UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES REGARDING INCLUSION

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

By

DANA DAWN HILBERT
Norman, Oklahoma
2009

Downloaded from SHAREOK. Persistent Handle URL: https://hdl.handle.net/11244/319334

PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES REGARDING INCLUSION

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY

_____
Dr. Gregg Garn, Chairperson

_____
Dr. Jeff Maiden

_____
Dr. Courtney Vaughn

_____
Dr. Mary John O'Hair

_____
Dr. Diane Horm

© Copyright by DANA DAWN HILBERT 2009
All Rights Reserved.

DEDICATION

My dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Connie Mack and Louise Sparks. Anyone who has ever had the pleasure of meeting my parents will attest to just how blessed I was to be their daughter. They instilled a sense of confidence, joy and optimism in me through their love and commitment to their family and life itself. Only now as a parent, can I truly appreciate their dedication. I never imagined my father would not live to see this day, but I am certain he is watching. As for my mother, I think President Abe Lincoln said it best, “Everything I am and hope to be, I owe to my mother.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No one achieves a goal of this magnitude without the help of others. There are a number of people who, in their own way, have been an important part of this dissertation process. First, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to my chairperson, Dr. Gregg Garn. Dr. Garn was always calm and encouraging. Dr. Garn's sincerity and dedication were a constant inspiration to me to complete this dissertation. I would also like to extend my thanks to Dr. Courtney Vaughn, Dr. Mary John O'Hair and Dr. Diane Horm for their support and professionalism. I will forever be indebted to Dr. Jeff Maiden for his patience and willingness to mentor me regarding the statistical analysis of this document.

I also want to acknowledge the support of my friends and colleagues. The members of the original Lawton cohort, the many countless weeknights and weekends spent together will forever hold fond memories. Dr. Christine Johnson was an unexpected blessing in my life. She changed my path, rekindled my interest and renewed my confidence in achieving this goal. Christine will always be a respected mentor and friend. A special thank you to: Dr. Rebecca York and Steve Doughty for their grasp and appreciation for the English language and technical writing; Theresa Flanagan for her "soda-runs" and to Kristie Smith for her mastery of copying machines, staplers and formatting.

Most importantly, I want to acknowledge my family. My children have never known a moment that their mother wasn't in "school." Ryanne, who is wise beyond her years, cared for her brother and our home without complaint while I worked for hours writing and researching. She also embraced her role as a quasi-graduate assistant and dedicated cheerleader. Ryanne is an amazing young woman. My son, Cale, was always there to give an unsolicited hug, make me take a break to listen to him recap an adventure from his day and provide needed energy and stamina with his brilliant smile. My children motivated me to continue, but always helped me keep everything in perspective.

Last, but certainly not least, I must thank my husband, Scot. I believe his dedication to this dissertation almost surpasses my own. Scot was the constant encourager. He was the one who pushed me to finish this doctorate, even when I thought the personal cost to our family was too high. He refused to let me get down or find an excuse to quit. Thank you all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I – Introduction……1
Research Problem Introduction……1
Statement of the Problem…… 5
Purpose of the Study……9
Significance of the Study……10
Research Design……10
Participants in the Study…… 11
Assumptions and Limitations…… 12
Organization of the Proposed Study…… 12
Summary…… 13

Chapter II - Review of Literature……14
Inclusion Defined……14
Development of Inclusive Education……19
Inclusion and the Preschool Child…… 24
Parents Perceptions of Inclusion……26
Perceptions of Parents and Key Characteristics……39
Summary……44

Chapter III – Methodology…… 46
Introduction…… 46
Research Design…… 46
Description of the Population…… 48
Survey Instrumentation……51
Survey Items…… 54
Data Collection…… 56
Analysis of Data……57
Summary…… 57

Chapter IV – Results of the Research…… 58
Introduction……58
Data Collection Procedures……58
Description of the Sample……58
Data Analysis…… 63
Summary of the Results……98

Chapter V-Conclusions/Recommendations……101
Introduction…… 101
Findings and Conclusions……101
Recommendations for Practice…… 109
Recommendations for Further Research……111

Limitations……..… 113
Summary…… 114

Bibliography……...… 115

Appendices……130
Appendix A – Survey…….130
Appendix B – Information Sheet for Consent……...…… 150
Appendix C – Site Letters……...153
Appendix D – Rafferty Correspondence……... 161

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Ethnicity of Parents……59

Table 2: Income of Parents…….. 60

Table 3: Education Levels of Parents……..... 61

Table 4: Frequencies (Percentages) for Child Age…….. 62

Table 5: Frequencies (Percentages) for Type of Disability……. 63

Table 6: Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children with Disabilities who Agreed with the Statement…… ..65

Table 7: Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children w/ Disabilities (N=84) Perceptions of the Impact of Inclusion on Children w/ Disabilities…….67

Table 8: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentage of Parents of Children with Disabilities (N=84) Perceptions of the Impact of Inclusion on Children without Disabilities…….69

Table 9: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentage of Parents of Children with Disabilities (N=84) Perceptions regarding the Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Preschoolers with Disabilities……. 70

Table 10: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentage of Parents of Children with Disabilities (N=84) Perceptions regarding the Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Preschoolers without Disabilities…….71

Table 11: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentage of Parents of Children with Disabilities (N=84) who Agreed with Inclusion based on the Age of the Child with a Disability…….72

Table 12: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentage of Parents of Children with Disabilities (N=84) who Agreed with Inclusion based on the Severity of the Disability……..72

Table 13: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentage of Parents of Children with Disabilities (N=84) who Agreed with Inclusion based on the Type of Disability…….73

Table 14: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentage of Parents of Children without Disabilities who Agreed with the Statement…..… 74

Table 15: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentage of Parents of Children without Disabilities (N=65) Perceptions regarding the Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Preschoolers with Disabilities……. 76

Table 16: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentage of Parents of Children without Disabilities (N=65) who Agreed with Statements regarding the Perceptions of the Impact of Inclusion on Children without Disabilities……..…78

Table 17: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentage of Parents of Children without Disabilities (N=65) who Agreed with Statements regarding the Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Preschoolers with Disabilities……...…… 80

Table 18: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentage of Parents of Children without Disabilities (N=65) who Agreed with Statements regarding the Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Preschoolers without Disabilities…….. 81

Table 19: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentage of Parents of Children without Disabilities (N=65) who Agreed with Inclusion based on the Age of the Child with a Disability…….81

Table 20: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentage of Parents of Children without Disabilities (N=65) who Agreed with Inclusion based on the Severity of the Disability…….. 82

Table 21: Mean, Standard Deviation and Percentage of Parents of Children without Disabilities (N=65) who Agreed with Inclusion based on the Type of Disability…… 82

Table 22: Means and Standard Deviation for Total Parental Perception Scores of Parents of Children with and without Disabilities…… 84

Table 23: Mean Scores for Parental Perceptions of Inclusion by Severity of Disability……. 87

Table 24: Means and Standard Deviations for Perceptions of Inclusion for Parents of Children w/ Down syndrome and of Children with Other Disabilities……. 89

Table 25: Mean Scores for Parents Perceptions regarding Inclusion for Male Parents and Female Parents…….91

Table 26: Means and Standard Deviations for Inclusion Scales for Caucasian Parents and Minority Parents……...93

Table 27: Means and Standard Deviations for Inclusion Scales for Parents with no College Degree and Parents with a College Degree…….. 95

Table 28: Mean Scores of Parents Regarding Inclusive Placement Based on Disability Type……...…96

Table 29: Summary of Significant Differences for Parent Perceptions……..99

ABSTRACT

This study compared perceptions of parents of children with and without disabilities attending an inclusive preschool program. One hundred and forty-nine participants in four states completed the Likert survey. The survey is a modification of a questionnaire designed by Rafferty, Boettcher and Griffin (2001) and used in New York State. The survey examined parental characteristics and the impact they have on parental perceptions regarding inclusion and inclusive preschool programs. In addition, child variables (disability status, type, severity and category) were examined to determine their significance regarding parental perceptions.

Parents of children with and without disabilities support inclusion and inclusive preschool programs. This finding supports prior research indicating that parents are supportive of programs that allow children of all abilities to be educated together. However, parents of children with a disability perceived more risks associated with the impact of inclusion on children with disabilities, their families and the families of children without disabilities.

This study also found that the disability category of a child has an impact on the extent in which parents agree on appropriateness of an inclusive placement. The data revealed significant differences in parental perceptions of inclusion when examining the variable of ethnicity. Parents of children with Down syndrome were found to be more agreeable to inclusion and inclusive placements, in general as compare to parents of children with disabilities other than Down syndrome.

These findings warrant further research on perceptions of parents of children with specific disabilities, as the identification of children with disabilities and the need to provide quality inclusive preschool programs is increasing.

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

Introduction

Public Law 94-142, was introduced in 1974 to end the exclusion and segregation of children with disabilities in public education. Prior to 1974, children with disabilities did not receive access to the same high-quality educational services as their non-disabled peers. These children were seen as unable to learn; and, as a result, many children with disabilities were isolated from school and many parents were forced to protect their children from a society that was not readily accepting of differences.

In 2009, parents of children with disabilities should, by law, have access to the same child care, community services and educational programs as parents of children without disabilities. With the subsequent reauthorizations and amendments of federal legislation, the enactments have expanded to include infants, toddlers, and preschool age children with disabilities and their families. Those enactments include the following: the Education of the Handicapped Act, 1986; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] of 1990; IDEA amendments in 1991 and 1997; the reauthorization in 2004 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA); the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); plus civil rights legislation and programs (Guralnick, 2001; Etscheidt, 2006; Grisham-Brown, Hemmeter, & Pretti-Frontczak 2005; Sandall, Hemmeter, Smith & McLean, 2005).

These enactments require that children have "the opportunity to participate in all activities and opportunities of community life," (The ARC, 2003, p.1) and that within their educational environments, students were to be educated alongside their nondisabled peers in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) possible, to the maximum extent appropriate, including supplementary supports (Etscheidt, 2006, Gandhi, 2007). According to Gandhi, "In practice, the implementation of the LRE requirement is typically referred to as 'inclusion,' and can vary tremendously from school to school, classroom to classroom and student to student." (p.65).

Implementing successful, inclusive early childhood programs for preschool-age children is a complex task. One of the challenges to finding inclusive placements for preschool aged children with disabilities is that while federal mandates call for services for preschool-age children with disabilities to be provided in the LRE with their peer group, children without disabilities; public law does not require educational services in the public school until Kindergarten. Most public schools do not offer preschool programs for children without disabilities (Lieber, Hanson, Beckman, Odom, Sandall, Schwartz, et al. 2000). Most school districts fund preschool-age programs (for children under 4 years of age) exclusively for children with disabilities. Some states across the United States are offering Pre-Kindergarten programs for 4 year olds. Parents of children with disabilities face challenges if they want to their child to be in the LRE and may also have difficulty finding a preschool that will accommodate the needs of their

child while also convincing the school district to provide support services in a location other than a special education program sponsored by the school.

Most programs for preschool age children without disabilities are sponsored by Head Start programs, private preschools and some public preschool programs. Many of these programs have long waiting lists, limiting the number of children with disabilities they serve and can vary tremendously in the quality and extent of their inclusion programs (Rafferty, Boettcher, & Griffin, 2001).

In addition to the lack of availability of quality early childhood education programs for preschool age children, participation in any type of early childhood education program is voluntary. Parents of preschool children chose whether or not their child will participate in an early childhood program and they choose what type of program in which to participate. Some parents may have negative perceptions concerning inclusive programs (Palmer, Fuller, Arora & Nelson, 2001; Peck, Staub, Gallucci, & Schwartz, 2004).

Parents may believe that the general education teachers are not trained to provide for the special needs of children with disabilities and may not be able to provide an appropriate education for their children (Serry, Davis, & Johnson, 2000). They may also believe that their child with disabilities will not receive the services and attention they need to succeed in a general education classroom (Garrick & Salend, 2000). Parents of children without disabilities may be concerned that their child will not be challenged in an inclusive classroom and that the teacher will not give their child enough attention secondary to caring for the

children with disabilities (Peck, Staub, Gallucci, & Schwartz, 2004). Parents may also worry that their child will imitate behaviors of some children with disabilities.

For an inclusive early childhood programs to operate, parents of children with and without disabilities must choose to participate in early childhood education and they must choose to participate in an inclusive program. By understanding parents' perceptions of inclusive early childhood programs, and inclusion itself, educators will be able to develop programs that meet requirements of federal policies as well as the needs of families and children.

This study builds upon previous research regarding parent perspectives and will attempt to acquire a clearer understanding of the perceptions of parents of preschool age children regarding inclusion and inclusive early childhood programs. The majority of previous research has focused on the perspectives of parents of children with and without disabilities attending self-defined inclusive preschool programs, without clearly defining the population of children with disabilities. Furthermore, no study has investigated the perceptions of parents whose children attend the Rise School programs. The study will also examine how, if at all, parent perspectives are influenced by key characteristics of the program, the children and the parents. Such research can guide policymakers, administrators and educators in their pursuit of developing educational programs that serve the needs of all children, and appeal to their families and communities.

Statement of the problem

The problem this research will address is decreasing barriers to successful implementation of inclusive early childhood education programs that meet the needs of children of *with and without* disabilities and their families. The guiding philosophy in early childhood is that children of all abilities are included in early childhood programs (NAEYC, in press). Existing literature, however, suggests that the actual implementation of inclusive preschool programs face many challenges. Attempts to facilitate the implementation of inclusive programs are complicated by the lack of availability of such programs.

Shonkoff and Phillips (2000) identified several factors that make it extremely difficult for families to find preschool programs for children with disabilities and other special needs. The inability or unwillingness of many child care providers to accept children with disabilities, transportation and other logistical problems, difficulty coordinating early intervention and child care services, and the scarcity of appropriately trained providers are all barriers for families of children with disabilities face when seeking preschool programs. Paulsell, Cohen, Stieglitz, Lurie-Hurvitz, Fenichel and Kisker (2002) report that in many communities, "the demand for care is so great that centers are able to fill all of their slots and can avoid accepting children with disabilities or other special needs" (pg. 24).

In addition to lack of available openings in inclusive early childhood settings, parents of children with disabilities also have difficulty finding quality care that can accommodate the special needs of their children. (Timmons, Foley, Whitney-Thomas,

Green and Casey, 1999). For example, one mother whose two children (an infant and a three-year-old) had asthma discovered that the child care provider was not giving them their asthma medication. Another mother whose son had a shunt in his head expressed fear that the providers would not understand that her son cannot lay down. (Timmons, Foley, Whitney-Thomas, Green and Casey, 1999). A parent of a child with disabilities must find a quality preschool program that is not only willing to accept their child, but that is able to meet their unique needs.

Erwin, Soodak, Winton, and Turnbull (2001) explained that, "understanding parents' experiences with inclusive education from their own perspectives can provide an invaluable insight into the issues, challenges, and practices of educating young children with disabilities successfully in inclusive environments" (pg. 127). In particular, this research will examine parents whose preschool age children with and without disabilities attend inclusive programs with similar characteristics such as service-delivery models, staff-to-child ratios and children served. Understanding the perspectives of parents, in general, is important for several reasons. First, IDEIA mandates that parents be an active part of the decision-making team and affords parents due process procedures to access if they believe their child is not receiving the services they need. Second, parental involvement in their child's education results in positive attitudes, improved behaviors, improved test scores, higher grades and more successful schools and programs (Yssel, Englebrecht, Oswald, Eloff & Swart, 2007).

However, unlike traditional K-12 education, parents of young children also choose their child's early childhood educational experiences: inclusive or segregated,

public, private or home. Parents of young children with disabilities not only determine their child's educational setting, but also when and where to receive early intervention and educational services for their child and choose to what extent their family will participate in such services. In order for an inclusive early childhood program to be successful, it must have participation from families of children with and without disabilities. Garrick-Duhaney and Salend (2000) explained that it is important to understand the perspectives of parents of children with and without disabilities regarding the effectiveness of inclusion; because parents: decide whether to place their child in an inclusive educational setting, influence their child's developmental and educational experiences and are advocates for reform.

Agencies and educational programs can develop and present what they envision are high-quality, effective early intervention and educational programs; however, if children do not attend these programs, their efforts are wasted. Therefore, stakeholders should understand the parents' perspectives regarding early intervention and education for their children and of issues that concern parents of all children in an inclusive setting. A clearer picture is needed of the characteristics of inclusive programs and the relationship, if any, between those certain characteristics and parent satisfaction. By understanding the perspectives of these families, policy makers and professionals can help to implement policies that increase parent participation, increase parent satisfaction, decrease parent stress and meet the needs of families while maintaining appropriate intervention and educational methods.

This study will focus on The Rise School programs across the United States. The Rise School programs are inclusive, private early childhood programs located in four states that serve children from six months to six years of age. Rise Schools vary according to location and their funding sources. Most schools operate on parent tuition, private donations and fundraising; although Oklahoma and Alabama have partial funding from state agency contracts (Alabama-Part B, Section 619; Oklahoma-State Legislation). The children attend the preschool program five days a week, for six hours a day. Children with disabilities comprise approximately 60 percent of the preschool classes, while 40 percent of the preschool classes are children without disabilities. Most classrooms have a lead teacher with a Master's degree in education, early childhood education or special education, while a few classrooms have lead teachers who are completing their Master's degrees in education, early childhood education or special education. In addition, each classroom has two teacher assistants. Classrooms have an average of ten to twelve children. Children receive integrated therapy services (speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy and music therapy), as part of their preschool program. Two of the schools employ a nurse full-time, while the remaining programs have consultant relationships with medical personnel to meet the needs of the children in the program.

The research will survey the perspectives of parents whose preschool children are enrolled in a Rise School program. This research emerges as a result of sparse literature concerning (1) the beliefs, motivation and concerns of parents of preschool age children with and without disabilities who chose for their children to attend

inclusive programs which enroll children with mild to severe disabilities and (2) the lack of previous research regarding the perceptions of parents whose children attend a Rise School program. The knowledge and understanding gained from this study is needed for professionals and policy makers to implement successful inclusive preschool programs.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of parents whose preschool age children attend an inclusive early childhood program, The Rise School. The study will explore parent perceptions concerning the benefits and risks of inclusion and inclusive preschool program. Personal characteristics of parent or child will be collected. Characteristics will be divided into personal characteristics of the parent (gender, educational level and ethnicity), of the child (child with a disability or a child without a disability, type and severity of disability). This study will contribute to the research base regarding early childhood programming models/characteristics and parent satisfaction/support regarding inclusive early childhood programs.

Seven (7) Rise School programs are currently located in four states: Alabama, Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas. These seven schools have very similar staff-child ratio, service delivery models and programming ratio of children with and without disabilities in each program. However, each school varies individually in respect to geographical location, socio-economic status and student population. The Rise School program model has not been the subject of previous published research.

Significance of the Study

This study adds to the body of research regarding inclusive early childhood education. The study provides valuable data regarding the perceptions of parents of children with and without disabilities who attend the same inclusive preschool program. In addition, by surveying a large sample of parents whose children attend an inclusive program with similar components, positive programming characteristics can be identified and duplicated; while areas of concern can be recognized and addressed. Through this study, educators and professionals can put into practice policies that increase parent participation and satisfaction, decrease parental apprehension and meet the needs of families while maintaining appropriate intervention and education methods.

Research Design

This study is a quantitative study based on survey data. The survey instrument used in this study was developed by Rafferty, Boettcher and Griffin (2001), with minor modifications. This research design and the subsequent methodology were selected as a result of a review of the existing literature regarding the perspectives of parents whose children attended an inclusive educational program. The following research questions were developed:

1. What are the perceptions of parents of children with disabilities regarding inclusion and inclusive programs?
2. What are the perceptions of parents of children without disabilities regarding inclusion and inclusive programs?

3. Are there statistical differences in parental perceptions of inclusion between parents of children with disabilities and parents of children without disabilities?

4. Are there statistically significant differences in parental perceptions of inclusion among parents of children with disabilities according to the severity of the disability?

5. Are there statistically significant differences in parental perceptions of inclusion among parents of children with disabilities according to the type of disability?

6. Is there a statistically significant relationship between parental perceptions of inclusion and the following parental demographic characteristics: gender, ethnicity, income and educational level?

7. Are there statistically significant differences in parental perceptions of inclusive placements within specific disability categories among parents of children with a disability within that category, parents of a child with a disability outside that category and parents of children without a disability?

Participants in the Study

The survey was distributed to all parents of children who attend a Rise School program in the United States (N=289). Rise School programs are located in Austin, TX; Corpus Christi, TX; Dallas, TX; Denver, CO; Houston, TX, Stillwater, OK and Tuscaloosa, AL. Along with the survey, parents will receive an instructional letter explaining the research and an envelope for return.

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions made for this research study:

1. Parents or caregivers responses on the survey are based on their perceptions of inclusion and that their responses are accurate.
2. The survey that is utilized for this study is a valid instrument.

Limitations for the research study are as follows:

1. The study is limited to parents or caregivers of children enrolled in the Rise School programs located in Alabama, Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas. Therefore, the findings may only be generaliziable to populations which share the same characteristics as the Rise School programs.
2. Some of the surveys may be completed by caregivers who are not as familiar with the Rise School program secondary to recent changes in child guardianship.

Organization of the Proposed Study

This study is organized using a five-chapter structure for research. Chapter I contains the research problem introduction, statement of the problem, statement of the purpose, significance of the study, research questions, participants in the study, assumptions and limitations, organization of the proposed study and a summary. Chapter II is a review of related literature. Chapter III describes the methodology and design used to develop and conduct the research study. Chapter IV will present the

findings of the research study. Chapter V will include a discussion of the research and its findings, conclusions and possible recommendations.

Chapter I Summary

Chapter I explained the problem that exists and the purpose of the study. Implementing early childhood educational programs that meet the needs of all children and their families is a challenge for educators and professionals across the nation. Parents have a critical role in the success of such programs and a better understanding of their perceptions of inclusion and inclusive programs is required.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter II

Introduction

The review of the literature will explore the definition of the term "inclusion" in the research base, followed by a summary of the development of inclusive educational settings within the early childhood education realm. Outcomes regarding inclusive education for the school-age student and the preschool child, with and without disabilities, are investigated. The review concludes with a summary of current studies on the perspectives of parents of children and without disabilities regarding inclusion.

Inclusion Defined

Educators do not always agree on the definition of inclusion, a term that is both fluid and evolving. The term "inclusion" has not been defined legally (Smith & Rapport, 1999), and its use, in the classroom and in the literature, continuously redefined its function. Characteristics of an inclusive classroom can vary considerably in the areas of the number of students with disabilities in the class, their disability types, and the characteristics of the personnel in the classroom (Gandhi 2007). Because different educational programs had inconsistent definitions for inclusion and because programs varied in the educational structure and how they provided services, Odom (2000) explained that it would be very complex to actually label programs into specific types. Bailey, McWilliam, Buysse and Wesley (1998) described inclusion as "… the full participation by children with disabilities in

programs and activities for typically developing children" (p.28). Allen and Schwartz (2001) believe inclusion is not defined as a placement issue or strategies, but rather it is about belonging to a community. Odom, et al (1996) explains that this definitional ambiguity "has important implications for researchers, in that findings on inclusion may be generated from vastly different programs types and contexts" (Odom, Peck, Henson, Beckman, Kaiser, Lieber, Brown, Horn and Schwartz, 1996, p.37)

However, some clarification of the term "inclusion" remains necessary. Many other terms, such as "mainstreaming" and "integration," are frequently used interchangeably with inclusion, but they are not synonymous. Mainstreaming is described in the literature as the practice of removing children from their special education class for part of the day and placing them in typical, general education classes with peers (McLean & Hanline,1990). Bricker (1995) pointed out that the term "mainstreaming" was not accurate when referring to early childhood inclusion secondary to the fact that many public school programs do not offer early childhood/preschool-age services for typically developing preschoolers; therefore children with disabilities are "mainstreamed" with typically developing children who are older. Generally, integration is the process of combining children with and without disabilities in different activities for a portion of the program time (Odom & McEvoy, 1988). Inclusion replaces terms such as "mainstreaming" and "integration," which provided "useful frameworks during early periods as the nature and meaning of participation between children with and without disabilities evolved" (Guralnick, 2001, p. 3).

Guralnick (2001) identified four categories of inclusion that can be implemented by public or private agencies. Those categories were as follows:

1. ***Full inclusion*** describes programs where children with disabilities are full participants in the general environment and the general early childhood educator is responsible for all of the children, although specialized staff can provide special education services and other professionals, such as speech-language pathology can be integrated into the early childhood curriculum.
2. The ***cluster model*** describes programs that have a small group of children with disabilities that is embedded within an existing program designed to serve children without disabilities. The children with disabilities typically participate in the program activities, though they are frequently assigned a separate physical location within the larger program and assisted by special education staff, not necessary the early childhood teacher.
3. ***Reverse inclusion,*** as described by Guralnick (2001) refers to settings in which 40% of all children are typically developing children who are added in to a specialized program for children with disabilities. Guralnick (2001) explains that there are substantial variations throughout reverse inclusion programs in terms of their curriculum, structure and philosophy of education.

4. ***Social inclusion*** is used to describe programs in which children with disabilities and children who are developing typically are in the same location or building, but spend most of their days in separate spaces with separate staff. Social interaction opportunities are planned during recreational times and free play.

The lack of consensus regarding a definition of inclusion resulted in a joint position statement from The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). These professional organizations recognized that "having a common understanding of what inclusion means is fundamentally important for determining what types of practices and supports are necessary to achieve high quality inclusion (NAEYC, in press)." DAC and NAEYC (in press) define early childhood inclusion as follows:

> Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and service include (1) access, (2) participation, and (3) supports.
>
> 1. ***Access***: Providing access to a wide range of learning opportunities, activities, settings, and environments is a defining feature of high quality early childhood inclusion.

Inclusion may take many different forms and may occur in various organizational and community contexts, such as homes, Head Start, child care, faith-based program, recreational programs, preschool, public pre-kindergarten through early elementary education, and blended early childhood education/early childhood special education programs.

2. ***Participation***: Depending on the individual needs and priorities of young children and families, implementation of inclusion involves a range of approaches in a variety of settings – from embedded, routines-based teaching to more explicit interventions – to scaffold learning and participation for all children. Tiered models in early childhood hold promise for helping adults organize assessments and interventions by level of intensity for infants and young children who need additional supports to learn and develop.

3. ***Supports***: An infrastructure of inclusion supports must be in place to undergird the efforts of individuals and organizations providing inclusive services to children and families. Because collaboration among key stakeholders is a cornerstone for implementing high quality early childhood inclusion, resources and program policies are needed to

> promote multiple opportunities for communication and collaboration among these groups. Specialized services and therapies must be implemented in a coordinated fashion and integrated with general early care and education services. (pg. 2)

While researchers, administrators and practitioners may not be able to define inclusion in strict terms with a specific definition (Schwartz, Sandall, Odom, Horn & Beckman, 2002), individual characteristics of inclusive programs/schools in research is necessary to study key elements for community, program, child success.

Development of Inclusive Education

Since 1974, inclusion has emerged as an option for families and educators in addition to participating in segregated programs or "opting out" of program participation altogether. Odom (2002) explains that although inclusion for preschoolers has appeared in the literature since the early 1970's, inclusion for preschoolers has only recently become a common setting. Over 50% of preschoolers with disabilities are receiving services in some form of inclusive setting (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). The evolution of inclusion in the preschool setting has been summarized by Bailey, McWilliam, Buysse, and Wesley (1998) who identified the following four elements that led to the placement of preschool children with disabilities with peers without disabilities: (1) legal mandates, (2) societal/moral

foundations, (3) rational assumptions, and (4) research findings (Bailey, McWilliam, Buysse & Wesley, 1998).

Legislation

In 1954, the landmark civil rights case, *Brown v. Board of Education* (347 U.S. 483) also inadvertently helped to bring about new opportunities for children with disabilities. The ideas of the "importance of education to the 'life and minds' of children" and the "inherent inequality of separate education" were expanded to the circumstances of individuals with disabilities (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987, p. 368). While this case was not conceived to help children with disabilities, its ruling inspired the idea that segregated education was not appropriate for any child, regardless of race, ethnicity or ability.

One of the first mandates that directly targeted children with disabilities was the requirement in 1968 that at least 10% of enrollment in Head Start programs be children with disabilities (Bailey, McWilliam, Buysse & Wesley, 1998). Then, in 1972, Mills v. Board of Education (348 F. Supp. 866) addressed the issue of financial burden. The court ruled that the school district that had refused to enroll children solely on the basis of their disability could not use the financial constraints of a district for excluding children with disabilities. In 1975, Public Law 94-142 - the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) introduced the concept of educating children with disabilities in educational settings or placements that were the LRE possible for the child. This legislation mandated that every child was entitled to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), in which children with disabilities

were to be educated in the general education classroom with their typically developing peers, as appropriate. The "as appropriate" terminology left some parents concerned that their children were not being educated in the least restrictive environment. Many children with special needs, though attending school, were segregated in separate classroom and in separate buildings than their peers. In addition to the policy regarding educating school-age children with disabilities, the EHA also provided incentives for states to serve preschool age children with disabilities.

In 1986, the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments (PL 99-457), which amended PL 94-142, created a mandate that states would serve children with disabilities ages 3-5 years of age (Grisham-Brown, Hemmeter & Pretti-Frontczak 2005). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 extended the provision of LRE to children of preschool age. The IDEA was revised again in 2004 and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). Preschool children are served under the Part B of IDEIA, while services provided to children birth to three years were defined under Part C of IDEIA (Etscheidt, 2006). School districts are funded to provide services, which may include preschool classrooms, to children with disabilities. However, since they do not receive funding for young children without disabilities, most school districts do not offer preschool programs for children without disabilities, therefore limiting inclusion opportunities. (Lieber, Hanson, Beckman, Odom, Sandall, Schwartz, et. al. 2000).

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) required that public programs be accessible to persons with disabilities and that admission into a program could not be denied on the basis of a disability. The ADA of 1990 prohibits child care centers and family child care homes from enrollment discrimination based on a child's disability (Galant & Hanline, 1993). Centers cannot exclude children with disabilities from their programs unless their presence would impose a direct threat to the health or safety of others or require a fundamental alteration of the program. Centers must make reasonable modifications to their policies and practices to integrate children, parents, and guardians with disabilities into their programs unless doing so would constitute a fundamental alteration of the program. Centers should not refuse to enroll children secondary to medication needs, diapering needs, developmental delays or other individual needs. These legal changes necessitated the need for the assessment of the perspectives of parents of all preschool children enrolled in early childhood programs to ensure their effectiveness and their ability to provide the necessary and desired services for families.

Societal Ideology

In addition to the sequential, legal mandates requiring more inclusive settings for preschoolers with disability, an overall sense of moral obligation has also been sited as a driving force behind the inclusive movement. Bailey, McWilliam, Buysse and Wesley (1998) explain that the moral argument is simply that children with disabilities have the right to participate in programs and activities of daily life available to other children. Children with disabilities should experience the same

quality preschool program as their typically developing peers. Researchers continue to point out that the moral argument was not necessarily based on any empirical basis or legal case, but on the belief that segregating children in our society is unacceptable and that inclusion is the appropriate alternative.

Rational assumptions

The third element supporting the emergence of inclusive education in the early childhood classroom is the idea that placing preschool children with disabilities with peers without disabilities has benefits for both groups of children (Holahan & Costenbader, 2000). Rational arguments were based on the assumption "that a policy should be implemented if it will benefit one or more individuals or groups (Bailey, McWilliam, Buysee, & Wesley, 1998, p. 29). These researchers believed that children with disabilities *should* have a more stimulating learning environment, be able to interact, socialize and learn with children without disabilities; while children without disabilities *should* become more accepting of differences and learn about differences in people (Bailey, McWilliam, Buysee, & Wesley, 1998). The key concept in this element is the idea of *should.* These are subjective assumptions based on previous knowledge and experiences, not clear, definitive evidence.

Research Findings

The final element identified was empirical foundations. Research regarding inclusion has concluded that inclusive placements may benefit some children with disabilities by increasing their social, adaptive and academic skills (Moore & Gilbreath, 1998; McDonell, Thorson, Disher, Mathot-Buckner, Mendel & Ray, 2003;

Hundert, Mahoney, Mundy, & Vernon, 1998). Children without disabilities may benefit from inclusive classroom by gaining a sense of understanding and compassion for differences (Diamond, Hestenes, Carpenter & Innes, 1997; Idol, 2007).

A thorough review of the current literature regarding inclusion will be presented in the subsequent pages. The review will first explore the effects of inclusive early childhood education programs on preschoolers with and without disabilities. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the research concerning the perspectives of parents of children with and without disabilities regarding inclusive educational settings in K-12 and early childhood classrooms.

Inclusion and the Preschool-age child

A limited amount of research has been conducted regarding the outcomes of inclusion for children with and without disabilities in inclusive settings (Kontos, Moore & Giorgetti, 1998; O'Brien, 2001). The existing research base has consistently found that, overall, participation in a quality inclusive preschool benefits children with and without disabilities; however, some studies have found alternative conclusions (Bruder & Staff, 1998). An explanation of the findings in the literature pertaining to the benefits and drawbacks of inclusive settings for children without disabilities and children with disabilities were presented.

Preschool-age children without disabilities

Preschool children without disabilities (n=31) who attended inclusive preschool programs were found to have higher acceptability ratings of children with and without disabilities and greater knowledge of disabilities than children attending

regular preschool classes (Diamond, Hestenes, Carpenter & Innes, 1997). Not surprisingly, another study (Okagaki, Diamond, Kontos & Hestenes, 1998) determined a positive relationship between the attitudes of children without disabilities (n=36) toward children with disabilities and the amount of social interaction directed toward children with disabilities.

Preschool-age children with disabilities

Mills, Cole, Jenkins and Dale (1998) compared three levels of inclusion: special education-only, integrated special education, and mainstream placements, regarding cognitive and language development of preschool children with disabilities (n=66). Using pretest/posttest standardized assessments, they concluded that children with disabilities could benefit from some level of inclusion. They found that "higher functioning" preschoolers with disabilities benefited more from the integrated placements; whereas "lower functioning" preschoolers with disabilities benefited as much in the mainstream placement as they did in the special education-only placement. Children in all three programs showed gains in language development.

Hundert, Mahoney, Mundy, and Vernon (1998) reported that children with severe disabilities (n=94) made greater developmental gains in the pre-academic and communication domains in inclusive settings than in segregated settings. In the segregated classroom the class size was smaller, the adult/child ratio was twice as high and the school day was almost half the length as compared to the inclusive preschool. The researchers did not find any significant gains in the level of peer interactions for any group of children with disabilities.

Additional research regarding the influence of educational setting on preschool child outcomes was conducted by Bruder and Staff (1998). They studied 37 preschool children with disabilities. Eighteen children attended an inclusion program and 19 children attended segregated rehabilitation programs that served only children with disabilities. The study consisted of conducting pretest/posttest assessments, with a 12-month span between each assessment. Preschool children with disabilities attending an inclusive or segregated program progressed at "the same rate of development, as measured by standardized assessment instruments, regardless of the type of classroom and service characteristics." (Bruder & Staff, 1998, p. 36).

Overall, the literature reflects positive outcomes for children with and without disabilities in inclusive settings. Children with disabilities perform as well as, if not better, in inclusive settings as compared to segregated settings (Mills, Cole, Jenkins and Dale, 1998). Also, children without disabilities gained experiences that positively impact their understanding of disabilities and their attitudes regarding differences (Diamond, Hestenes, Carpenter & Innes, 1997; Okagaki, Diamond, Kontos & Hestenes, 1998).

Parents Perceptions of Inclusion

The research base regarding inclusion extends beyond formal measurements of academic and development growth within the classroom setting. The perceptions of parents regarding inclusion and the impact it has on their child is vital to comprehending the overall benefits and drawbacks to the inclusion experience. Parents exert tremendous influence on the success of inclusive programming from

their choice to participate and their socialization of their child regarding attitudes and beliefs of other individuals, including individuals with disabilities (Stoneman, 2001).

In 2000, Garrick-Duhaney and Salend reviewed seventeen research studies including samples consisting of family members of children with and without disabilities and was related to the "attitudes, reactions, experiences, or perceptions" (p.122), of family members whose children attended an educational setting that included children with and without disabilities. The studies reported that parents of children without disabilities perceived specific benefits of inclusive placements for their children including social cognition, pro-social personal characteristics and greater acceptance of human diversity.

Additional research explained perceptions of parents of school-age children. A synopsis of current literature regarding the perceptions of parents of preschool-age children with and without disabilities concerning inclusion and inclusive programs will follow, as well as existing studies pertaining to relationships between certain variables addressed in this study.

Parents of School-age (K-12) Children

Research on the perceptions of parents toward inclusion continued to be varied. Many studies examined the perspectives of parents of elementary and older children with and without disabilities (Bennett, Deluca & Bruns, 1997; Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy & Widaman, 1998; Palmer, Fuller, Arora & Nelson, 2001). These studies found that parents of children with and without disabilities have generally

positive attitudes toward inclusion, although some concerns were reported including teacher preparation and individual needs.

Parents of school-age (K-12) children with disabilities

Parents of school-age children with disabilities have mixed perceptions of the benefits and risks of inclusive educational settings for their child. Some parents acknowledge potential benefits of inclusive education settings regarding socialization (Leyser & Kirk, 2004; Ritter, Michel & Irby, 1999; Green & Shinn, 1994), while other parents express concerns regarding self-esteem and acceptance in the general education classroom (Leyser & Kirk, 2004). Perceptions regarding academic benefits were also varied (Palmer, Fuller, Arora & Nelson, 2001; Green & Shinn, 1994).

In 1998, Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, Widaman, and Best examined possible influences on the perceptions of parents of children with disabilities regarding inclusive practices. They surveyed 460 families of children received services from a large metropolitan school district in southern California. This included children ages 3-23, with approximately 80% of the children being K-12. They concluded that similarities regarding inclusive practices tended to be based on individual characteristics of the child, the perceived needs of the child and family and the child's placement history rather than the diagnosed disability or condition. This study had a relatively large sample size and provided insight as to parents' perceptions. However, it was limited to one geographic area, one city, one school district; therefore, its generalizability to other programs is limited.

Palmer, Fuller, Arora and Nelson (2001) analyzed a 62-statement survey that included a Likert-scale and written statements from 140 parents of children (3-21) with severe disabilities that attended a segregated, special education class in a public school setting. Approximately 45% of parents expressed some positive perception regarding inclusive placements for children with severe disabilities, based on the Likert-scale results. However, the written statements revealed only 13% positive perceptions of inclusion. Parents sited increased academic or functional skills secondary to higher expectations as a major reason supporting inclusive programming for children with severe disabilities. Parents were not in favor of inclusive placements for children with severe disabilities secondary to the overall severity of their child's disability; moreover, beliefs surfaced that children would negatively impact the teachers/students in the general education setting and that children's needs could not be met in the general education classroom setting.

Leyser and Kirk (2004) surveyed 437 parents of children with disabilities residing in a Midwestern state. Of the 437 parents surveyed, 400 were parents of school-age children (6 years and older), while 37 were parents of children ages 3-5 that received services through their local school districts. Their findings were overall consistent with previous studies showing positive perceptions of inclusion by parents of children with disabilities (mild and severe). Parents cited "potential social and affective outcomes" (p.281), as a main benefit of an inclusive education placement for their child. However, even though the parents were supportive of the inclusive

placement, concerns emerged about social acceptance, quality of instruction and loss of services.

Ritter, Michel and Irby (1999) interviewed the parents of five middle school children, diagnosed with a learning disability and attending an inclusive program. The study identified five themes regarding inclusion as reported by the parents during interviews. Those themes included the following: children had increased self-confidence in relationships with peers and in academic expectations, in self-esteem, and in seeing teachers as supportive, all compared to when the student was in special education classes.

Green and Shinn (1994) interviewed 21 parents of third and fifth grade students who received special education resource service for less than half a day regarding their perceptions of reintegration of special education student into general education classrooms. Researchers found that 52% of the parents had a negative perception regarding their child attending a general education classroom. The majority of parents expressed liking the extra help the child received in the resource room and that they had seen increases in their child's self-esteem after beginning to attend the special education resource class.

Parents of school-age (K-12) children without disabilities

Although some parents of school-age children without disabilities articulated some apprehension concerning the inclusion of school-age children with disabilities in general education classrooms (Peck, Staub, Gallucci & Schwartz, 2004), most research examining perceptions of parents of school-age children regarding inclusion

found positive attitudes and expectations (Lowenbraun, Madge & Affleck, 1990; Giangrego, Edleman, Clondinger, & Dennis, 1993). Peck, Staub, Gallucci and Schwartz (2004) studied parents of typically developing elementary aged children (n=389) and found that some parents were concerned that their child would imitate behaviors of children with disabilities. Parents also reported that their child did not receive enough attention and supervision, because of the amount of time that a child with disabilities required or because instruction and expectations were lowered to accommodate the child with disabilities.

Lowenbraun, Madge and Affleck (1990) found contrasting results from their research. They studied the satisfaction of 93 parents of children without disabilities who were enrolled in an elementary-level integrated program. They found that a majority of the parents were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their child's placement in the integrated classroom as well as with their child's academic and social achievements.

Giangreco, Edleman, Cloninger, and Dennis (1993) also found similarly positive perceptions from parents of school-age children with disabilities. They surveyed 81 parents of children without disabilities (kindergarten through eighth grade) who attended programs with children with severe disabilities. Ninety percent of the parents reported that the opportunity was a positive experience for their child. Parents also reported that inclusive educational placement had positively impacted their child's social/emotional development.

While limited in volume, the literature regarding perceptions of parents of school-age children without disabilities leans toward an overall positive perception of inclusion and inclusive settings. Obviously, this literature base needs to be expanded so that stronger conclusions and applications of findings can be applied to develop programs that are beneficial to all children and their families.

Perceptions of Parents of Preschool-age Children

While conducted in different educational environments, studies also examined perceptions of preschool children parents, with and without disabilities, regarding inclusive early childhood settings. These studies revealed similar disparities: positive parental experiences and attitudes dispersed with the apprehension and concern among parents of preschool children toward inclusion.

Parents of Preschool-Age Children without Disabilities

In studies throughout the literature base, parents of children without disabilities have been positive regarding their attitudes toward preschool inclusion (Stoneman 2001). Parents of children without disabilities consistently reported that they believe a primary benefit of their child attending an inclusive preschool was children learning to be tolerant and accepting of differences (Peck, Carlson & Helmstetter, 1992; Stoneman, 2001; Rafferty & Griffin, 2005).

Similar results were found in another survey of parents whose children attended an integrated day care program (Bailey & Winton, 1987). This study revealed that, "the parents felt that inclusion was beneficial and promoted the acceptance of children with disabilities and exposed them to the real world" (Bailey

& Winton, 1987, p. 86). Peck, Carlson and Helmstetter (1992) found that parents of children without disabilities (n=125) reported benefits for children enrolled in inclusive early childhood programs, including social cognition, pro-social personal characteristics and an acceptance of diversity in others.

Mothers of preschoolers without disabilities whose child attended educational programming in local school districts and community agencies believed that inclusive settings provided them with increased opportunities. These mothers learned about individual differences and helped their families understand the experience of families who have children with special needs (Guralnick, 1994). In a study of 204 parents of preschool children without disabilities that attended an inclusive preschool program in Georgia or Massachusetts, Green and Stoneman (1989) reported that parents of preschoolers without disabilities whose children attended integrated programs had positive beliefs toward the education of their children in an integrated program.

While some studies focused primarily on perceptions of parents toward inclusion alone, other studies have also compared the variable of experience with inclusive programs and the effects of that personal experience. Miller and Strain (1992) found in their survey of 130 parents of children without disabilities, ages three and four, that parents whose child attended an inclusive program more strongly favored integration opportunities than parents of typical children who did not attend an inclusive program. However, they also concluded that the mean score for each parent sample revealed that both groups "held very favorable attitudes toward integration opportunities." (pg. 4).

Stahmer, Carter, Baker and Miwa (2003) studied a small sample of parents of typically developing toddlers (25-36 months of age) that attended either an inclusive program or a regular preschool program. Their findings were consistent with previous studies where parents of typically developing children attending a quality preschool program were satisfied with their child's experience in the respective program. They also shared that parents whose children attended the inclusive program identified specific components that were important in their decision to enroll their child in an inclusive program. Those components included low student-teacher ratio, benefit of speech and occupational therapy, availability of observation booths and parent educational opportunities for families.

Seery, Davis and Johnson (2000) also examined the idea of the influence of experience or familiarity with inclusion concerning the perspectives of parents of preschool children without disabilities. The researchers interviewed 30 parents (n=20 parents of children without disabilities; n=10 parents of children with disabilities) as part of a larger study that also included interviews of teaching professionals and support staff. The study took place in an urban university-based preschool program in the Midwest. Participants were interviewed via telephone early in the school year and at the end of the school year. Parents became less concerned about the program overall during the course of the school year (25.4% early year, 81.9% late year).

In the same study, Seery, Davis, and Johnson (2000) also found that some parents did express consistent concerns concerning the amount of attention adults are able to give to children, the number of staff in general and the lack of training of the

staff. Green and Stoneman (1989) also found in their research that parents of children without disabilities were concerned regarding inclusion and were anxious regarding the integration of some children with disabilities. They found parents were more concerned regarding the integration of children with severe disabilities, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, and behaviors disorders than children with physical and sensory disabilities.

Generally, parents of preschool children without disabilities have positive perceptions concerning inclusion. Parents sited an increased awareness and acceptance of children with disabilities, teacher-child ratios and extra services as positive components of the inclusive educational setting (Bailey & Winton (1987); Guralnick, 1994). Sometimes actual participation in an inclusive program altered parents' of children without disabilities perceptions of preschool programs; although, some parents continued to express concerns toward the integration of children with severe disabilities (Green & Stoneman, 1989; Seery, Davis & Johnson, 2000).

Parents of preschool children with disabilities

Current literature has concluded that most parents of preschool children with disabilities have positive perspectives regarding inclusion and inclusive early childhood programs (Miller & Strain, 1992; Rafferty & Griffin, 2005). Parents cited increased developmental skills and the opportunity to develop friendships and learn real-life skills as benefits of inclusive placements (Diamond & LeFurgy, 1994; Guralnick, 1994; Bennett, Deluca & Bruns, 1997; Rafferty & Griffin, 2005).

Miller and Strain (1992) surveyed 100 parents of children ages three though five with developmental delays regarding whether children with disabilities should be integrated with regular education students into the regular school environment. Of this number, 65 parents had children in mainstreamed settings while 35 had children attending a segregated setting. Based on their 14-item survey, they concluded that both groups of parents strongly favored integration opportunities.

Rafferty and Griffin (2005) surveyed 161 parents of children with disabilities whose children attended the same preschool in suburban New York State. Over 80 percent of the parents reported that the inclusive preschool setting helped their child develop independence in self-help skills and provided them with more chances to participate in other activities. Bennett, Deluca and Bruns (1997) interviewed parents whose children with a disability are in an inclusive setting. They reported that their children benefited from inclusion with increases in social, academic, and developmental skills, in availability of appropriate role models for behavior, and in friendships with peers.

Guralnick (1994) studied mothers of preschoolers with disabilities through interviews and a questionnaire to determine their perceptions of drawbacks and benefits of an inclusive educational setting. This study had a large sample size (n=222 with disabilities, n=59 without disabilities). Guralnick reported that mothers identified several benefits of integrated educational programming, including fostering their acceptance, preparation for the real world, and providing them with an interesting and creative environment that stimulates their learning.

Another study conducted in 1994 was by Diamond and LeFurgy. This study included 80 parents of preschool children without disabilities and 23 parents of preschool children with disabilities whose children attended an inclusive program that was reported to provide developmentally appropriate practices, with individualized goals and therapies. Surveys were given at the beginning and the end of the school year. Diamond and LeFurgy (1994) reported that parents held positive attitudes towards inclusion and that by their child participating in an inclusive program, parents' attitudes may be influenced positively.

While the perceptions of most parents of children with disabilities toward inclusion remained positive, many of these same families still have concerns regarding various components of inclusion. Guralnick (1994) found, in relationship to their child's social development, that although mothers of preschoolers in both groups (with and without disabilities) believed their children's placement in an integrated program would be socially beneficial and prepare their children for the real world, a significant percentage of mothers (40% and 51% of the mothers of children in integrated programs and specialized programs, respectively) expressed concern that their children would be rejected by peers in integrated settings.

Rafferty and Griffin (2005) found that 35 to 37% of all parents (of children with and without disabilities) surveyed believed potential risks of an inclusive placement for their children. Those risks included that teachers not having the education or experience to meet their children's needs and their children not receive the individualized education or special instruction they need from the teacher.

Guralnick (1994) found mothers of preschoolers with and without disabilities were concerned about the procurement of special services, availability of trained personnel in inclusive settings, and rejection of children by their peers without disabilities.

The concern of parents of children with disabilities may have toward inclusive classroom for their child were also discussed by Garrick-Duhaney and Salend (2000), who reported that parents worried that their children would not receive the appropriate services needed and that teachers may not be prepared to deal with their children's needs. They also report that parents of children with disabilities may also be concerned about what the other parents would think about their children.

Rafferty, Boettcher and Griffin (2001) surveyed 244 parents of children with and without disabilities who attended a community-based preschool in suburban New York State. The found that most parents in both groups agreed in the potential benefits of an inclusive preschool, except that parents of children with disabilities were less likely to agree that inclusion would "make children with disabilities want to try harder," as compared to parents of children without disabilities (Rafferty, Boettcher & Griffin, pg. 274).

The perceptions of parents of preschool children with disabilities about inclusion and inclusive preschool programs were varied. Although many studies reported a variety of concerns of parents of preschool children with disabilities, the majority of parents view inclusion of children with disabilities as positive, with many benefits for the children with disabilities (Guralnick, 1994; Bennett, Deluca & Bruns, 1997; Rafferty, Boettcher & Griffin, 2001; Garrick-Duhaney & Salend, 2000). More

research was needed to gain insight into the perceived drawbacks about inclusive services so that progress could be achieved in providing a positive educational experience for all children and their families, regardless of their abilities.

Perceptions of parents and key characteristics:

To develop a more comprehensive view of the perceptions of parents of preschool children with disabilities, researchers began to explore the impact and possible relationship between certain key characteristics and the perceptions of parents of preschool children regarding inclusion. Current research has examined a possible relationship between parent perceptions and the severity of their child's disability, the type of disability, parental characteristics and the type/severity of disabilities of other children in inclusive environments.

Severity of their child's disability

Buysse, Bailey, Smith and Simeonsson (1994) explored the relationship between the severity of a child's disability and the type of placement where the child would attend. They surveyed 162 children enrolled in either a specialized program exclusively for children with special needs (n=69) or an inclusive program (n=93). Inclusive programs were described as "regular childcare" and "preschool programs." They found that the children attending inclusive programs were more "mildly disabled" and functioning at higher levels than children attending programs designed exclusively for children with disabilities. This was a relevant study concerning the influence that parental choice has on the educational placement of their child with a disability.

Two other studies directly examined at the relationship between the type of disability a child has and their parents' attitude toward inclusion. Rafferty, Boettcher and Griffin (2001) surveyed 121 parents and found no relationship between the attitude of parents' of children with disabilities toward inclusion and the self-reported severity of their child's disability (mild, moderate or severe). In contrast, Leyser and Kirk (2004) reported in their study of 437 parents of students with mild, moderate or severe disabilities that parents of students with mild disabilities had more supportive views of inclusion than parents of students with moderate or severe disabilities. Palmer, Fuller, Arora and Nelson (2001) surveyed 140 parents of children with severe disabilities, ages 3-21, regarding full inclusive placements for their children. Over half of the parents disagreed with full inclusive of students with severe disabilities, citing that the general characteristics of the child's disability would impede benefits from participation, that their child would overburden the teachers or students and that their child's needs could not be met within a general education classroom

The shallow research base and discrepancies in existing findings regarding the relationship between the perceptions of parents of children with disabilities regarding inclusion and the severity of their child's disability warrant additional research in this area.

A Child's Type of Disability

Kasari, Freeman, Bauminger and Alkin (1999) studied the perceptions of parents of children with autism (n=113) and Down's syndrome (n=149) regarding inclusion. They found that diagnosis did impact parents' attitudes regarding

inclusion. They also found that the age of the child impacted parents' perceptions regarding inclusion. The younger the child with a disability, the more positive perceptions the parents had regarding inclusion. Limitations include unknown information concerning the characteristics of the current program the child attended (inclusive or segregated, services provided, frequency, and public or private setting).

Bennett, Lee and Lueke (1998) interviewed 18 parents of children with disabilities, ages three to six, who attended an inclusive educational setting. They did not find a relationship between the perceptions of parents regarding inclusion and their child's type of disability. However, the sample size was very small, with only a few disabilities represented by one to three parents. Existing literature provides inconclusive results about the relationship between the type of disability and a parent's perception regarding inclusion.

Parent characteristics: Gender, Ethnicity, Educational Level

Guralnick (1994) studied mothers of preschoolers with disabilities through interviews and a questionnaire to determine their perceptions of drawbacks and benefits of an inclusive educational setting. This study had a large sample size (n=222 with disabilities, n=59 without disabilities). Guralnick (1994) also noted that perspectives of the mothers were not related to their own child's disability, placement or most other characteristics measured in the study (age, gender, ethnicity, IQ score, and language development). However, the study noted that mothers whose children had behavior problems were substantially more concerned about the negative impact of inclusion as compared to mothers of children did not have behavior problems.

Stoiber, Gettinger and Goetz (1998) surveyed parents of children with and without disabilities from a variety of educational settings (Head Start, Kindergartens, Child Care programs and university-affiliated private preschool program), community settings, economic and martial status**.** They surveyed 260 parents of children without disabilities and 150 parents of children with disabilities (including speech/language delays, cognitive delays, and behavior disorders). They found that educational levels, marital status and the number of children in the home influenced parents' beliefs about inclusion. More positive beliefs were found with parents that had received a college education compared to a high school education and married parents as compared to single parents.

Green and Stoneman (1989) surveyed 204 parents of preschool children without disabilities regarding their attitudes toward preschool mainstreaming. They found that maternal attitudes were predicted by parent age and education. Paternal attitudes could not be predicted by parent age or education.

Leyser and Kirk (2004) surveyed 437 parents of student with disabilities and concluded that the educational level of the parent influenced their attitude regarding inclusion. Parents with college education "believed" in the benefits of inclusion more than parents with a high school education or less. They attributed this difference to "individuals with higher educational levels are more likely to be exposed to information and have more opportunities to reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of inclusion, thus increasing their tolerance levels" (p. 282).

Laws and Millward (2001) surveyed 131 parents of children with Down syndrome, ages 4-19 years of age to study the relationship between parents' satisfaction of the education of the their child and the parent's involvement with their child's education and perceived school climate. Researchers confirmed their hypothesis that there was indeed a relationship between the variables. One interesting note is that the researchers concluded that parent satisfaction was not dependent on the type of school program (segregated verses inclusive) or the child's stage in school (preschool (n=2); primary school (n=88) or secondary school (n=41).

Current research has revealed that a relationship exists between some parental characteristics and parents' perceptions of inclusion and inclusive programs (Green & Stoneman, 1989; Stoiber, Gettinger & Goetz, 1998; Leyser & Kirk, 2004), however, the results vary (Guralnick, 1994).

Parents' Perceptions of Inclusion and a Child's Type of Disability

A possible relationship could be between parent perceptions and a hypothetical child's type of disability. While most research explored how parents felt about the inclusion of their own child, Rafferty, Boettcher and Griffin (2001) looked at parents views of the inclusion of other children with disabilities. The researchers surveyed 244 parents of children with and without disabilities who attended a community-based preschool in suburban New York State. They found that most parents of children with and without disabilities were not as supportive of inclusive educational placement for children with certain disabilities, such as cognitive impairments, emotional problems or severe disabilities (22-35% of parents were not

supportive of inclusion). This relationship remained crucial because one would assume that a parent of a child with disabilities would be supportive of the inclusion of other children with disabilities, but this may not be the case. Just as previous researchers cautioned against developing a "one-size-fits-all" mentality regarding inclusion (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994) because of different outcomes for different children, we must also seek to understand the relationship between parental perceptions and disability, not just draw conclusions.

Chapter II Summary

Quality inclusive preschool programs can provide children with and without disabilities and their families the opportunity to learn and interact with each other. Current research concerning the perceptions of parents of children with and without disabilities that attended a quality inclusive preschool setting continues to be limited when considering the potential impact participation in such a setting could have for children, families and society. While the existing literature base includes many studies regarding parents perceptions regarding inclusion, few studies clearly define the characteristics of children with disabilities that attend the program. Research indicates that while parents are supportive of inclusion, they have concerns with the type and severity of the children's disabilities and the impact of inclusion on classroom environments. Previous studies have observed that certain parental characteristics may impact these concerns. This study will add to the literature base by providing data based on a relatively large sample, with identifiable programming characteristics, and allowing for data that could be generalized and duplicated in other

preschool inclusion programs studies. This study will focus exclusively on the parents of children with and without disabilities that attend a Rise School program across the United States. Rise School programs were selected because they have philosophies, curriculum and programming models that are consistent at all sites and the Rise School programs have not been the focus of previous research despite serving children with and without disabilities, their families and communities since 1972.

METHODOLOGY

Chapter III

Introduction

This study examined the perceptions of parents whose preschool age children attend an inclusive early childhood program, The Rise School. The study will explore parent perceptions concerning the benefits and risks of inclusion and inclusive preschool program. Personal characteristics of parent or child will be collected. Characteristics will be divided into personal characteristics of the parent (gender, educational level and ethnicity), of the child (child with a disability or a child without a disability, type and severity of disability). This chapter explained the procedures and methodology utilized in this quantitative study. The chapter consists of seven sections:

1. Research design and questions,
2. Population (including Rise School program description and settings),
3. Survey instrument,
4. Survey items,
5. Data collection,
6. Data analysis, and a
7. Summary of Methodology.

Research Design

The research design for this study is quantitative, using survey methodology to systematically collect data from a non-random sample of parents. A survey method

was selected because it lends itself to the purpose of the study. Surveys are efficient to distribute when sampling multiple sites in multiple states and also allow for a relatively rapid turnaround process (Dillman, 2000). Survey methodology allows for researchers to use questionnaires as the primary method of obtaining information from a specific sample and then be able to generalize the findings to a specific population so that inferences can be made about characteristics or perceptions of the actual population (Dillman, 2000).

The survey instrument to be used, with modifications, in the study was developed by Rafferty, Griffin and Boettcher (2001). The design and research methodology was selected after an extensive review of related literature, especially the research of Rafferty, Griffin and Boettcher (2001) and Rafferty and Griffin (2005) regarding parent perceptions and of Guralnick (2001) regarding early childhood inclusion. Their work, along with related literature provided the foundation for the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of parents of children with disabilities regarding inclusion and inclusive programs?
2. What are the perceptions of parents of children without disabilities regarding inclusion and inclusive programs?
3. Are there statistically significant differences in parental perceptions of inclusion between parents of children with disabilities and parents of children without disabilities?

4. Are there statistically significant differences in parental perceptions of inclusion among parents of children with disabilities according to the severity of the disability?

5. Are there statistically significant differences in parental perceptions of inclusion among parents of children with disabilities according to the type of disability?

6. Is there a statistically significant relationship between parental perceptions of inclusion and the following parental demographic characteristics: gender, ethnicity, income and educational level?

7. Are there statistically differences in parental perceptions of inclusive placements within specific disability categories among parents of children with a disability within that category, parents of a child with a disability outside that category and parents of children without a disability?

Description of the Population

This study describes the relationship between parents' perceptions of inclusion and particular characteristics of parents, children and/ or programs. The participants surveyed for the study were parents or caregivers of preschool age children with and without disabilities who attend an inclusive early childhood program (Rise School). All seven Rise School programs across the United States participated in the study.

Rise School programs are private early childhood education programs that serve children from six months to six years of age. Rise Schools vary according to

location regarding their funding sources. Most school rely on parent tuition, private donations and fundraising; although Oklahoma and Alabama have partial funding from state agency contracts (Alabama-Part B, Section 619; Oklahoma-State Legislation). The children attend the preschool program Monday-Friday, for six hours a day. Children with disabilities comprise approximately 60 percent of the preschool classes, while 40 percent of the preschool classes are children without disabilities (reverse mainstreaming inclusion model). Most classrooms have a lead teacher with a Master's degree in education, early childhood education or special education, while a few classrooms have lead teachers who are completing their Master's degrees in education, early childhood education or special education. In addition, each classroom has two teacher assistants. Classrooms have an average of ten to twelve children. Children receive integrated therapy services (speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy and music therapy), as part of their preschool program. Two of the schools employ a nurse full-time, while the remaining programs have consultant relationships with medical personnel to meet the needs of the children in the program.

Parents of children with and without disabilities at all seven Rise School programs will be surveyed. A brief description of each community has been provided in the following narrative:

> ***Community A***: A university town located in southern Alabama with a population of approximately 80,000 people. Within the population of individuals 25 years and older, 30.9% hold a bachelor's degree and 78.8%

have graduated from high school. The median household income for this community was approximately $27,731, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau (2000) , 23.6% of residents below the poverty level.

***Community B**:* An urban city located in central Colorado with a population of approximately 560,000 people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Within the population of individuals 25 years and older, 34.5% hold a bachelor's degree and 78.9% have graduated high school. The median household income for this community was approximately $39,500 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000), with 14.3% of people below the poverty level.

***Community C**:* An urban city located in central Texas with a population of approximately 672,000 people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Within the population of individuals 25 years and older, 40.4% hold a bachelor's degree and 83.4% have graduated high school. The median household income for this community was approximately $42,689 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000), with 14.4% of people below the poverty level.

***Community D**:* An urban city located in a metropolitan area of north central Texas. This community has a population of approximately 1,208,318 individuals, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000). Within this population of individuals 25 years and older, 27.7% hold a bachelor's degree and 70.4% have graduated high school. The median household income for this community was approximately $37,628, with 17.8% of people below the poverty level.

Community E: An urban city in southeast Texas. This community has a population of approximately 1,953,631 individuals, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000). Within this population of individuals 25 years and older, 27 % hold a bachelor's degree and 70% have graduated high school. The median household income for this community was approximately $36,616, with 19% of people below the poverty level.

Community F: A coastal town in southern Texas. This community has a population of 279,208 individuals according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000). Within this population of individuals 25 years and older, 19.6% hold a bachelor's degree and 75.8% have graduated high school. The median household income for this community was approximately $36,414, with 17.6% of people below the poverty level.

Community G**:** A university community located in north central Oklahoma. This community has a population of 41,320 individuals according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000). Within this population of individuals 25 years and older, 48% hold a bachelor's degree and 91.6% have graduated high school. The median household income for this community was approximately $25,432, with 27.3% of people below the poverty level.

Survey Instrumentation

A self-administered, Likert-type questionnaire was utilized for this study. This instrument was chosen for this particular study because: 1) it aligned very well with current literature related to preschool inclusion and parent perceptions, the

identified purpose of the study and research questions to be answered and 2) because it had strong validity and reliability, as established in previous studies by Rafferty, Boettcher and Griffin (2001) and Rafferty and Griffin (2005).

The questionnaire was modeled closely after a questionnaire developed by Rafferty, Boettcher and Griffin and used in a subsequent studies in 2001 and 2005 (Rafferty, Boettcher & Griffin 2001; Rafferty & Griffin 2005). The Impact of Inclusion on Typically Developing Children Scale (IITDC) and the Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities Scale (IICD) were developed by "to assess the perceived benefits and risks of inclusion for children with disabilities and typically developing children"(Rafferty, Boettcher & Griffith, 2001). The IITDC and IICD scales are comprised of four subscales: Benefits for Children with Disabilities, Risks for Children with Disabilities, Benefits for Typically Developing Children, and Risks for Typically Developing Children. The IITDC and IICD scales were based on items from the Parental Attitudes Toward Mainstreaming Scale (Green & Stoneman, 1989) and the Benefits and Drawbacks of Mainstreaming Scale (Bailey & Winton, 1987). The Parents Attitudes Toward Inclusion/Integration, 13-question scale was created by Rafferty, Boettcher and Griffin (2001) and based on items from the Attitudes about Integration Opportunities for Children with Special Needs by Miller, Strain, Boyd, Hunsicker, McKinley and Wu (1992) as sited in Rafferty, Boettcher and Griffith (2001).

Permission was granted by Rafferty to use the questionnaire in this study (Appendix D). Rafferty provided the original questionnaire to the researcher and

suggested changes in some semantics used in the original questionnaire. Those changes were made. In addition, the demographics section was also revised; however, the syntax and content of the questions remain the same. The construction and visual organization of the survey was also revised, based on recommendations from Dillman (2000) regarding survey construction and development. Finally, additional open-ended questions were included to obtain additional information pertaining to the research questions.

According to Rafferty, Boettcher and Griffith (2001), the scales have high internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each scale were reported as follows: Benefits for Children with Disabilities (alpha = .90), Risks for Children with Disabilities (alpha = .87), Benefits for Typically Developing Children (alpha = .83), and Risks for Typically Developing Children (alpha = .88), Parents' Attitudes Toward Inclusion/Integration (alpha = .94).

Rafferty and Griffith (2005) also reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients with high internal consistency. Perceived Benefits for Children with Disabilities (alpha = .87), Alpha for the Perceived Risks for Children with Disabilities subscales scores was .84. The subscale, Perceived Benefits for Typically Developing Children, had an alpha of .86. Alpha for the Perceived Risks for Typically Developing Children was .79. The Parents' Attitudes Toward Inclusion/Integration scale yielded a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .93.

Survey Items

The survey (Appendix A) consists of four parts: demographic information of the participant, scales regarding inclusion and inclusive settings, demographic information of the child and open-ended questions pertaining to the inclusive program the child is attending and additional comments.

1. **Demographics:** This section contains questions pertaining to the individual completing the survey. These questions include their relationship to child, how long the child has attend the school, their self-reported ethnic identity, level of education and annual income.
2. **Scales regarding inclusion and inclusive settings**

   a. *Parents' Attitudes toward Inclusion*: This section examines the attitudes of the respondents regarding inclusion in general. The respondent answered general questions regarding children with disabilities by replying on a 5-point scale (1- strongly agree to 5- strongly disagree).

   b. *Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities*: This section examines the attitudes of the respondents regarding the impact of inclusion on children with disabilities. The respondent answered questions regarding children with disabilities by replying on a 5-point scale (1- strongly agree to 5- strongly disagree).

   c. *Impact of Inclusion on Children without Disabilities*: This section examines the attitudes of the respondents regarding the impact of

inclusion on children without disabilities. The respondent answered generic questions regarding children without disabilities by replying on a 5-point scale (1- strongly agree to 5- strongly disagree).

d. *Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children with Disabilities*: This section asks questions regarding the impact of inclusion programs on the parents of children with disabilities using a 5-point scale (1-strongly agree to 5-strongly disagree).

e. *Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children without Disabilities*: This section asks questions regarding the impact of inclusive programs on the parents of children without disabilities using a 5-point scale (1-strongly agree to 5-strongly disagree)

3. **Child Demographics** (Parents' experiences with inclusive programs)

   This section consists of demographic questions pertaining to the child of the individual completing the survey as well as open-ended questions relating to factors effecting the parents' selection of an inclusive program, their expectations and results. Demographic questions address the age, type of disability and severity of the disability of the child. This section also addressed program structure and attendance.

4. **Program satisfaction**

   This final section is comprised of questions regarding parents' satisfaction of the inclusive program their child attends, opportunities for

participating in program activities and factors impacting participation in the program (1-not satisfied to 5-extremely satisfied).

Data Collection

An envelope containing the survey and an informational cover letter (Appendix B) was distributed to all parents at all seven (7) Rise School programs located in four different states (N = 238).

Envelopes were distributed at each preschool setting by the site administrator/director. The informational cover letter described the study and explained to families that their responses will be anonymous and confidential. As recommended by Dillman (2000) in his Tailored Design Method, a reminder was given to families three days after the envelope was sent home in order to help increase the response rate in the study. Participants returned the surveys in sealed envelopes to the site director. The envelopes were boxed and mailed to the researcher. Surveys were "coded" only according to the community site to track the rate of return at each site. The surveys were tallied and recorded. Data collection for the proposed study was organized and systematic to ensure the procedures were consistent for each site and data was entered without errors. Data was recorded and reviewed for accuracy by the researcher. Data were analyzed utilizing the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 16.0 to assist in analyzing the data collected in the study. Results of the survey are reviewed in Chapter Four.

Analysis of Data

Descriptive statistics were utilized to measure the perceptions of parents of children with disabilities and parent of children without disabilities regarding inclusion and inclusive programs. The t-test for independent samples was used to compare the total mean score of parents of children with and without disabilities on each perception measure. T- tests were also used to compare attitudes of parents for hypothetical children with different types of disabilities and to examine the perceptions of parents of children with disabilities according their own child's type of disability, severity of disability (mild, moderate or severe). The statistical significance was also explored between parents of children with disabilities according to the type of disability. The Bonferroni adjustment was applied to reduce the occurrence of a Type I error when interpreting the data.

Summary

This chapter provided a summary of the methodology for the study. Chapter Three described the survey procedures to be used in this study. The chapter presented the research questions addressed in this study, identified the populations used in the study, described the settings of all seven (7) Rise School programs, described the survey that was used, explained the protocol for distributing and collecting the surveys and illustrated the methods of data analysis (descriptive statistics, t-test for independent groups) used in the study.

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Chapter IV

Introduction

This study utilized a quantitative design with participants completing a 120 question survey; and the analysis procedures include t-test for independent groups and descriptive statistics. The collection procedures, description of the sample, the instruments used in the data collection, and data analysis will be described.

Data Collection Procedures

The survey was distributed to all families of children with and without disabilities at all seven (7) Rise School programs in the United States (N=289). Each envelope contained the survey and an Institutional Review Board (IRB) information sheet. Sealed surveys were mailed to each Rise School site collectively. The program director distributed a sealed survey to each family. Completed surveys were returned to the director in a sealed manila envelop. Surveys were mailed back to the researcher. A total of 149 surveys were completed and returned. Participation rates at each individual site ranged from 26-75 %, with a 52% overall return rate. The survey is described in Chapter Three and a copy of the survey is included in Appendix A.

Description of the Sample

A total of 149 participants completed and returned the survey. Seventy-four (74) participants were from Rise School programs in Texas, thirteen (13) participants were from Oklahoma, forty-four (44) were from Alabama and sixteen (16)

participants were from Colorado. Nine percent of participants were male (n=13) while eighty-nine percent were female (n=132). Demographic data were collected and are shown in Tables 1-3.

Table 1

Ethnicity of Parents

Ethnicity	Parent of a child without disability	Parent of a child with disability	Total
Native American	1	0	1
Asian American	1	5	6
Black/African American	2	11	13
Hispanic/Latino	3	3	6
White/Caucasian	58	64	122
Other	0	1	1
Total	65	84	149

Table 1 indicates that eighty-two percent of participants identified their ethnicity as being White/Caucasian and approximately nine percent identified their ethnicity as being Black/African-American. Four percent of participants selected Asian-American as their ethnicity; another four percent chose Hispanic/Latino. Less than 1 percent of the participants identified themselves as Native American.

Table 2

Income of Parents

Income (in dollars)	Parents of a Child without a Disability	Parents of a Child with a Disability	Total
Less than 15,000	2	6	8
15,001-25,000	1	3	4
25,001-35,000	3	3	6
35,001-50,000	5	7	12
50,001-75,000	9	10	19
75,001 +	45	55	100
Total	65	84	149

Table 2 describes the income levels of parents who completed the survey. Almost sixty-seven percent of participants reported an annual income greater than $75,001. Twenty percent of parents reported that their annual income was $35,001-$75,000; while twelve percent of parents reported their income to be less than $35,000 annually.

Table 3

Education Levels of Parents of Children with and without Disabilities

Education Level	Parent of a Child without a Disability	Parent of a Child with a Disability	Total
Some High School	2	2	4
HS Diploma/GED	1	4	5
Some College	9	16	25
Associates Degree	3	4	7
Bachelors Degree	25	33	58
Masters Degree	22	19	41
Professional Degree (DVM, MD, DDS)	1	5	6
Doctoral Degree (PhD, EdD)	2	1	3
Total	65	84	149

Table 3 describes the education levels of parents that completed the survey. One hundred and fifteen participants (72%) earned at least an Associate Degree, while thirty-four participants (28%) of parents had not. The majority of parents had earned at least a Bachelors degree, while only 9 parents highest level of education was below some college education coursework.

Table 4

Frequencies (Percentages) for Child Age attending Inclusive Program (Rise School)

Ages	Children without Disabilities	Children with Disabilities	Total
Under 2 years old	7 (10.7%)	2 (2.4%)	9 (6.1%)
2 years old	15 (23.1%)	16 (19.0%)	31 (20.8%)
3 years old	22 (33.8%)	22 (26.2%)	44 (29.5%)
4 years old	11 (16.9%)	22 (26.2%)	33 (22.1%)
5 years old	10 (15.4%)	14 (16.7%)	24 (16.1%)
6 years old +	0 (0%)	8 (9.5%)	8 (5.4%)
Total	65	84	149

Table 4 describes age distribution of the participants' children who attend the inclusive preschool program. Almost six percent of the participating children were under two years of age, twenty-one percent were two-year-olds, thirty percent were three-year-olds, twenty-two percent were four-year-olds and sixteen percent were five-year-olds and five percent were six years or older.

Table 5

Frequencies (Percentages) for Type of Disability attending Inclusive Program (Rise School)

Type of Disability	Children with Disabilities
Autism	4 (4.8%)
Cerebral Palsy	7 (8.4%)
Down syndrome	52 (62.7%)
Hearing Impairment	1 (1.2%)
Spinal Bifida	1 (1.2%)
Speech Impairment	3 (3.6%)
Other	15 (18.1%)

Table 5 describes the types of disabilities and the frequencies enrolled in the Rise School programs. The majority of children with disabilities have a diagnosis of Down syndrome. The second most frequent type of disability reported was "Other," which included many genetic disorders, as reported by the survey participant.

Data Analysis

The research design addressed seven research questions. The first two questions addressed perceptions of parents of children with and without disabilities. Additional questions examine possible relationships between parental perceptions and specific variables. This section of the study is organized by the seven research questions. Research questions 1-2, the number, percentage, mean and standard deviations of the participant responses to individual survey questions are presented. For research questions 3-6, independent t-tests were used to determine statistically significant differences between variables. For research question 7, a one-way

analysis of variance (ANOVA) was originally planned to determine statistically significant differences between variables. However, the ANOVAs were unable to be completed secondary to the limitations of the data collected.

Research Question 1

What are the perceptions of parents of children with disabilities regarding inclusion and inclusive programs?

Table 6

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children with Disabilities (N=84) who Agreed with the Statement:

"Children with Disabilities should…"	Percent	Mean	SD
…ride the same school bus as children w/o disabilities	60.7	2.37	1.073
…have their classrooms located throughout a regular school building with regular classrooms for children without special needs	88.1	1.64	.977
…eat lunch in the school cafeteria during the same time as the children without disabilities	94.1	1.49	.843
…eat lunch at the same tables in the school cafeteria with children without disabilities	90.4	1.61	.932
…share recess with children without disabilities	94.0	1.52	.814
…go on school field trips with children without disabilities	92.8	1.54	.857
…share special events, such as holiday parties, with children with disabilities	96.4	1.36	.739
…use the same bathroom as children without disabilities	84.5	1.77	1.057
…use the school hallways at the same time as children without disabilities	90.5	1.55	.911
…share one or more classes such as art, music, or PE with the children without disabilities	97.6	1.35	.720
…have their school pictures interspersed with their peers w/o disabilities throughout school publications	94.1	1.35	.768
…share the same school jobs and responsibilities as children without disabilities	82.2	1.70	.861
…go to special programs where children without disabilities do not attend	71.4	2.02	.931

The results of the survey indicate that a majority of parents of children with disabilities agreed with statements concerning inclusive programming for children with disabilities. The strongest support was demonstrated for children with

disabilities sharing one or more classes such as art, music, or PE with the children without disabilities. The lowest percentage of support was agreeing that children with disabilities should ride the same school bus as a child without a disability.

Table 7

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children w/ Disabilities (N=84) Perceptions of the Impact of Inclusion on Children w/ Disabilities.

Statement	Percent	Mean	SD
Inclusion helps children with disabilities become prepared to function in the real world. (Benefit)	90.5	1.49	.814
Children with disabilities in inclusive programs are more likely to develop independence in self-help skills. (Benefit)	92.8	1.50	.753
Children with disabilities in an inclusive setting learn more because they have a chance to see typically developing children and learn from them. (Benefit)	92.8	1.40	.713
Inclusion is more likely to make children with disabilities want to try harder. (Benefit)	78.6	1.74	.907
Inclusion is more likely to make children with disabilities feel better about themselves. (Benefit)	67.8	2.00	.892
Inclusion provides children with disabilities with more chances to participate in a variety of activities. (Benefit)	96.4	1.43	.607
Inclusion promotes acceptance of children with disabilities by the community in general. (Benefit)	90.5	1.54	.768
Inclusion is likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of the children with a disability. (Risk)	4.8	3.95	.943
In an inclusive classroom, children w/disabilities are less likely to receive enough help and individualized instruction from their teacher. (Risk)	28.6	3.19	1.047
In an inclusive classroom, children with disabilities are less likely to receive special services. (Risk)	33.3	3.13	1.170
Children with disabilities are more likely to be rejected or left out by other children. (Risk)	15.5	3.53	1.016
In inclusion classrooms, children with disabilities are more likely to be rejected or left out by other children. (Risk)	15.5	3.51	.951
In inclusion classrooms, teachers are not likely to be trained to deal with the needs of children w/ disabilities. (Risk)	63.1	2.77	1.079

Table 7 describes the perceptions of parents of children with disabilities concerning the impact of inclusion on children with disabilities. A majority of the parents agreed with statements that inclusion is beneficial for children with disabilities. The group also indicated that they disagreed that inclusion would have a negative impact on children with disabilities. However, sixty-three percent did respond that they believed that in inclusive classrooms, teachers are not likely to be qualified or trained to deal with the needs of children with disabilities.

Table 8

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children with Disabilities (N=84) Perceptions of the Impact of Inclusion on Children without Disabilities.

Statement	Percent	Mean	SD
Children without disabilities would better understand and accept differences in people as a result of his/her participation in an inclusive program. (Benefit)	96.4	1.40	.604
Children without disabilities benefit when children with disabilities are integrated. (Benefit)	94.0	1.50	.685
Children without disabilities learn to develop sensitivity to others by having the opportunity to know children with disabilities. (Benefit)	96.5	1.38	.599
In inclusive programs, children without disabilities become more aware and accepting of their own strengths and weaknesses. (Benefit)	67.9	1.96	.903
Children with disabilities may do things that injure children without disabilities. (Risk)	46.5	3.55	.999
Children without disabilities might be frightened by the strange behavior of some children with disabilities. (Risk)	51.2	2.76	1.013
Children with disabilities hold back children without disabilities and slow down their learning. (Risk)	21.4	4.07	.773
In inclusion, children with disabilities will take up too much of the teachers' time and children without disabilities will not receive enough attention. (Risk)	25.0	3.95	.710
Children without disabilities might be overlooked in an inclusive classroom because children with disabilities are so demanding. (Risk)	28.6	3.80	.875
In inclusion, the needs of the children with a disability for special materials and equipment will be so great that the children with out disabilities will not get their fair share of the resources. (Risk)	17.9	4.07	.757
A child with disabilities would present a number of behavior problems when integrated with children without a disability. (Risk)	26.2	3.89	.712
It is difficult to maintain order in a preschool classroom that contains a child with a disability. (Risk)	11.9	4.30	.708
In inclusion classrooms, children w/o disabilities may copy children with disabilities and learn negative behaviors from them. (Risk)	9.5	3.86	.933

Table 8 describes the perceptions of parents of children with disabilities concerning the impact of inclusion on children without disabilities. The group agreed with statements that inclusion was beneficial for children without disabilities and disagreed with most statements indicating that inclusion was a risk for children without disabilities. However, fifty-one percent of parents of children with disabilities agreed that children without disabilities might be frightened by the strange behavior of some children with disabilities.

Table 9

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children with Disabilities (N=84) Perceptions Regarding the Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Preschoolers with Disabilities

Statement	Percent	Mean	SD
Inclusion helps families of children with disabilities learn more about normal child development	66.7	2.17	1.028
Inclusion gives families of children with disabilities more of a chance to meet and interact with families of children without disabilities	71.4	2.02	.905
Families of children with disabilities in inclusion programs may feel left out or ignored by families of children without disabilities	25.0	3.42	1.143
Families of children with disabilities in inclusion programs may feel that most of the other families do not share or understand their concerns	41.7	2.90	.989
Families of children with disabilities in inclusion programs are more likely to notice and be upset by differences between their child and children without disabilities	50.0	3.39	1.064
Families of children with disabilities in inclusion programs are more likely to notice and be upset by the experience of seeing their child rejected or teased.	53.8	2.60	1.054

Table 9 describes the perceptions of parents of children with disabilities regarding the impact of inclusion on the parents of preschoolers with disabilities. Over fifty percent of participants in the group agreed that inclusion helps families of children with disabilities learn more about normal child development and gave families of children with disabilities more of a change to meet and interact with families of children without disabilities. However, a majority of the group did not agree with statements that families of children with disabilities feel left out or ignored by families of children without disabilities or that families of children without disabilities do not share or understand their concerns.

Table 10

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children with Disabilities (N=84) Perceptions regarding the Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Preschoolers without Disabilities

Statement	Percent	Mean	SD
Families of children without disabilities in inclusion programs are more likely to understand what it is like for families who have a child with a disability	77.4	2.17	.980
Families of children without disabilities in inclusion programs are more likely to understand children with a disability	84.5	2.00	.760
Families of children with out disabilities in inclusion programs feel uncomfortable being around children with a disability	44.1	3.54	.911
Families of children without disabilities in inclusion programs feel uncomfortable being around families who have a child with a disability	46.4	3.54	.857

Table 10 indicates that over seventy-five percent of parents of children with disabilities believe that inclusive programs help families without disabilities

understand what it is like for families who have a child with a disability and are more likely to understand children with a disability.

Table 11

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children with Disabilities (N=84) who Agreed with Inclusion based on the Age of a Child with Disability

Age of Child	Percent	Mean	SD
Preschool age children	97.6	1.31	.620
Elementary age children	94.0	1.46	.702
Middle school age children	82.1	1.85	.843
High school age children	82.2	1.82	.843

Table 11 describes the percentage of parents of children with disabilities who agreed with an inclusive placement for children with disabilities according to the age of the child. Support of inclusive placements for preschool and elementary age children was over 10% higher than inclusive placements for middle school and high school age children with disabilities.

Table 12

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children with Disabilities (N=84) who Agreed with Inclusion Based on the Severity of the Disability

Severity of Disability	Percent	Mean	SD
Mild Disability	95.2	1.33	.665
Moderate Disability	88.1	1.65	.829
Severe Disability	50.0	2.46	1.039

Table 12 describes the percentage of parents of children with disabilities who agreed with an inclusive placement for children with disabilities according to the severity of the disability. Support of inclusive placements for children with mild disabilities was 45% higher than for children with severe disabilities.

Table 13

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children with Disabilities (N=82) who Agreed with Inclusion Based on the Type of Disability

Type of Disability	Percent	Mean	SD
Autistic	65.5	2.17	.933
Emotional/Behavioral Disorder	48.8	2.48	1.021
Hearing Impairment/Deaf	85.7	1.68	.887
Learning Disability	83.4	1.78	.889
Cognitive Impairment	78.6	1.87	.857
Orthopedic/Physically Impaired	90.5	1.54	.757
Other Health Impaired (Medical)	83.3	1.70	.796
Speech Impaired	88.1	1.60	.814
Visually Impaired	88.1	1.67	.802

Table 13 describes the percentage of parents of children with disabilities who agreed with an inclusive placement for children with disabilities according to the type of disability. Parents of children with disabilities were more likely to support an inclusive placement for children with an orthopedic impairment, speech impairment or visual impairment. They were least likely to support inclusive placement of a child with autism, emotional/behavioral disorder or a cognitive impairment.

Research Question 2

What are the perceptions of parents of children without disabilities regarding inclusion and inclusive programs?

Table 14

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children without Disabilities (N=65) who Agreed with Statement

"Children with Disabilities should…"	Percent	Mean	SD
…ride the same school bus as children w/o disabilities	63.1	2.02	.893
…have their classrooms located throughout a regular school building with regular classrooms for children without special needs	89.2	1.62	.860
…eat lunch in the school cafeteria during the same time as the children without disabilities	85.3	1.43	.585
…eat lunch at the same tables in the school cafeteria with children without disabilities.	93.8	1.48	.664
…share recess with children without disabilities	95.4	1.42	.635
…go on school field trips with children without disabilities	92.3	1.45	.685
…share special events, such as holiday parties, with children with disabilities	100.00	1.31	.465
…use the same bathroom as children without disabilities	87.7	1.57	.790
…use the school hallways at the same time as children without disabilities.	89.3	1.49	.732
…share one or more classes such as art, music, or PE with the children without disabilities	93.9	1.42	.659
…have their school pictures interspersed with their peers without disabilities throughout school publications	100.00	1.31	.465
…share the same school jobs and responsibilities as the children without disabilities	89.2	1.54	.686
…go to special programs where children without disabilities do not attend	60.0	2.26	.957

The results of the survey on Table 14 indicate parents of children without disabilities agreed with statements concerning inclusive programming for children with disabilities. The strongest support was demonstrated for children with disabilities sharing special events with children without disabilities and having their school pictures interspersed with their peers without disability throughout school

publications. The lowest percentage of support was agreeing that children with disabilities should ride the same school bus as a child without a disability. Sixty-percent agreed that children with disabilities should attend a segregated program where children without disabilities do not attend.

Table 15

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentages of Parents of Children without Disabilities (N=65) who Agreed with Statements Regarding Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities

Statement	Percent	Mean	SD
Inclusion helps children with disabilities become prepared to function in the real world. (Benefit)	93.9	1.45	.622
Children with disabilities in inclusive programs are more likely to develop independence in self-help skills. (Benefit)	87.7	1.57	.847
Children with disabilities in an inclusive setting learn more because they have a chance to see typically developing children and learn from them. (Benefit)	93.8	1.42	.610
Inclusion is more likely to make children w/ disabilities want to try harder. (Benefit)	87.7	1.52	.709
Inclusion is more likely to make children with disabilities feel better about themselves. (Benefit)	76.9	1.78	.800
Inclusion provides children with disabilities with more chances to participate in a variety of activities. (Benefit)	87.7	1.49	.793
Inclusion promotes acceptance of children with disabilities by the community in general. (Benefit)	93.9	1.45	.662
Inclusion is likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of the children with a disability. (Risk)	4.6	4.11	1.017
In an inclusive classroom, children w/ disabilities are less likely to receive enough special help and individualized instruction from their teacher. (Risk)	9.2	3.72	.927
In an inclusive classroom, children with disabilities are less likely to receive special services. (Risk)	9.2	3.83	.945
Children with disabilities are more likely to be rejected or left out by other children. (Risk)	24.6	4.08	.872
In inclusion classrooms, children with disabilities are more likely to be rejected or left out by other children. (Risk)	29.3	3.89	.954
In inclusion classrooms, teachers are not likely to be qualified or trained to deal with the needs of children with disabilities. (Risk)	23.0	3.37	1.054

Table 15 describes the perceptions of parents of children without disabilities concerning the impact of inclusion on children with disabilities. A majority of the parents agreed with statements that inclusion is beneficial for children with disabilities. The group also indicated that they disagreed that inclusion would have a negative impact on children with disabilities. Twenty-nine percent did respond that they believed that in inclusive classrooms, children with disabilities are more likely to be rejected or left out by other children.

Table 16

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children without Disabilities (N=65) who Agreed with Statements Regarding the Perceptions of the Impact of Inclusion on Children without Disabilities.

Statement	Percent	Mean	SD
Children without disabilities would better understand and accept differences in people as a result of his/her participation in an inclusive program. (Benefit)	93.8	1.34	.594
Children without disabilities benefit when children with disabilities are integrated. (Benefit)	92.4	1.42	.635
Children without disabilities learn to develop sensitivity to others by having the opportunity to know children with disabilities. (Benefit)	95.4	1.38	.578
In inclusive programs, children w/p disabilities become more aware and accepting of their own strengths and weaknesses. (Benefit)	84.6	1.69	.769
Children w/disabilities may do things that injure children w/o disabilities. (Risk)	13.9	3.65	1.052
Children without disabilities might be frightened by the strange behavior of some children with disabilities. (Risk)	26.1	3.42	1.102
Children with disabilities hold back children without disabilities and slow down their learning. (Risk)	3.0	4.12	.857
In inclusion, children with disabilities will take up too much of the teachers' time and children without disabilities will not receive enough attention. (Risk)	23.1	4.00	.771
Children w/o disabilities might be overlooked in an inclusive classroom because children w/disabilities are so demanding. (Risk)	23.1	3.95	.926
In inclusion, the needs of the children w/ a disability for special materials and equipment will be so great that the children with out disabilities won't get their fair share of the resources. (Risk)	12.3	4.23	.745
A child w/disabilities would present a number of behavior problems when integrated with children w/o a disability. (Risk)	27.7	3.95	.799
It is difficult to maintain order in a preschool classroom that contains a child with a disability. (Risk)	6.1	4.43	.847
In inclusion classrooms, children w/o disabilities may copy children w/disabilities and learn negative behaviors from them. (Risk)	43.1	3.68	1.091

Table 16 describes the perceptions of parents of children without disabilities concerning the impact of inclusion on children without disabilities. The group agreed with statements that inclusion was beneficial for children without disabilities and disagreed with most statements indicating that inclusion was a risk for children without disabilities. Twenty-seven percent of parents of children without disabilities agreed that a child with disabilities would present a number of behavior problems when integrated with children without a disability. Forty-three percent of the group agreed that in an inclusive classroom, children without disabilities may copy children with disabilities and learn negative behaviors from them.

Table 17

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children without Disabilities (N=65) who Agreed with Statements regarding the Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Preschoolers with Disabilities

Statement	Percent	Mean	SD
Inclusion helps families of children with disabilities learn more about normal child development	73.8	1.97	.883
Inclusion gives families of children with disabilities more of a chance to meet and interact with families of children without disabilities	87.7	1.75	.708
Families of children with disabilities in inclusion programs may feel left out or ignored by families of children without disabilities	44.5	3.68	.986
Families of children with disabilities in inclusion programs may feel that most of the other families do not share or understand their concerns	29.3	3.17	1.039
Families of children with disabilities in inclusion programs are more likely to notice and be upset by differences between their child and children without disabilities	50.8	3.51	.866
Families of children with disabilities in inclusion programs are more likely to notice and be upset by the experience of seeing their child rejected or teased.	29.3	3.18	1.144

Table 17 describes the perceptions of parents of children without disabilities regarding the impact of inclusion on the parents of preschoolers with disabilities. Over fifty percent of participants in the group agreed that families of children with disabilities attending inclusive programs are more likely to notice and be upset by differences between their child and children with disabilities.

Table 18

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children without Disabilities (N=65) who Agreed with Statements Regarding the Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Preschoolers without Disabilities

Statement	Percent	Mean	SD
Families of children without disabilities in inclusion programs are more likely to understand what it is like for families who have a child with a disability	77.0	2.02	.927
Families of children without disabilities in inclusion programs are more likely to understand children with a disability	81.6	1.86	.788
Families of children with out disabilities in inclusion programs feel uncomfortable being around children with a disability	64.6	4.15	.734
Families of children without disabilities in inclusion programs feel uncomfortable being around families who have a child with a disability	61.6	4.23	.702

Table 18 indicates that over seventy-five percent of parents of children without disabilities believe that inclusive programs help families without disabilities understand what it is like for families who have a child with a disability and are more likely to understand children with a disability.

Table 19

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children without Disabilities (N=65) who Agreed with Inclusion Based on the Age of a Child with Disability

Age of Child	Percent	Mean	SD
Preschool age children	96.9	1.29	.522
Elementary age children	89.2	1.49	.687
Middle school age children	81.6	1.75	.830
High school age children	78.4	1.80	.851

Table 19 describes the percentage of parents of children without disabilities who agreed with an inclusive placement for children with disabilities according to the

age of the child. Support of inclusive placements for children with disabilities decreases as the child ages.

Table 20

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children without Disabilities (N=65) who agreed with Inclusion Based on the Severity of the Disability

Severity of Disability	Percent	Mean	SD
Mild Disability	95.4	1.37	.327
Moderate Disability	83.1	1.71	.861
Severe Disability	60.0	2.23	.972

Table 20 describes the percentage of parents of children without disabilities who agreed with an inclusive placement for children with disabilities according to the severity of the disability. Support of inclusive placements for children with decreased as the severity of the disability increased.

Table 21

Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Percentage of Parents of Children without Disabilities (N=64) who Agreed with Inclusion in Based on the Type of Disability

Type of Disability	Percent	Mean	SD
Autistic	66.2	2.16	.859
Emotional/Behavioral Disorder	59.0	2.34	.877
Hearing Impairment/Deaf	87.6	1.59	.771
Learning Disability	81.5	1.67	.874
Cognitive Impairment	76.9	1.78	.934
Orthopedic/Physically Impaired	89.2	1.45	.711
Other Health Impaired (Medical)	86.2	1.66	.695
Speech Impaired	92.3	1.44	.664
Visually Impaired	86.1	1.66	.859

Table 21 describes the percentage of parents of children without disabilities who agreed with an inclusive placement for children with disabilities according to the type of disability. Parents of children without disabilities were more likely to support an inclusive placement for children with a speech impairment, orthopedic impairment

or hearing impairment. They were least likely to support inclusive placement of a child with emotional/behavioral disorder, autism or a cognitive impairment.

Research Question 3

Are there statistically significant differences in parental perceptions of inclusion between parents of children with disabilities (N=84) and parent of children without disabilities (N=65)?

Table 22

Means and Standard Deviations (SD) for Total Parental Perception Scores of Parents of Children with and without Disabilities

Statements	Parents of Children	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	eta^2
Impact of inclusion on child w/disability (Benefits)	Without Disability	1.5253	.61710	-.621	147	.535	.0026
	W/Disability	1.5850	.55422				
Impact of inclusion on child w/disability (Risks)	Without Disability	3.8333	.74768	3.792	146	.000*#	.0897
	W/Disability	3.3574	.76559				
Impact of inclusion on child w/o disability (Benefits)	Without Disability	1.4577	.57209	-1.144	146	.255	.0089
	W/Disability	1.5663	.57393				
Impact of inclusion on child w/o disability (Risks)	Without Disability	3.9368	.62143	1.366	147	.174	.0117
	W/Disability	3.8056	.54838				
Impact of inclusion on families of child w/disabilities (Benefits)	Without Disability	1.8615	.69320	-1.751	147	.082	.0204
	W/Disability	2.0952	.88657				
Impact of inclusion on families of child w/disabilities (Risks)	Without Disability	3.3846	.83160	2.268	147	.025*	.0338
	W/Disability	3.0774	.81123				
Impact of inclusion on families of child w/o disabilities (Benefits)	Without Disability	1.9239	.80286	-1.090	147	.278	.0080
	W/Disability	2.0833	.80598				
Impact of inclusion on families of child w/o disabilities (Risks)	Without Disability	4.1923	.69985	5.045	147	.000*#	.1476
	W/Disability	3.5357	.84947				
Parental Global Perceptions regarding inclusion in general	Without Disability	1.5609	.51615	-.746	147	.457	.0013
	W/Disability	1.6355	.66538				

*indicates a significance at the < .05 level #indicates a significance at the <.005 level

Table 22 describes the results of an independent-samples t-test that was conducted to compare parental perceptions regarding inclusion for parents of children with disabilities and parents of children without disabilities. The test was significant on three variables ($p<.05$): Impact of inclusion on child w/disability (Risks); Impact of inclusion on families of child w/disabilities (Risks); Impact of inclusion on families of child w/o disabilities (Risks). However, a Bonferroni adjustment was made to reduce the probability of a Type I error occurring secondary to the multiple t-test conducted. After this adjustment, only two variables were significant ($p<.005$): Impact of inclusion on child w/disability (Risks) and the Impact of inclusion on families of child w/o disabilities (Risks).

When comparing the Impact of inclusion on a child with a disability (Risks) score for parents of a child without a disability (M=3.8333, SD=.74768) and parents of a child with a disability (M=3.3574, SD=.76559), there was a significant difference in scores, t (146) = 3.792, p=.00 (two-tailed). The mean scores of parents of a child without a disability were significantly higher, indicating this group was more likely to disagree with statements regarding possible risks associated with the inclusion of a child with a disability. The magnitude of the differences in the means was moderate ($eta^2 = .09$).

A significant difference in scores, t (147) = 2.268, p=.03 (two-tailed), was indicated when comparing the Impact of inclusion on families of child w/disabilities (Risks) score for parents of a child without a disability (M=3.3846, SD=.83160) and parents of a child with a disability (M=3.0774, SD=.81123). The mean scores of

parents of a child without a disability were significantly higher, indicating this group was more likely to disagree with negative statements concerning the impact of inclusion on families of children with disabilities than parents of a child with a disability. The magnitude of the differences in the means was small (eta^2=.04). This variable was not significant at the <.005 level (Bonferroni adjustment).

The comparison of the Impact of inclusion on families of child without disabilities (Risks) scores of parents of a child without a disability (*M*=4.1923, *SD*=.69985) and the parents of a child with a disability (*M*=3.5357, *SD*=.84947) revealed a significant difference, *t* (147) =5.045, *p*=.03 (two-tailed). The mean scores of parents of a child without a disability were significantly higher, indicating they are more likely to disagree with negative statements concerning the impact of inclusion on families of children without disabilities than parents of a child with a disability. The magnitude of the differences in the means was large (eta^2=.148).

Research Question 4

Are there statistically significant differences in parental perceptions of inclusion among parents of children with disabilities according to the severity of the disability?

Table 23

Mean Scores for Parental Perceptions of Inclusion by Severity of Disability

Perception Score	Parents of Child with mild disabilities (N= 25)	Parents of child with moderate disabilities (N= 48)	Parents of children w/ severe disabilities (N= 10)
Parents Perceptions Toward Inclusion Score	1.4985	1.6651	1.8692
Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities Score (Benefit)	1.4971	1.6220	1.6571
Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities Score (Risk)	3.3133	3.4965*	2.8500*
Impact of Inclusion on Children without Disabilities Score (Benefit)	1.5100	1.5798	1.6500
Impact of Inclusion on Children without Disabilities Score (Risk)	3.8267	3.8380	3.5444
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children with Disabilities Score (Benefit)	2.1400	2.1458	1.8000
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children with Disabilities Score (Risk)	3.1200	3.0781	2.9000
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children without Disabilities Score (Benefit)	1.7800**	2.2188**	2.2000
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children without Disabilities Score (Risk)	3.4800	3.5417	3.7500

*significance at the <.05 level

Table 23 describes the mean perception scores of parents of children with mild disabilities, parents of children with moderate disabilities and parents of children with severe disabilities. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean perception scores for parents of children with mild disabilities and parents of children with moderate disabilities, parents of children with mild disabilities and parents of children with severe disabilities and parents of children with moderate disabilities to parents of children with severe disabilities. The test was significant on

two variables: Impact of inclusion on child w/disability (Risks) and Impact of inclusion on families of child w/o disabilities (Benefits).

When comparing the Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities (Risk) score for parents of a child with a moderate disability (*M*=3.4965, *SD*=.72855) and parents of a child with a severe disability (*M*=2.8500, *SD*=.72627), there was a significant difference in scores, *t* (2.549) =, *p*=.01 (two-tailed). Parents of children with a severe disability were significantly more likely to agree with risk statements concerning the impact of inclusion on children with disabilities as compared to parents of children with a moderate disability. The magnitude of the differences in the means was moderate (eta^2 = .11).

A significant difference in scores, *t* (71) = -2.341, *p*=.02 (two-tailed), was indicated when comparing the Impact of Inclusion on Families of a Child without Disabilities (Benefits) score for parents of a child with a mild disability (*M*=1.7800, *SD*=.57879) and parents of a child with a moderate disability (*M*=2.2188, *SD*=.83734). Parents of children with a mild disability were significantly more likely to agree to the benefits of inclusion on the family of a child with disabilities than parents of children with moderate disabilities. The magnitude of the differences in the means was moderate (eta^2=.07).

Research Question 5

Are there statistically significant differences in parental perceptions of inclusion among parents of children with disabilities according to the type of disability?

Table 24

Means and Standard Deviations (SD) for Perceptions of Inclusion for Parents: of Children w/ Down syndrome (DS) and of Children w/ Other Disabilities (OD)

	Parents	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.	eta^2
Parents Perceptions Toward Inclusion Score	DS	1.5207	.45740	-2.142	81	.035*	.054
	OD	1.8387	.89451				
Impact of Inclusion on Children w/ Disabilities Score (Benefit)	DS	1.5824	.59935	-.131	81	.896	2.067
	OD	1.5991	.48574				
Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities Score (Risk)	DS	3.4346	.75798	1.101	80	.760	.015
	OD	3.2419	.78509				
Impact of Inclusion on Children without Disabilities Score (Benefit)	DS	1.5000	.50249	-1.356	80	.179	.023
	OD	1.6774	.67760				
Impact of Inclusion on Children without Disabilities Score (Risk)	DS	3.9017	.51820	2.259	81	.027*	.059
	OD	3.6272	.56331				
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children w/Disabilities Score (Benefit)	DS	2.1538	.91576	.680	81	.498	.006
	OD	2.0161	.85131				
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children w/ Disabilities Score (Risk)	DS	3.1154	.77089	.667	81	.507	.005
	OD	2.9919	.88620				
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children without Disabilities Score (Benefit)	DS	2.0288	.70303	-.806	81	.423	.008
	OD	2.1774	.97081				
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children without Disabilities Score (Risk)	DS	3.5962	.82271	.666	81	.507	.005
	OD	3.4677	.89383				

*significance at the <.05 level

Table 24 describes the results of an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean perception scores for parents of children with Down syndrome

and parents of children with disabilities (not Down syndrome). The test was significant on two variables: Impact of inclusion on children without disability (Risks) and Parents Perceptions toward Inclusion.

When comparing the Impact of inclusion on a child without a disability (Risks) score for parents of a child with Down syndrome (*M*=3.9017, *SD*=.51820) and parents of a child with a disability (not Down syndrome) (*M*=3.6272, *SD*=.56331), there was a significant difference in scores, *t* (81) = 2.259, *p*=.03 (two-tailed). Parents of children were significantly more likely to disagree with statements concerning risks associated with inclusive setting for children without disabilities. The magnitude of the differences in the means was moderate (eta^2 = .06).

A significant difference in scores, *t* (81) = -2.142, *p*=.04 (two-tailed), was indicated when comparing the Parents Perceptions toward Inclusion score for parents of a child with a Down syndrome (*M*=1.5207, *SD*=.45740) and parents of a child with a disability (not Down syndrome) (*M*=1.8387, *SD*=.89451). Parents of children with Down syndrome were significantly more likely to agree with inclusion than parents of children with a disability other than Down syndrome. The magnitude of the differences in the means was moderate (eta^2=.06).

However, when applying the Bonferroni adjustment to reduce the occurrence of a Type I error (p=.05/9), none of the variables were statistically significant.

Research Question 6

Is there a statistically significant relationship between parental perceptions of inclusion and the following parental demographic characteristics: gender, ethnicity and education level?

Table 25

Mean Scores for Parents Perceptions regarding Inclusion for Male Parents (N= 13) and Female Parents (N=132)

	Parents	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.	eta^2
Parents Perceptions Toward Inclusion Score	Female	1.5944	.62196	-.486	143	.628	.0016
	Male	1.6805	.44394				
Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities Score (Benefit)	Female	1.5400	.58552	-.634	143	.527	.0028
	Male	1.6484	.61061				
Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities Score (Risk)	Female	3.6107	.78354	1.282	142	.202	.0114
	Male	3.3205	.71835				
Impact of Inclusion on Children without Disabilities Score (Benefit)	Female	1.5057	.56113	-.315	142	.753	6.934
	Male	1.5577	.62211				
Impact of Inclusion on Children without Disabilities Score (Risk)	Female	3.8729	.57006	-.302	143	.763	6.374
	Male	3.9231	.59729				
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children with Disabilities Score (Benefit)	Female	2.0152	.82873	1.372	143	.172	.0130
	Male	1.6923	.56045				
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children with Disabilities Score (Risk)	Female	3.2273	.85742	.464	143	.644	.0015
	Male	3.1154	.42836				
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children without Disabilities Score (Benefit)	Female	2.0038	.80194	-.649	143	.517	.0029
	Male	2.1538	.71835				
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children without Disabilities Score (Risk)	Female	3.8561	.82316	.510	143	.611	.0018
	Male	3.7308	1.0530				

*significant to the <.05 level

Table 25 examines the results of independent t-test used to analyze the mean perception scores and the gender of the parent. Setting the significance level at $p<.05$, significant differences were not found in scores for male and female parents.

Table 26

Means and Standard Deviations (SD) for Inclusion Scales for Caucasian Parents (N=122) and Minority Parents (N=27)

	Parents	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.	eta^2
Parents Perceptions Toward Inclusion Score	Caucasian	1.5145	.48420	-3.988	147	.000*#	.0976
	Minority	2.0028	.88493				
Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities Score (Benefit)	Caucasian	1.5082	.53800	-2.299	147	.023*	.0347
	Minority	1.7884	.71359				
Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities Score (Risk)	Caucasian	3.6129	.80744	1.520	146	.131	.0155
	Minority	3.3580	.69137				
Impact of Inclusion on Children without Disabilities Score (Benefit)	Caucasian	1.4773	.52935	-1.870	146	.063	.0232
	Minority	1.7037	.72403				
Impact of Inclusion on Children without Disabilities Score (Risk)	Caucasian	3.8925	.58200	1.327	147	.187	.0118
	Minority	3.7284	.57927				
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children with Disabilities Score (Benefit)	Caucasian	1.9672	.81245	-.831	147	.408	.0047
	Minority	2.1111	.82431				
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children with Disabilities Score (Risk)	Caucasian	3.1783	.79609	-1.034	147	.303	.0072
	Minority	3.3611	.97895				
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children without Disabilities Score (Benefit)	Caucasian	1.9836	.76853	-1.179	147	.240	.0094
	Minority	2.1852	.95221				
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children w/o Disabilities Score (Risk)	Caucasian	3.8607	.85586	1.176	147	.241	.0093
	Minority	3.6481	.81824				

*significant to the <.05 level #significant to the <.005 level

Table 26 describes the results of an independent-samples t-test that was conducted to compare parental perceptions regarding inclusion for Caucasian/White

parents and minority parents. The test was significant on two variables: Parents Perceptions toward Inclusion Score and Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities Score (Benefit) when using a significance of <.05. However, when the Bonferroni adjustment was applied to reduce the occurrence of a Type I error, only one variable (Parents Perceptions toward Inclusion Score) was significant at the <.005 level.

When comparing the Parents Perceptions toward Inclusion score for Caucasian parents (*M*=1.5145, *SD*=.48420) and minority parents (*M*=2.0028, *SD*=.88493), there was a significant difference in scores, *t* (146) = -3.988, *p*=.00 (two-tailed). Caucasian parents were more likely to agree with inclusion than minority parents. The magnitude of the differences in the means was moderate (eta^2 = .09).

The comparison of the Impact of inclusion on children with disabilities (Benefits) scores of Caucasian parents (*M*=1.5082, *SD*=.53800) and minority parents (*M*=1.7884, *SD*=.71359) revealed a significant difference, *t* (147) =-2.299, *p*=.03 (two-tailed). Caucasian parents were more likely to agree with statements concerning the benefits of inclusion on children with disabilities than minority parents. The magnitude of the differences in the means was small (eta^2=.03). This variable was not significant at the <.005 level (Bonferroni adjustment).

Table 27

Means and Standard Deviations (SD) for Inclusion Scales for Parents with no College Degree (N=34) and Parents with a College Degree (N=115)

	Education	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
Parents Perceptions Toward Inclusion Score	No Degree	1.7285	.83993	1.383	147	.169
	Degree	1.5659	.51321			
Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities Score (Benefit)	No Degree	1.5084	.59600	-.576	147	.257
	Degree	1.5739	.57858			
Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities Score (Risk)	No Degree	3.4608	.80827	-.886	146	.423
	Degree	3.5980	.78732			
Impact of Inclusion on Children without Disabilities Score (Benefit)	No Degree	1.5455	.73009	.304	146	.173
	Degree	1.5109	.52398			
Impact of Inclusion on Children without Disabilities Score (Risk)	No Degree	3.9118	.59476	.556	147	.515
	Degree	3.8483	.58134			
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children with Disabilities Score (Benefit)	No Degree	2.0735	.77001	.653	147	.579
	Degree	1.9696	.82793			
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children with Disabilities Score (Risk)	No Degree	3.3824	.83764	1.368	147	.761
	Degree	3.1609	.82663			
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children without Disabilities Score (Benefit)	No Degree	2.1176	.99284	.803	147	.377
	Degree	1.9913	.74334			
Impact of Inclusion on Parents of Children without Disabilities Score (Risk)	No Degree	3.6765	.89512	-1.138	147	.565
	Degree	3.8652	.83593			

There is no statistically significant difference in parental perceptions concerning inclusion and inclusive program according to the education level of the parent whose child attends the inclusive preschool program.

Research Question 7

Are there statistically significant differences in parental perceptions of inclusive placement within specific disability categories among parents of children with a disability within that category, parents of a child with a disability outside of that category & parents of children with a disability?

Table 28

Mean Scores of Parents Regarding Inclusive Placement Based on Disability Type.

Category	Mean Scores of Parents of Children with							
	Autism (N=4)	Cerebral Palsy (N=7)	Down Syndrome (N=50)	Hearing Impaired N=1)	Spinal Bifida (N=1)	Speech Impaired (N=3)	Other (N=15)	w/out disability (N=65)
Autistic	1.75	2.29	2.22	2.00	2.00	2.67	2.00	2.15
Emotional/ Behavioral Disorder	2.25	2.43	2.58	2.00	4.00	2.67	2.07	2.35
Hearing Impaired/ Deaf	1.50	1.43	1.72	1.00	2.00	1.33	1.80	1.60
Learning Disability	2.50	1.71	1.74	1.00	3.00	1.33	1.80	1.68
Cognitive Impairment	2.50	1.71	1.78	2.00	2.00	1.67	2.07	1.78
Physical Impairment	1.50	1.57	1.56	2.00	2.00	1.33	1.47	1.45
Other Health Impaired (Medical)	1.75	1.71	1.68	2.00	3.00	1.33	1.73	1.65
Speech Impaired	1.50	1.43	1.56	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.87	1.45
Visually Impaired	1.50	1.43	1.70	2.00	3.00	1.67	1.60	1.66

Table 28 shows the mean perception scores for parents of children with a disability and parents of children without disabilities. All parents were less likely to agree to an inclusive placement for children with Autism or emotional/behavior disorders. Parents of children with autism were the most likely to support an inclusive placement of a child with autism.

A one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was originally planned to explore the impact of a child's disability category on parental perceptions of inclusive placements, as measured by the research survey questions. However, the sample sizes within the data were too small to perform ANOVAs.

"Disability Type" was measured by asking participants to rate on a Likert-scale (1-Strongly Agree, 2- Agree, 3-neither, 4- disagree, 5-strongly disagree) their perception of an inclusive placement for a hypothetical child, based on the hypothetical child's disability category. "Disability categories" are: Autistic, Emotional/Behavioral Disorder, Hearing Impaired/Deaf, Learning Disability, Cognitive Impairment, Orthopedic/Physically Impaired, Other Health Impaired (Medical), Speech Impaired and Visually Impaired. These categories are consistent with the disability categories used by the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

Summary of the Results

The statistical breakdown indicates that there were some significant differences when parents of children with disabilities were compared to parents of children without disabilities on inclusion perception measures. Parents of children without disabilities reported a higher mean than parents of children with disabilities;

therefore, they are more likely to disagree that inclusion would negatively impact a child with a disability, a family of a child with a disability and a family of a child without a disability.

Within the group of parents of children with disabilities, parents of children with moderate disabilities were more likely to disagree that inclusion would negatively impact a child with a disability than parents of children with severe disabilities. Parents of children with mild disabilities were more likely to agree that inclusion would have a positive impact on families without a child with a disability than the parents of children with moderate disabilities.

When parents of children with Down syndrome were compared with parents of children with a disability other than Down syndrome, two significant differences were observed. First, parents of children with Down syndrome were more likely to agree with inclusion of children with disabilities in general. Parents of children with Down syndrome were also more likely to disagree that inclusion would be a risk to children without disabilities.

Demographic variables were compared and no significant relationship was observed between female and male parents or the education level of parent and parental perceptions concerning inclusion and inclusive programs. However, the data suggests some significant differences concerning ethnicity. Caucasian/white parents were more likely to support the inclusion of children with disabilities in general than minority parents. Caucasian/white parents were also more likely to agree that the impact of inclusion on children with disabilities was beneficial.

Statistical analyses concerning a difference in means when parental perceptions of inclusive placements within a specific disability category were examined in regards to parents of a child with a specific disability category, parents of a child with a disability outside of that category and parents of a child without a disability, was unable to completed because of the limitations of the data. Table 29 summarizes the significant differences found in the results.

Table 29

Summary of Significant Differences for Parent Perceptions

Perception Scale	Significance difference for group vs. group
Parents Perceptions toward Inclusion	Caucasian parents vs. minority parents*#
Impact of inclusion on children w/disabilities (Benefits)	Caucasian parents vs. minority parents*
Impact of inclusion on children without disability (Risks)	Parent of a child with Down syndrome vs. Parent of a child with Disability (not Down syndrome)*
Parents Perceptions toward Inclusion	Parent of a child with Down syndrome vs. Parent of a child with Disability (not Down syndrome)*
Impact of inclusion on child with disability (Risks)	Parents of a child with a moderate disability vs. Parents of a child with a severe disability*
Impact of inclusion on families of child without disabilities (Benefits)	Parents of a child with a mild disability vs. Parents of a child with moderate disabilities*
Impact of inclusion on child with a disability (Risks)	Parents of a child with a disability vs. Parents of a child without a disability*#
Impact of inclusion on families of child with a disability (Risks)	Parents of a child with a disability vs. Parents of a child without a disability*
Impact of inclusion on families of child without disabilities (Risks)	Parents of a child with a disability vs. Parents of a child without a disability*#

*= significance at the <.05 level #=significance at the <.005 level (Bonferroni adjustment)

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of parents of preschool children with and without disabilities attending a Rise School program regarding inclusion and, from their responses, identify barriers to providing inclusive early childhood programs and to program participation. While some studies have been conducted regarding the perceptions of parents of preschool/early childhood/early care parents, few studies have focused on parents of children with and without disabilities that attend the same program. In addition, this study surveyed parents from four different states, within seven different communities attending programs that have the same inclusive philosophy, classroom curriculum, staffing ratios and policies.

Data were collected via a survey, and the results were presented in the previous chapter. Implication for practice and recommendations for further research will be discussed. Areas of discussion will include the research questions and findings from the survey responses.

Findings and Conclusions

Research Question 1. *What are the perceptions of parents of children with disabilities regarding inclusion and inclusive programs?*

The study revealed that parents of children with disabilities attending a Rise School program have strong support for inclusion and inclusive programs which is consistent to the findings of Rafferty and Griffin (2005). Parents believe that

inclusive settings help children with disabilities become prepared for the real world, develop independence and learn from typically developing peers, similar to the research findings of Guralnick (1994). Parents of children with disabilities believe that inclusive placements provide benefits for children without disabilities as well. They perceive that inclusion helps children without disabilities better understand and accept differences and develop sensitivity to others.

As with previous research by Seery, Davis and Johnson (2000) and Guralnick (1994), parents of children with disabilities have concerns regarding the preparation of the classroom teacher to be trained to deal with the needs of children with disabilities and that children with disabilities are less likely to receive specialized services, help and individualized instruction in an inclusive program. Parents of children with disabilities are also concerned that children without disabilities may be frightened by the behavior of some children with disabilities and that they may be injured by a child with a disability.

Parents of children with disabilities believe that inclusion also benefits the families of children with and without disabilities. Inclusion allows families of children with disabilities more of a chance to meet and interact with other families of children without disabilities and helps families of children without disabilities understand children with disabilities.

Parents of children with disabilities are more supportive of inclusive placements for preschool age children than secondary age children (97% v. 82%). They also more strongly agree with the inclusive placement of children with mild and

moderate disabilities than children with severe disabilities by almost 40%. Parents of children with disabilities were most likely to support the inclusive placement of children with orthopedic/physical impairments, speech or vision impairments. Parents of children with disabilities were less likely to support the inclusive placement of children with emotional/behavioral disorders and autism spectrum disorders.

Research Question 2. *What are the perceptions of parents of children without disabilities regarding inclusion and inclusive programs?*

Parents of children without disabilities whose children attend a Rise School program support inclusion of children with disabilities in a variety of educational activities, including special events, publications, meal times, recess, field trips and the general education classroom. These findings are consistent with previous studies throughout the literature base regarding parent perspectives of inclusion in a preschool setting (Peck, Carlson & Helmstetter, 1992; Stoneman, 2001; Rafferty & Griffin, 2005).

Parents of children without disabilities believe that inclusion not only helps children with disabilities become prepared to function in the real world, but it helps them learn more by being with typically developing peers. Bailey and Winton (1987) found similar results. They also agree that inclusion promotes acceptance of children with disabilities by the community in general. Parents of children without disabilities did not believe that children with disabilities were less likely to receive special services, help or individualized instruction.

Parents of children without disabilities agreed that children without disabilities would develop a sensitivity to others and better understand and accept the differences in people as a result of participating in an inclusive program, which is consistent with findings of Peck, Carlson and Helmstetter (1992). Parents of children without disabilities disagreed that children with disabilities may hold back children without disabilities and slow down their learning.

Parents of children without disabilities reported that inclusion has a generally positive impact on the families of children with disabilities that attend an inclusive program. The inclusive program helps families learn more about normal child development and provides families a chance to meet and interact with families of children without disabilities. However, there was some concern that families of children with disabilities in inclusive programs may feel left our or ignored by families of children without disabilities.

Parents of children without disabilities also believe that inclusive programs have a positive impact on the families of children without disabilities. Families are more likely to understand what it is like for families whose children have a disability and they are more likely to understand children with disabilities. Again, they also reported concerns that families of children without disabilities may feel uncomfortable being around children with disabilities and their families.

Parents of children without disabilities were more likely to support the inclusion of a preschool child (96.9%) than a high school child (78.4%). They were also more likely to agree with an inclusive placement for a child with a mild disability

(95.4%) than a child with a severe disability (60%). As in previous studies by Green and Stoneman (1989) parents of children without disabilities were less likely to be supportive of inclusion of a child with emotional/behavior disorders, Autism or cognitive impairment. However, they were more likely to support a child with a speech impairment, hearing impairment or orthopedic impairment being enrolled in an inclusive program.

Research Question 3. *Are there statistical differences in parental perceptions of inclusion between parents of children with disabilities and parents of children without disabilities?*

There was no statistically significant difference between parents of children with a disability and parents of children without a disability concerning the benefits of inclusion or their global attitudes toward inclusion. Both groups were likely to strongly agree with the benefits of inclusion and inclusion in general. These findings are consistent with Rafferty, Boettcher and Griffin (2001) study of parents of children with and without disabilities attending an inclusive preschool program in New York State.

However, this study found that parents of children with disabilities were more likely to agree that in an inclusive classroom, children with disabilities are less likely to receive enough special help and individual instruction from their teacher; children with disabilities are less likely to receive special services and are more likely to be rejected or left out by other children, than parents of children without disabilities. Leyser and Kirk (2004) also found that parents of children with disabilities had

concerns regarding teacher instruction and help provided to children with disabilities in an inclusive classroom. Parents of children with disabilities are also more likely to agree that teachers are not likely to be qualified or trained to deal with the needs of children with disabilities than parents of children without disabilities.

Parents of children with disabilities were more likely to agree that in an inclusive classroom, the families of children with disabilities may feel that most of the other families do not share or understand their concerns and are more likely to notice and be upset by the experience of seeing their child rejected or teased than the parents of children without disabilities.

Parents of children with disabilities were more likely to agree that families of children without disabilities in inclusive programs feel uncomfortable being around families of a child with a disability and children with a disability, than parents of children without disabilities.

Research Question 4. *Are there statistically significant differences in parental perceptions of inclusion among parents of children with disabilities according to the severity of the disability?*

Unlike previous studies by Rafferty, Boettcher and Griffin (2001), when considering the risks associated with inclusion on children with disabilities, parents of children with severe disabilities perceptions of the risks were statistically significant; they were more likely to agree with the risks involved with inclusion than parents of children with moderate disabilities. Parents of children with mild disabilities were more likely to agree with the benefits of the impact of inclusion on families without

disabilities than parents of children with moderate disabilities, which is consistent with the findings of Leyser and Kirk (2004).

Research Question 5. *Are there statistically significant differences in parental perceptions of inclusion among parents of children with disabilities to the type of disability?*

Findings were mixed concerning differences in the perceptions of inclusion among parents of children with disabilities concerning the type of disability. When comparing the parents' perceptions toward inclusion scores, parents of children with Down syndrome were more likely to agree with inclusion than parents of children with a disability (not Down syndrome). This is consistent with earlier studies that indicated that the parents of children with Down syndrome wanted inclusion for their children (Kasari, Freeman, Bauminger & Alkin, 1999). Parents of children with Down syndrome were less likely to agree that inclusion had a negative impact on children without disabilities than parents of children with a disability other than Down syndrome.

However, as with a previous study by Bennett, Lee and Lucke (1998), there were no significant differences found regarding parents' perceptions of the benefits of inclusion on children with and without disabilities, nor concerning the benefits of inclusion on families of children with and without disabilities.

Research Question 6. *Is there a statistically significant relationship between parental perceptions of inclusion and the following parental demographic characteristics: gender, ethnicity and educational level?*

The data revealed that no statistically significant difference between gender regarding parental perceptions of inclusion was found in the study. However, fathers represented less than ten percent (8.7%) of the total participants; therefore caution must be used before generalizations are made.

There were two scales in which statistically significant differences concerning the parental perceptions of inclusion in respect to ethnicity was observed. Caucasian/White parents were more likely to express a positive perception of inclusion than minority parents. Caucasian/White parents were also more likely to agree with the benefits of inclusion on children with disabilities than minority parents. There were no significant differences found when comparing Caucasian/White parents and minority parents concerning the risks associated with inclusion or the impact of inclusion on families. Both groups agreed with the benefits of inclusion on families and disagreed with possible risks associated with inclusion for children with and without disabilities.

There was not a statistically significant difference found between parents with a college degree and parents without a college degree concerning their perceptions of inclusion and inclusive programs. This finding is not consistent with previous research by Stoiber, Gettinger and Goetz (1998) who found a statistically significant relationship between parents with a college education compared to parents with a high school education or less. In their study, parents with a college education had more positive beliefs regarding inclusion.

Research Question 7. *Are there statistically differences in parental perceptions of inclusive placements within specific disability categories among parents of children with a disability within that category, parents of a child with a disability outside that category and parents of children without a disability?*

The study attempted to explore possible differences in parents' perceptions of inclusive placements in regard to specific disabilities and their child's disability. For example, is there a difference in parental perceptions of inclusive placements of a child with Autism when comparing parents of children with Autism, parents of children with a disability other than Autism and parents of children without disabilities? The data did not allow for this comparison. The disability categories were too small to analyze independently.

Descriptive statistics revealed that parents were less likely to agree to an inclusive placement of children with autism or emotional/behavior disorders according to the mean scores of each group (Table 22). Parents of a child with autism were most supportive of an inclusive placement for their child. However, parents of children with and without disabilities at the Rise School programs were found to be more supportive of inclusion and inclusive placements for children with behavior/emotional disorders and Autism than parents studied in previous research studies (Rafferty, Boettcher & Griffin, 2001; Rafferty & Griffin, 2005).

Recommendations for Practice

Early childhood program administrators should be knowledgeable of the perceptions of parents of children with and without disabilities. While the benefits of

inclusion may draw some parents to enroll their child in such a program, the perceived risks of an inclusive environment could negatively impact not only enrollment in general, but the diversity of enrollment. Early childhood programs should work together with families to develop effective strategies to address these concerns.

In addition, understanding the perception of inclusive placements concerning children with more severe disabilities such as behavior/emotional disorders and Autism is especially important. Early childhood programs should consider the characteristics of their program, including ratios of students with and without disabilities, staffing ratios and availability of specialized service providers when planning for quality inclusion. Early intervention is critical for these populations, though they are less likely to be viewed by some parents of children with and without disabilities as being appropriate for inclusive preschool settings.

Early childhood teacher preparation programs should incorporate positive professional philosophies regarding inclusion and inclusive placements in all aspects of their programming. Pre-service teachers need a clear understanding of NAEYC and DEC position statements (NAEYC, in press) and recommendations regarding inclusion. Most importantly, students need professors and mentors who embrace, practice and advocate for inclusive placements for preschool children.

Parents of children with and without disabilities have voiced concerns regarding teacher preparation and training to meet the needs of children with special needs. Strategic planning is needed to incorporate coursework and internship

experiences throughout the teacher preparation program that focus on meeting the needs of children with varying types and severity of disabilities is needed at the university level. Early childhood program administrators can incorporate teacher training to help improve teacher attitudes and competence toward inclusion (Baker-Ericzen, Mueggenborg & Shea, 2009).

Administrative preparation programs must also recognize the importance of inclusion and incorporate inclusion philosophies into their programs. Inclusive programming requires extensive administrative support in order to succeed. Administrators need to not only be familiar with special education law and inclusion to provide legally mandated opportunities for their students, but they need to fully understand the positive impact inclusion has on the social climate of a school and academic benefits for all students.

Administrators at the university level and the public school level must acknowledge the example they are setting for their students, staff and parents. Separate departments for special education and general education programs at all levels send a message that separate education is acceptable and appropriate. By blending teacher preparation programs and district-level administrative programs, schools will not only start sending the right message, but they will increase their ability to work together for the benefit of all students of all abilities.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study was conducted in Rise School programs exclusively because these programs share very similar programming characteristics (child-teacher ratios,

teacher training), curriculum and philosophies. This allowed for greater control of previously mentioned characteristics and greater generalization of study results. However, this study should be replicated on statewide samples to achieve a greater representative sample of all early childhood environments available and the perceptions of the parents whose children with and without disabilities attend these programs. Variables such as the level of teacher training and the ratio of children with and without disabilities should be considered.

Further research is needed regarding the ethnicity findings at the Rise School programs. Research could explore possible factors associated with why differences were observed between Caucasian families and minority families concerning parent perceptions toward inclusion and the impact of inclusion on children with disabilities.

A larger research study would allow for more statistical analysis (ANOVAs) to be performed to determine if there are statistically significant differences between parents' perceptions regarding inclusion and other variables such as the type of disability or the severity of a disability of the child. One possible data source would be the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) database. This database would provide a large sample size.

There may be some value in concerning perceptions of parents of children with and without disabilities in different inclusive early childhood settings. The studies should clearly describe the characteristics of inclusive early childhood programs, including how many children with disabilities are attending the program,

the severity of the children's disability and enrollment limitations, if any, regarding children with disabilities and availability of inclusive programs in the community.

Finally, the perceptions of parents of children with specific types of disabilities (Down syndrome, Autism, etc.) regarding inclusive early childhood programs is needed secondary to the increase in awareness and identification of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and the need to provide appropriate interventions at a preschool age.

Limitations

A few limitations to this research study have been identified. First, the overall sample size of the study was acceptable (N=149), given the total population of 289, with a 52 % response rate was achieved. Response rates at some locations may have impacted by outside factors such personnel changes (Director resignations) and the school calendar (summer vacation). Though unforeseeable, the impact these factors may have played on the return rate need to be recognized. Response rates could be increased in future studies by conducting the research in the spring when there are limited school breaks. Response rates could also be increased by conducting the research during a time other than administrative transition. The sample sizes within particular variables (type of disability, severity of disability) were too small to conduct the data analysis that was originally planned for this study.

In addition, the design of the survey questions concerning the participants' child's disability and the type of disability of a hypothetical child were not consistent. Therefore, the responses did not align and some data analysis was unable to be completed.

Research question 4: Original research design was a one-way analysis of variance; however, only one variable (moderate disability) resulted in n>30. Therefore, a t-test was conducted comparing responses of parents of a child with a mild disability to parents of child with a moderate disability, parents of a child with a mild disability to parents of a child with a severe disability and parents of a child with a moderate disability to parents of a child with a severe disability.

Research question 5: Original research design was a one-way analysis of variance; however, only one variable (Down syndrome) resulted in N>30. Therefore, an independent-samples t-test was conducted comparing Parents of children with Down syndrome to parents of children with other disability types.

Second, parent participants for this study were overwhelming female. Although no focused effort was made to recruit a particular gender of parent, it is possible that findings could be affected by more male parent participants.

Third, parent participants in the study appear to be wealthier and have completed more college and advanced degrees than peers in the community in which the preschool are located. In addition, the ethnicity of the parent respondents and the community are different. These factors should be considered as appropriate concerning generalization.

Summary

This chapter provided a review of the study, the research questions, a description of the survey, and the methods used to collect data. Findings from the

study were analyzed and implications for research and practice were presented. Limitations of the study were also explained in this chapter.

BIBLIOGRAHPY

Allen, K.E., & Schwartz, I.S. (2001). *The exceptional child: Inclusion in early childhood education.* Albany, New York: Delmar.

Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) (2003). *Child Care Settings and the Americans with Disabilities Act.* Retrieved February 11, 2007, from www.thearc.org .

Bailey, D.B., McWilliam, R.A., Buysee, V., & Wesley, P.W. (1998). Inclusion in the context of competing values in early childhood education. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *13* (1), 27-47.

Bailey, D.B., & Winton, P. (1987). Stability and change in parents' expectations about mainstreaming. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 7,* 73-88.

Baker-Ericzen, M.J., Mueggenborg, M.G., & Shea, M.M. (2009). Impact of trainings on child care providers' attitudes and perceived competence toward inclusion: What factors are associated with change? Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 28, 196-208.

Beckman, P.J., Barnwell, D., Horn, E., Hanson, M.J., Gutierrez, S., & Lieber, J. (1998). Communities, families, and inclusion. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *13*(1), 125-150.

Bennett, T., Deluca, & Bruns, D. (1997). Putting inclusion into practice: Perspectives of teachers and parents. *Exceptional Children*, *64*(1), 115-131.

Bennett, T., Lee, H., & Lueke, B. (1998). Expectations and concerns: What mothers and fathers say about inclusion. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 33, 108-122.

Bricker, D. (1995). The challenge of inclusion. *Journal of Early Intervention*, *19*, 179-194.

Bricker, D. (2000). Inclusion: How the scene has changed. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, *20*(1), 14-19.

Brown, W.H., Odom, S.L., Li, S., & Zercher, C. (1999). Ecobehavioral assessment in inclusive early childhood programs: A portrait of preschool inclusion. *The Journal of Special Education, 33*, 138-153.

Bruder, M.B., & Staff, I. (1998). A comparison of the effects of type of classroom and service characteristics on toddlers with disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 18*(1), 26-37.

Buysse, V., Bailey, D., Smith, T., & Simeonsson, R. (1994). The relationship between child characteristics and placement in specialized versus inclusive early childhood programs. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, *14,* 419-435.

Buysse, V., Skinner, D., & Grant, S. (2001). Toward a definition of quality inclusion: Perspectives of parents and practitioners. *Journal of Early Intervention*, *24*(2), 146-161.

Buysse, V., Wesley, P., Bryant, D., & Gardner, D. (1999). Quality of early childhood programs in inclusive and non-inclusive settings. *Exceptional Children*, *65*(3), 301-314.

Buysse, V., Wesley, P.W., & Keyes, L. (1998). Implementing early childhood inclusion: Barrier and support factors. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *13*(1), 169-184.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Cross, A.F., Traby, E.K., Hutter-Pishgahi, L., & Gen Shelton, G. (2004). Elements of successful inclusion for children with significant disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 24*(3), 169-183.

Cryer, D., Tietze, W., & Wessels, H. (2002). Parents' perceptions of their children's child care: a cross-national comparison. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *17,* 259-277.

DeVore, S., & Bowers, B. (2006). Childcare for children with disabilities: Families search for specialized care and cooperative childcare partnerships. *Infant & Young Children, 19*(3), 203-212.

Daniel, L.G., & King, D.A. (2001). Impact of inclusion education on academic achievement, student behavior and self-esteem, and parental attitudes. *The Journal of Education Research*, *91*(2), 67-80.

Diamond, K.E., Hestenes, L.L., Innes, F.K. and Carpenter, E. (1997). Relationships between enrollment in an inclusive class and preschool children's ideas about

people with disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 17*(4), 520-537.

Diamond, K.E., & LeFurgy, W.G. (1994). Attitudes of parents of preschool children toward integration. *Early Education and Development, 5,* 69-77.

Dillman, D.A. (2000). Mail and internet surveys: the tailored design method (2nd ed.) New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Erwin, E., Soodak, L., Winton, P., Turnbull, A. (2001). "I wish it wouldn't all depend on me": Research on families and early childhood inclusion. In M.J. Guralnick (Ed.), *Early childhood inclusion: Focus on change* (pg. 127-158) Baltimore: Brookes.

Espinosa, L.M. (2002). High-quality preschool: Why we need it and what it looks like. *National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) Preschool Policy Matters, 1,* 1-13.

Etscheidt, S. (2006). Least restrictive and natural environments for young children with disabilities: a legal analysis of issues. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 26*(3), 167-178.

Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L.S. (1994). Inclusive schools movement and the radicalization of special education reform. *Exceptional Children*, *60*(4), 294-309.

Fuller, J., & Xu, Y. (2006/2007). Including children with disabilities in early childhood education programs: Individualizing developmentally appropriate practices. *Childhood Education*, *83*(2), 92-98.

Garrick-Duhaney, L.M., & Salend, S.J. (2000). Parental perceptions of inclusive educational placements*, Remedial and Special Education*, *21,* 121-128.

Galant, K., & Hanline, M.F. (1993). Parental attitudes toward mainstreaming young children with disabilities. *Childhood Education*, 69(5), 293-297.

Gandhi, A.G. (2007). Context matters: exploring relations between inclusion and reading achievement of students without disabilities. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education, 54*(1), 91-112.

Gartner, A. & Lipsky, D. (1987). Beyond special education: Toward a quality system for all students. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57, 367-392.

Giangreco, M., F., Edleman, S., Cloninger, C., & Dennis, R. (1993). My child has a classmate with severe disabilities: what parents of nondisabled children think about full inclusion. *Developmental Disabilities Bulletin*, *21*(1), 77-91.

Green, S.K., & Shinn, M.R. (1994). Parent attitudes about special education and reintegration: What is the role of student outcomes? *Exceptional Children*, *61*(3), 269-281.

Green, A.L., & Stoneman, Z. (1989). Attitudes of mothers and fathers of nonhandicapped child. *Journal of Early Intervention*, *13*, 292-304.

Grisham-Brown, J., Hemmeter, M.L., & Pretti-Frontczak, K. (2005). Blended practices for teaching young children in inclusive settings. Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Guralnick, M.J. (1994). Mothers' perceptions of the benefits and drawbacks of early childhood mainstreaming. *Journal of Early Intervention*, *18*(2), 168-183.

Guralnick, M.J. (2001). *Early childhood inclusion: Focus on change*. Baltimore: Brookes.

Guralnick, M.J., Connor, R.T., & Hammond, M. (1995). Parent perspectives of peer relationships and friendships in integrated and specialized programs. *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, 99, 457-476.

Guralnick, M.J., Neville, B., Hammond, M.A., & Connor, R.T. (2008). Continuity and change from full-inclusion early childhood programs through the early elementary period. *Journal of Early Intervention, 30*(3), 237-250.

Hanson, M.J., Horn, E., Sandall, S., Beckman, P., Morgan, M., Marquart, J., Barnwell, D., & Chou, H. (2001). After preschool inclusion: children's educational pathways over the early school years. *Exceptional Children*, *68*(1), 65-83.

Holohan, A., & Costenbader, V. (2000). A comparison of developmental gains for preschool children with disabilities in inclusive and self-contained classrooms. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, *20*, 224-235.

Hundert, J., Mahoney, B., Mundy, F., & Vernon, M.I. (1998). A descriptive analysis of developmental and social gains of children with severe disabilities in segregated and inclusive preschools in southern Ontario. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *13*, 49-65.

Idol, L. (2006). Toward inclusion of special education students in general education. *Remedial and Special Education*, *27*(2), 77-94.

Kalambouka, A., Farrell, P., Dyson, A., & Kaplan, I. (2007). The impact of placing pupils with special education needs in mainstream schools on the achievement of their peers. *Educational Research*, *49*(4), 365-382.

Kasari, C., Freeman, S.F.N., Bauminger, N., & Alkin, M.C. (1999). Parental perspectives on inclusion: Effects of autism and Down syndrome. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *29*(4), 297-305.

Knoche, L., Peterson, C.A., Edwards, C.P., & Jeon, H. (2006). Child care for children with and without disabilities: The provider, observer, and parent perspectives. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *21*, 93-109.

Kontos, S., Moore, D., & Giorgetti, K. (1998). The ecology of inclusion. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, *18,* 38-48.

LaParo, K.M., Sexton, D., & Snyder, P. (1998). Program quality characteristics in segregated and inclusive early childhood settings. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 13,* 151-167.

Laws, G., & Millward, L., (2001). Predicting parents' satisfaction with the education of their child with Down syndrome. *Educational Research*, *43*(2), 209-226.

Leyser, Y., & Kirk, R. (2004). Evaluating inclusion: An examination of parent views and factors influencing their perceptions. *International Journal of Disability, Development, and Education, 51*, 271-285.

Li, S., Marquart, J.M., & Zercher, C. (2000). Conceptual issues and analytic strategies in mixed-method studies of preschool inclusion. *Journal of Early Intervention*, *23*(2), 116-132.

Lieber, J., Hanson, M., Beckman, P., Odom, S., Sandall, S., Schwartz, I., Horn, E., & Worlery, R. (2000). Key influence on the initiation and implementation of inclusive preschool program. Exceptional Children, *67,* 83-98.

Lowenbraun, S., Madge, S., & Affleck, J. (1990). Parental satisfaction with integrated class placements of special education and general education students. *Remedial and Special Education*, *11*, 36-40.

Mallory, B.L., & New, R.S. (1994). Social constructivist theory and principle of inclusion: Challenges for early childhood special education. *Journal of Special Education*, *28*(3), 322-338.

Meisels, S.J., & Shonkoff, J.P. (Eds.). (1990). Handbook of early childhood intervention. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

McLean, M., & Hanline, M.F. (1990). Providing intervention services in integrated environments: Challenges and opportunities for the future. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, *10*, 62-77.

McDonnell, A.P., Brownell, K. & Wolery, M. (1997). Teaching experience and specialist support: A survey of preschool teachers employed in programs accredited by NAEYC. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, *17*, 263-285.

McDonnell, J., Thorson, N., Disher, S., Mathot-Buckner, C., Mendel, J., & Ray, L. (2003). The achievement of students with developmental disabilities and their peers without disabilities in inclusive settings: an exploratory study. *Education and Treatment of Children, 26*(3), 224-236.

Miller, L.J., & Strain, P.S. (1992). Parental attitudes toward integration. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 12*(2), 2-10.

Mills, P.E., Cole, K.N., Jenkins, J, R., & Dale, P.S. (1998). Effects of differing levels of inclusion on preschoolers with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, *65,* 79-90.

Moore, C., Gilbreath, D., & Maiuri, F. (1998). *Education students with disabilities in general education classrooms: A summary of the research*. Eugene, Oregon: Western Regional Resource Center; Juneau, Alaska: Department of Education, Teaching and Learning Support Division.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (in press). *A joint position statement of the division for early childhood (DEC) and the national association for the education of young children (NAEYC)*. Early Childhood Inclusion Field Review Copy 2008. NAEYC.

O'Brien, M. (2001). Inclusive child care for infants and toddlers. In Guralnick (Ed.), *Early Childhood Inclusion* (229-251). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Odom, S. (1998). Inclusion of young children with special needs in early childhood education: The research base. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *13*(1), 3-25.

Odom, S. (2000). Preschool inclusion: What we now and where we go from here. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, *20*(1), 20-27.

Odom, S. (2002). *Widening the circle: Including children with disabilities in preschool programs*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Odom, S.L., & McEvoy, M.A. (1998). Integration of young children with handicaps and normally developing children. In S.L. Odom & M.B. Karnes (Eds.), *Early intervention for children with handicaps*. Baltimore, Brookes.

Odom, S.L., Peck, C.A., Henson, M., Beckman, P.J., Kaiser, A.P, Lieber, J., Brown, W.H., Horn, E.M., & Schwartz, I.S. (1996). Inclusion at the preschool level: An ecological systems analysis. *Social Policy Report: Society for Research in Child Development, 10*, 18-30.

Okagaki, L., Diamond, K.E., Kontos, S.J., & Hestenes, L.L. (1998). Correlates of young children's interactions with classmates with disabilities. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 13*(1), 67-86.

Palmer, D.S., Borthwick-Duffy, S.A., & Widaman, K. (1998). Parent perceptions of inclusive practices for their children with significant cognitive disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, *64*, 271-282.

Palmer, D.S., Borthwick-Duffy, S.A., Widaman, K., & Best, S.J. (1998). Influences on parent perceptions of inclusive practices for their children with mental retardation. *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, *103*(3), 272-287.

Palmer, D.S., Fuller, K., Arora, T., & Nelson, M. (2001). Taking sides: Parent views on inclusion for their children with severe disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, *67*(4), 467-484.

Paulsell, D., Cohen, J., Stieglitz, A., Lurie-Hurvitz, E., Fenichel, E., & Kisker, E. (2002). *Partnerships for quality: Improving infant-toddler child care for low-income families*. Washington, DC: Zero to Three and Mathematical Policy Research, Inc.

Peck, C.A., Carlson, P., & Helmstetter, E. (1992). Parent and teachers perceptions of outcomes for nonhandicapped children enrolled in integrated childhood programs: A statewide study. *Journal of Early Intervention*, *16*, 53-63.

Peck, C.A., Staub, D., Gallucci, C., & Schwartz, I. (2004). Parent perceptions of the impacts of inclusion on their nondisabled child. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 29*(2), 135-143.

Purcell, M.L., Horn, E., & Palmer, S. (2007). A qualitative study of the initiation and continuation of preschool inclusion programs. *Exceptional Children*, *74*(1), 85-99.

Rafferty, Y., & Boettcher, C., & Griffin, K. (2001). Benefits and risks of reverse inclusion for preschoolers with and without disabilities: parents' perspectives. *Journal of Early Intervention, 24*(4), 266-286.

Rafferty, Y., & Griffin, K. (2005). Benefits and risks of reverse inclusion for preschoolers with and without disabilities: perspectives of parents and providers. *Journal of Early Intervention*, *27*(3), 173-192.

Rafferty, Y., Piscitelli, V., & Boettcher, C. (2003). The impact of inclusion on language development and social competence among preschoolers with disabilities. *Council for Exceptional Children*, *69* (4), 467-479.

Ritter, C.L., Michel, C.S., & Irby, B. (1999). Concerning inclusion: perceptions of middle school students, their parents, and teachers. *Rural Special Education Quarterly, 18*(2).

Sandall, S., Hemmeter, M.L., Smith, B.J., and McLean, M.E. (2005). *DEC recommended practices: A comprehensive guide for practical application in early intervention/early childhood special education.* DEC, Washington, D.C.

Scarborough, A.A., Spiker, D., Mallik, S., Hebbeler, K.M., Bailey, D.B., & Simeonsson, R.J. (2004). A national look at children and families entering early intervention. *Exceptional Children*, *70*(4), 469-483.

Schwartz, I.S., Sandall, S.R., Odom, S.L., Horn, E. & Beckman, P.J. (2002) "I know it when I see it": In search of a common definition of inclusion. In S.L. Odom (Ed.), Widening the circle (pp. 10-24). New York: Teachers Press.

Seery, M.E., Davis, P.M., & Johnson, L.J. (2000). Seeing eye-to-eye: Are parents and professionals in agreement about the benefits of preschool inclusion? *Remedial and Special Education*, *21*(5), 268-319.

Shonkoff, J.P., & Phillips, D.A. (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington, CD: National Academy Press.

Smith, B.J., & Rapport, M.K. (1999). IDEA and Early childhood inclusion. Denver, Colorado: University of Colorado at Denver, Collaborative Planning Project.

Stahmer, A.C., Carter, C., Baker, M., & Miwa, K. (2003). Parent perspectives on their toddlers' development: Comparison of regular and inclusion childcare. *Early Child Development and Care. 173*(5), 477-488.

Stoiber, K.C., Gettinger, M., & Goetz, D. (1998). Exploring factors influencing parents' and early childhood practitioners' beliefs about inclusion. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 13*(1), 107-124.

Stoneman, Z. (2001). Attitudes and beliefs of parents of typically developing children: Effects on early childhood inclusion. In M.J. Guralick (Ed.), *Early childhood inclusion: Focus on change,* (p. 69-100). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Stowe, M.J., & Turnbull, H.R. (2001). Legal considerations of inclusion for infants and toddlers and for preschool-age children. In M.J. Guralick (Ed.), *Early childhood inclusion: Focus on change*, (pp. 101-126). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Tichenor, M.S., Heins, B., & Piechura-Couture, K. (1998). Putting principles into practice: parent perceptions of a co-taught inclusive classroom. *Education*, *118*(3), 471-476.

Timmons, J.C., Foley, S., Whitney-Thomas, J., Green, J., & Casey, J. (1999). *Negotiating the landscape: the path to employment for individuals with disabilities in the TANF system.* Institute for Community Inclusion/UAP research and training center on promoting employment.

U.S. Department of Education. (1998). *To assure the free appropriate public education of all children with disabilities*: Twentieth annual report to Congress on the implementation of the IDEA. Washington, D.C.: Author.

U.S. Department of Justice. (1997). *Commonly asked questions about child care centers and the Americans with Disabilities Act*. Washington, D.C.: Civil rights division. Disability rights section.

Wesley, P.W., Buysse, V., & Tyndall, S. (1997). Family and professional perspectives on early intervention: An exploration using focus groups. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, *17*, 435-456.

Willis, S. (1994). Making schools more inclusive. *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Curriculum Update*, p. 1-8.

Yssel, N., Englebrecht, P., Oswald, M.M., Eloff, I., & Swart, E (2007). Views of inclusion: A comparative study of parents' perceptions in South Africa and the United States. *Remedial and Special Education, 28* (6), 356-365.

Appendix A

Survey

Thank you for your participation in this study. The estimated time to complete this survey is 30 minutes. Please complete the following 28 questions. Most questions ask you to check the appropriate box or circle your response, or make written comments. When you have completed the survey, please place it into the stamped, addressed envelope that accompanied the survey and place in the mail.

Section I-Demographics

My child attends The Rise School of _____.
(City, State)

Directions: Please check the appropriate box.

These questions are about the person completing the survey:

1. Relation to child

- ☐ Mother
- ☐ Father
- ☐ Grandparent
- ☐ Other: ___ (please explain:_____)

2. Ethnic Identity

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black/African American
- ☐ Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origin (print origin:_____)
- ☐ White
- ☐ Other: ___ (please explain:_____)

3. Income (Total annual family income-in dollars)

- ☐ Less than $15,000
- ☐ $15.001-$25,000
- ☐ $25,001-$35,000
- ☐ $35,001-$50,000
- ☐ $50,000-$75,000
- ☐ $75,001 +

4. Level of Education

- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ High school diploma or GED
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ Associates Degree
- ☐ Bachelors Degree
- ☐ Masters Degree
- ☐ Professional Degree (MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD)
- ☐ Doctoral Degree (PhD, EdD)
- ☐ Other: (please explain:_____)

Directions: Please check the appropriate box.

These questions are about your child and his/her preschool experiences.

1. Age

- ☐ Under one year
- ☐ 1 year old
- ☐ 2 years old
- ☐ 3 years old
- ☐ 4 years old
- ☐ 5 years old
- ☐ 6 years old

2. Sex

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

3. How long has your child attended Rise School?

- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ One year
- ☐ Two years
- ☐ Three years
- ☐ Four years or more

4. How many days a week does your child attend Rise School?

- ☐ Rise School (5 days a week)
- ☐ Rise School (4 days a week)
- ☐ Rise School (3 days a week)
- ☐ Rise School (2 days a week)

5. Does your child have a disability?

- ☐ No (SKIP TO QUESTION 8)
- ☐ Yes

6. Based on your own experience and professional reports, is your child's disability?

- ☐ Mild
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Severe

7. Please describe your child's disability

- ☐ Autism/PDD
- ☐ Cerebral Palsy
- ☐ Down syndrome
- ☐ Hearing Impairment
- ☐ Spinal Bifida
- ☐ Speech Impairment
- ☐ Visual Impairment
- ☐ Other:_____

Section II-Parents' Attitudes Toward Inclusion/Integration

Directions: Please read statement and circle the number of your response.

8. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS SHOULD:

	Strongly Agree ▼	Agree ▼	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ▼	Disagree ▼	Strongly Disagree ▼
a.) Ride the same school bus as children without disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
b.) Have their classrooms located throughout a regular school building with regular classrooms for children without special needs	1	2	3	4	5
c.) Eat lunch in the school cafeteria during the same time as the children without disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
d.) Eat lunch at the same tables in the school cafeteria with children without disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
e.) Share recess with children without disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
f.) Go on school field trips with children without disabilities	1	2	3	4	5

8. (con't) CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS SHOULD:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
g.) Share special events, such as holiday parties, with children without disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
h.) Use the same bathroom as children without disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
i.) Use the school hallways at the same time as the children without disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
j.) Share one or more classes such as art, music, or PE with the children without disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
k.) Have their school pictures interspersed with their peers without disabilities throughout school publications (i.e. yearbook & newspaper)	1	2	3	4	5
l.) Share the same school jobs and responsibilities as the children without disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
m.) Go to special programs where children without disabilities do not attend	1	2	3	4	5

The following question is referring to children in general, not <u>your</u> child.

Directions: Please circle the number.

Some children may benefit from inclusion more than others. Please indicate your perceptions regarding the inclusion of children with the following characteristics (type of disability):

9. TYPE OF DISABILITY

	Strongly Agree ▼	Agree ▼	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ▼	Disagree ▼	Strongly Disagree ▼
Autistic	1	2	3	4	5
Emotional/Behavioral Disorder	1	2	3	4	5
Hearing Impaired/Deaf	1	2	3	4	5
Learning Disability	1	2	3	4	5
Cognitive Impairment	1	2	3	4	5
Orthopedic/Physically Impaired	1	2	3	4	5
Other Health Impaired (Medical)	1	2	3	4	5
Speech Impaired	1	2	3	4	5
Visually Impaired	1	2	3	4	5

The following questions are referring to children in general, not <u>your</u> child.

Directions: Please circle the number

Some children may benefit from inclusion more than others. Please indicate your perceptions regarding the inclusion of children with the following characteristics (age of the child, severity of the disability) by circling the number:

10. AGE

	Strongly Agree ▼	Agree ▼	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ▼	Disagree ▼	Strongly Disagree ▼
Preschool age children	1	2	3	4	5
Elementary school students	1	3	3	4	5
Middle school students	1	2	3	4	5
High school students	1	2	3	4	5

11. SEVERITY OF DISABILITY

	Strongly Agree ▼	Agree ▼	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ▼	Disagree ▼	Strongly Disagree ▼
Mildly Disabled	1	2	3	4	5
Moderately Disabled	1	3	3	4	5
Severely Disabled	1	2	3	4	5

Section III-Impact of Inclusion/Integration

Directions: Please circle your response to the statement.

12. IMPACT ON CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
a.) Inclusion helps children with disabilities become prepared to function in the real world.	1	2	3	4	5
b.) Children with disabilities in inclusive programs are more likely to develop independence in self-help skills, such as dressing, eating and toileting.	1	2	3	4	5
c.) Children with disabilities in an inclusive setting learn more because they have chance to see typically developing children and learn from them.	1	2	3	4	5
d.) Inclusion is more likely to make children with disabilities want to try harder.	1	2	3	4	5
e.) Inclusion is more likely to make children with disabilities feel better about themselves.	1	2	3	4	5
f.) Inclusion provides children with disabilities with more chances to participate in a variety of activities	1	2	3	4	5

Directions: Please circle your response to the statement.

	Strongly Agree ▼	Agree ▼	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ▼	Disagree ▼	Strongly Disagree ▼
g.) Inclusion promotes acceptance of children with disabilities by the community in general.	1	2	3	4	5
h.) Inclusion is likely to have a negative effect on the emotional development of the child with a disability	1	2	3	4	5
i.) In an inclusive classroom, children with disabilities are less likely to receive enough special help and individualized instruction from their teacher	1	2	3	4	5
j.) In an inclusive classroom, children with disabilities are less likely to receive enough special services, such as physical and speech therapy.	1	2	3	4	5
k.) Children with disabilities are more likely to be rejected or left our by teachers if they are in inclusive programs.	1	2	3	4	5
l.) In inclusion classrooms, children with disabilities are more likely to be rejected or left out by other children.	1	2	3	4	5
m.) In inclusion classrooms, teachers are not likely to be qualified or trained to deal with the needs of children with disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
n.) It is important to me that my preschool child participate in an inclusive program	1	2	3	4	5

Directions: Please circle your response to the statement.

13. IMPACT ON CHILDREN WITHOUT DISABILITIES

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
a.) Children without disabilities would better understand and accept differences in people as a result of his/her participation in an inclusive program.	1	2	3	4	5
b.) Children without disabilities benefit when children with disabilities are integrated.	1	2	3	4	5
c.) Children without disabilities learn to develop sensitivity to others by having the opportunity to know children with disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
d.) In inclusive programs, children without disabilities become more aware and accepting of their own strengths and weaknesses.	1	2	3	4	5
e.) Children with disabilities may do things that injure children without disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
f.) Children without disabilities might be frightened by the strange behavior of some children with disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5

Directions: Please circle your response to the statements.

	Strongly Agree ▼	Agree ▼	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ▼	Disagree ▼	Strongly Disagree ▼
g.) Children with disabilities hold back children without disabilities and slow down their learning.	1	2	3	4	5
h.) In inclusion, children with disabilities will take up too much of the teacher's time and children without disabilities will not receive enough attention.	1	2	3	4	5
i.) Children without disabilities might be overlooked in an inclusive classroom because children with disabilities are so demanding.	1	2	3	4	5
j.) In inclusion, the needs of the children with a disability for special materials and equipment will be so great that the children with out disabilities will not get their fair share of the resources.	1	2	3	4	5
k.) A child with disabilities would present a number of behavior problems when integrated with children without a disability.	1	2	3	4	5
l.) It is difficult to maintain order in a preschool classroom that contains a child with a disability.	1	2	3	4	5
m.) In inclusion classrooms, children without disabilities may copy children with disabilities and learn negative behaviors from them.	1	2	3	4	5

Directions: Please circle your response to the statement.

14. Section V-IMPACT ON PARENTS OF PRESCHOOLERS WITH DISABILITIES

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
a.) Inclusion helps families of children with disabilities learn more about normal child development.	1	2	3	4	5
b.) Inclusion gives families of children with disabilities more of a chance to meet and interact with families of children without disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
c.) Families of children with disabilities in inclusion programs may feel left out or ignored by families of children without disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
d.) Families of children with disabilities in inclusion programs may feel that most of the other families do not share or understand their concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
e.) Families of children with disabilities in inclusion programs are more likely to notice and be upset by differences between their child and children without disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
f.) Families of children with disabilities in inclusion programs are more likely to notice and be upset by the experience of seeing their child rejected or teased	1	2	3	4	5

Directions: Please circle your response to the statement.

14. Section VI-IMPACT ON PARENTS OF PRESCHOOLERS WITHOUT DISABILITIES

	Strongly Agree ▼	Agree ▼	Neither Agree Nor Disagree ▼	Disagree ▼	Strongly Disagree ▼
a.) Families of children without disabilities in inclusion programs are more likely to understand what it is like for families who have a child with a disability.	1	2	3	4	5
b.) Families of children without disabilities in inclusion programs are more likely to understand children with a disability.	1	2	3	4	5
c.) Families of children without disabilities in inclusion programs feel uncomfortable being around children with a disability.	1	2	3	4	5
d.) Families of children without disabilities in inclusion programs feel uncomfortable being around families who have a child with a disability.	1	2	3	4	5

Additional Questions

15. Would you place your child into an inclusive classroom again if afforded the opportunity?
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

16. When your child started, what did you expect from the Rise School program?

_____

_____

_____

17. Why did you decide to place your child at the Rise School program?

_____

_____

_____

18. What benefits have you seen for your child related to the inclusive environment at the Rise School? Can you describe specific examples?

_____

_____

_____

19. Have you observed any negative effects of attending the Rise School? Can you describe specific examples?

_____

_____

_____

20. Is there any information you wish you would have had prior to your child's involvement in the program?

_____

_____

_____

Kindergarten Placement – Where your child will attend kindergarten in August 2008 (If your child **is not** transitioning to Kindergarten, SKIP to Question 25)

21. Type of placement
    - ☐ Full day
    - ☐ Half day

22. Type of program
    - ☐ Regular Education
    - ☐ Special Education
    - ☐ Mixed (please explain)

      _____

23. Type of placement
    - ☐ Integrated
    - ☐ Segregated
    - ☐ Other (explain)

      _____

24. To what extent were you involved in the following activities during your child's transition into elementary school? *Circle your response*.

	Very Much ▼	A Lot ▼	A little ▼	Not at All ▼
a. The transition into the new school	1	2	3	4
b. The assessment/evaluation process	1	2	3	4
c. The placement decision	1	2	3	4

Directions: Please circle your response.

25. Section VIII-Program Satisfaction

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the Rise School?

	Extremely Satisfied ▼	Very Satisfied ▼	Satisfied ▼	Sometimes Satisfied ▼	Not Satisfied ▼	Not Applicable ▼
a.) Development of IFSP/IEP/IIP (Individual Plan)	1	2	3	4	5	na
b.) Quality of instruction	1	2	3	4	5	na
c.) Availability of instructional materials	1	2	3	4	5	na
d.) Adequacy of speech/language services	1	2	3	4	5	na
e.) Adequacy of PT/OT services	1	2	3	4	5	na
f.) Teachers are adequately trained	1	2	3	4	5	na
g.) Overall program quality	1	2	3	4	5	na

Directions: Please circle your response.

26. To what extent are you involved in the following activities involving your child?

	Very Much ▼	A Lot ▼	A little ▼	Not at All ▼
a. The transition into the program	1	2	3	4
b. The assessment/evaluation process	1	2	3	4
c. Contact with teachers	1	2	3	4
d. Observations at school	1	2	3	4
e. Educational activities at home	1	2	3	4
f. Advocacy groups	1	2	3	4
g. School activities	1	2	3	4
h. Overall involvement in program	1	2	3	4

27. To what extent did any of the following limit your level of involvement?

	Very Much ▼	A Lot ▼	A little ▼	Not at All ▼
a. Time of day meeting are held	1	2	3	4
b. Job/work schedule	1	2	3	4
c. No babysitter	1	2	3	4
d. No means of transportation	1	2	3	4
e. Not interested	1	2	3	4
f. Feel unwelcome by staff	1	2	3	4
g. Language barriers	1	2	3	4

28. To what extent did any of the following impact your decision to enroll your child in this program?

	Very Much ▼	A Lot ▼	A little ▼	Not at All ▼
a. Inclusive Setting	1	2	3	4
b. Inclusive services (OT,PT,MT & ST)	1	2	3	4
c. Speech-Language Therapy	1	2	3	4
d. Occupational Therapy	1	2	3	4
e. Music Therapy	1	2	3	4
f. Physical Therapy	1	2	3	4
g. Quality of curriculum	1	2	3	4
h. Teacher training	1	2	3	4
i. Staff-to-child ratio	1	2	3	4

Thank you so much for your participation in this study. I appreciate your time. Please return this survey by July 11, 2008.

Appendix B

Information Sheet for Consent

INFORMATION SHEET FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

My name is Dana Hilbert, and I am a doctoral student in Educational Administration, Curriculum and Supervision at the University of the Oklahoma. I am requesting that you volunteer to participate in a research study titled Perceptions of Parents of Preschool Children with and without Disabilities regarding Inclusion. You were selected as a possible participant because your child attends an inclusive early childhood program. Please read this information sheet and contact me to ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Purpose of the Research Study: The purpose of this study is to: 1) gain a better understanding of the factors impacting parents' perspective of inclusion and 2) inclusive programs.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: complete a questionnaire (estimated time to complete questionnaire is 30 minutes)

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study: The study has the following risks: no physical/psychological/economic risks have been identified by participating in this study. The benefits to participation are: contributing to the research base and future programming for inclusive preschools.

Compensation: You will not be compensated for your time and participation in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Length of Participation: It is estimated it will take you 30 minutes to complete the survey. After you complete the survey and return it to the principal investigator (Dana Hilbert) your participation in the study will end.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private and your inclusive early childhood program will not have access to your responses. In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify you as a research participant. Research records will be stored securely. Questionnaires will be stored in a locked cabinet in the principal investigator's office. Questionnaires will be destroyed upon completion of all data analysis. All paper records will be shredded. Only approved researchers will have access to the records.

Contacts and Questions: If you have concerns or complaints about the research, the researcher(s) conducting this study can be contacted at (405)744-7767 or dana.hilbert@okstate.edu (Principal Investigator) or the advisor for this study, Dr. Gregg Garn (garn@ou.edu or (405)325-6832. You are encouraged to contact the researcher(s) if you have any questions. If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the

research and wish to talk to someone other than the individuals on the research team, or if you cannot reach the research team, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at (405) 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Please keep this information sheet for your records. By completing and returning this questionnaire, I am agreeing to participate in this study.

Appendix C

Site Letters

College of
Human Environmental Sciences

Rise Program

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA
HUMAN SCIENCES

January 30, 2008

Dana Hilbert
1601 S. Main
Stillwater OK 74074

Dear Ms. Hilbert:

The Rise School of the University of Alabama has reviewed your proposal to conduct the research study entitled *Perceptions of Parents of Preschool Children with and without Disabilities regarding Inclusion.* We will be glad to participate in this study.

It is our understanding that packets (including a stamped return envelope) will be distributed by our director to all families who attend our program. Reminder letters will be distributed to all families 3 days after receiving the packets. If families choose to participate, they will return the packet to the director to be mailed by a predetermined date, which will be included in the packet.

In addition, a copy of the final report will be forwarded to the director upon completion of the study.

Sincerely,

Martha Cook

Martha J. Cook
Director
The Rise School of the University of Alabama

Stallings Center
Box 870305
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0305
(205) 348-7931
FAX (205) 348-9611

The Rise School
OF DENVER
"Where Special Kids Shine"

Dana Hilbert
1601 S. Main
Stillwater, OK 74074

Dear Ms. Hilbert:

The Rise School of Denver has reviewed your proposal to conduct the research study entitled *Perceptions of Parents of Preschool Children with and without Disabilities regarding Inclusion*. We will be glad to participate in this study.

It is our understanding that packets (including a stamped return envelope) will be distributed by our director to all families who attend our program. Reminder letters will be distributed to all families 3 days after receiving the packets. If families choose to participate, they will return the packet to the director to be mailed by a predetermined date, which will be included in the packet.

In addition, a copy of the final report will be forwarded to our director upon completion of the study.

Sincerely,

Sarah Shikes

Sarah Shikes, Director
The Rise School of Denver

4949 E. Eastman Ave., Denver, CO 80222 ph.(303) 756-7473 fax (303) 300-4374 www.riseschool.org

COLLEGE OF
Human Environmental
Sciences

The Rise School of Stillwater
"Where Special Kids Shine."

January 24, 2008

Dear Ms. Hilbert:

The Rise School of Stillwater will participate in your research study. We have reviewed your proposal entitled Perceptions of Preschool Children with and without Disabilities regarding Inclusion.

We look forward to assisting in distributing the packets and receiving a copy of your final report at the completion of the study.

Sincerely,

Jenny Eskew

Jenny Eskew
Adm. Asst.
The Rise School of Stillwater



The Rise School
OF HOUSTON
"Where Special Kids Shine"

January 28, 2008

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CYNTHIA ALLSHOUSE
ANDREW J. CLARK, III
MARTHA COOK, ED.D.
JUDITH FEIGIN, ED.D.
RALPH FEIGIN, M.D.
JOHN GAYLORD
RICHARD HELLMANN
JOHN HOLLAND
AARON HOWES
KARA KINDER HOWES
SUSAN MACDONALD
DON MCGILL
CATRINA MCLEAN
JANIS STAILEY
BRAD TUCKER
MARK WALLACE
DON WEIR
SHERIDAN WILLIAMS

ADVISORY BOARD

BEN BROLLIER
BRENDA DUNCAN
JOHN H. DUNCAN
JOHN POSTON
WENDY POSTON
KEVIN WHALEN

Dana Hilbert
1601 S. Main
Stillwater, OK 74074

Dear Ms. Hilbert:

The Rise School of Houston has reviewed your proposal to conduct the research study entitled *Perceptions of Parents of Preschool Children with and without Disabilities regarding Inclusion*. We will be glad to participate in this study.

It is our understanding that packets (including a stamped return envelope) will be distributed by our director to all families who attend our program. Reminder letters will be distributed to all families 3 days after receiving the packets. If families choose to participate, they will return the packet to the director to be mailed by a predetermined date, which will be included in the packet.

In addition, a copy of the final report will be forwarded to our director upon completion of the study.

Sincerely,

Jan Stailey
Director
The Rise School of Houston

8080 NORTH STADIUM DRIVE HOUSTON, TEXAS 77054 TEL: 713.532.7473 FAX: 713.383.7007 WWW.RISESCHOOL.ORG
A non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization

The Rise School

OF AUSTIN

"Where Special Kids Shine"

January 24, 2008

Dana Hilbert
1601 S. Main
Stillwater, OK 74074

Dear Ms. Hilbert:

The Rise School of Austin has reviewed your proposal to conduct the research study entitled *Perceptions of Parents of Preschool Children with and without Disabilities regarding Inclusion.* We will be glad to participate in this study.

It is our understanding that packets (including a stamped return envelope) will be distributed by our director to all families who attend our program. Reminder letters will be distributed to all families 3 days after receiving the packets. If families choose to participate, they will return the packet to the director to be mailed by a predetermined date, which will be included in the packet.

In addition, a copy of the final report will be forwarded to our director upon completion of the study.

Sincerely,

Joan P. David

Director
The Rise School of Austin



The Rise School
of Corpus Christi
Where Special Kids Shine

Dana Hilbert
1601 S. Main
Stillwater, OK 74074

Dear Ms. Hilbert:

The Rise School of Corpus Christi has reviewed your proposal to conduct the research study entitled *Perceptions of Parents of Preschool Children with and without Disabilities regarding Inclusion*. We will be glad to participate in this study.

It is our understanding that packets (including a stamped return envelope) will be distributed by our director to all families who attend our program. Reminder letters will be distributed to all families 3 days after receiving the packets. If families choose to participate, they will return the packet to the director to be mailed by a predetermined date, which will be included in the packet.

In addition, a copy of the final report will be forwarded to our director upon completion of the study.

Sincerely,

Sherry L. Peterson

Sherry Peterson
Director
The Rise School of Corpus Christi

3434 Ft. Worth Street ~ Corpus Christi, Texas 78411 ~ Ph. (361) 814-9399 ~ Fax (361) 814-9366
E-mail: risedirector@att.net ~ Web: www.riseschool.org

The Rise School
OF DALLAS
AT ST. LUKES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Dana Hilbert
1601 S. Main
Stillwater, OK 74074

January 16, 2008

Dear Ms. Hilbert:

The Rise School of Dallas has reviewed your proposal to conduct the research study entitled *Perceptions of Parents of Preschool Children with and without Disabilities regarding Inclusion*. We will be glad to participate in this study.

It is our understanding that packets (including a stamped return envelope) will be distributed by our director to all families who attend our program. Reminder letters will be distributed to all families 3 days after receiving the packets. If families choose to participate, they will return the packet to the director to be mailed by a predetermined date, which will be included in the packet.

In addition, a copy of the final report will be forwarded to our director upon completion of the study.

Sincerely,

Peggy Dyer, Ed.D.
Director
The Rise School of Dallas

5923 ROYAL LANE DALLAS, TEXAS 75230 TEL: 214.373.RISE (7473) FAX: 214.373.6545 EMAIL: RISEDAL@SWBELL.NET
A non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization

Appendix D

Rafferty Correspondence

Dear Dana – Good luck with your project. I am attaching the survey—but it is not the final version that I used. I believe the changes were minor – changes in terminology from disabled children to children with disabilities, for example. I believe it describes all of the subscales – this information, as you know, is also in the articles. Best regards, Yvonne

-----Original Message-----
From: "Hilbert, Dana: dana.hilbert@okstate.edu
Date: Sunday, December 2, 2007 12:31 am
Subject: Scales used in your research
To: yrafferty@pace.edu

>Dr. Rafferty:
>
>I am inquiring about two scales that you discussed in your
>articles published in the Journal of Early Intervention in 2001
>& 2005: The Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities
>Scale and the Impact of Inclusion ob Typically Developing
>Children Scale (and the subscales).
>
>As a doctoral student working on a dissertation, I was
>interested in adapting your existing measure for my study.
>I would appreciate any information you could provide, including
>copies of the actual scales and any relevant information
>needed for analysis.
>
>Thank you for your time and assistance.
>
>Sincerely,
>
>Dana Hilbert
>Doctoral student at University of Oklahoma
>

Yvonne Rafferty
Professor, Psychology Department
YRafferty@pace.edu
(212)346-1804