax rotation was performed on 3, 4 and 5 factor solutions.

Two to three sorts are required to establish a common factor (Brown, 1980). A factor solution was chosen based on the criterion of three sorts per factor so that each factor reflected sorts of two or more respondents.

A four-factor solution was chosen because it accounted 71% of the explained variance (Table 4), which was 6% more variance than the three factor solution with sixteen of the variables loading on single factors and two confounded, which was one less confounded than that on the five-factor solution. Correlations between factors were low to moderate ranging from .33 - .59 (Table 5).

The three-factor structure accounted for 65% of the explained variance with all Q-sorts showing significant loadings. Correlation between factors was in the moderate range (.41 - .58). The five-factor solution accounted for 78% of the variance with fifteen of the Q-sorts loading on single factors and three of the variables confounded. Two to four Q-sorts loaded per factor with three of the Q-sorts confounded across two to three factors. Correlation between factors was low to moderate (.23 - .56). The five-factor solution did not meet the criterion of three sorts to define a factor.

Table 4
Factor Structure of the Early Childhood Programming Q-Sort

ID No.	A	B	C	D	
1 TAM01	.3379	.1759	.7086X	.3357	
2 TIM01	.3741	.1169	.7104X	.3452	
3 TAV01	.1924	.2135	.8825X	.1911	
4 TIV01	.1893	.2279	.8785X	.1621	
5 TAH01	.8473X	-.0244	.1691	.0554	
6 TIH01	.8870X	.0822	.2501	.0328	
**7 TAH02	(.4975)	.6553X	.3187	-.0154	
*8 TIH02	(.4099)	(.5951)	(.4197)	.1204	
*9 TAH03	(.5468)	.1902	.3013	(.4875)	
10 TIH03	.6338X	.1411	.2011	.3705	
11 PAU01	.2939	.3335	.1716	.7367X	
12 PIIU01	.3024	.3350	.1704	.7417X	
13 PAU02	.0965	-.0119	.3099	.6989X	
14 PIU02	-.0034	.0982	.3453	.7009X	
**15 PAU03	.0373	.7443X	.0899	.4123	
16 PIU03	-.0457	.6730X	.2403	.3057	
17 PAD01	-.1543	.3492	-.0537	.5271X	
18 PID01	.3935	.2297	.1580	.6240X	
Number of Significant Loads	6	4	5	7	
Number Retained	3	3	4	6	
% expl.Var.	18	13	19	21	= 71%

T = Professional participants

P = Parent participants

X = Q-sorts retained for factor interpretation

Loadings are considered meaningful at .40.

*Mixed loadings are indicated parenthetically ( )

** = Item was retained as a loading on factor B because Factor B explains more of the sort's variance than the combined variance of the other three factors.

Table 5
Correlations Between Factors

	A	B	C	D
A	1.0000	.3250	.4943	.3779
B		1.0000	.5025	.5871
C			1.0000	.5592
D				1.0000

Factor Interpretation

Interpretation of the factor structure revealed four beliefs about early childhood programming. A consensus across the factors is represented by a strong opinion identifying play as educationally valuable evidenced by the –5 array ranking of the statement "Play is NOT educational" by all four beliefs. The four beliefs are distinguished by preferences for free, prompted or directed discovery teaching structures and by the way play is incorporated into those structures. Therefore, the four beliefs can be described in the context of the role of play within teaching structure preferences. The four beliefs revealed in this context were: Factor A (Work) – Play is the Child's Work in the Environment, Factor B (Responsible) – Play is Responsibly Structured, Factor C (Expression) – Play is Spontaneously Expressed Development and Learning and Factor D (Social) – Play is Social Interaction. The expressed view of play as a child's work as found in Factor A (Work) probably emphasizes a prompted discovery structure evidenced by expected child development of preacademic and milestone skills in

self-directed activities with materials. The viewpoint of Factor B (Responsible) suggesting a responsible structure for play most likely prefers a directed discovery structure so that children participate in age-appropriate activities. Structuring centers and direct adult involvement with children is likely to be considered a positive reflection of professional skills. The apparent belief of Factor C (Expression) that play is spontaneous expression presumably uses a free discovery structure as a springboard for creating a prompted discovery environment with directed discovery incorporated if needed to support individualized child activity in a group setting. A Factor D (Social) viewpoint that play is social would feasibly emphasize a free discovery structure for child explorations and creations, but expect that children need directed discovery methods to develop appropriate social skills.

A summary sketch of each factor is provided in the following sections. The interpretations of the beliefs of each factor are supported by Q-statements, interviews, written responses and field notes. When Q-statements are presented in the text to support interpretation, factor array placement will appear first in parenthesis, followed by z scores. Array placement ranges from –5 (most unlike) to +5 (most like) the belief represented in that factor. The z score is a normalized score using the average weight of an item among the Q-sorts loading on a factor. The arrays for each factor are presented with truncated Q-item statements for easier comparison between statements and factor arrays in Appendix F.

Factor A (Work) - "Play is the Child's Work in the Environment"

This view emphasizes that play is the work of and should be directed by the child within the environment. The positive and negative factor scores for items of this nature support this belief.

9. Children develop and demonstrate pre-academic skills such as math, reading, writing and language use during play. (+5, 2.02)

14. Play is not educational. (-5, -2.07)

As stated by one respondent representing this viewpoint, the "adult's responsibility [is] to set-up [the] environment" and the "child's job is to play within the environment and learn" (written response, respondent TH01). To encourage child play, these subjects tend to set-up the environment to include activities that are fun by providing materials in a variety of play areas.

2. Children use toys, real props, or just their imaginations to create and recreate stories and real-life events. (+5, 1.80)

43. New toys, materials or activities attract and keep children's attention. (+4, 1.64)

41. Children build with blocks in the block area. (+3, 1.07)

These designated areas are likely to include activities typically expected for young children. Materials are housed in housekeeping, dramatic play and dress-up, sensory exploration (i.e., sand, water, beans, finger paints, etc.) block, outdoor and gross motor, miniature toy (i.e., toy characters, cars, animals, etc.), cooking, art/fine motor and pre-academic skill areas (field notes, p. 2). Materials are easily accessible to children perhaps because they emphasize child

creations and imagination. A walk through the house of one respondent expressing this viewpoint presents an inviting child atmosphere with each room representing a center. Center areas not represented in the previous list included a bowling alley arranged with plastic bowling pins and balls in the hall and a box of miscellaneous scraps in an open area. This respondent stated that the intended use of the scraps was "so children could use their imaginations." She then shared the story of a boy who used nylon netting sacks used for plastic eggs as Spiderman gloves. She said that she the story impressed upon her "how smart kids are" when "you put things out for them" (field notes, p. 2).

3. Children demonstrate creativity, exploration and skill use by living them, so materials and props related to a story or poem read in class are provided to invite their spontaneous demonstration of these qualities through their play and social interactions. (+4, 1.18)

4. Art activities include drawing, coloring or gluing using pre-designed or pre-cut pictures or materials. (-5, -1.96)

This view holds the position that each child is unique; therefore, watching children is likely to take priority over direct adult involvement to encourage child-led play. One respondent lined the walls of her house with pictures of children she's had over the years. During her descriptions of the children in the pictures, she stated, "I've always let the children play and felt that was important, because that's how they learn" (field notes, p. 1-2). As she identified the children and their ages at the time of the pictures, she proudly compared unique child characteristics to their achievements as older children or young adults to validate her emphasis on play.

34. Watching children play guides the adult's use of teaching or intervention strategies. (+3, 1.11)

19. Extensive adult time is spent playing with children. (-3, -1.33)

Consistent with supporting child-directed play, the position expressed in play as child's work rejects direct teaching and predetermined outcomes as evidenced by negative responses to items:

24. Children are corrected so that they know the right way to complete a task or interaction. (-4, -1.76)

8. Children learn pre-academic skills such as math, reading, writing and language use from adults. (-4, -1.65)

16. Adults test children to identify their developmental levels and pre-academic skills by asking questions or having them perform certain tasks during structured activities. (-3, -1.00)

Despite the reluctance to be directive with children, the Work perspective is likely to want assurances that children are achieving developmental milestones and pre-academic skills. Activities such as learning to identify letters and numbers, counting, writing and coloring are designed as games to be fun for children and often occur within a small group so the adult can give individual support and encouragement to children who have difficulty.

17. Adults know when children are developing new skills by keeping a checklist of the developmental milestones mastered by each child. (+3, 1.06)

15. Children demonstrate intelligence in the ability to read, write, do math and accurately complete fine motor tasks. (+2, .96)

Examples of the preacademic emphasis was found in one setting of a respondent holding this viewpoint. Materials and arrangements included word cards labeling items and areas throughout, a library area, magnetic letters and numbers and a horseshoe-shaped table with child-sized chairs for interactive games to teach letters, numbers, writing and cutting with scissors (field notes, p. 3)

Specific skill development may require more adult involvement than children's play as evidenced by an item related to adult modeling. The respondent with the horseshoe-shaped table referred to the table as "the best purchase I ever made" because the children sit around the outside edge and "I can sit here and help them one at a time if they need it" (field notes, p. 2-3).

25. Adults modeling behaviors slightly higher than children's mastered skills helps children emerge into new levels of development and learning. (+2, 1.05)

33. Children learn how to react appropriately when adults model appropriate emotions. (+3, 1.16)

Social cooperation is probably recognized as developing within the context of play activities, so respondents holding this viewpoint may hesitate to emphasize social interaction and communication as suggested by neutral placement in the overall factor array.

37. Children talk when they have something to say, because listening to children helps adults know how to expand on ideas and concepts. (0, .00)

26. Adult imitation of children's play activities and communication builds an interactive relationship that encourages children to be actively involved in mastering learning and social activities. (0, -.05)

Despite the lack of emphasis on expectations for social interaction, these subjects tend to acknowledge child emotions and respond to them in supportive ways to encourage comfort and participation. "Children need choices with support of adults while learning through play" was a statement made by a respondent suggesting that adult support is needed at times to ensure child comfort and support (written response, TH01).

30. Expecting children to take turns and share during play teaches them how to get along with others. (-4, -1.49)

31. Acknowledging and responding to each child's feelings makes them more comfortable so that they participate in various activities and interact with others. (+4, 1.17)

Respondents in this study who represent the play is Work belief are full-day home care providers. They report 10 - 14 years of experience in childcare with children aged 0 – 5 years and seek their own training related to child development.

Factor B (Responsible) – Play is Responsibly Structured

Adherents of the Responsible play belief tend to emphasize the importance of structuring learning centers designed with adult involvement so children experience appropriate developmental milestone activities as well as pre-academic and social skills. Although respondents representing this belief did not provide written or interview information to support interpretation of their Q-

sort data, a directed discovery structure is evident in the distinguishing items in the factor array.

19. Extensive adult time is spent playing with children. (+5, 2.06)

22. Assigning children to small groups to rotate through center activities insures that children will participate in activities and interact with other children. (+5, 1.93)

Adults tend to provide materials and participate with children in age-appropriate activities (e.g., miniature toy animals or dinosaurs, blocks, housekeeping, play-dough, math, letters, writing and coloring, art, etc.). It would seem that professional knowledge is demonstrated by structuring activities and active involvement with children.

5. Content is NOT targeted so children are exposed to a wide variety of experiences as they rotate through different activities. (-4, -1.60)

20. Playing with children takes away from teaching or intervention time. (-4, -1.86)

Plays allows children to practice skills so children are probably given time for free play and sometimes have choices in centers.

14. Play is not educational. (-5, -2.06)

12. Letting children play freely leads to undisciplined and even bad behavior now and as they get older. (-5, -1.93)

13. Children are given a limited number of play choices so that they have time to complete specific developmental and pre-academic activities and tasks to be ready for kindergarten and 1st grade. (-3, -1.13)

Moderate item loadings within the Factor B array, play is responsibly structured, indicate that subjects with this viewpoint are likely to provide activities that are commonly acknowledged as developmentally appropriate. The emphasis on cleanliness in conjunction with lukewarm placement of sensory and gross motor activity suggests that movement and sensory are considered developmentally appropriate for young children and are structured in ways children can enjoy activities without creating a mess in the room or chaos amongst themselves.

48. Children are taught to be responsible by keeping their areas, their bodies and their clothes clean. (+3, 1.01)

47. Activities invite children to "get messy" while they are playing with sensory materials such as sand, water, beans, shaving cream, finger paints, dirt, etc. and props such as dress-up clothes, dolls, cars, etc. (+2, .63)

32. Children use their whole bodies during both indoor and outdoors activities. (+3, .85)

Neutral placement of items reflecting child creations and spontaneity is consistent with teaching children responsibility through the structuring of developmentally appropriate activities and adult involvement during play.

3. Children demonstrate creativity, exploration and skill use by living them, so materials and props related to a story or poem read in class are provided to invite their spontaneous demonstration of these qualities through their play and social interactions. (0, .18)

23. Children make their own constructions and develop artistic creations with a wide variety of materials, miscellaneous scraps and tools. (-1, - .21)

The Responsible position taken about supporting child development and learning indicates that child confidence and comfort are important to child participation. It seems evident that these subjects regard the importance of adult encouragement and help so children feel comfortable and successful when participating in activities.

21. Children watch and do what other children are doing allowing them to confidently participate in activities when they are ready. (+4, 1.60)

31. Acknowledging and responding to each child's feelings makes them more comfortable so that they participate in various activities and interact with others. (+4, 1.66)

36. Adults can't know which teaching or intervention strategies are best to use because children are unique individuals who respond differently to different people and situations. (-3, -1.53)

40. Questioning children restricts their discovery learning. (-4, -1.86)

A lot of time is potentially given to structuring activities and teaching children, which presumably leaves little time to assess child progress. It is likely that although these subjects recognize the importance of teaching skills, there is no time left to assess what children have actually achieved.

39. Adults ask children questions to be sure that they are learning and paying attention. (0, .00)

16. Adults test children to identify their developmental levels and pre-academic skills by asking questions or having them perform certain tasks during structured activities. (0, .14)

Success is likely to be evaluated in terms of adult structure and child willingness to participate rather than specified outcomes.

10. Children are given directions to follow so that they complete activities correctly and play appropriately. (-3, -1.06)

24. Children are corrected so that they know the right way to complete a task or interaction. (-2, - .76)

Moreover, adherents of this viewpoint are likely to provide a structure to support the development of social skills individually during play and during group discussions.

38. Children are given permission to talk about stories and life experiences so that they each have a turn. (+4, 1.13)

29. Giving children turns during play and conversations teaches them appropriate social skills. (+3, .77)

Respondents representing Responsible play include a child developmental specialist and a mother whose children are in full day care. The child developmental specialist holds a master's degree and reports more than 20 years experience working with children from birth to 6th grade. No demographic information is available on the parent respondent.

Factor C (Expression) – Play is Spontaneous Expression of Development and Learning

This belief reflects the viewpoint that child initiation, motivation, engagement and independence are the foundation for determining the environmental structure, curriculum activities and adult role. Subjects tend to structure an environment based on an assessment of child spontaneous behaviors to invite children to play and interact socially. As one respondent

representing this point of view stated, "I do a skeleton type of activity, so they [the children] can do the activity" (interview transcripts, p. 11). They are likely to provide a setting that is organized and purposefully structured to ensure child access to typically expected early childhood activities.

18. Children demonstrate their mastery of concepts and skills when they use them spontaneously in play and their emerging skills when they imitate or model after others. (+5, 1.89)

21. Children watch and do what other children are doing allowing them to confidently participate in activities when they are ready. (+4, 1.70)

5. Content is NOT targeted so children are exposed to a wide variety of experiences as they rotate through different activities. (-4, -1.34)

While describing her setting, one respondent stated, "The environment is based on what they are interested in" referring to the curriculum activities in her setting. She further defines her role in relation to child "exploring, learning, putting things together and interacting" by stating, " I support their learning, which is the middle of their world" (interview transcripts, p. 10).

They presumably assert that the process of play allows each child to learn and demonstrate skill development within the context of individual characteristics because, in terms of the previously mentioned respondent, play is "the middle of their world" (interview transcripts, p. 10). The neutral array placement of the items reflecting a teaching focus on specific skills and activities may be evidence of a holistic approach to programming, which incorporates needed strategies rather than an expressed opposition to adult direction (interview transcripts, p. 10).

22. Assigning children to small groups to rotate through center activities insures that children will participate in activities and interact with other children. (0, -.05)

27. Having teacher time and directly teaching children during center activities supports skill development and learning. (0, .00)

Materials are apparently used to invite child-initiated play and independence and the neutral placement of items reflecting the use of materials may indicate that they are incorporated when relevant to the activity goals for a child, but they are not likely to be the focus of the curriculum. This interpretation is reinforced in a respondent's statement, "They [children] self-select activities and whatever their needs are, I make accommodations". Another reinforcing statement by the same respondent follows in the interview, "I try to make it very kid friendly and have most things at the children's eye level so they can move through those areas" (interview transcripts, p. 10).

41. Children build with blocks in the block area. (0, .00)

43. New toys, materials or activities attract and keep children's attention. (0, .00)

Moreover, the apparent emphasis on child spontaneity is consistent with the assertion that child initiation and creation in the process of play is important. One respondent stresses the importance of child interest in regards to making effective decisions about interventions to support child learning, "With play, they have already bought into the activity and can I support them in it" (interview transcripts, p. 10).

3. Children demonstrate creativity, exploration and skill use by living them, so materials and props related to a story or poem read in class are provided to invite their spontaneous demonstration of these qualities through their play and social interactions. (+3, 1.23)

2. Children use toys, real props, or just their imaginations to create and recreate stories and real-life events. (+4, 1.40)

23. Children make their own constructions and develop artistic creations with a wide variety of materials, miscellaneous scraps and tools. (+3, 1.24)

Subjects with this viewpoint are likely to describe the setting and activities within the context of individual child characteristics, goals and interactions. After a broad description of her setting, a respondent expressing this point of view began describing individual child situations to justify the need for "messy" activities and exemplify the value of play in her setting. She shared an example of a child who entered her program with no initiating behaviors or social exchanges. She stated that the child recently demonstrated goal-directed behavior by scooping and pouring sand into a bucket and uttered a two-syllable sound to have her do the same (interview transcripts, p. 10). The theme of individualization is reiterated by the negative ranking of distinguishing items, which most likely represent narrowly focused curriculum guidelines to respondents who view play as Expression of both developing and learned processes.

6. Children's ages dictate the kinds of activities made available. (-3, -1.15)

15. Children demonstrate intelligence in the ability to read, write, do math and accurately complete fine motor tasks. (-4, -1.42)

They most likely believe that this emphasis on child spontaneity allows them to identify mastered and developing skills, as well as individual child characteristics that affect the quality of play and social interaction, which in turn affect developmental progress. One respondent promoted this belief in her statement, "Play gives me good knowledge of where they are and where they are going next and how I can provide that next step" (interview transcripts, p. 10). Therefore, although structure and pre-planning are important, the environment is likely to appear chaotic because the setting arrangement and activities remain flexible to emphasize active child involvement and communication. "I permit messes" was a proudly made statement by one respondent (interview transcripts, p. 10).

47. Activities invite children to "get messy" while they are playing with sensory materials such as sand, water, beans, shaving cream, finger paints, dirt, etc. and props such as dress-up clothes, dolls, cars, etc. (+3, 1.23)

48. Children are taught to be responsible by keeping their areas, their bodies and their clothes clean. (-3, -1.32)

7. Children are taught concepts and skills in a quiet, structured environment. (-3, -1.23)

24. Children are corrected so that they know the right way to complete a task or interaction. (-3, -1.07)

Teaching and assessment go hand-in-hand because they believe as a teacher you have to know about each child before you can make decisions to create an effective learning environment. In reference to preparing activities, one respondent emphasized that she has developed an "assessment tool to

document and show [child] progress in each area [of development]" and expects other professionals such as therapists to use the "tool" as they watch children in activities. She gave an example of determining a child's readiness to read in response to parent requests by differentiating his ability to identify letter symbols while playing with sponges in the bathtub or when working puzzles versus recognizing them in words (interview transcripts, p. 10).

20. Playing with children takes away from teaching or intervention time. (-5, -1.89)

16. Adults test children to identify their developmental levels and pre-academic skills by asking questions or having them perform certain tasks during structured activities. (-2, -1.73)

Individual child interest is strongly supported to encourage each child's natural motivation and independence within activities, which guide adult use of strategies. An example, given by a respondent with the Expression viewpoint, was in a discussion regarding the importance of anticipating child behaviors. By taping newspaper to a table for children painting on separate sheets of paper, she eliminated a concern of getting paint on the table when two of the children in her class painted off the edges or soaked the page with paint. She also realized how much the two children enjoyed removing the newspaper from the table, which reinforced independence and responsibility for cleaning-up after an activity (interview transcripts, p. 10). The position expressed in the example displays an intention to maintain child engagement within learning and social interactions as suggested in the rankings of the following statements.

11. Children select their modes of learning, which informs adults of the support, guidance, facilitation and modeling needed by each child. (+5, 1.84)

14. Play is not educational. (-5, -1.75)

Adult involvement is deliberate and will potentially range from no involvement to direct instruction. Pre-structuring activities to encourage child-initiated play, supporting social interaction between peers and using opportunities for peer or adult modeling are most commonly reported teaching strategies. One respondent maintains that the children in her setting are "always challenged but not outside of their ability, instead they are easing into their potential abilities" (interview transcripts, p. 10).

19. Extensive adult time is spent playing with children. (+4, 1.31)

28. Adult support of children taking turns during play, individual conversations and group time encourages them to interact socially. (+3 .96)

A school psychologist and an early childhood special education teacher were the respondents representing the play as Expression viewpoint. Both hold college hours beyond a master's degree and report less than 5 years of experience with the early childhood population within special education programming. It should be noted that both participated in play-based programming for 2 – 3 years of their early childhood professional experiences.

Factor D (Social) -- Play is Social Interaction

The viewpoint associated with this belief tends to want children to have fun playing while they learn how to share and get along with others. One

respondent asserts that children should be "moving around, getting messy, playing dress-up and pretending" (interview transcripts, 6-7); therefore, children are given access to a variety of materials without predetermined outcomes or expectations.

12. Letting children play freely leads to undisciplined and even bad behavior now and as they get older. (-4, -1.93)

30. Expecting children to take turns and share during play teaches them how to get along with others. (+4, 1.41)

47. Activities invite children to "get messy" while they are playing with sensory materials such as sand, water, beans, shaving cream, finger paints, dirt, etc. and props such as dress-up clothes, dolls, cars, etc. (+5, 1.81)

As expressively stated by one respondent, individuals holding this viewpoint might "hate having everything organized for them [children]." She expanded on her statement, "If the teacher does everything for them and tells them what to do" children become bored because "they [children] wait for someone to tell them what to do" (interview transcripts, p. 7). They presumably believe that children need to play before they get into kindergarten and first grade. They are likely to express confidence that children will, as one respondent states, "figure out what to do on their own when they get to school" even if they have not been exposed to pre-academics and direct teaching in preschool. The respondent states opposition to direct teaching of preacademic skills, "I don't want them [teachers] to teach the ABC's", but reinforces that children learn naturally through play, "They can sing the ABC's or learn sounds and things like that from singing" (interview transcripts, p. 7).

2. Children use toys, real props, or just their imaginations to create and recreate stories and real-life events. (+5, 1.90)

23. Children make their own constructions and develop artistic creations with a wide variety of materials, miscellaneous scraps and tools. (+4, 1.47)

32. Children use their whole bodies during both indoor and outdoor activities. (+4, 1.23)

They apparently think that teaching of pre-academic skills and sitting at a desk "come soon enough in a child's life" (interview transcripts, p. 6), so young children should learn skills during fun and natural activities (e.g., letters and sounds through songs and life routines such as shopping). "They [children] learn from life and doing things, they don't need to do that other stuff until they get to school" (interview transcripts, p. 5).

7. Children are taught concepts and skills in a quiet, structured environment. (-5, -2.02)

14. Play is not educational. (-5, -2.38)

Adult-guided activities such as cooking, group games (e.g., Duck-Duck-Goose) or simple crafts are perhaps acceptable if they are fun and kept to a minimum. "A few organized things are o.k., if all the activities aren't that way and if its fun for the kids", was conceded by one respondent (interview transcripts, p. 8). She followed with that statement quickly with, "Teachers should not tell children what to do in play and they are not their playmates" (interview transcripts, p. 9). The idea of adults playing with children is likely to be put into a

context of social guidance in that they can be involved in cooperation activities, but are not to interfere with child play choices by playing with the child.

20. Playing with children takes away from teaching or intervention time. (-4, -1.83)

19. Extensive adult time is spent playing with children. (-1, -.39)

On the other hand, it is appropriate for adults to make sure children are "sharing and being fair" because as one respondent believes, "they don't know how to do that on their own" (interview transcripts, p. 8).

29. Giving children turns during play and conversations teaches them appropriate social skills. (+3, .91)

36. Adults can't know which teaching or intervention strategies are best to use because children are unique individuals who respond differently to different people and situations. (-4, -1.59)

Two mothers of children in full day care settings and one mother who has accessed mother's day out in the past represent the belief that play is social interaction. One of the mothers with children in full day care reported that she and her husband both hold bachelor's degrees and have 2 children in the home. Another mother also reported two children in the home, both in full day childcare and that she and her husband have high school degrees. The third mother reported accessing mother's day out in the past, but that her youngest child has not attended in the past year. She reported that she and her husband have bachelor's degrees plus additional college hours and have 5 children in the home.

Consensus Items

Consensus items indicate general agreement of a statement between the beliefs in relation to its placement on the factor arrays. Factor array placement followed by the z score in order of the factors A (Work), B (Responsible), C (Expression), D (Social) is in parenthesis at the end of each statement.

Agreement among subjects on the following items indicates that play is educational and children need a variety of play choices.

14. Play is not educational. (-5, -2.07; -5, -2.06; -5, -1.75; -5, -2.38)

13. Children are given a limited number of play choices so that they have time to complete specific developmental and pre-academic activities and tasks to be ready for kindergarten and 1st grade. (-3, -.90; -3, 1.13; -2, -.69; -3, -.82)

Additional subject responses documented in field notes, written responses and interview transcripts, reinforce the educational value of play reflected in three of the viewpoints of Play is Child's Work in the Environment, Play is Spontaneous Expression of Development and Learning and Play is Social Interaction. For example, a written response provided by one respondent expressing the play as "Work" view stated that adult responsibility includes arranging the environment and a "child's job [is] to play within the environment and learn" (written response, respondent TH01). A respondent representing the play as spontaneous "Expression" view stated that "play is based in child interests, which may vary" but "with play they have already bought into the activity" (interview transcripts, p. 10). The play as "Social" view is reflected in statements by a respondent

suggesting that teachers allow free play, but directly teach appropriate social interactions by encouraging "them [children] to play" without telling "them [children] what to do", but "teach them how to share and be fair" (interview transcripts, p. 8). Additional information was not available to expand on the viewpoint of play as "Responsible".

They also agree that some type of content is needed to organize child activities as indicated by item 5.

5. Content is NOT targeted so children are exposed to a wide variety of experiences as they rotate through different activities.

(-2, -.60; -4, -1.59; -4. –1.34; -3, -1.06)

Content structure is usually evident in the arrangement of play areas and/or learning centers. A previous description of a respondent's setting reflective of the Work viewpoint suggested a preacademic focus for content within typically expected EC activities such as a housekeeping area, sensory play, blocks, miniature toys characters and animals, outside play and table activities including games (field notes, p. 2-4). The Responsible point of view feasibly structures content around typically expected EC milestone and basic skills activities evidenced by an emphasis on assigning children to rotate through activities identified as a distinguishing item discussed further in the next section. The Expression viewpoint most likely presents specific or broad themes to provide continuity for individualized choices within typically expected EC activities such as those listed in the Work perspective. One of the Expression respondents

reported using stories or books within her group setting (interview transcripts, p. 10). Content used to provide structure in a setting reflecting a Social belief probably includes ideas they assume invite child explorations and creativity without presumed interference of preacademics within activities similar to those found in other settings.

All respondents tend to acknowledge individual child characteristics to help them feel comfortable in the setting.

31. Acknowledging and responding to each child's feelings makes them more comfortable so that they participate in various activities and interact with others (4, 1.17; 4, 1.66; 2, .77; 3, .87).

The Work viewpoint might consider the use of one-on-one support to help a child who may not be ready to successfully achieve certain basic skill tasks. One respondent holding the Work belief referred to a young boy and the expectation that he would have difficulty with writing his name due to his awkward fine motor skills. She reported helping him at the table with the others so that "he can feel successful, too" (field notes, p. 4). A Responsible viewpoint presumably maintains on-going adult involvement. An Expression viewpoint probably assesses child feelings and comfort continually within activities. One respondent stated "If I try something and it doesn't work, I ask myself: Why are they not interested in the activity and what do I have to do to keep them interested?" (interview transcripts, p. 10). The Social viewpoint most likely

maintains a positive relationship, because children are to have fun. "The teacher should be kind, positive and loving to them [children] (interview transcripts, p. 8).

Discriminating Items

Analysis and interpretation identified consensus items between the beliefs about EC programming. In addition, the four-factor solution allowed interpretation to further distinguish between the expressed viewpoints using the 1X3 factorial design of free discovery, prompted discovery and directed discovery teaching structures and the role of play within the structures. The interpretation within the context of play is highly relevant to the purpose of this study, because words and concepts in the EC profession are frequently assumed within the context of a specific belief without the benefit of understanding the guiding belief in relation to a discussion or decision. All items used for this discussion are distinguishing items for the identified factor at the $p < .01$ level of significance.

The Work belief indicates a preference for free discovery learning by emphasizing characteristics of a child-directed environment as they demonstrate development of and use skills through play and the tendency to reject pre-structured activities and direct adult involvement. As one looks closer, the item rankings may actually be characteristic of prompted discovery because distinguishing items suggest an assumption that pre-academic learning occurs through play and materials are provided to encourage child-led rather than adult-directed play activity. A respondent holding this belief emphasized the structuring of materials into centers when she stated, " Instead of just putting toys out and

letting them [children] play, I've noticed that kids are more interested and play with things longer" (interview transcripts, p. 1).

9. Children develop and demonstrate pre-academic skills such as math, reading, writing and language use during play. (+5, 2.02)

43. New toys, materials or activities attract and keep children's attention. (+4, 1.64)

8. Children learn pre-academic skills such as math, reading, writing and language use from adults. (-4, -1.65)

19. Extensive adult time is spent playing with children. (-3, -1.33)

The Expression and Social beliefs also emphasized characteristics associated with free discovery learning, but Work, Expression and Social each present differing views and provide distinct limitations in terms of a free discovery environment as represented in the factor arrays. For example, respondents who represent Work presumably believe that intelligence is related to pre-academics as evidenced by the distinguishing statement 15. "Children demonstrate intelligence in the ability to read, write, do math and accurately complete fine motor tasks." (+2, .96). This belief may then lead to their use of the prompted discovery strategies such as the game-like preacademic activities described previously to encourage milestone and basic skill development. On the other hand, the Social belief presumably emphasizes child free discovery during play with little concern about pre-academic development as expressed by one respondent, "I'm not interested in them [children] learning reading, writing and math yet, they need to play" (interview transcripts, p. 5). Item 19, neutrally placed, reflects this child free discovery viewpoint "Extensive adult time is spent

playing with children" (-1, -.39). In contrast to free discovery for learning, a Social viewpoint tends to support adult direction of social interactions, item 30. "Expecting children to take turns and share during play teaches them how to get along with others" (+4, 1.41), because, as stated by one respondent, "Kids don't know how to share and be fair, someone has to teach them that" (interview transcripts, p. 8). Like the viewpoints of Work and Social, the Expression viewpoint apparently assigns importance to free discovery, but distinguishes the use of free discovery or in their terms, child spontaneity, as a springboard for structuring the program in place of narrowly defined curriculum goals 6. Children's ages dictate the kinds of activities made available (-3, -1.15), and 15. Children demonstrate intelligence in the ability to read, write, do math and accurately complete fine motor tasks (-4, -1.42). Unlike the perspectives of Work and Social points of view, the Expression perspective feasibly supports direct adult involvement as evidenced by placement of items not significantly discriminating: 19. "Extensive adult time is spent playing with children" (+4, 1.31) and 28. "Adult support of children taking turns during play, individual conversations and group time encourages them to interact socially" (+3, .96) and are not opposed to directed discovery teaching strategies. As stated by a respondent with Expression views, "Play gives me good knowledge of where they are and where they are going next and how can I provide that next step" (interview transcripts, p. 10). Contrary to the beliefs supporting free discovery learning found in Work, Expression and Social, a Responsible viewpoint is clearly

distinguished by a directed discovery structure items 22. "Assigning children to small groups to rotate through center activities insures that children will participate in activities and interact with other children" (+5, 1.93) and 1. "Children are given specific materials to complete structured activities so that they master age-appropriate developmental and pre-academic skills" (+3, .87).

Two of the respondents each had one sort with a mixed loading. The first respondent sorted "actual" items reflective of the Responsible belief (Factor B, loading of .66). Interestingly, the "actual" Q-sort also showed a negative loading (-. 015) on the Social view of EC programming. This negative ranking may reflect a perspective that limits free discovery methods for young children as evidenced in a previous discussion of neutral placement of items reflecting child creativity and spontaneity. This respondent's "ideal" sort was confounded across Work (Factor A, loading of .41), Responsible (Factor B, loading of .60) and Expression (Factor C, loading of .42). This respondent is a child development specialist with a master's degree and over 20 years of experience with young children. An interview was not available and written responses were not provided for further interpretation of the mixed loading within the context of this study.

The second respondent sorted "ideal" items on Work (Factor A, loading of .63) and "actual" items confounded on Work (Factor A, loading of .55) and Social (Factor D, loading of .48). This respondent is a home care provider with over ten years of experience with young children and recently received child development training related to her associate's degrees in child development. The mixed

loading for the home care provider may be reflective of the training activities she describes as emphasizing a center approach to structuring play activities and learning (interview transcripts, p.1).

Of the 9 respondents, 7 sorted their actual and ideal sorts on the same factor. These sorts, representing similar viewpoints about what actually occurs to support child learning and development and what should ideally occur may reflect the limitation of relying on the dominant child development knowledge base discussed in the literature (Goffin, 1996; Katz, 1996; Lubeck, 1996; Stott & Bowman, 1996). If professionals and parents limit knowledge and expectation levels to the dominant child development knowledge base, they are likely to be satisfied or feel they have to be satisfied with current practices, because they lack the awareness and skills to evaluate the setting's responsiveness to child and situational diversity. A parent respondent expresses her confusion about her satisfaction with an EC program for her children when she states, "This can make a parent wonder: Have I done the right thing to ensure my children's intelligence level? Can I? And these people I leave them with everyday seem to play a bigger part in their lives than I do. Can my influence mean that much? Am I a bad mother?" (written response, subject PU02). These heartfelt comments reflect a lack of clarity about any defining aspects used as a base for EC practices and how to determine the positive or negative effects of the practices. The comments also suggest a sense of helplessness in influencing practices related to the lack of clarity.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of this exploratory study with professional and parent respondents indicate that teaching strategies are likely to range along the described continuum of free, prompted and directed discovery teaching structures and that goals of the learning affect the use of methods characterizing each structure and the role of play. Four beliefs about EC programming practices were identified and described in relation to how play is used within each structure. The beliefs were interpreted as Work - Play is the Child's Work in the Environment, Responsible - Play is Responsibly Structured, Expression - Play is Spontaneous Expression of Development and Learning, and Social - Play is Social Interaction. A conclusion can be drawn that persons holding the differing beliefs all consider play to be an important aspect of child learning and development, but indicate certain preferences for structuring the use of play in an early childhood setting. One way of structuring play might be through the perspective of people holding the Work belief suggesting that prompted discovery guides children to achieve self-directed milestone and preacademic skill development as accomplished through play with toys and materials. Although people expressing this point of view presumably believe that intelligence is demonstrated in the ability to master preacademic skills, they are likely to assume that children do not learn the skills directly from adults, but are

likely to occasionally provide individual help if children need to feel successful. Perhaps another way of preparing for children's play is through the viewpoint of people who believe that play should be Responsible suggesting that children require directed discovery structures and adult involvement to participate in predetermined activities. Although the child learning processes expected might seem unclear to others, people who apply strategies from a Responsible point of view probably assume that participation in the activity is the child's learning. People who behave from a point of view related to the Expression belief presumably merge learning, assessment and teaching strategies with play to balance the use of free, prompted and directed discovery structures. In application, they might balance the use of the structures by considering the quality of child interactions within individualized developmental growth goals. Still another perspective reflecting Social beliefs might expect children to take turns and share through the direction of adults by as they explore and create through free discovery play without adult involvement.

Creating A Balance of Teaching Strategies

In light of the apparent segregation of teaching structures associated with three of the beliefs, it must be reiterated here that Peters, Neisworth and Yawkey (1985) presented all three teaching structures of free, prompted and directed discovery methods as beneficial for all children in an EC setting. Within the context of their discussion of applying different methods, the authors identified professional skills needed to effectively integrate and balance methods

characteristic of each structure. The skills, compiled in a list here are consistent with current recommendation in the EC field and can be used as a framework from which to create a developmentally appropriate environment inclusive of children with exceptional needs. The skills include the ability to:

1. Prepare a learning environment to meet goals related to child ability to process information,

2. Develop behavioral objectives that reflect mastery of children's ability to process information,

3. Observe child activities and reactions to identify emerging processes and skills to determine the appropriate presentation of activities ,

4. Extend and adapt activities for different child needs, and

5. Evaluate the outcome of the activity to improve the activity and professional teaching skills.

The results of this study reinforce concerns of a gap between actual practices and research-based DAP recommendations. DAP recommendations include using a variety of strategies, or teaching structures, to address child and situational diversity, yet people holding three of the beliefs in this study reflected a tendency to segregate the three structures by focusing on a particular style of strategies characteristic of an individual structure. For example, people holding the view that play is Work toward achieving milestone and preacademic skills are likely to emphasize prompted discovery, while people with a view of play as needing to be Responsible feasibly emphasize directed discovery to ensure child

participation. People expressing views from a Social perspective presumably emphasize the use of two teaching structures to serve different purposes (i. e., directed discovery for sharing, free discovery for learning). In addition to focusing on a specific style of strategies, people holding the Work, Responsible and Social beliefs demonstrated congruency between what they believe to be actually occurring and what they believe should ideally occur in an EC setting. This congruency between actual and ideal perspectives suggests that there is little impetus for participating in program development and training activities designed to change practices.

The emergence of four beliefs rather than the possible expectation of only three to reflect the three individual teaching structures, cause us to further examine the views represented in the Expression belief emphasizing play as the structure from which to implement various teaching strategies. Examining the viewpoints of people espousing the Expression belief strongly suggests that play provides an avenue to develop the skills necessary for providing a balance of structures in an EC setting. Expressed behaviors that tend to reflect an Expression point of view appear to be consistent with four of the previously listed skills needed to provide a balanced application of teaching methods appropriate to individual child and group situations. The expressed behaviors revealed in this study include:

1. Play provides a skeletal structure from which to prepare an environment to support child learning and development,

2. Spontaneous play reflects individual child mastered and emerging developmental processes and skills to guide objectives within the environment,

3. Using play to assess the quality of child interactions (i. e., initiations, motivations and engagement) leads to effective decisions in the choice of teaching strategies,

4. A play structure is flexible in nature allowing for expansions and adaptations as needed to support child engagement and interactions.

The respondents reflecting the Expression belief both participated in EC play-based training and program activities based on the Transdisciplinary Play-Based Assessment/Intervention (Linder, 1993a & b) and Storybook Journey Curriculum (McCord, 1995) models. Although pre-testing is not available to determine the effects of the play-based training and program activities on respondents representing the Expression belief that a play structure merges learning, assessment and teaching strategies consideration of the in-depth exposure to play-base models is warranted. This consideration in conjunction with the consensus between beliefs that play is educationally valuable to children may provide a key to supporting professional development of the skills necessary to expand teaching strategies to adequately address child and situational diversity.

Beliefs Affecting Practice

Differing beliefs are likely to be expressed through verbal expectations of and practices in the EC setting. Previous findings in the literature suggest that

primary learning goals determine the environmental structure and methods used in an EC setting (Ceglowski, 1997; Stipek & Byler, 1997). The learning goals and structures associated with a person's belief are likely to be assumed across settings and diverse child situations. Specifically related to this research, this means that people holding a Work point of view presumably recognize play as child's work and are likely to structure an environment to prompt children to make play choices toward achieving expected developmental milestone and pre-academic competence without adult direction. Child fluctuations from a range of skill expectations may be verbally accepted, but a need to expand teaching strategies to address developmental levels outside of the loosely defined acceptable range may seem awkward and uncomfortable. People demonstrating perspectives portrayed by the Responsible belief presumably structure play within the environment to use directed teaching methods so children participate in basic skill activities. They probably work to create inviting activities for children and may assume that as long as children are participating within assigned activities they are successful. On the other hand they may view that children not interested in assigned activities or those that are unresponsive to adult direction need behavioral interventions such as added enticements (i. e., stickers, treats or verbal praise), negative reinforcement (i. e, time out or sitting out from recess), or hand-over-hand support. Views reflective of the Expression belief suggest a free discovery environment structured to invite spontaneous child play as children develop competent use of thinking processes and specific skills by making their

own choices with adult involvement as needed to support individual development. The quality of child interactions is likely to take priority over performance or product expectations to emphasize child motivation so that an optimal level of independence is achieved relative to the child's developmental functioning. Intervention is likely to be designed to maintain child initiations and motivations toward process objectives rather than to achieve a narrowly defined performance objective. Finally, the behaviors of people expressing views consistent with Social beliefs presumably give children free range to follow their interests as long as they get along with others. Intervention might be to entice a child to engage in an activity through adult or other child demonstrations of fun in the activity. Specific intervention strategies for learning are likely to be minimal to avoid adult intrusion of child free discovery, but directive of social exchanges to teach cooperation.

Beliefs Affecting Inclusion

The study was developed in response to current guidelines in the early childhood field developed to improve programming for all children including children with special education and intervention needs. Laws that require these children be given access to appropriate modifications and accommodations in typical settings strongly suggest that regardless of individual views, EC professionals will become increasingly responsible for children with special needs (Gargiulo, Sluder, & Streitenberger, 1997). Guidelines are provided throughout the literature to encourage quality learning and social interaction for

all children based on age appropriateness, individual appropriateness and sociocultural contexts. In addition to guidelines for practice, professional and program development efforts toward the implementation of developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) include reasons for and ways to structure play-based strategies and inclusion opportunities for children with delays or disabilities (Gargiulo, Sluder, & Streitenberger, 1997). The common starting point within these guidelines toward affecting change is to recognize and acknowledge professional and parent diversity of beliefs, values and individual strengths (for examples see, Klugman, 1995; McCollum & Maude, 1994; NAEYC, 1996; Winton, McCollum & Catlett, 1997).

Among general goals for children with developmental delays and disabilities, Wolery and Wilbers (1994) list goals that are specifically impacted by the EC setting, professional attitudes and practices. Supporting family goals, promoting child engagement, independence and mastery, promoting each domain of child development, building and supporting social competence and encouraging generalized use of skills are important considerations when planning curricular activities and interventions. Differing beliefs are likely to lead to various attitudes and varying approaches to address the goals.

The emergence of four beliefs provides a foundation from which to discuss attitudes toward inclusion likely to be reflected in professional practices, parent collaborations and practices that stem from an interaction of beliefs. Possibilities for interactions between professionals holding the differing viewpoints are

endless, but consideration of potential interactions is vital to improving EC practices for all children including those with special needs. Common situations regarding the successes and failures of inclusion practices exist throughout the literature proving this point (for examples see Gallagher, 1997; Honig, 1997). Therefore, comparisons between the differing beliefs are made within components of an inclusion process to exemplify the complexity involved in implementing an inclusion program in the following sections. For the purposes of this discussion, only brief examples of common situations are needed to suggest the complexity of interactions. Reference to characteristics specifically related to delays or disabilities and strategies for intervening are from Linder, 1993; Linder, 1993a & b; Marchant and Brown, 1996; and Wolery and Wilbers, 1994.

Professional Collaboration

Professional beliefs influence other professional practices as well as parent program support. In turn, parent beliefs influence professional practices and the success of an inclusion program. The steps toward inclusion involve collaboration between professionals and between professionals and parents holding differing viewpoints about how best to support child learning and development in a process outlined by Wolery (1994). The professional team might remain the same throughout the entire process or team members and even settings might change between the steps. The components of the process, briefly described in each section, include screening, diagnosis, eligibility for services,

planning instructional programs, placement assessment, monitoring progress and evaluating the effects of the program.

Screening and Diagnosis

The screening process is designed to address a teacher or parent concern about a child to determine whether or not the concern warrants more in-depth assessment or evaluation. The diagnosis assessment follows the screening process, when warranted and determines the existence of a specific disorder or delay and the severity of the condition. Concerns may be related to physical conditions, behaviors, milestone achievements, or any combination. Expectations in and the design of the setting based on a strongly held belief will likely determine different reasons for referring a child for screening and diagnosis. In addition, commonly used terms may hold different meanings (e.g., short attention span, immature behavior, hyperactive, etc.). Because centers are arranged so children experience certain skills, subjects holding the Responsible viewpoint might be inclined to refer children who are not interested in table activities because they believe the children demonstrate noncompliance or short attention spans. Whereas, those same children might attend for long periods of time in a child-directed activity found in a setting holding Work, Expression or Social beliefs. Referrals by subjects with a Responsible viewpoint are likely made with an expectation that the child will receive maximum intervention such as removal to a specialized setting, an aide or, at a minimum, the teacher will be given strategies to get the child to do what is expected. Therefore, recommendations

emphasizing play-based intervention strategies within a free discovery context may not be well received by someone with a Responsible view that play should be structured. Those representing an Expression point of view are likely to state referral concerns in very specific terms and identify conditions under which the concerns arise. They probably refer with the expectation that the interventions will occur in the child's existing setting and a lead professional is to manage the implementation of interventions to ensure an effective balance of free, prompted and directed discovery experiences for the child. Subjects holding viewpoints representing Work and Social beliefs might be reluctant to refer children who appear delayed in milestone achievements because they fear that children are too easily labeled and adult-directed teaching will overshadow a child's natural need to play. At the same time subjects with the Work perspective probably acknowledge that certain milestone achievements are important to a child's future success and are likely to identify limitations of the setting as their reason for eventually referring a child. On the other hand, subjects with the viewpoint that play is Social may demonstrate a high level of acceptance of children with exceptional needs because they worry about labeling children too soon and might be concerned that referring children to be assessed will limit the child's experiences throughout school. They may not be aware of specialized interventions for young children and might delay acknowledging referral concerns until the child enters an academic level in school.

Determining Eligibility

Eligibility for services follows assessment and diagnosis information to determine that a child meets criteria to receive services beyond those provided in an existing setting. Perhaps one way of viewing this might be from those holding the Responsible belief that a diagnosis validates referred concerns and indicates that certain adult-directed activities will help the child catch-up or the child needs to be placed in another setting with similar-functioning children. If a child is not determined eligible for services, these subjects may continue with the same interventions regardless of effectiveness. Agreement or disagreement with the determination is likely to influence future referrals. People who believe that play is Expression feasibly rely on input from parents and colleagues (the team) for intervention ideas regardless of eligibility status. Those expressing a Work viewpoint probably feel more comfortable about a child's eligibility determination when the child's strengths are emphasized. They are likely to feel comfortable with the determination when they hear that their referral concerns have been accurately portrayed in the diagnostic process and known interventions will support the child's weaknesses. People holding the Social belief are likely to have difficulty in making an eligibility determination probably because of the concerns of labeling children and limiting natural play experiences.

Instructional Programming and Placement

Instructional program planning involves a determination with parents and other professionals of skills important to the child and the supports necessary for

the child to learn the skills. The child's environments and situations are also considered to determine placement, choosing the most appropriate setting in which the child can access the instructional program. The process here involves consideration of family goals and priorities, adaptations needed for the child to realize goals and additional support needed in the setting. One way to view eligibility for services might be from a Responsible perspective where one might consider eligibility synonymous with special education classroom placement and therapy. If children remain in a setting structured under a Responsible point of view, they probably receive direct help from adults and peers. Accommodations are likely to occur within a narrow range of existing activities and may include hand-over-hand strategies to help the child feel successful. Those with Work viewpoints are probably willing to include children with different needs, but may feel limited in the ability to provide intervention. Even with the willingness to try they may feel uncomfortable with intervention needs that included direct discovery structures, which are inconsistent with their teaching methods and wonder if there is a better place for the child to receive specialized therapy and teaching. They are also likely to express concerns that the child-led work of the other children is being sacrificed. Those with an Expression viewpoint expect that additional support and accommodations will occur in the existing setting and are likely to make specific requests of team members and for materials. They accept the challenge to change the setting related to individual needs without sacrificing the flow of the environment or the needs of the other children. A Social

perspective is likely to welcome children as long as they do not disrupt free play activities and they are probably expected to learn social skills like those expected of other children. Peer support for interaction might be encouraged and unplanned one-on-one adult support might be provided at times to maintain the flow of play for the other children and any group activities. Perhaps one way of viewing the interactions from a Social perspective is to consider that they might see these interactions as an opportunity for typically developing children to learn to accept differences and demonstrate helpful and kind attitudes to others.

Conflicts between team members with different beliefs might occur when planning a child's goals, interventions and program implementation. For example, an occupational therapist reflecting Expression beliefs might recommend pre-structuring play activities and teacher facilitation throughout activities in the setting to encourage specific fine motor skills related to a child's goal of self-feeding. If the parents or teacher hold beliefs reflecting a Responsible structure for play, they might view the recommendation as an avoidance of services and demand pull-out therapy sessions to the maximum extent so the child receives adult-direction in developing the skill. Another example might include parents with a Social viewpoint who might be accepting of a child's delay and possibly express an emphasis on the child's enjoyment of play without limitation in spite of a professional's Expression viewpoint recommending behavioral boundaries for the purpose of establishing social interactions with peers. A third example might include a teacher who structures a Work setting who is likely to exhaust her best

efforts to help a child with DD achieve the same math skills as the other children in his group and request to have him placed in a special education classroom. The parents holding Expression beliefs, on the other hand, are pleased with the child's cognitive and social progress relative to his functioning level and worry that his skills will regress.

Assessment of Child Progress

Monitoring a child's progress informs professionals and parents of the child's development and learning. This is an opportunity for feedback regarding needed changes. Subjects with the Expression belief are likely to have an established process to document child progress and include detailed notes to emphasize a child's breakthrough in relation to a specific goal. Other professionals and parents who reflect an Expression viewpoint are likely to welcome the on-going assessments and are probably encouraged to keep the same on-going accounts in relation to their specific situations to assess the child's generalization of skills. Viewpoints of Work, Responsible and Social might express concerns about assessment activities intruding upon the activities of the setting and on the teacher's time. Although they are probably willing to provide verbal feedback as to their observations, they may recognize assessment documentation as a more formal testing situation or completion of a checklist rather than a holistic assessment of generalized skill development, play and peer interactions, and the effects on the other children.

Expanding Structures to Prepare a Balanced Learning Environment

Professionals and parents are likely to express beliefs that reflect an emphasis on a specific use of the structures in relation to what they believe about how to support children's learning and development. Therefore, professional skill is required to determine the most effective use of various strategies used through different structures within curriculum and intervention planning as well as in any given spontaneous situation to support and encourage each child's learning and development regardless of special education eligibility.

As previously mentioned, characteristics of children with atypical development such as those with delays or disabilities are likely to require expanded opportunities, varied strategies or specific accommodations within activities. This may require specific interventions related to methods in a teaching structure not similar to the teacher's preference or skill level. Each teaching structure will reflect different strengths and challenges to individual child and group situations. Therefore, professionals and parents representing differing beliefs can watch and learn from settings unlike theirs to use methods necessary to enhance the learning of children with different developmental needs. For example, not all children know how to initiate or maintain play and people with the viewpoint that play occurs naturally and skill development will follow such as suggested in Work and Social beliefs, may feel awkward or unskilled in direct teaching of play behaviors that they assume are naturally occurring. On the other hand, individuals holding the Expression belief might provide enough direct

instruction to teach the child specific play skills, then become a facilitator to encourage the child's own initiation of those same skills. A child requiring sensory exploration in bean, sand or shaving cream play due to delays or sensory integration difficulties may not receive adequate interventions in an environment reflecting the Responsible belief presumably due to the emphasis on cleanliness. On the other hand the child might willingly attempt the activities when encouraged by peers in a setting reflective of Expression or Social beliefs. A child who is content playing alone in the sand table may be ignored in a Social setting even though this leads to limited interactions with a range of activities and children. Perhaps one way of viewing the child's activity from the Social perspective is that he is involved in his own explorations and creations and does not disrupt the play of other children. People who structure their settings in accordance with the Work belief are likely to employ game-like strategies to help a child become comfortable interacting with other children. A child who is easily distracted may have difficulty focusing on play in the presumed chaos of a setting representative of Expression beliefs, but might thrive with small group activities and directive adult involvement with people who feasibly behave in accordance with the Responsible belief.

Implications for Professional and Program Development

The emphasis on DAP in the literature emphasizing the importance of play for all children has led to general support for inclusionary practices, but recognition of a gap between recommended practices and actual practices by

professionals. Specific professional knowledge and skills are required to meet the responsibilities associated with having children who demonstrate a need for expansions or adaptations to curricular activities. In this study, play emerged as an important component of child learning and development among respondents reflecting four beliefs expressed by parents and professionals. One belief emphasized play as structure to incorporate various strategies using skills necessary to balance the use of teaching methods. Respondents expressing the Expression viewpoint consistent with the skills had received training in and practiced play-based programming strategies. In light of the Expression respondents' experiences with play-based programming, the emergence of the importance and structure of play to each belief has significant implications for designing professional and program development activities toward a applicable understanding of DAP for all children. This recognition of play as the common ground among the different beliefs allows play to become an avenue for professional development, parent education and program implementation in efforts to establish practices supporting the development of all children.

Future Recommendations

One final step in the process of inclusion practices listed by Wolery (1994) includes evaluating the effects of the program. Evaluation allows the professional staff and parents to determine child achievement of their goals within the setting and to what extent the program contributed to the achievements. The results of this study relate to individual practices and do not provide the data necessary to

address program evaluation within an inclusion process. Further research is needed to identify the patterns of practices by professionals with differing beliefs that might lead to or be barriers to program evaluation, which will in turn support the effectiveness of professional and program development. Three guiding questions are recommended for future research:

1. In what ways do individuals segregate free, prompted and directed discovery methods in EC settings?

2. What aspects of training do individuals seek to reinforce the method that most reflects their individual beliefs?

3. What play-based knowledge, skills and program models will provide reinforcement to the strengths of each individual's existing practices while encouraging each to effectively expand their use of other methods?

In addition to research to improve program evaluation and professional receptivity to training, methods of self-evaluation and collaborative critiques of professional performance and program changes are needed. Evaluation to address changes within a dynamic field will require guidance for individual reflection and comfort with colleague and parent critiques. Research helpful to supporting effective program changes might be to explore the congruency between beliefs about actual and ideal EC program practices. An exploration of discrepancies between actual and ideal beliefs might be conducted using Q-Methodology with parents who withdraw their children from EC settings and with parents and professionals participating in program development and training

activities involving play-based and/or inclusionary practices. Such information from parent and professionals will better prepare the field of EC to accept specific input for professional and program development activities regarding individual need for knowledge, skills, observation, practice or consultation.

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Appendix A

Research Informed Consent

A – 1 Professional Consent

A – 2 Parent Consent

A – 1

INFORMED CONSENT FORM – Professional

Oklahoma State University
Graduate Study
School of Applied Health and Educational Psychology

Many studies have shown how play prepares children for later school learning and getting along with other children and adults. You are invited to give your input in this study by sharing your beliefs about play and early childhood programming. If you would like to provide input, please sign this consent form and return it with the attached instrument.

This study is done as part of an investigation entitled Linkages Between Child Development, Professional and Parent Use of Strategies, Parent Stress Level and Child Adjustment Behavior Within the Context of Combined Play-Based Models for Training.

I understand that the results of this research will be published, but my name and any identifying information such as the name of the agency will be kept confidential. Codes using letters and/or numbers will be used in place of names.

I know that I am volunteering to participate. There is no penalty for refusing to participate and I am free to withdraw my consent for participation in this project at any time. I freely accept any risks that might be involved in this project such as the time needed to fill out information.

I, _____, certify that I have read the above consent form in which I have been asked to fill out information about children's learning and development. I agree to participate by completing the information.

If I have any questions or concerns, I know to contact the researcher, Dena M. Pinson, in writing at: P.O. Box 6235, Edmond, OK 73083. I can also contact her by phone: home -- (405) 340-4124. I may also contact Gay Clarkson, IRB Executive Secretary, 305 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078.

Date _____/_____/_____ Signed _____
(Participant)

I choose **NOT** to participate at this time. ___

Date _____/_____/_____ Researcher Signature: _____
Dena M. Pinson, M. Ed.

___ YES, you may call me at a later date for an interview. _____.
(phone number)

___ NO, please do not call me at a later date for an interview.

A – 2

INFORMED CONSENT FORM – Parent

Oklahoma State University
Graduate Study
School of Applied Health and Educational Psychology

Many studies have shown how play prepares children for later school learning and getting along with other children and adults. You are invited to give your input in this study by sharing your beliefs about play and early childhood programming. If you would like to provide input, please sign this consent form and return it with the attached instrument.

This study is done as part of an investigation entitled Linkages Between Child Development, Professional and Parent Use of Strategies, Parent Stress Level and Child Adjustment Behavior Within the Context of Combined Play-Based Models for Training.

I understand that the results of this research will be published, but my name and any identifying information such as my child's name and birth date, teacher and school will be kept confidential. Codes using letters and numbers will be used in place of names.

I know that I am volunteering to participate. There is no penalty for refusal to participate and I am free to withdraw my consent for participation in this project at any time. I freely accept any risks that might be involved in this project such as the time needed to fill out the information.

I, _____, certify that I have read the above consent form in which I have been asked to fill out information about what I believe about early childhood learning and development. I agree to participate by completing the information.

If I have any questions or concerns, I know to contact the researcher, Dena M. Pinson, in writing at: P.O. Box 6235, Edmond, OK 73083. I can also contact her by phone: home -- (405) 340-4124. I may also contact Gay Clarkson, IRB Executive Secretary, 305 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078.

Date _____/_____/_____ Signed:_____
(Participant)

I choose **NOT** to participate at this time. ___

Date _____/_____/_____ Researcher Signature: _____
Dena M. Pinson, M. Ed.

___ YES, you may call me at a later date for an interview. _____.
(phone number)

___ NO, please do not call me at a later date for an interview.

Appendix B

Demographic Information

B – 1 Professional Demographic Questionnaire

B – 2 Parent Demographic Questionnaire

B - 1

Demographic Questionnaire – Professional

Initials____ Professional Title_____ I work with children ages _____

Directions: Please circle the best answer for each item as it relates to your situation.

1. Gender: Female Male

2. Ethnic Background: African American Asian/Pacific Caucasian Mexican American/Hispanic Native American Indian Other:

3. Education Level Completed: High School Diploma Associate's Degree Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Other:

4. Household Income: <15,000 15,000-24,999 25,000-34,999 35,000-44,999 45,000-54,999 55,000-64,999 65,000-74,999 >75,000

5. I teach ___ number of hours in the early childhood program each week: <10 hours 10-15 hours 16-20 hours 21-25 hours 26-30 hours 31-35 hours 36-40 hours >40 hours

6. Times that I teach are in the: Morning Session Afternoon Session Other:

7. I receive training in early childhood education in the following ways (circle all that apply):

Through this center I seek my own training through workshops

Vo-tech College or University

8. Approximate number of hours of training I have received in early childhood education: ____

9. Approximate number of hours of training I have received in early childhood intervention: ____

10. Total number of years I have taught child age 5 years or younger: ____

11. Total number of years I have taught: ____

12. Grade levels of children I have taught: _____

13. My age range is: <20 20 – 29 30 – 39 40 – 49 50 – 59 >60

Thank you for the time you have taken to fill out this form.

B - 2

Demographic Questionnaire – Parent

Directions: Please circle the best answer for each item as it relates to your situation.

1. Child ages are: <1 year _____ 1 year ___ months 2 years ____months

   3 years ____months 4 years ____months 5 years ____months

2. I have: ___ Girl(s) ___ Boy(s)

3. I am the: Mother Father Other Caregiver: _____

4. My child(ren) attends ____ number of hours in this school program each week: <10 hours
   10-15 hours 16-20 hours 21-25 hours 26-30 hours 31-35 hours
   36-40 hours >40 hours

5. My child(ren) goes to the: Morning Session Afternoon Session Other: _____

6. My child(ren) lives with: 1 Parent 2 Parents Other: _____

7. My child(ren) has been identified as having developmental delays: Yes No
   If you checked yes, please check the areas of identified delays:

____Cognitive	__less than 50%	__greater than 50%
____Communication	__less than 50%	__greater than 50%
____Social-Emotional	__less than 50%	__greater than 50%
____Gross Motor	__less than 50%	__greater than 50%
____Fine Motor	__less than 50%	__greater than 50%
____Adaptive Behavior	__less than 50%	__greater than 50%

8. My child(ren) has received early intervention services: Yes No
   At what age? ____ How long did he/she receive services? ____
   List the services he/she received _____

9. My child(ren) is currently receiving early intervention services: Yes No
   Services are through: Public School Sooner Start Other: _____

10. Our ethnic background is: African American Asian/Pacific Caucasian Mexican
    American/Hispanic Native American Indian Other: _____

11. Mother's education level completed: High School Diploma Associate's Degree
    Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Doctoral Degree Other:

12. Father's education level completed: High School Diploma Associate's Degree
    Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Doctoral Degree Other: ____

14. Our household income is: <15,000 15,000-24,999 25,000-34,999 35,000-49,999

    45,000-54,999 55,000-64,999 65,000-74,999 >75,000

Thank you for the time you have taken to fill out this form.

Appendix C

Q-Sort Packet for EC Programming

C - 1

Early Childhood Q-Sample Items

1. Children are given specific materials to complete structured activities so that they master age-appropriate developmental and pre-academic skills. (Directed)

2. Children use toys, real props, or just their imaginations to create and recreate stories and real-life events. (Free)

3. Children demonstrate creativity, exploration and skill use by living them, so materials and props related to a story or poem read in class are provided to invite their spontaneous demonstration of these qualities through their play and social interactions. (Prompted)

4. Art activities include drawing, coloring or gluing using pre-designed or pre-cut pictures or materials. (Directed)

5. Content is NOT targeted so children are exposed to a wide variety of experiences as they rotate through different activities. (Free)

6. Children's ages dictate the kinds of activities made available. (Directed)

7. Children are taught concepts and skills in a quiet, structured environment. (Directed)

8. Children learn pre-academic skills such as math, reading, writing and language use from adults. (Prompted)

9. Children develop and demonstrate pre-academic skills such as math, reading, writing and language use during play. (Free)

10. Children are given directions to follow so that they complete activities correctly and play appropriately. (Directed)

11. Children select their modes of learning, which informs adults of the support, guidance, facilitation and modeling needed by each child. (Free)

12. Letting children play freely leads to undisciplined and even bad behavior now and as they get older. (Directed)

13. Children are given a limited number of play choices so that they have time to complete specific developmental and pre-academic activities and tasks to be ready for kindergarten and 1st grade. (Directed)

14. Play is not educational. (Directed)

15. Children demonstrate intelligence in the ability to read, write, do math and accurately complete fine motor tasks. (Directed)

16. Adults test children to identify their developmental levels and pre-academic skills by asking questions or having them perform certain tasks during structured activities. (Directed)

17. Adults know when children are developing new skills by keeping a checklist of the developmental milestones mastered by each child. (Prompted)

18. Children demonstrate their mastery of concepts and skills when they use them spontaneously in play and their emerging skills when they imitate or model after others. (Free)

19. Extensive adult time is spent playing with children. (Prompted)

20. Playing with children takes away from teaching or intervention time. (Directed)

21. Children watch and do what other children are doing allowing them to confidently participate in activities when they are ready. (Free)

22. Assigning children to small groups to rotate through center activities insures that children will participate in activities and interact with other children. (Prompted)

23. Children make their own constructions and develop artistic creations with a wide variety of materials, miscellaneous scraps and tools. (Free)

24. Children are corrected so that they know the right way to complete a task or interaction. (Directed)

25. Adults modeling behaviors slightly higher than children's mastered skills helps children emerge into new levels of development and learning. (Prompted)

26. Adult imitation of children's play activities and communication builds an interactive relationship that encourages children to be actively involved in mastering learning and social activities. (Prompted)

27. Having teacher time and directly teaching children during center activities supports skill development and learning. (Prompted)

28. Adult support of children taking turns during play, individual conversations and group time encourages them to interact socially. (Prompted)

29. Giving children turns during play and conversations teaches them appropriate social skills. (Prompted)

30. Expecting children to take turns and share during play teaches them how to get along with others. (Directed)

31. Acknowledging and responding to each child's feelings makes them more comfortable so that they participate in various activities and interact with others. (Prompted)

32. Children use their whole bodies during both indoor and outdoors activities. (Free)

33. Children learn how to react appropriately when adults model appropriate emotions. (Prompted)

34. Watching children play guides the adult's use of teaching or intervention strategies. (Free)

35. Adults decide which teaching or intervention strategies to use in relation to the concept or skill being taught. (Directed)

36. Adults can't know which teaching or intervention strategies are best to use because children are unique individuals who respond differently to different people and situations. (Free)

37. Children talk when they have something to say, because listening to children helps adults know how to expand on ideas and concepts, (Prompted)

38. Children are given permission to talk about stories and life experiences so that they each have a turn. (Directed)

39. Adults ask children questions to be sure that they are learning and paying attention. (Directed)

40. Questioning children restricts their discovery learning. (Free)

41. Children build with blocks in the block area. (Prompted)

42. A child's look, movement, gesture, vocalization, verbalization or specific behavior guides adult responses to an activity or conversation. (Prompted)

43. New toys, materials or activities attract and keep children's attention. (Prompted)

44. Children have gross motor time so that they have a chance to move their whole bodies after working on table tasks. (Directed)

45. Adults demonstrate activities or model social interactions many times so children learn concepts and skills appropriately. (Prompted)

46. Adults wait for children to work through their problems to provide the least amount of support needed by a child to successfully accomplish the child's intended goal in an activity or social interaction. (Free)

47. Activities invite children to "get messy" while they are playing with sensory materials such as sand, water, beans, shaving cream, finger paints, dirt, etc. and props such as dress-up clothes, dolls, cars, etc. (Prompted)

48. Children are taught to be responsible by keeping their areas, their bodies and their clothes clean. (Directed)

Refer to the array of the form board in Appendix C-4.

C - 2

Q-Sort Professional Directions

1st Professional Q-sort

The purpose of this Q sort is to record your thoughts about the following question:

What do you believe are "most like" the ways you support children's learning and development?

Please complete each step:

1. As you read each of the 48 statements from the envelope, place a mark next to the number of the statement to reflect your initial reactions to the idea relative to the question above.

   Use a (+) mark for those items you feel are most like, a (-) mark for those that are least like and a (?) for those items about which you do not have any strong feelings.

2. Choose from the items you marked with a (+) the two that you believe are most like the way you support children's learning and development and write their numbers in the spaces on line 1 below.

3. Choose from the items you marked with (-) the two that you believe are least like the way you support children's learning and development and write their numbers in the spaces on line 11 below.

4. Choose three items from the remaining (+) items to place in the spaces on line 2 below. You may have to use other items if you have run out of items marked (+).

5. Choose three items from the remaining (-) items to place in the spaces in line 10 below. You may have to use other items if you have run out of items marked (-).

6. Complete the rank order. Remember that the items placed on line 1 are more like than 2, 2 is more like than 3, etc.

2nd Professional Q-sort

Now use the same 48 statements to record your thoughts about the following question:

What do you believe are the "most ideal" ways to support children's learning and development?

C - 3

Q-Sort Parent Directions

1st Parent Q-sort

The purpose of this Q sort is to record your thoughts about the following question:

What do you believe are "most like" the ways your child's teacher supports children's learning and development?

Please complete each step:

1. As you read each of the 48 statements from the envelope, place a mark next to the number of the statement to reflect your initial reactions to the idea relative to the question above.

   Use a (+) mark for those items you feel are most like, a (-) mark for those that are least like and a (?) for those items about which you do not have any strong feelings.

2. Choose from the items you marked with a (+) the two that you believe are the most like the way your child's teacher supports children's learning and development and write their numbers in the spaces on line 1 below.

3. Choose from the items you marked with (-) the two that you believe are least like the way your child's teacher supports children's learning and development and write their numbers in the spaces on line 11 below.

4. Choose three items from the remaining (+) items to place in the spaces on line 2 below. You may have to use other items if you have run out of items marked (+).

5. Choose three items from the remaining (-) items to place in the spaces in line 10 below. You may have to use other items if you have run out of items marked (-).

6. Complete the rank order. Remember that the items placed on line 1 are more like than 2, 2 is more like than 3, etc.

2nd Parent Q-sort

Now use the same 48 statements to record your thoughts about the following question:

What do you believe are the "most ideal" ways to support children's learning and development?

C - 4

Q-Sort Record Sheet

MOST IDEAL

1. ____ ____
2. ____ ____ ____
3. ____ ____ ____ ____
4. ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
5. ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
6. ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
7. ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
8. ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
9. ____ ____ ____ ____
10. ____ ____ ____
11. ____ ____

LEAST IDEAL

What are you thoughts about completing this Q-sort?
(Please write on the back of this page and/or use additional paper)

Appendix D

PLAY-BASED FACILITATION STRATEGIES CHECKLIST

(Adapted from the TPBA Facilitation Strategies Evaluation Checklist used at the Transdisciplinary Play Based Assessment/Intervention (TPBA/I) Institute in June/July 1994, University of Denver, Denver, CO. Permission to use and adapt this form was granted by the author, Toni W. Linder, Ed.D.)

Directions: Circle the number beside each statement that most reflects your use of each strategy. Please feel free to write comments.

1 - I do not know this strategy.
2 - I know about this strategy, but do not use it.
3 - I use this strategy sometimes with some of the children in my class.
4 – I use this strategy frequently with the children in my class.
5 – I am very confident that I use this strategy as appropriate with each child in my class.

1. The environment promotes play through appropriate toys (variety, number, level). 1 2 3 4 5

   Comments:

2. I follow child leads in selecting play materials. 1 2 3 4 5

   Comments:

3. I imitate child words, actions and play when appropriate. 1 2 3 4 5

   Comments:

4. I read child cues and respond in ways to maintain play or social interactions. 1 2 3 4 5

   Comments:

5. I adapt my mode of communication to the child's level of sensory input. 1 2 3 4 5

   Comments:

6. I wait for the child to play before I introduce or model new activities. 1 2 3 4 5

   Comments:

7. I observe optimal behaviors of children and build on their strengths. 1 2 3 4 5

   Comments:

8. I use aspects of play that are motivating for children to maintain their attention to activities. 1 2 3 4 5

   Comments:

9. I respond to and build on child initiations of play and social exchanges. 1 2 3 4 5

   Comments:

10. I use parallel play. 1 2 3 4 5

    Comments:

11. I allow each child to participate in turn exchanges during interactions with peers and adults. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

12. I model slightly higher level behavior based on child mastered skills observed in play. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

13. I encourage children to explore and be creative in their use of objects and materials. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

14. I modify my play to match child capabilities. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

15. I respond to each child's affect or feeling during interactions. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

16. I enjoy playing with children. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

17. I use the following language strategies:

a. Mirroring – reflecting non-verbal expression. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

b. Parallel talk – talking about the child's actions. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

c. Self-talk – commenting on my own actions. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

d. Imitation – repeating child. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

e. Elaboration – adding new information to what the child has said. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

f. Corroborating – saying correctly what the child has said in error. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

g. Expanding – building on the child's words. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

h. Modeling – conversing without using the child's words. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

Appendix E

Protocol for the Structural Analysis of Low-structure Activities

Directions:

1. Complete identifying information.
2. Check each item that applies. Note, more than one check may occur in some categories.
3. Include comments to qualify or clarify observations and conclusions.
4. After the first observation, complete the form. After the second and third observations, review the form and note additions, corrections, and clarifications/qualifications.

Identifying Information:

Observation #1, Date: _____/_____/_____

Observation #2, Date: _____/_____/_____

Observation #3, Date: _____/_____/_____

Observer Name: _____

Program: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

1. How many centers or area were available to children?_____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

2. List the centers available to children

_____

_____

_____

3. When are learning centers available to children?

_____ Designated time of day – open to all children at once

_____ Designated time of day – open to part of the children at a time

_____ Open to children all the time

Comments: _____

_____

4. Identify how children are selected for specific learning centers

_____ Teacher designated – identifies where individual children should go

_____ Teacher designated – identifies where groups of children should go

_____ Children are allowed to make individual choices

_____ Teacher and child jointly plan where each child will go

_____ Mixed arrangement – teacher and child plan schedule for some children and others go where they want

Comments: _____

_____

5. Identify activities within learning centers

_____ Children can choose from what is available; do not have to engage in specific activity

_____ Teacher defined activities within areas; a specific activity is required

_____ Teacher defined activities, but children choose what they will do

_____ Mixed arrangement – some areas require specific activities, others do not

Comments: _____

_____

6. Identify content of the learning centers

_____ Content is tied to specific and changing themes/units

_____ Content is not tied to specific and changing themes or units

_____ Content is tied to specific skills (e.g., preacademic, social skills, language, etc.)

_____ No specific content is targeted

_____ Type of content being taught is not recognizable to observer

_____ Content of centers varies regularly

_____ Content of centers remains constant does not change

_____ Content of some centers varies and content of other centers remains constant

Comments: _____

_____

7. Identify level of teacher involvement during learning center

_____ Adult present in center and leads activity

_____ Adult present in center and actively assists children but does not lead activities

_____ Adult rotates between centers are available to help children if needed

_____ Adult observes class wide, no involvement with children and activities – responds only to problems and caregiving issues

_____ Adult uses learning center time to work with individual children or small groups on other tasks

_____ Other (specify)_____

_____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

8. Identify how children know what to do in learning center

_____ Teacher directed – teacher tells/shows children what to do

_____ Child directed – children make their own "discoveries"

_____ Some centers are teacher directed and others are child directed

_____ Other (specify)_____

_____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

9. Identify how materials are available to children

_____ Needed materials in all centers are child accessible and controlled

_____ Needed materials in all centers are teacher controlled and not accessible to children without teacher provision

_____ In most centers, needed materials are accessible and controlled by children

_____ In most centers, needed materials are not accessible and controlled by children

_____ Other (specify)

_____

_____

Comments:_____

_____

_____

10. Identify group rules and how they are communicated

_____ Teacher provides daily review of rules for centers

_____ Teacher does not provide daily review of rules, but responds to rule violations

_____ Children required to remain in centers for designated time – some signal to cue children to move to new area

_____ Children allowed to move independently from center to center – no limit on number of children in area

_____ Children allowed to move independently from center to center – limit on number of children in area

_____ Children not required to move from one center

_____ Children use a "pass" to indicate changes in learning center

Appendix F

Q-Item Factor Arrays

F – 1 Factor A (Work) Normalized Factor Scores

F – 2 Factor B (Responsible) Normalized Factor Scores

F – 3 Factor C (Expression) Normalized Factor Scores

F – 4 Factor D (Social) Normalized Factor Scores

F - 1

Normalized Factor Scores -- For Factor A (Work)

No.	Statement	Z
9	Children develop and demonstrate pre-academic skills such as	2.018
2	Children use toys, real props, or just their imaginations to	1.808
43	New toys, materials or activities attract and keep children' s	1.639
3	Children demonstrate creativity, exploration and skill use	1.176
31	Acknowledging and responding to each child's feelings makes	1.171
33	Children learn how to react appropriately when adults model	1.162
34	Watching children play guides the adult's use of teaching or	1.107
41	Children build with blocks in the block area.	1.072
17	Adults know when children are developing new skills by keeping	1.058
25	Adults modeling behaviors slightly higher than children's ma	1.054
15	Children demonstrate intelligence in the ability to read, writing	.957
44	Children have gross motor time so that they have a chance to	.756
47	Activities invite children to "get messy" while they are pla	.746
21	Children watch and do what other children are doing allowing	.645
42	A child's look, movement, gesture, vocalization, verbalizati	.540
23	Children make their own constructions and develop artistic	.535
28	Adult support of children taking turns during play, individu	.521
46	Adults wait for children to work through their problems to	.440
32	Children use their whole bodies during both indoor and outdoor	.366
18	Children demonstrate their mastery of concepts and skills	.270
7	Children are taught concepts and skills in a quiet, structur	.215
38	Children are given permission to talk about stories and life	.155
48	Children are taught to be responsible by keeping their areas	.106
6	Children's ages dictate the kinds of activities made availab	.045
37	Children talk when they have something to say, because liste	.004
26	Adult imitation of children's play activities and communicat	-.046
35	Adults decide which teaching or intervention strategies in	-.060
11	Children select their modes of learning, which informs adult	-.210
12	Letting children play freely leads to undisciplined and even	-.219
45	Adults demonstrate activities or model social interactions	-.265
39	Adults ask children questions to be sure that they are learn	-.521
27	Having teacher time and directly teaching children during	-.526
22	Assigning children to small groups to rotate through center	-.526
29	Giving children turns during play and conversations teaches	-.581
5	Content is NOT targeted so children are exposed to a wide	-.595
1	Children are given specific materials to complete structured	-.636
36	Adults can't know which teaching or intervention strategies	-.655
40	Questioning children restricts their discovery learning.	-.796
20	Playing with children takes away from teaching or interventi	-.856
13	Children are given a limited number of play choices so that	-.897
10	Children are given directions to follow so that they complet	-.911
16	Adults test children to identify their developmental levels	-.998
19	Extensive adult time is spent playing with children.	-1.332
30	Expecting children to take turns and share during play teach	-1.492
8	Children learn pre-academic skills such as math, reading,	-1.648
24	Children are corrected so that they know the right way to	-1.757
4	Art activities include drawing, coloring or gluing using pre	-1.964
14	Play is not educational.	-2.073

F – 2

Normalized Factor Scores -- For Factor B (Responsible)

No.	Statement	Z
19	Extensive adult time is spent playing with children.	2.059
22	Assigning children to small groups to rotate through center	1.928
31	Acknowledging and responding to each child's feelings makes	1.657
21	Children watch and do what other children are doing allowing	1.595
38	Children are given permission to talk about stories and life	1.130
48	Children are taught to be responsible by keeping their areas	1.011
1	Children are given specific materials to complete structured	.869
32	Children use their whole bodies during both indoor and outdo	.848
29	Giving children turns during play and conversations teaches	.769
27	Having teacher time and directly teaching children during	.666
44	Children have gross motor time so that they have a chance to	.656
47	Activities invite children to "get messy" while they are	.634
9	Children develop and demonstrate pre-academic skills such as	.506
11	Children select their modes of learning, which informs adult	.505
6	Children's ages dictate the kinds of activities made availab	.496
43	New toys, materials or activities attract and keep children'	.483
2	Children use toys, real props, or just their imaginations to	.477
18	Children demonstrate their mastery of concepts and skills	.446
41	Children build with blocks in the block area.	.443
42	A child's look, movement, gesture, vocalization, verbalizati	.414
28	Adult support of children taking turns during play, individu	.333
34	Watching children play guides the adult's use of teaching or	.326
3	Children demonstrate creativity, exploration and skill use	.182
16	Adults test children to identify their developmental levels	.141
33	Children learn how to react appropriately when adults model	.132
8	Children learn pre-academic skills such as math, reading,	.079
39	Adults ask children questions to be sure that they are learn	.000
45	Adults demonstrate activities or model social interactions	.000
26	Adult imitation of children's play activities and communicat	-.122
15	Children demonstrate intelligence in the ability to read, write	-.132
4	Art activities include drawing, coloring or gluing using	-.204
23	Children make their own constructions and develop artistic	-.210
7	Children are taught concepts and skills in a quiet, structur	-.264
37	Children talk when they have something to say, because liste	-.333
30	Expecting children to take turns and share during play teach	-.417
17	Adults know when children are developing new skills by keepi	-.603
24	Children are corrected so that they know the right way to	-.760
46	Adults wait for children to work through their problems to	-.857
35	Adults decide which teaching or intervention strategies in	-.929
25	Adults modeling behaviors slightly higher than children's	-.939
10	Children are given directions to follow so that they complet	-1.061
13	Children are given a limited number of play choices so that	-1.130
36	Adults can't know which teaching or intervention strategies	-1.526
5	Content is NOT targeted so children are exposed to a wide	-1.595
20	Playing with children takes away from teaching or interventi	-1.858
40	Questioning children restricts their discovery learning.	-1.858
12	Letting children play freely leads to undisciplined and even	-1.928
14	Play is not educational.	-2.059

F - 3

Normalized Factor Scores -- For Factor C (Expression)

No.	Statement	Z
18	Children demonstrate their mastery of concepts and skills	1.890
11	Children select their modes of learning, which informs adult	1.835
21	Children watch and do what other children are doing allowing	1.699
2	Children use toys, real props, or just their imaginations to	1.397
19	Extensive adult time is spent playing with children.	1.315
23	Children make their own constructions and develop artistic	1.238
3	Children demonstrate creativity, exploration and skill use	1.234
47	Activities invite children to "get messy" while they are	1.233
28	Adult support of children taking turns during play, individu	.959
17	Adults know when children are developing new skills by keepi	.843
25	Adults modeling behaviors slightly higher than children's	.767
26	Adult imitation of children's play activities and communicat	.767
31	Acknowledging and responding to each child's feelings makes	.767
34	Watching children play guides the adult's use of teaching or	.631
37	Children talk when they have something to say, because liste	.575
42	A child's look, movement, gesture, vocalization, verbalizati	.575
29	Giving children turns during play and conversations teaches	.548
9	Children develop and demonstrate pre-academic skills such as	.521
32	Children use their whole bodies during both indoor and outdo	.466
33	Children learn how to react appropriately when adults model	.247
39	Adults ask children questions to be sure that they are learn	.164
45	Adults demonstrate activities or model social interactions	.164
41	Children build with blocks in the block area.	.000
43	New toys, materials or activities attract and keep children'	.000
27	Having teacher time and directly teaching children during	.000
22	Assigning children to small groups to rotate through center	-.055
35	Adults decide which teaching or intervention strategies in	-.055
38	Children are given permission to talk about stories and life	-.109
30	Expecting children to take turns and share during play teach	-.356
46	Adults wait for children to work through their problems to	-.409
44	Children have gross motor time so that they have a chance to	-.411
10	Children are given directions to follow so that they complet	-.521
8	Children learn pre-academic skills such as math, reading,	-.620
36	Adults can't know which teaching or intervention strategies	-.685
13	Children are given a limited number of play choices so that	-.686
1	Children are given specific materials to complete structured	-.712
4	Art activities include drawing, coloring or gluing using pre	-.712
40	Questioning children restricts their discovery learning.	-.723
12	Letting children play freely leads to undisciplined and even	-.878
24	Children are corrected so that they know the right way to co	-1.068
6	Children's ages dictate the kinds of activities made availab	-1.151
7	Children are taught concepts and skills in a quiet, structur	-1.233
48	Children are taught to be responsible by keeping their areas	-1.315
5	Content is NOT targeted so children are exposed to a wide	-1.343
15	Children demonstrate intelligence in the ability to read,	-1.424
16	Adults test children to identify their developmental levels	-1.726
14	Play is not educational.	-1.754
20	Playing with children takes away from teaching or intervention	-1.890

F - 4

Normalized Factor Scores -- For Factor D (Social)

No.	Statement	Z
2	Children use toys, real props, or just their imaginations to	1.897
47	Activities invite children to "get messy" while they are pla	1.814
23	Children make their own constructions and develop artistic	1.472
30	Expecting children to take turns and share during play teach	1.408
32	Children use their whole bodies during both indoor and outdo	1.228
44	Children have gross motor time so that they have a chance to	1.171
42	A child's look, movement, gesture, vocalization, verbalizati	.930
29	Giving children turns during play and conversations teaches	.910
31	Acknowledging and responding to each child's feelings makes	.875
28	Adult support of children taking turns during play, individu	.856
9	Children develop and demonstrate pre-academic skills such as	.826
38	Children are given permission to talk about stories and life	.799
3	Children demonstrate creativity, exploration and skill use	.777
18	Children demonstrate their mastery of concepts and skills	.648
10	Children are given directions to follow so that they complet	.595
45	Adults demonstrate activities or model social interactions	.336
41	Children build with blocks in the block area.	.305
24	Children are corrected so that they know the right way to	.288
37	Children talk when they have something to say, because liste	.285
4	Art activities include drawing, coloring or gluing using pre	.238
8	Children learn pre-academic skills such as math, reading,	.234
33	Children learn how to react appropriately when adults model	.197
11	Children select their modes of learning, which informs adult	.196
48	Children are taught to be responsible by keeping their areas	.139
43	New toys, materials or activities attract and keep children'	.137
6	Children's ages dictate the kinds of activities made availab	.123
22	Assigning children to small groups to rotate through center	.101
21	Children watch and do what other children are doing allowing	-.034
34	Watching children play guides the adult's use of teaching or	-.140
46	Adults wait for children to work through their problems to	-.189
16	Adults test children to identify their developmental levels	-.336
35	Adults decide which teaching or intervention strategies in	-.366
19	Extensive adult time is spent playing with children.	-.390
15	Children demonstrate intelligence in the ability to read,	-.445
39	Adults ask children questions to be sure that they are learn	-.528
26	Adult imitation of children's play activities and communicat	-.545
27	Having teacher time and directly teaching children during	-.560
17	Adults know when children are developing new skills by keepi	-.663
1	Children are given specific materials to complete structured	-.674
25	Adults modeling behaviors slightly higher than children's	-.711
13	Children are given a limited number of play choices so that	-.823
5	Content is NOT targeted so children are exposed to a wide	-1.061
40	Questioning children restricts their discovery learning.	-1.556
36	Adults can't know which teaching or intervention strategies	-1.593
20	Playing with children takes away from teaching or interventi	-1.834
12	Letting children play freely leads to undisciplined and even	-1.933
7	Children are taught concepts and skills in a quiet, structur	-2.021
14	Play is not educational.	-2.384

Appendix G

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: June 25, 1997 **IRB #: ED-97-108**

Proposal Title: LINKAGES BETWEEN CHILD DEVELOPMENT, PROFESSIONAL, AND PARENT USE OF STRATEGIES, PARENT STRESS LEVEL AND CHILD ADJUSTMENT BEHAVIOR WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF COMBINED PLAY-BASED MODELS FOR TRAINING

Principal Investigator(s): Kay S. Bull, Dena M. Pinson

Reviewed and Processed as: Modification

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING THE APPROVAL PERIOD.
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR DATA COLLECTION FOR A ONE CALENDAR YEAR PERIOD AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.
ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature

Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: February 20, 1998

cc: Dena M. Pinson

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 06-25-97 **IRB#:** ED-97-108

Proposal Title: LINKAGES BETWEEN CHILD DEVELOPMENT, PROFESSIONAL, AND PARENT USE OF STRATEGIES, PARENT STRESS LEVEL AND CHILD ADJUSTMENT BEHAVIOR WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF COMBINED PLAY-BASED MODELS FOR TRAINING

Principal Investigator(s): Kay S. Bull, Dena M. Pinson

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING THE APPROVAL PERIOD.
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR DATA COLLECTION FOR A ONE CALENDAR YEAR PERIOD AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.
ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature: _____ Date: June 26, 1997
Chair of Institutional Review Board
cc: Dena M. Pinson

Dena M. Pinson P. O. Box 6235, Edmond, OK 73083 (405) 340-4124

June 22, 1998

Oklahoma State University
Graduate College
202 Whitehurst
Stillwater, OK 74078

To Whom It May Concern,

The following changes were made following the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board approval of my dissertation research in June 1997 and under the guidance of members of my dissertation committee. The changes, consistent with my original proposal and the IRB approved amendments, resulted in an amended title, use of fewer instruments and a smaller population.

1. Title change:

PROFESSIONAL AND PARENT BELIEFS ABOUT ACTUAL AND IDEAL EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF PLAY-BASED STRATEGIES

2. Analysis was conducted using Q-Methodology on Q-Sort instruments completed by subjects. Subjects included 9 adults (5 early childhood professionals and 4 parents) who did not participate in the previously proposed play-based training activities. Developmental checklists, parent checklists and professional checklists were not used in the analysis.

3. Informed consent and Q-Sort record forms were amended to address the participating population, which did not participate in training activities. The amendments were consistent with previous approval of the IRB.

These are broad descriptions of the changes made in this research project. The changes are further detailed in the Methodology section found in Chapter 3.

Sincerely,

Dena M. Pinson

Dena M. Pinson

cc: OSU Institutional Review Board

VITA

Dena Meredith Pinson

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: PROFESSIONAL AND PARENT BELIEFS ABOUT ACTUAL AND IDEAL EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF PLAY-BASED STRATEGIES

Major Field: Applied Behavioral Studies

Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Ponca City High School, Ponca City, Oklahoma in May 1976; received Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education-Emotionally Disturbed from the University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma in May 1982. Received a Master of Education degree with a major in Gifted/Talented Education at Oklahoma City University in May 1990. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in School Psychology at Oklahoma State University in July 1998.

Experience: As an adolescent was actively involved with the Youth Association for Retarded Citizens through camp counseling and social activities with individuals of all ages who had been identified with developmental delays or disabilities; employed by the Oklahoma Association for Retarded Citizens as the youth director, 1978; employed as a teaching assistant by Enid Public Schools to assist a child with "borderline autism" in classes, 1978-79; taught special education – emotionally disturbed for two years, 1982-84; employed as a graduate research assistant at Oklahoma State University fall 1990 – spring 1991; taught two summers at the Oklahoma City University Enrichment program for Gifted/Talented children, 1990-91; employed by Edmond Public Schools as school psychometrist with an emphasis on early childhood January 1993 – December 1996; developed and taught graduate student gifted education course at Oklahoma City University June 1993.

Professional Memberships: National Association for School Psychologists, Oklahoma Association for School Psychologists, National Association for Gifted Children; Oklahoma Association for Gifted, Creative and Talented; National Association for the Education of Young Children.