

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF THE SUCCESS BY SIX PROGRAM:
INFLUENCE ON ACADEMIC GAINS AND SCHOOL READINESS

By

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

in Educational Leadership

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

April, 2013

Measuring the Impact of the Success by Six: Influence on Academic Gains and School Readiness

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Abstract

Early intervention prior to kindergarten is an effective strategy in closing the gaps in pre-readiness skills and appropriate behavior which may occur because of disparity in socioeconomic status, parenting styles, and preschool experience. The United Way Success by Six Program was created to provide the opportunity to engage children and their parents prior to the kindergarten experience in an intervention process. This study was designed to determine if the Success by Six Program with parental workshops closed the gaps of skill development and behavior prior to the kindergarten experience. The first research question explored if the achievement gap closed. The second research question determined which factors had the most impact on closing the gap. The third research question explored the impact of the parent workshops. A pre-post non-random control group design was utilized. Results were analyzed utilizing SPSS Version 20 to compute descriptive and inferential statistics. The outcome revealed the achievement gap closed upon the completion of the program for those students in the treatment group. Socioeconomic status and days in attendance were the two independent variables that significantly impacted the outcome. Two of the four parental workshop appeared to impact the outcome of the treatment group in a positive manner.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction.....1
Problem Statement.....5
Outcome Measures.....6
Research Questions.....7
Limitations.....7

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction.....10
State & Federal Initiatives.....20
Literacy Readiness.....25
Parental Involvement.....29
Socioeconomic Differences.....33
Preschool Experiences.....38
Summer School Early Childhood Program.....41
Success by Six Program.....44

3. METHODS

Introduction.....47
Research Design.....47
Participants/Settings.....48
Instrumentation.....49

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Procedures/Data Analysis..... | 51 |
| 4. DATA ANALYSIS | |
| Introduction..... | 56 |
| Demographics..... | 58 |
| Preliminary Analysis..... | 61 |
| Bivariate Analysis of Assessments & Variables..... | 63 |
| Multivariate Analysis of Program Impact..... | 65 |
| Impact of Program Dosage..... | 70 |
| Impact of Parent Workshops..... | 71 |
| Summary..... | 73 |
| 5. DISCUSSION OF ANALYSIS | |
| Introduction..... | 75 |
| Discussion..... | 75 |
| Pre Program Measures, DIAL-3..... | 76 |
| Pre Program Measures, Success by Six Screener..... | 77 |
| Program Impact..... | 78 |
| Impact of Dosage..... | 83 |
| Parental Workshops, Impact on Student Measures..... | 82 |
| Limitations of Study..... | 87 |
| Future Research..... | 88 |
| REFERENCES..... | 90 |

APPENDICES

| | |
|--|-----|
| Appendix A: DIAL-3 Assessment & Behavior Checklist | 99 |
| Appendix B: Success by Six Screener | 103 |
| Appendix C: KRAL Instrument | 107 |
| Appendix D: Parent Questionnaires | 112 |
| Appendix E: Preschool Transition Form | 118 |
| Appendix F: Parental Workshops Notification | 122 |
| Appendix G: Print Name Rubric | 124 |
| Appendix H: Schedule of Day | 126 |
| Appendix I: IRB Protocol | 129 |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am extremely thankful to Dr. Karen H. Larwin who was the driving force behind the completion of my dissertation. She believed in me and thus I believed in myself. She was there every step of the way to meet with me and communicate via email throughout the journey. Her motivation and support helped me complete this mission. I am also thankful to my committee members, Dr. Chuck Vergon, Dr. Gail Saunder-Smith, and Dr. Danielle Gruhler. Thank you for your time and suggestions and revisions. Thank you to Leslie Reedy for her time and quickness in returning my documents with suggestions to be in compliance with APA standards. I am very appreciative to the members of my doctoral cohort; Geno, John, Connie, Matt, Pat, and Chris who supported me as I supported them throughout the program. We helped each other through the difficult times and celebrated the successful times as well. I enjoyed working alongside of them and wish them luck as they complete their journey as well.

DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this work to my family, Warren, Robert, and Courtney. You truly are my rock and you have been there for me throughout this journey. I am truly blessed and realize that you are my life. I praise God for guiding me through this process. I knew when I was frustrated, He lifted me up and gave me a sign to continue moving forward. He is the reason why I was able to continue this journey when hardships occurred. I am truly grateful to my mother, Millie, and my deceased father, Ken for always believing in me. Their unconditional love was my strength throughout my life. They always encouraged all of their children to never give up and taught us the meaning of the words integrity and honesty. To my sister, Karen, and my brother and his wife, Ken and Janet, I thank them for always being supportive of all of my endeavors. I also dedicate my work to my nieces and nephews and my husband's family. Each of you are special to me and I am grateful for this extended family. Finally, I want to dedicate this work to my husband, Warren. Your understanding, support, and willingness to take on extra responsibilities while I pursued this degree were second to none. You always expressed your belief in my ability. I love you so very much. You're the meaning in my life, you're my inspiration.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Anything the teachers believe they can accomplish alone, they can do better in collaboration with parents.”

- Peter Hannon, 2001, *How Can We Foster Children's Early Literacy Development?*

Closing the achievement gaps that exist from one child to another child has always been a problem in education. The home-school partnership is one of the primary factors that contributes to the achievement gaps that exist. Parental involvement in early schooling is linked to behavioral and academic success and has a lasting influence throughout the educational journey (Turney & Kao, 2009). As much as positive parental involvement is important, ineffective parenting has contributed to behavior problems during the early years as well (Hanisch et al., 2010). Besides positive and negative parenting, the socioeconomic factor has had an impact on the cognitive and academic success of a child (Cooper, 2010). Fish (2007) points out that more positive attitudes and behaviors relate to optimal child development. The opposite holds true, as well, that negative consequences lessen optimal development. The importance of the parental component in partnership with the school has clearly shown that positive parenting practices during the formative years are powerful predictors of later success in school environment (Powell, Seung-Hee, File, & San Juan, 2010).

Understanding the experiences that the parents of these young children had when the parents were in school is important in understanding positive or negative parenting styles when it comes to education. Parents are the primary role model for their children. If parents of young children did not have role models who placed a high value on education, it is likely that they will not be effective, positive role models for their own children. Ensuring that all parents understand

how they can best help their child to be successful is an important factor in the child's success. Contrarily, there is another notion that parents do not feel that they should take an active role or may lack the confidence to partner with the school (Berthelsen & Walker, 2008). It is imperative that programs are in place to coach parents so that they can confidently participate in the children's learning. Reading at home is one of the many experiences that can impact a child to become a lifelong learner prior to the start of kindergarten.

Formal and Informal Experiences

In conjunction with effective parenting, research has also shown that children's reading experience prior to kindergarten is an important factor in educational success. There is substantial evidence that formal reading experiences, such as letter-name knowledge and phonological sensitivity, are important predictors of early reading achievement (Bishop, 2003). Both informal and formal reading experiences at home have been found to be closely associated with literacy skill development (Stephenson, Parrila, Georgiou, & Kirby, 2008). Two different domains of parental involvement in the home lead to literacy (Senechal, 2006). Informal literacy experiences engage children; they expose them to written language such as when an adult reads a story to a child. In this type of activity, the adult is exposing the child to print through oral delivery of the text as well as talk surrounding illustrations in the book. Language development can be promoted through the story. Many children have print materials at home and can observe adults in all socioeconomic environments engaging in opportunities of reading print in their daily routines as they go about shopping or cooking (Senechal, 2006). Senechal indicated that book reading is directly related to the language skill development of vocabulary as well as children's early literacy skill.

The second domain of parental involvement is formal reading experiences which focus directly on the written language. The term *formal* means that the focus of the activity is on the structure of the written language, however, this does not mean that the parent must engage their child in activities that are formal structures such as workbook pages. Parents adopt an educational role when they engage their children in formal literacy activities. Alphabet knowledge, beginning reading, and temporary spelling are examples of activities in this area (Senechal, 2006). Parents who teach their children the names of the letters, or teach their children how to print the children's names are engaging their children in a formal literacy experience. Teaching their children letters in the alphabet and learning a word's beginning and ending sounds are formal literacy experiences by which a parent can improve their children's literacy skills (Senechal, 2006).

Stephenson et al. (2008) have shown that early storybook exposure may be associated with better skills in listening, comprehension, and building of vocabulary, but not for fostering phonological sensitivity, letter-name knowledge, or letter-sound knowledge. The informal literacy experiences have been shown to have an impact on general language skills, but formal literacy experiences, with more specific activities as teaching letter names, letter sounds, and printing letter formation are necessary to directly impact specific reading skills. The home is one place where this skill development can take place and a preschool setting may also be a supportive base.

Program Development

Overwhelming evidence indicates that some preschool programs can work to increase academic attainment in the elementary years. The results of this research clearly establish that state-level programs can have positive effects on vocabulary, pre-reading, and early math skills

when three conditions are met. These conditions include (a) local programs are heterogeneous within a state, (b) the implementation of the program is in the hands of the manager and teachers and not with the individuals who developed the program, and (c) selection bias is ruled out (Wong, Cook, Barnett, & Jung, 2008; Arnold, Bartlett, Gowani, & Shallwani, 2008; Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2012). Evidence also supports these programs in the early years as positively affecting high school graduation rates, participation in the labor force, and criminal behavior (Wong et al., 2008). Studies demonstrating long term effects tend to be small and local in scope. Two of the studies that claimed long term effects left the implementation of the program up to the developer of the program. This indicates the preschool programs worked, but if they were implemented at scale, the question would remain, do they in fact work? When the program reaches state or federal level and management of the program is left in the hands of bureaucrats, does the essence of the program get lost, since the individuals at the local level and developers of the program are the individuals who understand the essence of the program? When the daily classroom implementation depends on local teachers and administrators who may not have the knowledge or motivation of the program developer, would they be effective (Wong et al., 2008)?

The state-wide and federal initiatives, such as Head Start, are being closely examined since public policy is always interested in how well the preschools not funded by federal funds are performing in relationship to the state-wide or federal initiatives. Having proven that states with higher quality requirements in teacher qualifications out-performed Head Start is a concern. Head Start must raise their standards of teacher education requirements, or funds should be sent to the states as block grants to operate state pre-Kindergarten programs (Wong et al., 2008). The funding of early childhood programs differs state by state. For this reason, many of the

programs funded by federal or state governments are being examined to determine if this is indeed the best area in which to spend money in the educational arena (Wong et al., 2008).

Problem Statement

The United Way Success by Six Program was developed to provide the opportunity to engage children and their parents prior to the kindergarten experience in an intervention process designed to close the gaps in skill development exhibited by the individuals in the program as oppose to those individuals who did not meet the criteria to be in the program. After reviewing the literature on the topic of the effect of parental involvement in the early education years, two substantial areas evolved from which hypotheses will be derived to guide the analysis of the data. First, it is surmised that if parents had the opportunity to attend parent workshops, a relationship between the home and school would be built so that the parents would be knowledgeable on how to reinforce skill development at home that is introduced in school. These workshops would include literacy skill development and strategies for behavioral and social development. Second, exposure to literacy skills development within the home, prior to kindergarten, would benefit the children. The Success by Six classroom experiences would provide development of literacy skills such as letter recognition, viewing name in print, and reading a book together which research has shown to be important in a child's successful educational journey (Senechal, 2006; Stephenson, Parrila, Rauno, & Georgiou, 2008).

Potential Contributions

A summer intervention program prior to kindergarten has the potential to close the gaps between the disparities of skill levels among the children as they begin their educational journey. Students enter kindergarten from many diverse backgrounds. Parenting style, exposure to informal and formal literacy experiences, different preschool experiences, and the socioeconomic

component of the family all play a role in determining the development of the child as the child enters school. A summer intervention program prior to the start of kindergarten could have a positive effect in exposing children to academics, social interaction, and routines and structure to which they perhaps did not have. Engaging parents in the educational process by offering parent workshops that enable them to learn techniques to help their child, thus partnering parents and their children's education, could provide a positive benefit to the children's early educational success.

Outcome Measures

The hypothesis that the child's initial and subsequent perception of school and that of the parent's own school experience becomes the catalyst in providing workshops to promote positive parental support. Building a relationship between the school and home would foster parents' feeling comfortable with reinforcing the skills at home that are introduced in school. This is important because parents who did not have a good experience in school may transfer those negative feelings and find fault in their children's school environment. Parents who have had a positive school experience are more likely to engage in the activities the school offers for parents and see teachers as responsive to them (Berthelsen & Walker, 2008). Building a positive relationship could be accomplished in the parent workshops that would emphasize building literacy skills and strategies for behavioral and social development.

The second hypothesis would focus on the classroom setting within the Success by Six Program in which literacy skills such as letter recognition, recognizing name in print, and reading a book together would be practiced. Another element of the program is the reinforcement of expected classroom behavior such as following directions, responding to name,

cooperation, and following a routine. The program's effectiveness would be measured by the growth viewed from the pre and post testing measures.

Research Questions

The research study explores the relationship between school readiness outcomes for incoming kindergarteners and contributing factors that may have an impact on school readiness and the skill level differences that exist between the children. The current study is guided by three primary research questions:

1. Is the Success by Six Program effective in closing the achievement gaps for students who are determined to be at-risk?
2. Which of these factors has an effect on kindergarten readiness?
 - Preschool experience or lack of preschool experience;
 - Exposure to formal and informal literacy skills;
 - Parent involvement.
3. Would a parent workshop component within the Success by Six Program strengthen the partnership between home and school? What would the characteristics of an effective program incorporate?

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is the diversity of attitudes, previous school experiences of the parent, self-efficacy, and parental knowledge of how to work to prepare their child for kindergarten. The socioeconomic status of the parents may also be a limitation due to resources that the parents have to provide opportunities, not only for themselves, but for their children. A second limitation of the study may be in the pretest score of the child during the screening process as the child visits each station to be assessed on a concept. There are two

assessments that will be administered: the DIAL-3 and the Success Six Screener. The fact that this would be the first-time meeting of the child and assessor(s), and that there would be four different assessors may account for a lower score due to the fact that the children were not comfortable. The DIAL-3 assessment assesses motor, language, and cognitive skills which are considered in deciding which students would be in the treatment group. There is a different assessor for each subtest; however, these assessors will administer one part of the test to all of the individuals. Each assessor is competent in each area of assessment. The Success by Six Screener serves as the assessment utilized for the pre and post assessment and would be administered by one individual who is familiar with the instrument. This assessment focuses on the identification of letters and numbers, rhyming words, beginning sounds, printing names, and other basic skills.

External validity consists of three major elements: people, places, and times. Time may be the factor, in this study, that causes greatest issue due to the fact the assessment is completed in the summer and the role of weather in the response of a student. Even though growth may have occurred because of the treatment administered to the treatment group, the group may not respond in that manner due to the heat, being tired, or the time of day. To minimize this issue, it would be important to make sure the temperature in the assessment area is controlled, therefore, minimizing the possible effect of testing conditions on the assessment. To reduce the discomfort issue with people, the classroom teacher in the Success by Six classrooms is the same educational professional that administers the Success by Six Screener. The teacher would be familiar with the instrument and with the child. A table setting, away from the mainstream would be suggested so that minimal noise would not distract the test environment. The assessor would sit across from the student for both the pre and post assessment to minimize

the external issue of place for this study and to ensure the consistent testing experiences will ensure minimal error in testing outcomes.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter Two examines the many facets that demand consideration when focusing on closing the achievement gap prior to kindergarten entry, in an effort to ensure that all students can be successful throughout their educational journey. First addressed is a look at the current state of readiness of our children as they enter kindergarten, including the research outlining what behavior, knowledge, and skills are necessary for a child to be ready to be actively engaged in learning at this level. Second, state and federal initiatives are highlighted. Third, the importance of developing literacy skills prior to kindergarten is discussed. Fourth, the implication of positive and negative parental involvement is considered. Fifth, the socioeconomic position of the family is presented and reasons it is important to understand the impact this has on pre-readiness skills. Sixth, a discussion of prior educational experiences, in the form of preschool programs and early childhood summer school programs is examined. This discussion leads into the explanation of the Success by Six Program and how it provides for the students who are not at benchmark levels as they begin their formal schooling.

Throughout the United States, more than three million children enter a public kindergarten program yearly (Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2012). This is a significant time in their lives. Each child enters kindergarten with a skill set that varies tremendously from one child to the next. Differences in cognitive development, social-emotional development, health status, child rearing practices, and behaviors have been noted. Literature on kindergarten transition, movement without interruption from one experience to another, states that there is a qualitative shift as children move from a play-oriented environment to a more structured,

academic based kindergarten classroom (Wildenger & McIntyre, 2011; Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000). Groundbreaking research has indicated the importance of early experiences in skill attainment on brain development which has sparked an interest in educators, policy makers, and the public to design initiatives to close these gaps in skill attainment. State and local leaders have implemented early childhood initiatives that include the encouragement of high quality child care through a quality rating and improvement system (Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2012). Increased access to programs such as Head Start and Early Head Start are geared for low-income families. The federal government is also showing interest in this initiative. Recently, the Obama Administration has included, in the American Recovery and Reimbursement Act budget, \$5 billion of new funding not only for Head Start, Child Care, and Early Head Start, but also for programs for young children with special needs. (Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2012).

In the state of Ohio, Governor John R. Kasich, through Executive Order 2011-21K, developed accountability measures for early childhood education and development. The essence of the Executive Order, which has the effect of law, was to elevate the importance of education of our young children in the state and seek to improve kindergarten readiness. The process would include academic, social, emotional, and physical health measures (Exec. Order No. 2011-21K). The Ohio Business Roundtable, a partnership of chief executives of the state's major businesses who are committed to working with the governor in a bipartisan way, challenged leaders in Ohio to give more support to initiatives that research indicates has the biggest impact which is in the early years. The Ohio Business Roundtable embraced the counsel offered by the School Readiness Solutions Group, a task force created by the State Board of Education in 2006. The High/Scope Perry Preschool Project findings were also referred to in their discussion. The Ohio Department of Education was the source of information. The Office of Early Learning and

School Readiness available at the Ohio Department of Education website had information that was utilized. It is noted that nearly 60% of children in Ohio begin school ill-equipped to succeed in kindergarten (Ohio Business Roundtable, 2010). One-third of kindergarten teachers reported that at least half of their kindergarten class entering in the fall had issues, whether academic or behavioral, that the children would be dealing with in the school setting. Forty-six percent of the children had difficulty following directions, 36% lacked academic skills, 35% were from disorganized home environments, and 34% had difficulty working independently (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000). The data indicate that socio-behavioral adjustments and compliance issues were a relative concern for these children new to kindergarten (Wildenger & McIntyre, 2010; Eckert et al., 2008). When children start their educational journey lacking in skills it is damaging to the children and expensive to the taxpayers. Ninety-eight percent of public expenditures for education happen after the age of five when 90% of brain development has occurred (Ohio Business Roundtable, 2010).

Extensive research by Ohio lawmakers and business partners has shown that participation in quality pre-Kindergarten experiences have had a significant impact on the improvement of early literacy, language, and math skills (Ohio Business Roundtable, 2010). These experiences have been shown to improve student performances on the third grade tests, to lower the retention rate by nearly 36%, and reduce the identification for special needs by 49% (Ohio Business Roundtable, 2010). This evidence of “good start” to schooling is influential to later well being. School readiness encompasses not only the children, but their school, community, and family (Hair, Halle, Terry-Humen, Lavelle, & Callkins, 2006).

Many studies have shown that these favorable early learning experiences have contributed to higher rates of employment and earnings, and reduction of crime and use of public

assistance (Ohio Business Roundtable, 2010; Schweinhart, 2002). The United States continues to support a society that requires adult members to be literate, possess the ability to understand basic math skills, and be resourceful in acquiring and utilizing new knowledge (Ramey & Ramey, 2004). As automation increases and globalization of business is transferring manufacturing and service jobs to foreign markets that are less expensive to run, it has become even more imperative that our society becomes more academically accomplished (Ramey & Ramey, 2004).

Since the 1960s, several life-science disciplines have tried diligently to better understand the causal factors that are involved in the developmental discrepancies (Ramey & Ramey, 2004). Investments in closing the achievement gaps made in the early years far outweigh the investments made in the secondary years (Ohio Business Roundtable, 2010; Schweinhart, 2002). Waiting for these children to “fail” in school and then provide the remediation through compensatory programs, pull-outs, or retention does not sufficiently enable these students to close the gaps and achieve at grade level. Children who have early failure experiences are more likely to become inattentive, withdrawn, and disruptive (Ramey & Ramey, 2004).

Recent scientific advances in the area of child development have affirmed that the early years are a period of time when rapid growth and development occur. There are seven essential experiences backed by extensive scientific evidence and linked to many aspects of brain functioning. The seven experiences essential to ensure normal brain and behavioral development include: 1) Encourage exploration 2) Mentor in basic skills 3) Celebrate developmental advances 4) Extend new skills 5) Protect from inappropriate disapproval 6) Communicate richly 7) Guide and limit behavior. These findings indicate that the development of the brain and learning are truly interdependent and that what occurs during these early years of

development has lasting and important consequences (Ramey & Ramey, 2004; Gilkerson, 2001). Negative developmental cascade can be prevented. Advances in the fields of child development, neurobiology, and early childhood affirmed that the time for rapid growth and development is in the early years (Ramey & Ramey, 2004; Fusarelli, 2011).

The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University discussed early readiness intervention with our nation's leading neuroscientists, developmental psychologists, pediatricians, and economists and surmised that when parents, informal community programs, and professional staff pay attention to the emotional and social needs of young children, as well as the mastery of cognitive and literacy skills, a maximum impact results on the architecture of the brain in preparing for success in school (Ohio Business Roundtable, 2010).

It is important that initiatives and regulations surrounding early intervention be supported, but the question remains as to why the problem exists in the first place. Quite simply, children cannot choose their parents. The family has a powerful influence on how a child develops. Differences in early environments do contribute to the large gaps seen in test scores. The early gaps in both cognitive skills, mental processes of knowing and remembering, and non-cognitive skills, related to emotion and affect, persist throughout the school years and into later life (Ludwig & Sawhill, 2007). Children live in homes that support literacy development in varying degrees. With this reality is the fact that curricula vary in each school, all day kindergarten is not universally mandated, and effective educational resources and familial support differs (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The higher literacy skills required with the new Common Core curriculum are also a concern. In this technological society, the demand for higher literacy is increasing, which has more negative consequences for those who fall short (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Preschool programs provided in the early years can positively affect high school graduation rates, participation in the labor force, and criminal behavior (Wong, Cook, Barnett, & Jung, 2008; Schweinhart, 2002). Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, and Mann, (2001) conducted a study that made three contributions to the literature on child health and development. The first contribution was that preschool participation was associated with a significantly higher rate of completion of school and had a positive impact all the way through early adulthood. The second contribution was that participation in preschool was associated with significantly lower rates of juvenile arrests. The third contribution was that participation in the extended childhood intervention program was associated with lower rates of grade retention as well as special education identification (Reynolds et al., 2001). The long term effect of an effective preschool program has been demonstrated on a small scale in a local area being limited in scope to one particular city or one state where the implementation of the program was done by the program developer and success realized (Wong et al., 2008). The state-wide and federal initiatives, such as Head Start, are being closely watched. It is important to determine if these federally funded or state funded programs are effective since they are being developed at the hands of educational bureaucrats rather than at the local level where success was evident because the program developer implemented the program with integrity (Wong et al., 2008).

In a recent Head Start Research Executive Summary, *Third Grade Follow-up to the Head Start Impact Study*, the findings concluded that the cognitive outcomes through early elementary and middle childhood are in line with other experimental and non-experimental early education studies which showed initial positive impact that dissipated as the children entered early elementary school. Some studies, however, did report finding positive effects later in adulthood. As mentioned in the High/Scope Preschool Comparison Study, children from the High/Scope

group had less self-reported misconduct at age 15, fewer felony arrests, completed more years of school and had fewer property crime arrests. Head Start studies point to the importance of early education for improving long-term outcomes for the children similar to those outcomes viewed in the High/Scope Preschool Comparison Study (Executive Summary, OPRE Report 2012-45b).

Funding is quite a concern. Jacobson (2005) expressed, “When legislators who understand the effects of high-quality pre-K partnered with forward-thinking governors, reasoned debate led to legislation that benefitted young children, schools, communities, and state budgets.”

The movement for high-quality, voluntary pre-K is a growing trend that has been recognized by many states and is gaining momentum. There is a concern as to how a voluntary pre-K program would be funded if it became a mandate for all students to attend a pre-K program every state. Even though research has indicated that a high quality pre-Kindergarten program would benefit young children, which would help close the gap, the economy has caused states to make cuts in funding. Unless another stimulus plan is developed, or grants become available to finance such a program, this type of programming could be eliminated, since it is not mandated by law to have such a program (Jacobson, 2005). School readiness and educational success are at the forefront of our country’s domestic policies. The importance of a well-educated citizenry is needed for the continued success of our country as a productively and economically strong nation.

Numerous children start public kindergarten with major delays in language development and basic skills. This situation occurs in every state, and is not only concentrated in a few large urban school districts or poor rural districts. The philosophy of waiting until these children fail in school before providing remediation, intervention, or retaining, does not sufficiently help

these children to catch up and eventually meet grade level benchmarks. Children who do not have a positive early transition to school are often the children who experience early failure, become inattentive, disruptive, or withdrawn. Subsequently, these children are the most likely to drop out of school early, engage in dangerous or illegal activity, become teen parents, and depend on public assistance program for survival (Ramey & Ramey, 2004; Schweinhart, 2002). It is important to our country that we prepare our children for the future and meet the needs of our children so they become productive citizens.

The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study was one of the first studies to research the effects of a preschool program. It was one of the first studies to consider the effects of preschool education on children living in poverty and to involve random assignment of children to a participation group and non-participation group in order to determine the impact of a preschool program (Schweinhart, 2002). It was also one of the first studies to identify lasting effects of the program on the participants' later educational achievement, economic success, and avoidance of criminal activity which supported a positive return on public investment in the program. The results of the study showed that the program group significantly outscored the no-program group on a test of general literacy at age 19 and a school achievement test given at age 14 in the disciplines of reading, language, and arithmetic (Schweinhart, 2002). According to social services records and interviews at the age of 27, only 59% of the program group received welfare assistance in comparison to 80% of the no-program group, and 36% of the program group compared to 13% of the no-program group owned their own home. Court records showed that the program group members averaged 2.3 arrests by the time the participants turned 28 in comparison to 4.6 arrests by the participants in the no-program group (Schweinhart, 2002). This study supported some of the concerns that were noted in Ramey's research in regard to long term

negative effect that lack of proper transition can have when gaps are not closed early in the educational process.

The Family and Child Experiences Survey Study (FACES) described the outcomes for children and families who were served by the Head Start Program (Zill, Resnick, Kim, O'Donnell, & Sorongon, 2003). The findings included the fact that given the Head Start eligibility criteria, most children entered Head Start at a great disadvantage, showing that areas of math and early literacy skills were substantially below national averages. The typical Head Start child entered at approximately the 16th percentile in vocabulary and early writing skills, 31st percentile for letter recognition, and 21st percentile in early math in comparison to the full array of American children in the same age group (Zill et al., 2003). Head Start children who entered the program with lower levels of knowledge and skill showed larger gains during the program year, yet still lagged considerably behind national averages. Children did show growth in social skills, while hyperactive behavior was reduced. Head Start quality has been observed to be consistently robust over time due to indicators such as child: adult ratio, teacher-child interactions, the classroom activity, and resources (Zill et al., 2003).

Head Start engages families in a number of weekly and monthly educational activities. The activities were positively correlated with positive child behavior and emergent literacy. Parent reports indicated that the parents and their children had positive experiences at Head Start and the parent satisfaction component significantly moderated negative relationships between risk factors of the family dynamics and behavioral and cognitive outcomes of the child (Zill et al., 2003). All families that qualify for Head Start cannot be served due to facility quotas, nor can a child who is school age attend Head Start, even if he or she is ill-prepared to start formal schooling.

There is compelling scientific evidence that this negative developmental hill or slope can be prevented. The promotion of children's cognitive and language development cannot wait until kindergarten or be considered only when the child shows signs of developmental delay. The commitment that must be made is the goal to improve K-12 achievement in the pre-K years by providing an array of proven learning opportunities. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) states their position in a commitment to promote universal school readiness. This commitment involves three areas: (a) all children are given access to opportunities that will support success in school, (b) recognize and support the individual differences in children, and (c) establish reasonable and appropriate expectations for what children should be able to perform when they enter school. According to these commitments, all families must gain access to resources that will allow them to build nurturing relationships that promote school readiness. Early intervention is necessary to support children who may be at risk for later failure in school. Expectations of readiness must include all areas such as physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and positive outlook toward learning (NAEYC, 1995).

A number of facets exist to the educational issue of closing the gaps through early intervention in the pre-Kindergarten years. Socioeconomic status, child development, differences in preschool experiences, exposure to early readiness skills, parental involvement, state and federal initiatives, and funding play a role. A closer look at the research in these areas will lay the groundwork for the purpose of this study. Even though there are individual components, combinations of these areas contribute greatly the proposed initiative.

State and Federal Initiatives

Many state and federal initiatives have been developed based on the research findings surrounding early intervention strategies to close the gaps. The transition concept appears frequently in these initiatives and involves the steps necessary to make the leap from the environment the child is engaged in prior to starting school to the formal school process. The transition process encompasses many components. Children arrive at kindergarten differing in socioeconomic status, development of skills, differences in prior school experiences, perhaps no experience at all, and the amount of parental involvement. Building transitional mechanisms in order to sustain the social, emotional, and academic competencies is supported by a body of evidence (Wildenger & McIntyre, 2010; Los Angeles County Policy Roundtable for Child Care, 2006). Title 1 requires School-Wide Title buildings to plan for transition from an early childhood program to an elementary program and, furthermore, the legislation requires Targeted Assistance programs to assist preschool children in their transition (Los Angeles County Policy Roundtable for Child Care, 2006). Legislation enacted in 2002, under the Bush Administration, launched “Good Start, Grow Smart.” This federal initiative urged states to develop voluntary early literacy and math guidelines for children between ages three and five that were aligned with the state academic standards. Each state and the District of Columbia have Early Learning Guidelines. Guidelines were developed by stakeholders in the early childhood community. The Early Learning Guidelines are not intended to act as readiness checklists or assessment tools. They are recommended to be used to help early education providers select instructional tools and assessment instruments that are appropriate for young children in the early developmental stages (Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2012).

Ohio's Governor, John Kasich, referenced in the Executive Order 2011-21K the concern regarding the state's progress on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Twenty-two percent of economically disadvantaged Ohio fourth graders were proficient in math and 15% were proficient in reading. Based on this finding, extensive research has been conducted that confirmed high-quality early education experiences are necessary to ensure that all children on the educational continuum, especially high needs children, have the strong foundation to exceed, not only through the K-12 system, but onto post-secondary options. It is imperative that the stability and economic vitality of the state is dependent on a skilled and educated workforce prepared to meet the demands of the 21st century. Governor Kasich's Administration committed itself to aligning and coordinating efforts from birth to graduation. The position of Early Education and Development Officer was developed for the purpose of elevating the importance of the education for young children so that kindergarten readiness results would be improved in the state.

This Officer, commissioned by the governor and granted resources by the Governor's Office, has defined goals to accomplish. Defining and measuring kindergarten readiness, their skills and development strongly influenced by their families, their interactions with their environment, and developing and implementing the assessment that would determine the extent to which children are ready to enter kindergarten were the first priorities. The assessment process is to measure academic, social, emotional, and physical health measures. Publishing the results would aid in making improvements in the early childhood system. The second priority would be destroying silos that are found between agencies and programs so that all agencies and programs are working together in a streamlined, effective triage to support high need children. The third priority would be ensuring the performance measures' outcomes are included in the

statewide quality rating and improvement system. The emphasis is to include all of the licensed, publicly funded early learning and development providers as part of this rating system. In tandem with this rating system, innovative financing strategies to support high quality services for young children must be developed. The final strategy of the commissioned Officer's duty would be to engage parents as resources in the development of state policies and programs (Executive Order 2011-21K, 2011).

The imperative to look closely at early childhood readiness has been shown to have a positive effect. Early childhood investments do pay off positive dividends for our future. Mentoring programs for parents have been shown to reduce child abuse and neglect as much as 80% which allow for improvements in a student's cognitive understanding and vocabulary scores with higher grade point averages and achievement scores. The evaluations of pre-Kindergarten programs have shown reductions in grade retentions and special education placement by 50%. Even though the above information is public, Ohio is still not investing in the young learner. Ninety-eight percent of public expenditures in education occur after the age of five which is when 90% of brain development has already occurred. The percent of eligible children for public preschool programs is less than 10%. The state's home visiting program, Help Me Grow, only impacts one out of five children. In the state funded preschool program, Ohio only meets three out of 10 benchmarks. When all of the other private child care centers available to parents are considered, only 880 out of 5,800 of those centers participate in the Step Up to Quality rating system. Out of the 880 child care centers that do participate, only one third meet standards beyond the basic requirements (Ohio Business Roundtable, 2010). Cooke, Kretlow, and Half (2010) determined that starting supplementary small-group interventions early is an advantage to students' acquired rates of skill.

The state of Mississippi does not fund any pre-K programs. Routine behaviors of standing in line, listening to directions, and making eye contact play an important role in learning how to read and write. Teachers have claimed that some of the students don't know their name and cannot recognize it in print (Willen, 2012). It costs the state a great deal of funds when children are not prepared for transition into kindergarten. In the state of Mississippi, from 1999 to 2008, \$383 million was spent on children who had to be retained in first grade or kindergarten (Willen, 2012). The long-term economic benefits of pre-K programs may be one of the best investments for job skills later on in life. Individuals who agree have given the state millions of dollars to improve early literacy (Willen, 2012). The reality is that even though the NCLB legislation has acknowledged the importance of teachers being highly qualified and research-based methods and strategies being used to teach, the level playing field has received attention. In order to achieve universal proficiency in math and reading it must be recognized that we cannot assume that all children are equally prepared for formal instruction.

All children do not begin their educational journey ready to learn (Neuman, 2003). The kindergarten teacher is exposed to many different skills and experiences with which children enter the classroom in relation to the complex task of learning to read. Even though it is not likely that the gap can be eliminated entirely, it can be reduced substantially through prekindergarten intervention programs that acknowledge this educational journey inadequacy, and prepare children to take on the challenges that are presented (Neuman, 2004).

The challenges that have been presented to the state of Ohio have caused more than a decade of education reform. As a result, Ohio schools rank fifth in the nation, the highest ever rating received. Even with these steps forward the job is far from complete. Ohio is ranked 32nd in the percentage of high school seniors that go on to post-secondary education. Ohio is ranked

33rd in the percentage of its population having a bachelor's degree or higher, and 39th in percentage of first year public university students enrolled in at least one remedial class in 2008. Our teachers are asked to close the skill gaps because children are coming to them who are not ready to learn (Ohio Business Roundtable, 2010). Former U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell stated:

Education doesn't begin in kindergarten and first grade. It begins when the child can look up at a mother lovingly and look up at a father lovingly. Part of our system of reform has to include what is accomplished in the early years of life and not just fixing our schools (Ohio Business Roundtable, 2010).

The importance of legislation and policymakers in the educational reform process is inevitable. If policymakers are dedicated to these educational reforms, they have to extend beyond the classrooms. Reform in social policy must also be undertaken. Unfortunately, most school reforms are not in correlation with the greater societal conditions that surround education. School reform, thus, is in a vacuum (Fusarelli, 2011). This is demonstrated when the inception of the Head Start Program is considered. It was founded based upon ecological theory that examined human development as a complex interrelationship between self, family, and community (Lee, 2011). In order to have effective lasting school reform, revitalization of the community as part of a comprehensive and strategic interconnected plan must be developed (Fusarell, 2011). The United States invests a great deal, financially, in education. The problem is that the funds are invested poorly. The funds are not targeted at the root causes of the problems. The redirection of resources from the current model of remediation to one of prevention (i.e., early intervention) must be implemented (Fusarell, 2011). Children are believed to have a distinct advantage in their educational journey if they have a successful initial

experience (Kagan & Neuman, 1997; McBryde, Ziviani, & Cuskelly, 2004). The concept of the school in regard to school readiness needs to shift from the child fitting into the rigid expectations of the school to the idea that each child is an individual and successful school experiences require mutual adaptability. The approach should consider that schools need to accommodate individual differences rather than expecting children to enter with homogenous skills (McBryde, Ziviani, & Cuskelly, 2004).

The most current legislation, Senate Bill 316, was written to ensure that all students are reading on grade level by third grade. In order to be promoted to fourth grade, the student must demonstrate a certain level of competency (Ohio Department of Education, 2012). By September 30, 2012, all K-3 students must be given a reading diagnostic assessment. Those students not “on track” at that time must be placed on a reading improvement and monitoring plan outlining the type of interventions that will be implemented to close the gap and help the student to be “on track” in reading. The interventions must be scientifically research based, delivered by personnel who have a reading endorsement or have passed a reading instruction test. In 2013-2014, students who do not pass the state assessment in third grade are mandated to be retained with few stipulations to consider (Ohio Department of Education, 2012). The new legislation requires districts to be diligent in closing the achievement gaps in the earlier years to avoid consequences in third grade.

Literacy Readiness

In 1997, the director of The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development was asked by Congress, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to form a national panel to assess the research-based knowledge in regard to the effectiveness of different

approaches in instructing children to read (National Reading Panel, 1998). As a result, several key points were expressed repeatedly. One of the first key points addressed the role of the parents and other concerned individuals in providing children with early language and literacy experiences that would foster reading development. A second area addressed was the importance of early identification and intervention for those children who are deemed at risk. Third, was the development of phonemic awareness and phonics skills, use of appropriate literature in the instruction of reading, and an understanding of how to integrate different approaches in reading to improve the effectiveness of instruction for all children. The need for scientifically based information on the effectiveness of different approaches to reading as well as a clear objective of the effectiveness of different types of reading instruction that would affect policy and practice was a task the National Reading Panel was asked to research (National Reading Panel, 1998).

The educational and literacy climate of the family that posed risks evolved from the child's opportunity to read fewer than three days per week and having fewer than 30 children's books in the home. Socioeconomically disadvantaged children who were read to fewer than three days a week were at a stronger risk for low language skills than those who were not socioeconomically disadvantaged (Smart, Sanson, Baxter, Edwards, & Hayes, 2008). In 2009, the NAEYC determined that research continued to confirm that early action was imperative and favored intensive intervention rather than remediation. In the area of language and literacy, vocabulary awareness and oral language were two important precursors to reading comprehension. Teachers need to engage young children in language interactions throughout the day, which would include small group reading, and talking about the stories.

Language development is so important in the development of skills necessary for success in reading. An article from Northeastern University, Boston, stated, “parent styles that are consistent with, and responsive to, a child’s contextual focus, development, and interests are most conducive to language development” (O’Neill-Pirozzi, 2009). In home situations where the style of parenting lends itself to reading to the child and practicing letter and sounds, development of language is evident.

In a year-long literacy intervention program named Project EASE, seminars were held for parents that gave specific knowledge about language skills that matched the children’s ages. Project EASE was designed to provide the parents with a theoretical understanding of how to help their children and how to scaffold interactive activities to facilitate early literacy development. This program provided support for parents' involvement in the oral language development of their children and for focusing on vocabulary, narratives, and exposition (Jordan, Snow, & Porche, 2000; Paratore & Jordan, 2007). The parents utilized the knowledge and worked with their children. At the end of the program, assessments were given on these specific language skills and significant gains were seen in many of the pre-readiness skills (Paratore & Jordan, 2007). The data further showed that the development of language was directly linked to the participation in the parent-child relationship and work on these pre-readiness language skills (Paratore & Jordan, 2007).

Language interaction is important and has a profound influence on the development of vocabulary and reading proficiency (Dickinson & Newman, 2006; Stephenson, Parila, Georgiou, & Kirby, 2008; Senechal, 2006; LaCour, McDonald, Thomason, & Tissington, 2011). These skills begin forming before formal schooling even in daycare settings that do not typically focus on literacy development. Language development occurs in discussions and activities.

Shared reading fosters print to letter knowledge and develops all of the concepts of print. A child's preschool experience can build a foundation for future academic success (Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff, & Ortiz, 2008). Schooling has seen an increased emphasis on literacy intervention for students with speech/language impairments. Reading disabilities in later grades can accurately be predicted by the literacy skills at the kindergarten and prekindergarten level. Reading disorders are usually linked to underlying linguistic deficits. Treatment of literacy problems that emerge in the early grades can eliminate or reduce the need for reading remediation in later years. Students who are identified and treated for reading disorders in third grade or later have a difficult chance of catching up to typically developing classmates (Foster & Miller, 2007). Results indicate that decoding development is on a fast track in the lower grades. If students enter school without the necessary emergent literacy skills, they quickly fall behind. Closing the gap by second or third grade in phonics/decoding skills is not an answer to the problem because, by this time, a comprehension gap has developed. In essence, one gap of learning is traded for another gap of learning which places these students at additional risk (Foster & Miller, 2007).

Book reading is directly related to the language skill development of vocabulary as well as children's early literacy skills (Senechal, 2006). Informal literacy experiences are basically engaging a child in literacy experiences that expose the child to written language, e.g., when an adult reads a story to a child and discusses the illustrations. Language development can be promoted through the language in the story. Formal reading experiences focus directly on the written language. Parents who teach their children the names of the letters or teach their children how to print their names are engaging in formal literacy experiences. Early storybook exposure may be associated with better skills in listening comprehension and building of vocabulary, but

not for fostering phonological sensitivity, letter-name knowledge, or letter-sound knowledge (Senechal, 2006; Stephenson et al., 2008).

Teachers cannot achieve the same results with students if a partnership with the home does not exist (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006). It has been said that it takes a village to raise a child, and, as Christenson and Sheridan (2001) suggest in their book, *Schools and Families: Creating Essential Connections for Learning*, it takes a whole village to educate a child. The authors propose a paradigm shift in thinking about the relationship between school and family. The relationship would shift from the traditional, linear view that families influence their children's performances to a reciprocal interaction view amongst family, school, community, and peers (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006). Learning to read is crucial to academic success and correlates strongly to the early language experiences of a child. A child who is immersed in literature at home and in a highly interactive language environment acquires strong oral-language skills, the ability to understand the spoken language, and is able to self-express by using conversational discourse (Ramey & Ramey, 2004).

Parental Involvement

Parents are a child's first educators. This role should not change when children enter school. A partnership between school and home can help establish a collaborative environment that positively supports achievement and success (Larocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011; Powell, Son, File, & San Juan, 2010; Berthelsen & Walker, 2008; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins, & Closson, 2005). Parental involvement is broadly defined as behavior of the parents with or on behalf of their children in the home and school setting as well as the expectations that parents hold for their children's future education (Reynolds & Clements, 2005). Three categories of parental involvement exist: (a) parents may be active because they

truly believe that they are the first educators and they bear the primary responsibilities of their children's academic achievements, (b) parental involvement is classified as partnership where the parents and school share the responsibilities of the academic achievements of their children, and (c) parental involvement may include the parents who are not active because they either feel that they should not take an active role because it is the school's responsibility or they lack the confidence to become involved as a partner (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

The attitudes, behaviors, and activities of the parents are related to students' learning and educational success (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). When families and schools work as partners, children experience higher achievement in school and tend to stay in school (Berthelsen & Walker, 2008; Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007; Reynolds & Clements, 2005). The types of experiences that the parents had could be either positive or negative and may influence the attitudes that their children have about school. If the parents' feelings were negative they can deter connections made with their children's schools, whereas, if the feelings were positive, the connection to their children's schools will likely increase the parent involvement. If parents have high expectations, solid academic achievement, and were committed to their school, the likelihood of their children having the same positive feelings is more likely to be adopted (Berthelsen & Walker, 2008, Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

Two dimensions of the parent-school relationship include parental involvement in school activities, and the perceived teacher responsiveness to both parent and children (Powell, Son, File, & San Juan, 2010). Parental school involvement uniquely predicts social outcomes of the child seen within social skills, problem behaviors, and academic skills in math. The second dimension, perceived teacher responsiveness, warrants further consideration as a distinct

dimension of the relationship between the home and school (Powell, Son, File, & San Juan, 2010).

Consistent among theoretical points of view is the notion that children do internalize aspects of the care-giving experience and these aspects do influence the emotional and behavioral responses to new social situations (Stadelmann, Perren, Wyl, & Klitzing, 2007). Consideration has been taken in the studies of early childhood education in regard to race and immigrant differences which sometimes become a barrier to parental involvement (Turney& Kao, 2009). Immigrant parents face challenges that are unique and include lack of free time and unfamiliarity of the American culture and English language (Turney & Kao, 2009; Zhou, 1997).

Schools play a huge role in the determination of level and role of parental development. Some critical factors include the teachers' beliefs of the role of the parents in the classroom and how much the teacher provides involvement activities for the parents. Offering a range of opportunities for a parent to be involved in is in the hands of the teacher and the school (Berthelson & Walker, 2008). It is essential that the school climate welcomes parents into the school. Showing respect to parents' concerns and questions is essential. Personal trust is built when the teacher invites parents to be partners in their children's educations. Children who invite their parents to help with their learning can also prompt involvement. Developmental research has shown that children's behaviors can influence parents' practices (Berthelson & Walker, 2008).

School programs that provide support and resources for parental involvement yield greater benefits than other efforts that are financially supported by the district, such as after school programs or smaller class size. Even though it may sound simple to involve parents in their children's educations, it does require involvement of resources and professional

development of teachers to improve their capabilities to work with families (Reynold & Clements, 2005). It is not enough to offer involvement activities without forming a strong family-school partnership. If the combination of involvement activities and family-school partnership are not present, more parental involvement is less likely yielded. Both involvement activities and a strong partnership between family and school are essential. The teacher and school have to solicit and respond to suggestions and concerns of parents (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Lee & Bowen, 2006). Parents' decisions to become involved are influenced by schools. Schools can take steps to encourage parents to take an active role and gain self-efficacy for helping their children in the learning environment. Across all of the findings are themes of empowerment for all individuals who aid in the schooling of the children. The schools' attention to parents' personal needs for involvement and their motivation for involvement have a positive effect on students' outcomes. Some of these empowerment goals include learning that personal behavior is correlated to desired outcomes. A parent's behavior is related to a child's success. Another goal is that personal action by involvement with the school enables achievement of desired outcomes. When a parent is involved in the education of the child, the achievement of desired outcomes is realized. Personal decisions come from personal choice which means that it is a choice to be effectively involved. Overall, when schools take the initiative to ignite parent involvement, the school supports parents' effectiveness in the learning process of their child (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Berthelsen & Walker, 2008).

Interventions that foster involvement by the parents establish a knowledge base to guide the educational program. School psychologists could provide leadership in the school setting because they understand the developmental needs of children and the importance of family factors. The school psychologist could also help school personnel by developing

professional development opportunities to understand the importance of extended family and tailoring a program to meet the needs of different families (Arnold et al., 2008). School personnel can be trained to improve communication and broaden parent involvement by utilizing strategies such as family-school teams, developing shared goals with families, and modeling effective ways to engage families. Simple strategies can be effective in promoting development such as a home-school daily report card (Arnold et al., 2008).

Parental involvement can be actively encouraged in the home setting by providing learning opportunities for children to support the learning opportunities at school. Home-based involvement could include reviewing a child's homework, spending time with a child on a reading or writing activity, or just discussing the learning process with a child and being an active listener. A parent can bring home learning games and books which can be supplemental to the school work (Senechal, 2007). Subsequently, families that are successful are passing along optimal values regarding the importance of education, work, and relationships to their child (Davis-Kean & Sexton, 2009).

Socioeconomic Differences

Parental involvement has been highlighted as effective support to the mission of the school in helping students to achieve academically. Parental involvement builds school-specific social capital which aids in influencing achievement as well as positive behavior. It is a possibility that teachers can interpret the level of parental involvement in correlation to what extent parents care about their children. Even though parental involvement is indeed important to a child's academic progress, some parents are not equally equipped to participate at school. Logistical and linguistic barriers are two reasons why parental involvement might not be evident (Turney & Kao, 2009).

Academic disparities between affluent and impoverished children are quite evident at the onset of formal schooling. Impoverished children typically start school with significantly lower cognitive skills than their affluent peers. Academic-related parenting helps explain these socioeconomic gaps (Cooper, 2010). Families who are socioeconomically disadvantaged are burdened by inadequate income despite long working hours, irregular shifts, and are perhaps faced with inferior quality in afterschool care. Parents who are poorly educated may not be in the position to help their children in learning to read or master multiplication tables. Reform in education is centered on greater accountability and has magnified the impact of cognitive skills among the parents because of their need to monitor their children's homework and reinforce basic skills. Intergenerational transmission of inequality is the story to be told. Families who can help their children will do so and those who cannot help their children will see their children held back or drop out. The increasing number of hours that parents from low-income families spend at the workplace is negatively impacting their capacity to help their children over the hurdles. Some parents have no choice but to put their family's economic needs for surviving in this society ahead of the educational needs of their children (Newman & Chin, 2003).

Three factors- parents' educational attainment, the qualifications of the teacher, and outreach programs for the parents- were shown to reduce socioeconomic disparities in parental involvement with the school. Poverty was negatively associated with school based involvement only for those parents who were less educated. Poverty and non-poverty parents who had relatively higher levels of education were both shown to have similar involvement levels in their children's schools (Cooper, 2010). In research conducted by Erika Hoff, the findings indicated that maternal speech was a variable worthy of consideration. Growth of vocabulary was observed between children who were products of high socioeconomic families and children who

were from mid-socioeconomic families, which was linked to their mothers' speech (Hoff, 2003). Maternal speech affects the growth of language. Children who heard longer utterances were able to build vocabularies that were robust at faster rates than those children who heard short utterances. The mother who spoke in longer utterances used a richer vocabulary. The child was exposed to many words. These findings are consistent with the findings that specific elements of the development of language depend on specific exposure to language experiences. This is one area by which socioeconomic differences affect the aspect of child development. It is consistent with the broader view that pervasive effects of socioeconomic differences on child development are made up of many specific relations between the child's experience that vary as a result of the socioeconomic status and the developmental outcome that these experiences affect (Hoff, 2003).

The second factor, qualifications of the teachers, revealed a negative association between family poverty and school involvement in correlation with the teacher's qualifications. School-based involvement was weaker for children with highly-educated teachers than for children with less-educated teachers. Highly-educated teachers had more resources available to them which correlate to higher levels of self-efficacy, which could increase the ability of this teacher to engage low-income parents in the schooling process (Castro et al., 2004). More research is necessary to understand the connection of teacher education and parental involvement, however, the thrust in the provision in the No Child Left Behind policy of highly qualified teachers may help to raise early achievement in those students who come from poverty by increased level of parental involvement (Cooper, 2010). The final factor, on-going parent outreach, indicated a larger socioeconomic gap in school based involvement when schools provided ongoing parent outreach. This doesn't suggest that parent outreach programs are not important for families from poverty, but that unintentionally, the parent outreach programs target

middle and upper class parents (Lareau, 2003). Parent outreach programs should address the obstacles that may deter families from poverty involvement such as transportation and/or expenses (Cooper, 2010).

A study conducted at Ohio State University suggested that higher income children had a mother with a college education and lived in a two-parent home. Even though children were securely attached to both the parent and teacher, the teacher-child relationship in school predicted readiness outcomes. The value of education aided in fostering the development of a secure relationship in the school environment. Students who had a secure attachment at home realized a positive teacher-child relationship. An interesting finding was that the lack of a male caregiver in a home of a higher income mother did negatively affect the child's school readiness outcome. It was hypothesized that perhaps higher income mothers who lacked a co-parent were not as skilled as their lower income counterparts in the support of their child in regard to school readiness due to time constraints (Boland, 2011). The sole predictor of school readiness with lower income students was what happened in the home. The security of the relationship with the parent and the learning activities in the home environment were found to be the factors that formed what happened in the home environment which predicted school readiness. No relationship was found between teacher attachment and parent attachment. The mothers reported reading to their children much less often than their higher income counterparts. This could possibly be due to a view of education that may have been formed by their negative personal educational experiences. They may not understand the purpose and goals of their education like the higher income parents. For the children from lower income families, what happened in their home outweighed what occurred in the preschool classrooms in regard to school readiness (Boland, 2011). How the parent and the teacher related to school readiness was quite different

between the higher and lower income families. Perhaps the educational values of the family were the reason for the difference; however, values were not directly measured in the study. Home factors were the best predictors of school readiness for low income students, while the relationship between the higher income student and the teacher seemed to be linked with higher income children's school readiness scores (Boland, 2011).

International literature on how socioeconomically disadvantaged children may be linked to undeveloped school readiness skills identified factors that related to children's readiness for school. The findings outlined many assumptions that follow. Children's school readiness is affected by family, community, and child characteristics with child and family factors having the stronger impact than community on school readiness. Early cognitive ability and temperament have consistently been seen to influence a child's readiness for school. When viewing family characteristics, parental style, learning environment in the home, maternal education, and family income, the latter seemed to be the most influential in the determination of school readiness. Parenting and home environment factors which have a direct effect are crucial mediators of the relationship between socioeconomically disadvantaged students and school readiness (Smart et al., 2008).

Two models aid in providing an explanation for the link between school readiness and financial means. The family stress model discusses the effect of income on school readiness of the child. Financial stress and poverty influences children's behaviors by the effect they have on parents' emotional health, parenting styles, and marital relationships. In this model a child's behavior is affected by the disadvantaged financial component in the home which drains the emotional and psychological resources of the parent and disrupts parent-child interactions and parenting styles (Edwards, Baxter, Smart, Sanson, & Hayes, 2009).

The investment model focuses on the intellectual climate in the household, stating that children from socioeconomically disadvantaged homes have fewer opportunities to develop their skills because of financial strain. Lack of funds limits the parents' ability to support a cognitively stimulating environment, nutritious food, safe living conditions, and high-quality child care. Time spent with the children may be limited as well because of long hours that parents are required to work. Higher income levels have been associated with higher levels of involvement from parents and increased availability of resources that are stimulating to the children in the home (Votruba-Drzal, 2003). The family stress model may provide a better explanation for the support of the relationship between income and the emotional and behavioral outcomes of children through the practices of the parents in the home. The investment model best explains the relationship between income and the cognitive outcomes of children by the home physical and learning environment. It is likely that these two models act in unison (Edwards et al., 2009). Among the many characteristics within the family unit, parenting style, the home learning environment, maternal education, and family income seemed to be the most influential when correlated with school readiness. Not only does the home environment and parenting style have a strong direct effect on school readiness, these two factors are also essential mediators of the relationship between the socioeconomically disadvantaged and school readiness (Smart et al., 2008).

Preschool Experiences

Another area to consider is the experiences that children are exposed to prior to kindergarten entry. If a child has been participating in a preschool experience, is this experience the same for each child if they did indeed attend preschool? Can students be specifically categorized students if they attended preschool, assuming that every child who attends preschool

is exposed to the same type of experience? The preschool experiences that children are exposed to differ from one to another. It cannot be assumed that a child who had a preschool experience has acquired certain skills. It cannot be assumed that just because a child has not had a preschool experience that skills have not been acquired. It cannot be said that, because a particular child went to preschool, learning gaps have been lessened or closed, if indeed, there were learning gaps. No common preschool standards have been mandated by the state and preschool isn't mandated. The quality of early childhood education programs is tied to the qualifications of the teacher (Honig & Hirallel, 1998).

A dissertation written by Rebecca Brinks (2007) on early literacy instruction for preschool teachers concluded that a discrepancy exists between identified instructional strategies and literacy development for preschoolers among many programs. Families that have identifiable risk factors and literacy difficulty have the most need for a quality early literacy program. It is imperative that educational qualifications of preschool teachers be raised, and effective professional development for preschool teachers be offered to enable the educators to provide intervention. An effective coaching model was also encouraged whose main focus would be to engage preschool teachers in inquiry-based decision making and reflective practice (Brinks, 2007). In comparison to K-12 teachers in a public school setting, an educator needs to be highly qualified in his or her area of teaching. Novice educators are assigned a mentor for the first few years of their teaching experience who aid them in inquiry-based decision making and reflective practice. This type of coaching/mentoring strategy should also be seen at the most crucial time of literacy development: at the preschool level.

A difference in the types of preschool/childcare experiences a child has is seen between socioeconomically disadvantaged children and non-socioeconomically disadvantaged

children. Socioeconomically disadvantaged children are more likely to receive informal or parent-only care than non-socioeconomically disadvantaged children attending preschool or a childcare facility with an educational program. Previous research has indicated that children's childcare experiences were relevant to school readiness. Those children who had parent-only or informal childcare were more likely to have poor cognitive outcomes but better social behavior. This type of care is usually family based, intimate, and more than likely encourages caring and helpful behaviors, but less educationally stimulating. Overall, when considering the research, it is clear that a high-quality educationally oriented experience prior to entering formal education in kindergarten is a critical component in ensuring school readiness (Smart et al., 2008).

Head Start is the leading program in early childhood care and education. The program provides a comprehensive range of education, nutrition, parent involvement, and family support services, and its primary goal is to serve at-risk children and families. It has been in existence since 1965. The federal government pays 80% of the Head Start budget and the other 20% comes from in-kind contributions that come in the form of donations or services. Head Start serves families that earn an income below federal poverty level. Educators who teach in this program either have CDA, associate degree, or bachelor's degree, and compensation for these individuals is almost half of a kindergarten teacher's salary according to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER, 2003). The federal government spent \$7.1 billion on Head Start programs in 2010. Family risk factors and income levels are two factors that determine the eligibility and admission to the program. The Head Start Bureau is trying to expand the program so that more students can enroll since only one third of eligible low-income children attend Head Start.

For many years preschool education and elementary education were separate. Preschool was not thought to be a part of American public education. Many of these programs came into existence because child care for working parents was needed. In the past few years preschool education has been increasingly recognized. The two entities have substantial reasons to work together for greater continuity and collaboration. Mandated accountability requirements are one of the exerting pressures driving this force (NAEYC, 2009). Standard overload is overwhelming to teachers at the preschool level. A concern is that practices such as excessive lecturing to whole group, rigid schedules, and fragmented teaching will take the place of rich play, collaboration with peers, outdoor/physical activity, opportunities for emotional and social development, and the arts. Research continues to confirm that greater efficacy of early action and intensive intervention is far better than remediation and other “too little” or “too late” approaches (NAEYC, 2009).

Summer School Early Childhood Programs

Failure to prepare children for kindergarten is a huge financial burden on the state. A great deal of funding is spent on children who repeated kindergarten or first grade. In Mississippi, one of 14 kindergarteners and one of 15 first graders were retained in 2008. From 1999 - 2008 the state spent nearly \$383 million on students who were retained in first grade or kindergarten according to the Southern Education Foundation. Some children start so far behind that they may never catch up, and those children who end up being retained are more likely than their classmates to drop out of school (Willen, 2012). In the state of Mississippi, state-funded pre-K programs helping to prepare 75% of young children who will be ineligible to join the military because they might fail to graduate from high school on time is an issue. State-funded pre-K programs are being supported for better learning in Mississippi. Efforts are being put

forward to collaborate with influential business leaders who are working to improve literacy. Collaboration with business partners is a viable way to get ahead; it was reported in a survey in 2010 that even though 71% of Mississippi's registered voters felt that it was important to improve early learning opportunities, only 31% felt that the state government should pay for the adventure (Willen, 2012). According to the challenge by President Obama, all children are expected to be proficient in reading and math by 2014. It has been documented that high quality prekindergarten has been the best investment for improving achievement. Time seems to be an element. In order to make an impact, the time has to be extended to devote learning experiences in prekindergarten. A visit to a locally funded prekindergarten classroom revealed that in a three hour day, 20 minutes were devoted to instruction. Transitions, such as late arrivals, early dismissals, bathroom, lunch, specials, and clean up deterred instruction time (Neuman, 2003).

Under the premise that the transition from preschool to kindergarten is a milestone in the life of each young child, a Shared Summer School approach for kindergarten transition was developed. Both the preschool and kindergarten teachers taught children simultaneously prior to kindergarten. Shared Summer School was a half day program and it lasted six weeks with classes being held all five days. The targeted audience for entry into the program was children from local childcare providers, Head Start, and pre-Kindergarten who were considered to be at – risk. The purpose of the program was to develop supportive relationships between the elementary school and preschool children and their families, provide an effortless transition in activities and teaching approach from late preschool to early kindergarten, and increase social and academic skills of the children (Dail & McGee, 2011).

Shared Summer School was devised to comply with the Early Reading First Project in 2004. This project required high quality transition to kindergarten activities for the children

involved. The Shared Summer School Program was a program that would target those students who would be attending school in the fall. Kindergarten teachers were identified from each school based on their interest in participating and direct input from the principal. Since this was a federally funded project through Title 1 funds, teachers would receive a summer salary (Dail & McGee, 2011). A kindergarten teacher partnered with a pre-school teacher to instruct the class. Small groups and morning messages were two ideas required by the teachers. The morning message was designed to influence children's concepts about print and the content of the messages was to communicate daily classroom activities and learning goals to the parents. Small group lessons and morning messages provided opportunities for parents and teachers to collaborate and share insights about the reading and writing skills of the child. The Shared Summer School Program allowed kindergarten teachers to reach out to the preschool teacher and provide a joint activity preparing children to make the transition. The program promoted continuity in instructional approach between both the preschool teacher and the kindergarten teacher; it improved children's achievement, and increased the involvement of parents in the school (Dail & McGee, 2011).

Another reason for supporting a summer program is the fact that many delayed children are unlikely to advance a full 33 developmental months in nine calendar months. During the three summer months, children who come from households that do not actively promote learning fail to show progress in academic or language skills; however, children who come from families that provide academic learning support continue to progress the three summer months and continue to develop (Entwisle, 1995). The achievement gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged children further increases when children's learning during the summer months does not occur. Even if the disadvantaged are in a highly supported school program during the

academic year, if these children do not receive strong summer learning opportunities, they will be even further behind their advantaged peers. Learning that occurs is not only restricted to the hours of a formal school program. Children's progress during the first five years of their lives, as well as during their school years, is the result of not only the formal school experience but also the learning opportunities that occur in the home, on the playground, in the community, and in the summer. It is the total of a child's experience from all of these opportunities that serves as the foundation for a lifetime of each child's competency. Schools are important, however, schools alone cannot close the achievement gap. Strategic investment in programs and community supports are what are necessary to ensure that the developmental needs of each child are met (Ramey & Ramey, 2004).

Success by Six Program

The Success by Six Program is sponsored by United Way as an early intervention summer program to aid children who are lagging behind their counterparts as they begin their educational journey in kindergarten. The goals and objectives of the program are:

1. To establish familiarity with the physical environment;
2. To develop a relationship with the school personnel;
3. To learn to adhere to classroom structure;
4. To develop appropriate social skills;
5. To overcome any readiness deficiencies identified through the screening process, and
6. To ensure children who participate in this program will exhibit age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate physical, emotional, social and cognitive development.

Several factors aid in the selection process of which children are invited to attend the program. The criteria include:

1. No prior preschool experience;
2. Limited amount of preschool experience - a child who attends only part of the year due to late entry or not being ready for the formal school experience;
3. Children who exhibited “red flags” during kindergarten screening which may include the inability to separate from the family member, poor social interaction, inability to follow simple directions, and reports by family members of problems with preschool skills;
4. Family history of mental or physical illness or reports of limited exposure to learning experiences;
5. Previous attendance in Head Start and still considered needing additional support by the educators in the Head Start Program, and
6. Young birth date.

The Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL-3) instrument and the Success by Six screener are the two assessments from which data are gathered to base decisions as to who will be invited to attend the summer program.

Three research questions form the impetus for this study. First, is the Success by Six Program effective in closing the achievement gaps for students who are determined to be at-risk? Does the classroom experience outlined in the program provide opportunities to initiate and build literacy skills such as recognition of name in print and letter recognition and also focus on routines and structure? This would take into account the fact that the children differ in literacy skill development, socioeconomic makeup of the home, preschool experience or lack of preschool experience, and behavioral expectations. Second, would a parent workshop component aid in building a positive relationship between home and school? This would

translate into parents practicing skills and strategies in the home environment that are introduced in the program's setting.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter details the description of the research design, the participants, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis. The research questions for the current investigation are:

1. Is the Success by Six Program effective in closing the achievement gaps for students who are determined to be at-risk?
2. Does the diversity of the students who attend the program in socioeconomic level of the family, development of literacy skills, parent involvement, and preschool experience or lack of preschool experience have an effect in closing the gaps in the classroom experience?
3. If parents participated in workshops on building literacy skills and strategies for behavioral and social development, would a difference be noticeable in the child's success in the school setting within the parameters of the Success by Six Program?

Research Design

The quasi-experimental design was selected to analyze the effectiveness of the Success by Six Program on closing the achievement gaps of children prior to entering kindergarten. The quasi-experimental design was appropriate as students included in this investigation were part of pre-existing groups, based on kindergarten screening scores. Guidelines for participant inclusion in the Success by Six Program are provided by the funders of the program. Therefore, assignment was not random since consideration for participation in the program was dictated by the program.

Specifically, the scores on the DIAL-3 assessment instrument, no preschool experience, late birth date, and score on the Success by Six Screener played a factor in determining the individuals invited to participate in the program. If a child did attend preschool, a recommendation by the preschool teacher was given as a consideration. The first group for the program based on these criteria was considered to be the treatment group for the current investigation.

The second group was the control group. This group was made up of the students whose score on the DIAL-3 assessment and Success by Six Screener were on-track, who did not have a young birthdate, who had a preschool experience, and who behaved appropriately in the screening situation and were not recommended by the preschool to be considered for the program. For the purpose of further comparison, a third group, intend-to-treat, was included in the project. These students possessed the certain criteria to be considered for the program; however, some families chose not to participate when invited, or enrolled after the program was finished, so they could not participate.

Participants/Setting

All students entering kindergarten had the opportunity to be offered an invitation to be placed in the Success by Six Program, a summer intervention program, if they met the established criteria. The DIAL-3 assessment instrument measured the students in the categories of concepts, language, motor, and behavior. A late birth date, lack of preschool experience, recommendation by the preschool teacher, and the score on the Success by Six Screener was the criteria considered. This provided an initial sample of 56 participants who were placed in the treatment group, 34 participants who were placed in the intend-to-treat group, and 137 students who were in the control group.

The setting for the proposed study was at a K-3 elementary building located in northeast Ohio. Two classrooms were used. The district is an urban, low middle-income district with close to 68% of the students receiving free/reduced lunch. There was one certified kindergarten teacher in each classroom and one instructional aide. Both of the teachers have approximately thirty years' experience in education and many of those years were at the kindergarten level. Classroom units ranged from 12-15 students. Bussing was provided, however, families were given the option to transport children.

Instrumentation

The DIAL-3 was a standardized assessment that assessed all five early childhood areas. A copy of the DIAL-3 assessment is located in Appendix A. The first area to be assessed was *motor skills*. This involved the gross motor skills that included catching, jumping, hopping, and skipping. It also included the fine motor skills of building with blocks, cutting, copying shapes and letters, and writing. The second area was *language*. Skills included in this area focused on answering simple personal questions, such as name, age and sex, articulation, naming or identifying objects and action, and phonemic awareness tasks. The third area was concepts. In this category, students were asked to point to named body parts, identify or name colors, rote counting, counting blocks, identifying concepts in a triad of pictures, and sorting shapes. The self-help development area included the child's development of personal care skills of dressing, eating, and grooming, and the fifth area was social development. This area focused on the child's development of social skills with other children and parents, including rule compliance, sharing, self-control, and empathy. Extensive bias reviews support the appropriateness of this assessment from various socioeconomic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. The estimated reliability coefficient of .87 for the assessment is reported by the developers. This assessment is

used in correlation with the pre-testing use of the Success by Six Screener as an instrument that will serve as the pre-posttest instrument for this research study.

Another component of the DIAL -3 assessment instrument was the behavior point system that was utilized through observations. A copy of the behavior assessment is provided in Appendix A. There were nine categories of behavior that were considered through observation as the child was administered the assessment. The nine areas included: 1) Separation from adult, 2) Crying/whining, 3) Verbal response to questions, 4) Persistence, 5) Attention, 6) Activity level, 7) Participation, 8) Impulsivity, and 9) Understanding of directions.

Each of the above categories had three levels to select that were numbered 0, 1, and 2. If an assessor marked a 0, the behavior was appropriate. If a 1 was marked by the assessor that indicated that there was some work to be done in this behavior area for the individual. If a 2 was marked by the assessor that indicated that the behavior was inappropriate in that specific category. The behavioral observations checklist, which included motor, concepts, and language was located at the bottom of each subtest page. The adult who was assessing that particular subtest was the adult responsible for marking the behavioral checklist of that child's behavior in the screening situation. The three scores were tabulated which translated to the behavior score for that child.

The Success by Six Screener instrument was provided to the schools by the United Way, who funded the Success by Six Program. Items on the screener included the recitation of the alphabet song, counting object by 5,10, and 15, identifying eight colors, identifying four shapes, identifying numbers to 10, identifying lowercase and uppercase letters, beginning sounds, rhyming words, sentence completion, and areas to check for behaviors. The sections were each

given a score and then were tabulated for a final score for the entire screener instrument. A copy of the Success by Six Screener is found in Appendix B.

The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Literary (KRA-L) assessment was a state assessment given to every kindergartener in the state of Ohio within the first month of school. It was designed to help educators in the evaluation of literacy skills at the beginning of the kindergarten year. The KRA-L does not assess all areas of reading readiness; rather it assesses literacy skills which correlate to learning to read. The results can indicate that a more comprehensive assessment may be needed to determine what steps to take in literacy instruction with the particular student. It measured six indicators for success which included answering when and why questions, sentence repetition, rhyming identification, rhyming production, letter identification, and initial sound. The score fell into three bands. Band 1 indicated a need for intense instruction; Band 2 indicated a need for targeted instruction; and Band 3 indicated a need for enriched instruction. Scores of 0-13 indicated a need for intensive instruction. Scores of 14-23 indicated a need for targeted instruction. Scores of 24-29 indicated the need for enriched instruction to continue the educational growth of these individuals. A copy of the KRA-L is provided in Appendix C.

Procedures/Data Analysis

Families who had a child who would be attending a fall kindergarten program were asked to enroll their child in school at the beginning of January of the year prior to their kindergarten experience. After a child was enrolled, a spring screening date and time was given to the parent and the child. At the kindergarten screening, every potential child enrolled was assessed with the DIAL-3 assessment instrument at various stations. Two teachers and an intervention specialist

conducted the assessment. Each individual was responsible for one of the subtests as well as the behavior checklist on the bottom of the page. The three subtests included motor, language, and concepts. A hearing and vision screening was conducted by the school nurse and other medical personnel associated with the school. A speech and language assessment, which is part of the DIAL-3, was conducted by two speech pathologists employed by the district. The Success by Screener was administered by another intervention specialist in the district. The parents filled out a DIAL-3 information form, as well as a school composed information sheet in order for school personnel to gain some background knowledge on each potential student. A copy of this information is provided in Appendix D. The preschools in the area were also given an information form to complete, and a section to make a recommendation for a child to be considered for the Success by Six Program was on the form. A copy of this form is provided in Appendix E.

When all of the information was collected, the teachers and administration analyzed the data in correlation with the criteria set by the United Way for the Success by Six Program, and individuals were selected and invited to participate in the program. This group of students represented the treatment group. The control group was comprised of the children who were enrolled but did not meet the criteria for the treatment group. The intend-to-treat group was comprised of the children who had similar deficits based on the same criteria but either declined to take part in the program or registered in the summer after the program was completed.

In the fall of the Kindergarten year, all students who were in kindergarten were mandated by the state of Ohio to be assessed with the KRA-L assessment tool. Students' scores in the treatment, control group, and intend-to-treat group were analyzed. At the end of the Kindergarten year, all kindergarten students were assessed with the Success by Six Screener to

determine growth. The scores for the students in the treatment group, control group, and intend-to-treat group were analyzed. The independent variable in this study was the participation in the Success by Six Program. The dependent variable was the gain score on the post test screener and the KRA-L score.

The effect of the parent workshops on the students in the program was determined by factoring out components of the posttest screener related to the material presented in the workshops. There was a series of four parent workshops. The workshops were outlined at the parent orientation which was held the last week before the students were out of school. The same day of the week, the same time of the day, and the same length of the workshop was purposely devised so that the parents would have an easier time remembering when they would be held. A flyer was handed out and it was recommended that they place this on their refrigerator so they could refer to it. The workshops were on Tuesdays from 11:00 a.m. until noon. This hour was chosen so that they would be able to take their children home if they would choose to instead of their children riding the bus. A copy of this flyer is found in Appendix F.

The first workshop was on the importance of monitoring behavior, structure, and routine. A Success by Six Transition Skills Checklist was given to the teachers to fill out at the beginning of the program. The areas requested for observance included: 1) Adjusts to changes in routine, 2) Responds when name is called, 3) Demonstrates cooperative behavior, 4) Communicates wants and needs, 5) Follows simple directions, and 6) Demonstrates self-control.

A copy of this form is found in Appendix G. The teachers were asked to mark the checklist using the following key: M means most of the time, D means developing the skill, and N means not at this time. At the end of the program the teachers were asked to complete the checklist again. Growth in these areas was observed.

The make-it, take-it workshop (Number/Letters) enabled the parents to make letter and number flashcards on a ring to take with them to practice these concepts with their children. This corresponded to the identifying the number and letter section on the screener instrument. The occupational therapy (OT) workshop (Print Name) was geared at educating the parents in using the proper pencil grip for their children so that they could print their names and other words. The children were asked to print their names on the screener in the beginning and then asked to print their names on the post screener. A rubric was utilized to score the printing of the names. The rubric is found in Appendix H.

The literacy workshop (Literacy Skills) was geared to reading practices. The rhyming words section and sentence completion sections of the screener correlated strongly with the skills in this workshop. This information was analyzed by the attendance sheets at the workshops to see if there was a difference between the scores of the children whose parents did attend the workshops as opposed to those parents who did not attend the workshops. The linkage between the workshop and the assessment tool was determined by analyzing the data to see if particular workshops might have been influential based on particular items on the post assessment. The alignment of the workshops' focus to certain questions pertaining to the workshops' topic was the manner in which this would be determined.

Every day the teacher followed a schedule so that all of the activity flowed and the attention span of the children was taken into consideration. From 8:00 a.m. until 8:30 a.m., the children arrive and were involved in a morning meeting which included puzzles, books, and calendars. The concept instruction took place from 8:30 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. Letters and numbers were introduced as well as phonics and story time. Learning centers were developed to practice new skills and the students rotated from one center to another between 9:30 a.m. and

10:30 a.m. A restroom break and snack took place between 10:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. From 11:00 a.m. until 11:15 a.m., the students enjoyed free play and/or recess. This supported socialization skills. Art, music, or concept review took place between 11:15 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Lunch was provided at 11:30 a.m., and the students prepared for dismissal by 12:00 p.m. A letter explaining the schedule is located in Appendix I.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The current investigation sought to examine the impact of the Success by Six Program on student participants compared to non-participants. Additionally, the impact of parental participation in educational workshops on student gains was assessed. One of the crucial elements of the program is to even the playing field so that all children begin their educational journey on solid ground. The discrepancy between the posttest score of the Success by Six Screener for all students and the KRAL scores was to help determine if the playing field was leveled. The emphasis of the Success by Six Program is to identify students who demonstrate a lack of pre-kindergarten academic preparedness, and provide them with an intervention that will enable them to start their educational journey on solid ground. A comparison of the change in Success by Six Screener scores and the KRAL scores was used to determine the effectiveness of this program.

The data for the research were gathered from the students' files and organized within a Microsoft Excel document. The document outlined each student's data of the subtests on the DIAL-3, birthday, preschool attendance, behavior score, and Success by Six Screener score. This information was viewed to select which students met the criteria and would be considered first for the Success by Six Program. The Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was then imported and analyzed using SPSS Version 20. There were 56 students who participated in the Success by Six Program.

The current investigation included both the treatment group students and control group students. Treatment group students were those individuals whose screening scores were below

the determined cut-off value, therefore, identifying these students as candidates for the Success by Six Program. The control group students did not attend the program because their screening scores indicated that they had reasonable levels of kindergarten readiness skills and did not need the treatment intervention. In some instances, the data were broken down into three groups, the third group being identified as students who would have been eligible to attend but were not enroll until the beginning of the school year, or students who were invited to attend the program, but whose parents declined the invitation. Overall, 137 participants did not meet the criteria for the program, 56 students were in the Success by Six program, and 34 students either submitted late registration, i.e., after the completion of the program, or declined the invitation to attend the program. In addition to the formal educational setting, parents of students in the treatment group were encouraged to attend parent workshops. These workshops were intended to enhance the partnership between home and school, which is vital to student growth.

The analysis focused on which independent variables had the impact on the dependent variables as measured by: Success by Six scores pre and post test score gain and the KRAL assessment instrument. It was determined that attendance in the Success by Six Program and the socioeconomic background of the students were variables that had impact on the dependent variables. The findings suggested that participation in the Success by Six Program did eliminate the achievement gap originally identified between the two groups of students. The gain score of the pretest and the posttest of the Success by Six Screener illustrated that students who participated in the Success by Six Program leveled the playing field and performed as well on the measure taken at the end of the school year as the non-participating students. The data also revealed that participant performance improvement was positive irrelevant to socio-economic status. This was not the case with the control group students' year end scores.

Data were also examined to determine the impact of parent workshops. Each parent workshop was correlated to information on the Success by Six Screener. The make-it, take-it workshop attendance correlated with the letter and number recognition, the Occupational Therapy workshop attendance corresponded with printing the name, and the literacy workshop was linked to the sentence completion and rhyming word section on the screener. The behavior workshop attendance was linked in behavior measures that were assessed at the beginning of the program and at the end of the program. Each workshop was matched with the elements of the screener that pertained to the information shared in the workshop and the gain score of those elements was utilized to determine the impact. Some of the workshops did have an effect while others did not have the anticipated effect. Finally, the number of days that each participant attended the program was examined in the Success by Six Screener. The number of days attended for those students in the treatment group demonstrated an effect on the gain score of the Success by Six Screener. The trend data indicated that the more a participant was in attendance while participating in the Success by Six Program, the higher the gain score was revealed between the pre assessment and post assessment.

Demographic

Descriptive data were aggregated from the students who comprised the incoming kindergarten class in each year at the school. Demographic variables of gender, preschool experience, attendance in the Success by Six program, and socioeconomic status was charted and analyzed. The various demographic factors were examined in an effort to understand the participants who comprised the sample to determine if the students in the sample were representative of students in the grade level. Table 1 contains the descriptive data in regard to gender. The control group in Table 1 is the summation of the students who were not invited to

attend and those students who either declined the invitation or went through late enrollment but would have met the criteria. All are students who did not participate in the Success by Six Program.

Table 1 indicates the distribution of participants who were potential participants in the Success by Six Program.

Table 1: Sampling Pool for Success by Six

| Group | <i>f</i> |
|--|----------|
| Not asked (Didn't meet criteria) | 137 |
| Late Registration (Could not be considered) | 24 |
| Refused Invitation (Met criteria but declined) | 10 |
| Attended (Met criteria and participated) | 56 |

The data in Table 1 reveals that out of the 171 participants in the control group, 80.1% were not asked to participate in the Success by Six Program because they did not meet the necessary criteria. Approximately 5.8% of the participants were asked to attend the program but declined the invitation, and 14% of the participants could have been invited to attend the program had they been screened in April. The fact that they enrolled and were screened in late August made them ineligible for the program since the program ran late July and early August. There were 56 students in the Success by Six treatment group. The demographic data below provides the aggregate information for the students in the treatment group relative to the true control group students (all students who did not receive the treatment).

Table 2 provides a summary of the responses by gender.

Table 2: Gender by Treatment

| Gender | Male | Female |
|-----------|------|--------|
| Control | 81 | 90 |
| Treatment | 36 | 20 |

As indicated in Table 2, the gender comparison indicates that in the control group, 47.4% of the participants were male and 52.8% of the participants were female. In the treatment group 64.3% of the participants were male and 35.7% of the participants were female. There were a higher percentage of males than females in the intervention program which corresponds with the reverse percentages of more females than males in the control group.

The next analysis examines the frequency of participants attending preschool, presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Preschool Experience by Treatment

| Preschool | No | Yes | Headstart |
|-----------|----|-----|-----------|
| Control | 36 | 121 | 13 |
| Treatment | 18 | 22 | 16 |

The data in Table 2 reveals that 70.8% of the participants in the control group attended preschool as compared to 21.1% of the participants who did not attend preschool. Only 7.6% of the students in the control group attended Headstart. In the treatment group, 32.1% of the students did not have a preschool experience while 39.3% of the students did have a preschool experience. A total of 28.6% of the students in the treatment group attended Headstart.

The next category analysis examined the socioeconomic status of the students in both the control and treatment group, which is provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Frequency of Economically Disadvantaged Group

| Economic Status | Yes | No |
|-----------------|-----|----|
| Control | 94 | 77 |
| Treatment | 38 | 18 |

Table 4 indicates that 45% of the participants in the control group were not socioeconomically disadvantaged whereas 55 % of the participants were socioeconomically

disadvantaged. In the treatment group, 32.1% of the participants were not socioeconomically disadvantaged whereas 67.9% of the participants in the treatment group were socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Table 5 focuses on the ages of control group and treatment group participants so that average age of the participant in each group can be determined.

Table 5: Number of Birth Days from Jan.1, 2004

| Group | Control | Treatment |
|---------------------|---------|-----------|
| No. of Participants | 171 | 56 |
| Mean | 593.55 | 628.14 |
| Std. Deviation | 221.83 | 235.41 |
| Skewness | -0.04 | 0.58 |
| Kurtosis | -0.82 | 0.68 |

The information in Table 5 indicates that the mean age of the students in the treatment group was younger than the mean age of the participants in the control group. The larger the number the younger the participant since the student was more days away from the January 4, 2004 set date. The skewness and kurtosis of this data indicate the age distribution is within acceptable ranges for a normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Preliminary Analysis

The preliminary analysis included students in the treatment group relative to students who were identified for the control group by their screening score in April of the pre-kindergarten year. The first analysis, found in Table 6, indicates the average score for both the participants in the control and treatment group on all of the subgroup tests and total on the DIAL-3 assessment.

Table 6: DIAL-3 Scores Across Treatment Groups

| Group | Mean | Std. Dev. | Skew | Kurtosis |
|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|----------|
| Control | | | | |
| Motor | 73.36 | 26.22 | -1.22 | 0.60 |
| Concepts | 62.46 | 27.98 | -0.57 | -0.79 |
| Language | 63.33 | 29.45 | -0.66 | -0.76 |
| Total | 68.11 | 28.08 | -0.81 | -0.35 |
| Treatment | | | | |
| Motor | 41.54 | 31.05 | 0.34 | -1.45 |
| Concepts | 31.32 | 20.50 | 0.65 | 0.28 |
| Language | 29.80 | 23.34 | 0.99 | 0.34 |
| Total | 31.02 | 21.29 | 0.67 | -0.13 |

Overall, the average scores on the subtests in all three areas: motor, concepts, and language were higher for the control group members as opposed to the treatment group participants. The skewness and kurtosis were within acceptable range (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Behavior was assessed by a point system with certain behaviors assigned a set of points in relation to the severity of the behaviors at screening. Table 7 indicates the results of the behavior. Each problem behavior was given a point value in regard to the severity of that behavior. Some of the behavior categories' notes included wiggling, separation anxiety with adult, and repeating or following directions. All of the assessment points were added together. The higher point value indicated more negative behaviors.

Table 7: Behaviors as indicated by a point system across treatment groups

| Group | Mean | Std. Dev. | Skew | Kurtosis |
|-----------|------|-----------|------|----------|
| Control | 2.45 | 3.84 | 1.98 | 3.44 |
| Treatment | 7.46 | 7.55 | 1.52 | 2.18 |

The average behavior score was three times larger in the treatment group as oppose to the control group. One of the criteria for invitation into the Success by Six Program is the point number associated with the behaviors of the child at the spring screening. Behavior is a notable factor when considering qualifications for the program.

Table 8 indicates the average score for both the participants in the control and treatment group on the pre Success by Six Screener, the post Success by Six Screener, and the KRAL score.

Table 8: Pre, Post, and KRAL scores across treatment groups

| Group | Mean | Std. Dev. | Skew | Kurtosis |
|------------------|-------|-----------|-------|----------|
| Control | | | | |
| Pre-Test | 71.25 | 23.49 | -0.73 | -0.73 |
| Post-Test | 95.92 | 9.02 | -6.53 | 54.37 |
| KRAL | 21.09 | 5.81 | -0.75 | 0.12 |
| Treatment | | | | |
| Pre-Test | 47.62 | 22.64 | 0.31 | -0.86 |
| Post-Test | 91.24 | 10.07 | -2.33 | 5.77 |
| KRAL | 15.52 | 4.92 | 0.01 | 0.04 |

The control group had an average gain from the pre-test to the post-test of 24.67 points. The participants in the treatment group had an average gain of 43.62 points. The average mean of the KRAL score indicates that the average mean score of the control group was 5.57 points higher than the average mean score of the participants in the treatment group.

Bivariate Analysis of Assessments and Variables

A zero order correlation analysis was conducted. First, the correlation between the pre-program assessment measures was examined in an effort to understand how much overlap there was between the students' performances on the Success by Six Screener and the DIAL-3. Table 9 demonstrates the correlation between the Success by Six Screener and the subtests of the DIAL-3 assessment.

Table 9: Correlation Between Assessments

| Assessments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|------------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Pre S by Six (1) | - | .539* | .656* | .725* | .735* | -0.296 |
| Motor (2) | | - | .646* | .572* | .834* | -0.381 |
| Concepts (3) | | | - | .749* | .895* | -0.403 |
| Language (4) | | | | - | .848* | -0.362 |
| Total (5) | | | | | - | -0.408 |
| Behavior (6) | | | | | | - |

Note: *p<.05

The information in Table 9 indicates that there is a positive correlation between the Success by Six Screener, used as the pretest, and the DIAL-3 assessment in the subtest areas of motor, concept, language, and total score. There was a negative correlation between the behavior component on the DIAL-3 assessment and the Success by Six pretest screener instrument. The explanation for the negative relationship between the Success by Six Screener and the DIAL-3 is that the reverse scoring of the behavioral items indicates that as behavior improves, students score higher on their assessments. Additionally, the relationship between the Success by Six posttest and the KRAL were analyzed. This revealed that a significant positive moderate relationship existed between these assessment results.

Zero order correlations were conducted to assess which variables are related to students' performances on KRAL and the Success by Six Screener (Gain). Table 10 outlines these correlations.

Table 10: Correlations to Assess Variables and Post Assessments

| Assessment | Gender | Birth days | Preschool | Free/Red. Lunch | Days Attended |
|---------------------|--------|------------|-----------|-----------------|---------------|
| Success by Six Gain | | | | | |
| <i>r</i> | -0.10 | -0.09 | -0.10 | 0.15* | -0.38* |
| KRAL | | | | | |
| <i>r</i> | 0.13 | -0.10 | -0.04 | -0.20* | 0.23* |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Based on Table 10, *free and reduced lunch* and *days attended* were significantly correlated to both dependent variables. The other three variables, gender, birth days, and preschool were uncorrelated as indicated by the low values close to zero. Additionally, the correlation between the post KRAL measure and the change score on the Success by Six Screener measures were examined. Based on the significant correlation between the two dependent variables, KRAL and Success by Six change score, ($r=.40, p<.001$), it was determined that a multivariate analysis of variance could be used to further analyze this data.

Multivariate Analysis of Program Impact

Multivariate Analysis of variance provides two perspectives on the year end data. First, it provides an examination of both measures simultaneously, therefore eliminating any overlap influence due to the significant correlation between these variables. Second, this analysis provides an examination of the individual assessments across the independent variables.

Two preliminary tests were conducted in order to assess if the multivariate analysis of variance would be supported by the data. A Levene's Test of Homogeneity of variance for the KRAL score, $F(5,221) = 1.22, p<.05$, and for the SXS Change score, $F(5,221) = 1.03, p<.05$, were not significant and therefore tenable. A Box's M Test, $F(15,11981.02)=18.45, p<.001$, was significant, but determined to be tenable by the guidelines of Field (2009).

The multivariate analysis of variance revealed significant differences for students based on attendance to Success by Six, $F(4,438) = 8.182, p<.001$, and for students across different socio-economic statuses, $F(2,220) = 3.5987, p<.001$. No significant interaction between socio-economic status and program participation was revealed. The Test of Between-Subjects Effects

revealed a similar pattern of results when examining each assessment independently, as presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

| Source | Dependent Variable | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|----|-------------|-------|------|
| SXS_ATT | KRAL Score | 953.47 | 2 | 476.73 | 16.42 | 0.00 |
| | SXS_Change | 6466.73 | 2 | 3233.36 | 0.91 | 0.41 |
| Free Lunch | KRAL Score | 204.21 | 1 | 204.21 | 7.03 | 0.01 |
| | SXS_Change | 5348.71 | 1 | 5348.71 | 1.50 | 0.22 |
| SXS_ATT*Free Lunch | KRAL Score | 16.91 | 2 | 8.50 | 0.29 | 0.74 |
| | SXS_CHange | 4766.44 | 2 | 2383.22 | 0.67 | 0.51 |

The Test of Between-Subject Effects examined the data independently for the two dependent variables. As indicated in Table 11, the student’s attendance or nonattendance of the Success by Six Program and the student’s socio-economic status were significantly different on the KRAL, but not found to be significantly different for the gain in Success by Six scores. No significant interaction was found.

A closer look at the student results shed some light on these findings. Data from all students whose scores qualified them to participate in the program but who did not because of declining the invitation or late enrollment were included as another comparison group: *Intend-to-treat*. Of interest were the students who attended Success by Six Program and performed at about the same level as students not identified for inclusion as seen in Table 12. The gain score from the pretest to the posttest for the students in the treatment group closed the gap and leveled the playing field with their counterparts.

Table 12: *Performance from Pre to Post for Treatment and Control*

| Group | | Pre | Post | Gain |
|----------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|
| Control Mean | | 72.89 | 96.31 | 29.46 |
| | <i>sd</i> | 22.86 | 8.69 | 77.38 |
| Treatment Mean | | 48.44 | 92.08 | 42.05 |
| | <i>sd</i> | 22.53 | 8.79 | 20.2 |
| Intend to Treat Mean | | 49.1 | 85.38 | 39.87 |
| | <i>sd</i> | 25.02 | 16.3 | 23.26 |

Further analysis reveals the degree of the differences for each group across socio-economic status groups, as illustrated in Figure 1. Figure 1 demonstrates the average means change score when comparing the pretest to the posttest on the Success by Six screener, and demonstrating different results for students who received free/reduced lunches relative to those who did not. The groups being compared include the control group (0), treatment group (1), and the *intend-to-treat* group (2). The thin (blue) dashed-line represents the participants in each group who were not socioeconomically disadvantaged and the thick (green) dashed-line represents the participants in each group who were socioeconomically disadvantaged.

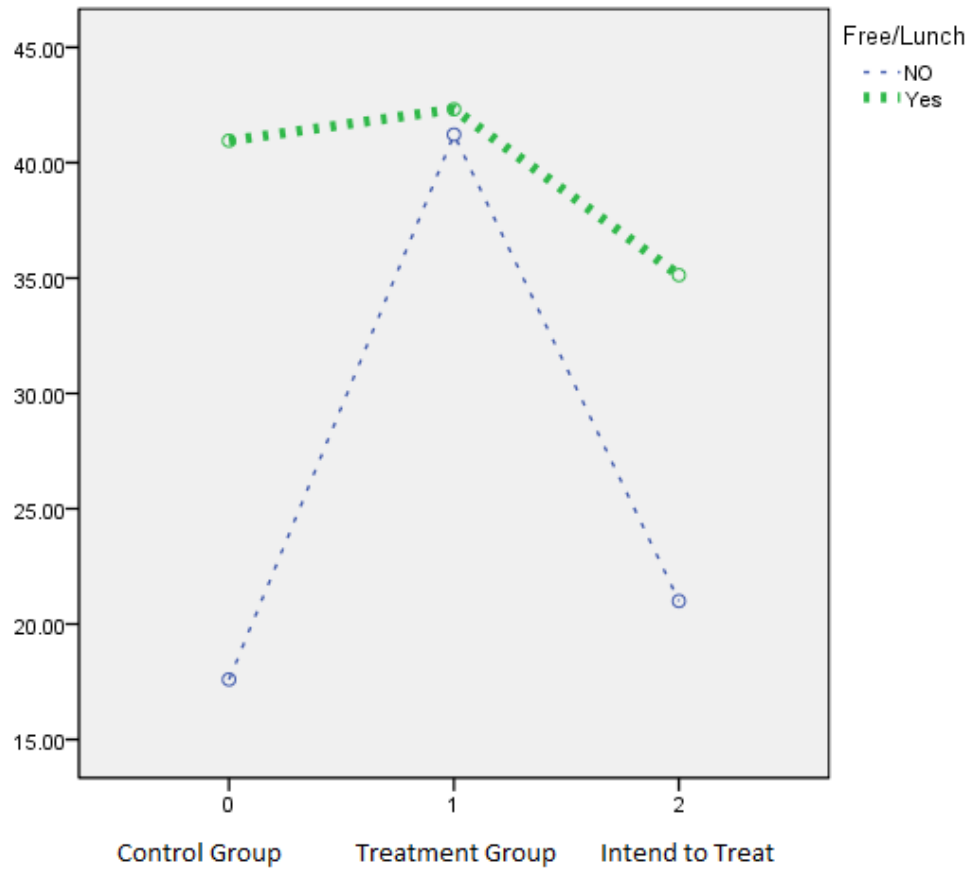


Figure 1: Means of Success by Six Change Scores Across Socio-Economic Groups

As indicated in Figure 1, the participants in the treatment group gained the most points from pretest to posttest with socioeconomic status not relevant in points gained. The difference between the free/reduced lunch students across the three groups is notable for the control group and the *intend-to-treat* group. Figure 2 looks specifically at the KRAL scores. Again, the groups being compared include the control group (0), treatment group (1), and the *intend-to-treat* group (2).

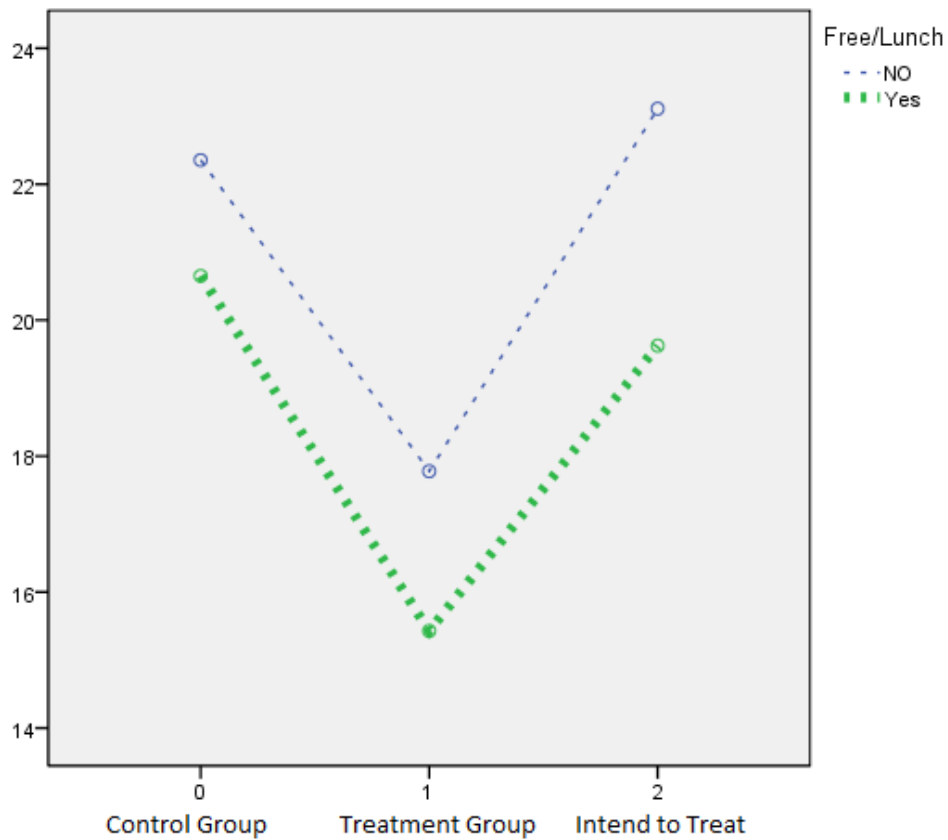


Figure 2: Means of KRAL Scores Across Socio-Economic Status

The second figure, the treatment group, scored the lowest on the KRAL; however, it is surmised that the scores could have been even lower had the treatment group not have had access to the program. A larger difference between the socioeconomic statuses of the groups is seen when considering the KRAL score than was seen when considering the Success by Six score gain.

Impact of Program Dosage

An analysis of variance was conducted with KRAL and Success by Six change scores in an effort to examine the impact of days in attendance. The purpose of ANOVA is to test for significant differences between group means. Three categories of days of attendance were considered. If the students were in attendance less than eight days they were coded zero (0). If the students were in attendance nine to 12 days, they were coded one (1), and if the students were in attendance 13-16 days, they were coded with a number two (2). The results of this analysis revealed significant differences across days in attendance for the Success by Six change, but no significant differences were found across days of attendance for the KRAL. These results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. *Days in Program Attendance by Assessment Measure*

| Assessment | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> |
|----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| KRAL | 1.35 | 2 | 50 | 0.27 |
| Success By Six | 3.98 | 2 | 44 | 0.03 |

Obvious in Table 14, students ($n = 8$) who attended 9-12 days demonstrated the greatest gains in their Success by Six change scores. The Success by Six Program was 16 days long. The trend data indicate that students who attended anywhere from 9 to 16 days benefitted from the program.

Table 14: *Descriptive Data on Attendance for the ANOVA*

| Assessment | Days Attended | <i>n</i> | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|------------|---------------|----------|-------|----------------|
| KRAL | 1 | 9 | 13.90 | 7.42 |
| | 2 | 40 | 16.40 | 4.35 |
| SXS_Change | 1 | 8 | 55.25 | 17.32 |
| | 2 | 37 | 37.14 | 18.83 |

Impact of Parent Workshops

Workshops were offered to the parents to provide them information intended to encourage them to be an active partner in their child's education. There were four workshops offered. The first workshop was on the importance of monitoring behavior, structure, and routine. The make-it, take-it workshop (Number/Letters) was a workshop that enabled the parents to make letter and number flashcards on a ring that they were able to take with them to practice these concepts with their child. The Occupational Therapy (OT) workshop (Print Name) was geared at educating the parents on the proper pencil grip for their child so that they could print their name and other words. The literacy workshop (Literacy Skills) was geared at reading practices. The Success by Six pre and posttest screener had components in the instrument that reflected or related to information provided in the workshops. The screener was sectioned off into three areas and the individual scores in those areas were correlated to the child's score whose parents attended the respective workshop to see if there was positive, negative, or no correlation between the workshops and the how the child scored. The three workshops that could be correlated to sections of the screener were the make-it, take-it workshops of letters and numbers, the OT workshop, and the literacy workshop. Table 15 shows the correlation between the workshops and the score of the components on the screener that reflected or related to the information provided in the workshop.

Table 15: Wkshp. Att. Correlated to assessment results

| Workshop | r |
|-----------------|-------|
| Number/Letters | 0.27* |
| Print Name | -0.03 |
| Literacy Skills | -0.16 |

Note:* $p < .05$

Table 15 indicates that there was a positive correlation between the parents who attended the number/letter workshop and the score on the number/letter section of the Success by Six post screener. A negative correlation was seen between the parents who attended the OT workshop and the print the name section on the post screener. There was a negative correlation between the parents who attended the parent workshop on literacy and the students' scores on the section of the Success by Six screener posttest which pertained to literacy skills.

The behavior workshop was the fourth workshop offered to the parents. Each behavior was given a value of either (M) most of the time, (D) developing the skill, or (N) not at this time using a behavior checklist which measured response to name, cooperation, communication, following directions and self-control at the beginning of the program. At the end of the program, the same checklist was utilized with the assessor assigning one of the values to that particular behavior demonstrated by each child at the end of the program. The behaviors which were considered from the checklist were those behaviors that were highlighted during the behavior workshop. Table 16 indicates the results of the correlation conducted on behavior.

Table 16: Correlation between Wkshp. Att. & Behavior Measure

| Area Assessed | r |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Responds to name | -0.25 |
| Cooperation | -0.15 |
| Communicating Wants & Needs | 0.02 |
| Follows Directions | 0.59* |
| Self-Control | 0.08* |

Note: * $p < .05$

Table 16 indicates that there was a negative correlation between the parents who attended the workshop and the child's ability to respond to their name and cooperate with others. There was a positive correlation between the parents who attended the behavior workshop in relationship to following directions and self-control.

Summary

The data collected for both the control and treatment group were reliable and analyzed, and the parent workshop component of the research was isolated to determine the effect or lack of effect the workshops had on the growth of the participants whose parents attended the workshop. In summation, the socioeconomic level demographic variable of the participants was related to the dependent variable. Attendance in the Success by Six Program was also viewed to be effective in leveling the foundation of participants who lacked readiness skills or social skills. The demographic data indicated that the participants in the treatment group were younger as determined by their average age from January 1, 2004; there was a 31.5% difference in whether or not the child attended preschool between the students that had a preschool experience in the control group and the students who had a preschool experience in the treatment group.

The differences between the control and treatment group were analyzed, and when the Success by Six gain score between the pre and post test scores was considered, it was significant. The difference of the average mean score on the pretest between the treatment group and the control group indicated a difference of 24.45 as compared to the difference of the average mean score on the posttest (4.23) between the treatment group and the control group. The participants in the treatment group were able to gain ground so that they were in close proximity to the participants in the control group on the posttest assessment.

The data, in relationship to the socioeconomic variable which was being considered, indicated that the discrepancy in the control group and the intent-to-treat group between the score of those who were socioeconomically disadvantaged and those participants who were not socioeconomically disadvantaged was large when considering the Success by Six Screener

change score. The participants in the treatment group, however, showed only a slight variance between the socioeconomically disadvantaged participants and those students in the treatment group that were not socioeconomically disadvantaged on the Success by Six Screener. The interesting fact in relation to the independent variables was that, independently, the socioeconomic status and attendance in the program proved to have an impact on the dependent variable, however, the interaction between the two independent variables proved not to have a significant effect on the dependent variable. Due to the fact that each of the independent variables in isolation impacted the dependent variable significantly, when the two interacted it did not show any more significant gain than when isolated.

Attendance in the Success by Six Program did prove to be a factor in the Success by Six change score. The more days the participants were in attendance, the more gain between the pre and posttest was realized. The trend data indicated that participants who attended the Success by Six Program nine or more days received were impacted positively by the elements in the program.

The impact of the parents' workshops was isolated to analyze whether or not this component of the program was effective. The make-it, take-it workshops, which focused on numbers and letters, were significant. The behavior workshop in relationship to following directions and self-control was also significant. The literacy workshop and Occupational Therapy (OT) workshop which correlated with printing the name did not significantly affect the data. The respond to name when called and cooperation in relationship to behaviors were also not significant.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF ANALYSIS

Introduction

Chapter Five discusses the results of the current investigation examining the effectiveness of the Success by Six Program in closing the achievement gap of those children who were identified as having developmental deficits. First, the individuals who comprise the sample are considered in reference to the population of students in northeast Ohio. Second, the outcome measures utilized to determine the placement of students in the control and treatment groups are discussed. Next, the impact of the program activities and the implications of these findings are summarized. The Parent Workshop series' findings and inferences are discussed. In light of the impact analysis of the Parent Workshops, future directions are considered. Finally, the limitations of the study are listed and suggestions for future research are proposed.

Discussion

The current investigation included a sample of 227 kindergarten level students. The study identified students for inclusion in the treatment group based on DIAL-3 and Success by Six screening scores. Students who did not meet the criteria for inclusion were considered to be part of the control group (did not receive treatment) and an intend-to-treat group (met criteria for inclusion in the treatment group, but did not participate in the treatment). Approximately 48.5% of all the study participants were female and 58.8% of all study participants were considered socio-economically disadvantaged (received free/reduced lunches). Based on the demographics of northeast Ohio students, the gender distribution of the sample is representative of the gender distribution of students in northeast Ohio (Kidscount.org, 2013). The percentage (58.2%) of

students receiving free/reduced lunches in the current investigation is higher than the percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunches in northeast Ohio (Kidscount.org, 2013).

Pre Program Measures, DIAL-3

Preliminary analysis revealed that students in the treatment group were substantially lower on the DIAL-3 indicator, in comparison to students in the control group. These results are in accordance to the data collected by the Ohio Business Roundtable, suggesting that 60% of the students in Ohio begin school not ready to succeed in kindergarten (Ohio Business Roundtable, 2010). The data from the research presently conducted also correlate with the research findings positing that 36% lacked academic skills and 35% were from disorganized home environments.

In addition to the motor, concepts, and language areas measured by the DIAL-3, a behavior measure was also assessed, establishing that some students revealed elevated levels of undesirable behaviors such as separation from adult, crying/whining, verbal response to questions, persistence, attention issues, high activity level, willingness to participate, impulsivity, and understanding of directions. These factors also contributed to students' placement in the treatment group. The proportion of students demonstrating these behavioral *deficits* is consistent with research that suggests that up to 46% of the children had difficulty following directions, and 34% had difficulty working independently (Rimm-Kaufman, & Pianta, 2000).

It is imperative to address the behavioral deficits that students bring to their potential first formal classroom experience. Failure to do so not only negatively impacts the student with the deficit, but also negatively impacts the academics of all students in the classroom. Recent scientific advances in the area of child development have affirmed that the early years are a period of time when rapid growth and development occur. The following essentials ensure

normal brain and behavioral development which include: (a) protect from inappropriate disapproval, (b) communicate richly, and (c) guide and limit behavior. These findings indicate that the development of the brain and learning are truly interdependent and that what occurs during these early years of development has lasting and important consequences on student academic success (Ramey & Ramey, 2004; Gilkerson, 2001). Therefore, the behavior component has a significant impact on school readiness.

Pre Program Measures, Success by Six Screener

All students included in the current research were measured on both a pre- and post-measure of the Success by Six Screener. As indicated by the current investigation, students in the treatment group scored significantly lower than the student in the control group on the pre-test administration of the screener. These scores measured the students in the following areas:

1. Printing name;
2. Identification of colors/shapes;
3. Identification of letters/numbers;
4. Sound/letter association;
5. Rhyming;
6. Classification of words, and
7. Sentence completion.

Reading “disorders” are usually linked to underlying linguistic deficits (Foster & Miller, 2007). These authors also posit that if students enter school without the necessary emergent literacy skills, they quickly fall behind. Closing the gap by second or third grade in phonics/decoding skills is not an answer to the problem, because, by this time, a comprehension gap has developed. In essence, one gap in learning is traded for another gap of learning, placing

these students at additional risk (Foster & Miller, 2007). Early storybook exposure may be associated with better skills in listening, comprehension, and building of vocabulary, but not for fostering phonological sensitivity, letter-name knowledge, or letter-sound knowledge (Senechal, 2006; Stephenson et al., 2008). As indicated above, the results of the pre-administration on the Success by Six Screener were used to identify the students who had underlying linguistic deficits, learning gaps in letter/number knowledge, and letter/sound association. Therefore, these measures were used to determine which students qualified for inclusion in the Success by Six program activities.

Ample variability in student knowledge, behavior, and social development is revealed each year at the early kindergarten screening. Attendance in a preschool situation, parents' involvement in the home setting, age of the child, and the socioeconomic status of the family are all elements that help define children's achievement levels when they arrive at kindergarten. There is evidence that a "good start" to schooling is influential in the later well-being of the child. School readiness is contingent, not only the children, but the school, community, and family (Hair, Halle, Terry-Humen, Lavelle, & Calkins, 2006). Investments in closing the gap made in the early years far outweigh the costly investments in the secondary years (Ohio Business Roundtable, 2010; Schweinhart, 2002). Waiting for these children to fail in school and then providing needed remediation through compensatory programs, pull-outs, or retention does not sufficiently enable these students to close the gaps and achieve at grade level (Ramey & Ramey, 2004).

Program Impact

At the end of the kindergarten school year, data was analyzed for gains between the pre- and post-testing on the Success by Six Screener. The results indicated that the control group had

a 24.67 point gain while the treatment group had a 43.62 point gain from the pre to the post testing. The Success by Six Program offered in the summer had a significant impact on the students that were enrolled in the program. The students who met the criteria to attend the Success by Six Program started out significantly behind many of their peers on the pre-screening measures, however, ended up statistically equivalent to their peers at the end of the kindergarten year. The achievement gap that existed during the pre- screening closed, resulting in no significant differences between students in the different groups on the post-test screening results.

First, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted in order to understand the impact of program participation and student scores on the KRAL and the change in student scores on the Success by Six inventory. This analysis revealed that there was a difference in the KRAL scores across the Success by Six *participants* relative to the non-participants. Non-participants were found to have higher scores, in both the control group and the intend-to-treat group. There were no notable differences across socio-economic status for any of the groups on the KRAL scores.

It is surmised, however, that the participants would have possibly scored lower had they not been in the program. The average score of the treatment group on the KRAL was 15. In examining more closely the scores of the students in the intend-to-treat group, a number of students were found to have scores as low as 6, 8, 11, and 12, below the average score for the treatment group. However, this measure presents some limitations as it cannot be used as a part of the pre-screening for kindergarten entry, and is administered at the beginning of the kindergarten school year to all students. For the treatment group, students generally did not produce scores as low as students in the intend-to-treat group, therefore, indicating the potential impact of the program activities.

Second, the multivariate analysis revealed significant differences in the change scores on the Success by Six screener across the three groups. Specifically, the students in the treatment group demonstrated the greatest gains from pre- to post-testing, followed by the intend-to-treat group, with the control group showing the lowest gains. Most remarkable is that there was no statistical difference between the treatment and control groups' end of the year post-test scores. While it is likely that some of the gains made by the treatment group and the intend-to-treat group students from pre- to post-testing reflect regression to the mean artifacts, the differences that were found between the treatment group and the intend-to-treat group potentially were representative of the impact of the Success by Six program participation.

According to Dail and McGee (2011) research on a Shared Summer School approach for kindergarten transition disclosed supportive relationships between the school, incoming kindergartners, and their families. The program provided an effortless transition in activities and teaching approaches which increased social and academic skills of the children. The targeted audience for entry into this program was children from local childcare providers, Head Start, and pre-kindergartners who were considered to be at-risk. The Shared Summer School program is very similar to the Success by Six Program. Based on the results in the current investigation, there is evidence that the Success by Six Program had an impact on closing the achievement gap.

Another similarity between the Shared Summer School Program and the Success by Six Program was the fact that kindergarten teachers were identified from each school based on their interest in participating. In this program a kindergarten teacher partnered with a pre-school teacher to instruct the class (Dail & McGee, 2011). In the current study, two kindergarten teachers who are veteran teachers on staff have both been leaders in the classroom. An educational aid was also present in each classroom which then allowed for a one to six or seven

student ratio. It has been noted in some Success by Six Programs that a pre-school teacher does work as the instructional aid in the classroom with the certified kindergarten teacher helping to bridge the transition. The location where the current research was conducted did not engage in this protocol; however, input from the area preschool staff about the children involved in the program was shared helping to make the transition smooth.

Another important argument for this type of summer program is the fact that many delayed children are unlikely to advance a full 33 developmental months in nine calendar months. Research has shown that during the three summer months, children who come from households that do not actively promote learning fail to show progress in academic or language skills (Entwisle, 1995). Entwisle maintained that children who come from families that do provide academic learning support throughout the summer months continue to progress and develop during that time.

Research suggests that intense interventions aid in closing the achievement gaps and fostering the appropriate behaviors needed to be successful in kindergarten (Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, & Mann, 2001). According to Reynolds et al., participation in the extended childhood intervention programs is associated with lower rates of grade retention as well as special education identification. Closing the achievement gaps, fostering appropriate behaviors for success in the structured environment, and fostering a partnership with home and school are imperative. Children who do not have a positive early transition to school are often the children who experience early failure, become inattentive, disruptive, or withdrawn (Ramey & Ramey, 2004; Schweinhart, 2002). This is the impetus to strive to close the achievement gap so that this research does not become reality.

In one of the earliest studies on the impact of preschool programs, the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study identified the lasting effects of the program on the participants' later educational achievement, economic success, and avoidance of criminal activity (Schweinhart, 2002). The results of this study demonstrated that the no-program group was significantly outscored by the program group on both an in-school achievement test when the students were 14 years old (in reading, language, and arithmetic) and later, on a general literacy test when the students were 19 years old. As the study continued, it showed that according to social services records and interviews at the age of 27 only 59% of the program group received welfare assistance in comparison to 89% of the no-program group, and 36% in the program group compared to 13% in the no-program group owned their own homes (Schweinhart, 2002). Even though it is not likely that the gap can be eliminated entirely, a prekindergarten summer intervention program can substantially reduce the existing achievement gap and prepare students to take on the challenges that are presented in kindergarten settings (Neuman, 2004).

Impact of Dosage

The number of days in attendance in the Success by Six Program was analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA). The Success by Six Program was 16 days long. The analysis indicated that there was a difference in post-test screening scores for students who attended the program different numbers of days (1-8, 9-12, or 13-16 days). The data indicate that students who attended anywhere from nine to 12 days benefitted from the program the most, followed by students who attended 13-16 days. It is surmised that many of the students were tired on Monday after coming back from the summer weekend days, therefore, it is possible that Mondays produced no gains due to student fatigue. There was a total of four Mondays in the

program. Additional research with larger sample sizes is needed to understand these associations.

Parental Workshops Impact on Student Measures

The data were examined regarding the parental workshops that were offered. This was examined in an effort to understand the impact of the workshops on student gains. This component was not a component from the United Way in regard to The Success by Six Program. This was an element that was added in order to engage the parents in their children's education and it is highly supported by prior research. High-quality, educationally oriented experience prior to entering formal education in kindergarten is a critical component in ensuring school readiness (Smart et al., 2008). Parental involvement can be actively encouraged in the home setting by providing learning opportunities for children to support the learning opportunities at school. Home-based involvement such as spending time with a child on letter recognition activity or readiness skill, or discussing the events of the day in the classroom setting with the child as an active listener are all excellent ways that the parent can scaffold the learning process (Senechal, 2007). Families that are successful with this type of engagement are passing along optimal values regarding the importance of education, work, and relationships with their child (Davis-Kean & Sexton, 2009).

The roll-out of the workshops occurred during the orientation meeting that took place the last week of May. The parents and their children were invited to attend the meeting, and the program was explained to them with an opportunity for the parents and the children to visit the classroom. At this orientation, the parent workshop component was explained, the topics of the workshops were introduced, and it was emphasized that the workshop would take place weekly,

on the same day, at the same time. Tuesday was the day selected and 11:00 a.m. was the time chosen since the workshops were one hour in length; this gave the parents the opportunity to pick up their child on that day if they chose to do so.

The skills that were highlighted at each workshop correlated with a section of the Success by Six Screener. The data revealed that there was a positive correlation between the parents who attended the number/letter workshop and the score on the number/letter section of The Success by Six post screener.

It is important that members in the family read to a child to foster skills in listening comprehension and building the vocabulary of the child, however, this activity does not foster phonological sensitivity, letter-name knowledge, or letter-sound knowledge (Senechal, 2006; Stephenson et al., 2008). It is important to develop the skill of recognition of letters and numbers as well as the sound associated with the isolated letter. The make-it, take-it workshop enabled the parents to create a letter ring and number ring that they were able to take with them. Ideas on how to utilize the tools with their child were also shared. Requests were made for sharing strategies that parents in the group may have used on how to use the tool. Some parents gave good suggestions not mentioned in the workshop by the presenter on other ways to utilize the tools which helped build self-efficacy in the parents.

There was a negative correlation between the parents who attended the OT workshop in correlation to printing the name on the screener. After workshop analysis, it was determined that, if this workshop were offered again, the parents would be given the tools to take with them so that they could practice skills learned at the workshop with their children. The materials were not available for the parents to take, even though the power point worksheet was given to each

parent so they could remember the presenter's strategies covered during the hour session. When this workshop was offered in the fall by our preschool committee to preschool parents, grant funds were spent to purchase the slant board, short pencils, and other tools that the parents were able to take home to practice with their children. No data were collected to ascertain if this made a difference or not in the children's printing, however, teachers' observations as well as parents' comments indicated that the parents enjoyed the workshop and they were able to go home and work with their children because of the tools provided. It could not be assumed that a parent would be able to purchase the items needed, or have transportation to go to the store to find the items. Provision of materials for the workshop would definitely be a change.

A negative correlation between the parents who attended the workshop on literacy and the students' scores on the section of The Success by Six Screener also shed some light on evaluating the effect of this workshop so that a positive correlation could be seen in the future. Book reading is directly related to the language skill development of vocabulary as well as children's early literacy skills (Senechal, 2006). The literacy workshop needed to focus more on role playing how reading a book at home should look. Perhaps an effective and ineffective example could be displayed so that the parent can comprehend the difference. Choral reading, shared reading, and reading with inflection can also be showcased during the workshop. Showing parents strategies on how they can isolate vocabulary or complete a picture walk could guide the parents in developing these skills. The literacy workshop that transpired during The Success by Six Program for this research study was fashioned in a lecture format and focused more on the importance of good literature than it did on strategies of how to read a book with the child. This change could be effective in producing a positive correlation between the workshop and gain score on the screener in the future.

One of the main reasons why this change would be considered is because of the socioeconomic disparity and status of the families. In the book, *Words at Work and Play*, by Shirley Brice Heath, the author alluded to the fact that literacy development is viewed differently between these two groups. In a socioeconomically advantaged household, parents, grandparents, and extended family members read to children from books they possess or have the means to attain, and they ask for identification of pictured items and main characters in the stories. They ask comprehension and sequence questions about the stories. Many children from socioeconomically disadvantaged families see print in their world by what they view on television, or labels on cans or boxes, and hear conversations about what people have to read and write in daily life. They can remember stories told to them, however, they do not perform well on separating letters, single words, or step-by-step sequencing. Since many of the families in The Success by Six Program are from socioeconomically disadvantaged environments, it would behoove the presenter of the literacy workshop to take in consideration skills that should be developed by the parents so they can be effective in providing strategies to promote literacy development. The book, *Read It Again!*, by Brenda Parkes, offers many good suggestions of different practices including shared reading, informational texts, and essentials of the bedtime story that can be referenced in order to strengthen the literacy workshop so that a positive correlation can be ascertained.

The behavior workshop was the fourth workshop that was offered. A checklist of five specific behaviors that the teacher filled out was the instrument utilized to correlate the benefits of the workshop with the outcome of the program. The teachers were asked to fill out the checklist of the behaviors at the beginning of the program and again, at the end of the program. The checklist was marked by either a (M) most of the time, (D) developing the skill, or (N) not at

this time. Daily observations by the teacher attained the information needed to mark the checklist accordingly. The data showed that there was a positive correlation between the parents who attended the behavior workshop and the children's abilities of following directions and self-control. There was a negative correlation between the parents who attended the behavior workshop and the children's abilities to respond to their name and cooperate with others. These negative correlations were small, and indicate a non-significant change in the students' behaviors.

In considering the analysis of the data on the behaviors in relationship to the information that was shared at the behavior workshop, the outcome made sense since teaching a child how to follow directions and practice self-control were areas that the presenters covered in their delivery of the information. Responding to names is usually a behavior viewed and developed prior to entering kindergarten and cooperation was not a focus of the behavior presentation. This may also be an area to change and add to the presentation so that relationship to the checklist produces a positive correlation in the future.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations of this study that need to be taken into consideration in understanding the impact of the Success by Six program. One of the limitations of this study is the diversity of attitudes, previous school experience of the parents, self-efficacy, and parental knowledge of how to work to prepare their child for kindergarten. The socioeconomic status of the parents may also be a limitation due to resources, or lack thereof, that the parents have to provide the opportunities for their children. The parental workshop was examined to consider if changes made in the delivery of the workshops would produce more effective impacts.

Additionally, resources that can be funded and given to the parents to take with them will be considered in future program deliveries in an effort to equip the parents with the supplies they need to work with their children. Not having the resources potentially limited follow-through with the parent-child activities at home.

Lastly, using student eligibility for free/reduced lunch as an indicator for socioeconomic status is not a precise measure. Although it is consistent with NCLB parameters, more precise measures may be helpful in identifying student needs (Lubienski & Crane, 2010; Marks, 2011).

The second limitation is the screening process, itself. There are two assessments that are administered by six different assessors. Each assessor is responsible for one area of the instrument. The fact that the children and the assessors may be unfamiliar could account for a lower score due to the fact that the children are uncomfortable. Every effort is made to assure that this is not the case on the post assessment. The teacher in the kindergarten classroom at the end of the year is the person who administers the post assessment. The students are familiar with this individual.

A third limitation may be time. The assessment is completed in the summer at the end of the year and the role of weather and student fatigue may impact the results. The issue can be minimized by making sure the temperature is cooled in the assessment area and the assessment is given earlier in the day.

Future Research

The current study indicates the impact that the program has in closing achievement gaps ascertained when the students' screener scores are analyzed. It would be interesting to follow these students to determine if there are sustained effects of the program by viewing the scores on

the third grade state assessment, and determining if those students who attended The Success by Six Program attain the same scores as their counterparts who did not meet the criteria to attend the program. It would be interesting to determine if The Success by Six Program would have the same results as the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study which identified lasting effects of the program on the participants' later educational achievement, economic success, and avoidance of criminal activity which supported a positive return on public investment in the program (Schweinhart, 2002). Lastly, it will be imperative to continue to monitor the impact of the parental workshops, and adjust the content of the workshops accordingly. Adding this parental element to the Success by Six Program seems to be a potential piece in addressing the achievement gap that so many students experience at the beginning of their educational journey.

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APPENDIX A

(child)

| | |
|----|----|
| 8) | 7) |
| 6) | 5) |
| 4) | 3) |
| 2) | 1) |

(child)

Name _____

Ex.

Intelligibility

Check if the child's overall intelligibility in connected speech is:

Good (You can understand everything the child says.)

OK (You have some difficulty in understanding what the child says.)

Poor (You cannot understand what the child says.)

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PEARSON

DIAL-3 Record Form
 Carol Mardell-Czudnowski, PhD
 Dorothea S. Goldenberg, EdD

Child's Name _____ Boy Girl
 Nickname _____
 Address _____
 Phone Number _____ Child's Primary Language _____
 Mother's Name _____
 Father's Name _____
 Coordinator's Name _____
 School _____
 Teacher/Class _____

| | | | |
|-------------------|------|-------|-----|
| Screening Date | YEAR | MONTH | DAY |
| Birth Year | | | |
| Chronological Age | | | |

Score Summary

| Area | Score | Standard Error | Other | Percentile | Decision |
|-----------------------|-------|----------------|-------|------------|-----------------------------|
| Motor | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> OK |
| Concepts | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> OK |
| Language | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> OK |
| Self-Help Development | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> OK |
| Social Development | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> OK |

Use the cutoffs found in Appendix E in the manual.
 Cutoffs chosen:
 16 percent (1.0 SD)
 10 percent (1.3 SD)
 7 percent (1.6 SD)
 5 percent (1.7 SD)
 2 percent (2.0 SD)

Overall Screening Decision Refer for follow-up assessment OK

Screening Decision based on:
 DIAL-3 Total
 1 or more area scores (Specify):

Behavioral Observations Total (max. = 54) _____
 Refer for further social/affective assessment? No Yes
 (See Appendix E in the manual for cutoffs.)

Intelligibility Rating _____
 Refer for further speech/language assessment? No Yes
 (Ratings of poor may warrant further investigation.)

Vision and Hearing Results
 Refer for follow-up vision assessment? Vision + No Yes
 Refer for follow-up hearing assessment? Hearing + No Yes

Comments _____

PEARSON

PsychCorp

Success by Six – Transition Skill Social/Communication

Student's Name: _____

Please fill in the letter that best describes the student:

M – Most of the Time

D – Developing the Skill

N – Not at this time

| | Pre Date | Post Date |
|--|-------------------|-----------|
| Student exhibits the following behaviors: | | |
| Adjusts to changes in routine | | |
| Responds when name is called | | |
| Demonstrates cooperative behavior <i>* ex: turn-taking (with children/with adults), helping others, sharing</i> | | |
| Communicates wants and needs | | |
| Follows simple directions | | |
| Demonstrates self-control <i>* ex: waits for turns, hands to self</i> | | |
| Pre Test Total | ___ M ___ D ___ N | |
| Post Test Total | ___ M ___ D ___ N | |
| Information obtained from (check all that apply): ___ parent ___ preschool/childcare ___ observation ___ other | | |
| Comments: | | |

Adapted from STARK COUNTY – TRANSITION SKILLS SUMMARY

APPENDIX B

Name _____

Age _____

Kindergarten Screening

1. What is your name? yes ___ no ___ (1)

2. Write your name (1) Right ___ Left ___

3. Recites Alphabet Song yes ___ no ___ (1)

4. Orally Counts to ___ (1)

5. Can count objects up to 5, 10, 15 (3)

6. Identifies colors (8)

red orange yellow green
blue purple brown black

7. Identifies shapes (4)

circle square triangle rectangle

8. Identifies Numbers (10)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|----|
| 2 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 10 |
| 4 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 6 |

Score /29

9. Identifies Uppercase Letters (26)

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | T | C | F | G | Q | B |
| V | N | H | O | M | X | D |
| P | U | Z | A | E | I | K |
| R | L | J | Y | W | | |

10. Identifies Lowercase Letters (26)

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| s | t | c | f | g | q | b |
| v | n | h | o | m | x | d |
| p | u | z | a | e | i | k |
| r | l | j | y | w | | |

11. Which picture does not begin with the "s" sound? (5)



yes/no



yes/no



yes/no



yes/no



yes/no

12. Which word does not belong with the others? (5)

sun moon starfish
mouse monkey hat
can cat snake
tiger star tape
pig rose pretzel

Score

/62

13. Which pictures rhyme? (5)

| | | |
|-------|--------|------|
| net | wet | bed |
| swing | toad | king |
| rat | ten | hen |
| bird | log | dog |
| yarn | yellow | barn |

14. Finish these sentences (3)

I like to eat _____ for breakfast.

I like to play _____ outside.

I saw a _____ at the zoo.

Check All That Apply:

- Cooperative ____ (1)
- Easily Distracted ____
- Unable to Focus ____
- Speech ____

Score /9

Total Score /100

Additional Comments:

Level _____

APPENDIX C

**Kindergarten Readiness Assessment - Literacy
Student Score Sheet**

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Center for Curriculum and Assessment
Offices of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Center for Students, Families and Communities
Office of Early Childhood Education

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Session 1

Activity 1: Answering Questions

For Questions 1 - 3, score 1 point for each relevant response the student provides. Please write any comments in the space provided.

| Question No. | Scoring Key | Student Response | Points (see Scoring Guidelines) Please Circle |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|--|
| 1 | relevant response | | 1 0 NR |
| 2 | relevant response | | 1 0 NR |
| 3 | relevant response | | 1 0 NR |

Comments:

Total Activity 1 ____ out of 3

Activity 2: Sentence Repetition

For Questions 4 - 7, score 1 point for each sentence the student correctly repeats. Please write any comments in the space provided.

| Question No. | Scoring Key | Student Response | Points (see Scoring Guidelines) Please Circle |
|--------------|--|------------------|--|
| 4 | She won't go to the store. | | 1 0 NR |
| 5 | The big car is red. | | 1 0 NR |
| 6 | He might get burned if he eats the hot soup. | | 1 0 NR |
| 7 | He was helping his mother cook dinner. | | 1 0 NR |

Comments:

Total Activity 2 ____ out of 4

For Questions 8 - 14, score 1 point for each correct response the student provides. Please write any comments in the space provided.

| Question No. | Scoring Key | Student Response | Points (see Scoring Guidelines) Please Circle |
|--------------|-------------|------------------|--|
| 8 | yes | | 1 0 NR |
| 9 | no | | 1 0 NR |
| 10 | no | | 1 0 NR |
| 11 | yes | | 1 0 NR |
| 12 | yes | | 1 0 NR |
| 13 | no | | 1 0 NR |
| 14 | yes | | 1 0 NR |

Comments:

Total Activity 3 ____ out of 7

For Questions 15 - 19, score 1 point for each correct rhyming word the student provides. Please write any comments in the space provided.

| Question No. | Scoring Key | Student Response | Points (see Scoring Guidelines) Please Circle |
|--------------|------------------------------|------------------|--|
| 15 | word that rhymes with "wig" | | 1 0 NR |
| 16 | word that rhymes with "pot" | | 1 0 NR |
| 17 | word that rhymes with "mug" | | 1 0 NR |
| 18 | word that rhymes with "ten" | | 1 0 NR |
| 19 | word that rhymes with "sick" | | 1 0 NR |

Comments:

Total Activity 4 ____ out of 5

Activity 5 Letter Identification

For Questions 20 and 21, circle those letters the student identifies correctly. Write any incorrect responses above the missed letter(s). Note, if a student scores a 0 on Question 20, skip Question 21 but fill in the NR bubble.

| Question No. | Scoring Key and Student Response | Points (see Scoring Guidelines) Please Circle |
|--------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 20 | S G M I B X Z Q H W T R | Score 3 18 - 26 correct 2 12 - 17 correct 1 6 - 11 correct 0 0 - 5 correct NR: No response is given |
| | J C O V P F D U A Y N L | |
| | K E | |
| 21 | c g s l b x l q h w f r | Score 3 18 - 26 correct 2 12 - 17 correct 1 6 - 11 correct 0 0 - 5 correct NR: No response is given |
| | j m o v p t d u a y n z | |
| | k e | |

Comments:

Total Activity 5 ____ out of 6

Activity 6 Initial Sounds

For Questions 22 - 25, score 1 point for each initial sound the student correctly identifies. Please write any comments in the space provided.

| Question No. | Scoring Key | Student Response | Points (see Scoring Guidelines) Please Circle |
|--------------|-------------|------------------|--|
| 22 | moon | | 1 0 NR |
| 23 | toe | | 1 0 NR |
| 24 | snail | | 1 0 NR |
| 25 | fork | | 1 0 NR |

Comments:

Total Activity 6 ____ out of 4

TOTAL OUT OF 29

APPENDIX D



Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning • Third Edition

Parent Questionnaire

Carol Mardell-Czudnowski, PhD
Dorothea S. Goldenberg, EdD

Child's Name _____

School _____ City _____ State _____

This form was filled out by

Mother Father Other (please specify relationship) _____

Name of person filling out form _____ Date form filled out _____

To the Parent:

This form has four parts that ask for information about your child:

Part 1. Personal/Medical asks about your child's background.

Part 2. Self-Help Development asks about your child's ability to care for himself or herself.

Part 3. Social Development asks about how your child behaves with other people.

Part 4. Overall Development is a place for you to write any concerns or worries you might have.

A fifth part asks for your input on the screening program. Please read through the form and respond to all items as carefully as you can. You are an important source of information about your child. We very much need the answers and comments only you can provide.

The questions are arranged in the order that skills tend to develop in children. Some of the items, especially the later ones, may cover skills that your child is just not ready for yet. Please do not be concerned. We use the same form with children ages 3 through 6, and we ask about some skills that are difficult even for the oldest children.

Thank you for your help.

PEARSON

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Part 1. Personal/Medical Information

This part is for you to give information on your child's personal and medical history. Include anything that you think may have been important to your child's development.

Medical/health history of your child (such as premature birth, serious illness, ear tubes, etc.):

Medication is/was given for:

Part 2. Self-Help Development

Directions: Place an X in the box that best describes how your child can do each task. A young child's behavior is not the same from day to day. Think of your child's average ability at home, not his or her very best or worst day. Mark each item by putting an X in one of the boxes.

| Example | Most of the time, with no help | Sometimes, or if I help | No, not yet | Not allowed to or not asked to |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Drinks from a straw. | | X | | |
| 2. Buttons large buttons. | X | | | |

| Task | Most of the time, with no help | Sometimes, or if I help | No, not yet | Not allowed to or not asked to |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Drinks from a straw. | | | | |
| 2. Buttons large buttons. | | | | |
| 3. Puts toys away when asked. | | | | |
| 4. Unscrews jar lid or bottle cap. | | | | |
| 5. Washes and dries hands. | | | | |
| 6. Puts clothes or shoes where they belong when asked. | | | | |
| 7. Drinks from a water fountain. | | | | |
| 8. Brushes teeth. | | | | |

| Task | Most of the time, with no help | Sometimes, or if I help | No, not yet | Not allowed to or not asked to |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| 9. Blows and wipes nose without being asked. | | | | |
| 10. Puts on clothes with front and back correct. | | | | |
| 11. Puts shoes on correct feet. | | | | |
| 12. Completely dresses himself or herself. | | | | |
| 13. Uses the toilet. | | | | |
| 14. Brushes or combs hair. | | | | |
| 15. Washes his or her own body during bath or shower. | | | | |

Self-Help Raw Score
(max. = 30)

Personal/family history (such as divorce; a recent death in the family, etc.): _____

During the day, my child (check all that apply):

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> attends preschool | <input type="checkbox"/> attends family daycare | <input type="checkbox"/> attends kindergarten |
| <input type="checkbox"/> full day | <input type="checkbox"/> full day | <input type="checkbox"/> full day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> half day | <input type="checkbox"/> half day | <input type="checkbox"/> half day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> attends a daycare center | <input type="checkbox"/> is home with a parent | <input type="checkbox"/> is home with a sitter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> full day | <input type="checkbox"/> full day | <input type="checkbox"/> full day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> half day | <input type="checkbox"/> half day | <input type="checkbox"/> half day |

Part 3. Social Development

Directions: Place an X in the box that tells how frequently your child shows each feeling or behavior. Again, think of your child on an average day, at home or with friends. Mark each item by putting an X in one of the boxes.

Feeling or Behavior

| | Always or almost always | Sometimes or partially | Never or almost never |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Sticks to one activity (listens to a story, does coloring) for at least 15 minutes at a time. | | | |
| 2. Accepts limits without getting upset. | | | |
| 3. Plays with toys without breaking them. | | | |
| 4. Plays well with other children (takes turns, shares). | | | |
| 5. Stops an activity when parents say to do so. | | | |
| 6. Keeps working at something until it is finished. | | | |
| 7. Is well liked by other children. | | | |
| 8. Does what parents ask him or her to do. | | | |
| 9. Waits his or her turn in games. | | | |
| 10. Over-reacts or has temper tantrums. | | | |

Feeling or Behavior

| | Always or almost always | Sometimes or partially | Never or almost never |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 11. Uses words rather than physical actions to settle arguments with other children. | | | |
| 12. Likes to be with other people. | | | |
| 13. Reacts in ways parents can predict. | | | |
| 14. Admits mistakes and doesn't blame others. | | | |
| 15. Is easily frustrated. | | | |
| 16. Describes others' feelings (such as happy, sad, mad). | | | |
| 17. Smiles, giggles, or laughs in response to something funny. | | | |
| 18. Waits to hear the entire question before answering. | | | |
| 19. Goes to bed easily and without a struggle. | | | |
| 20. Asks permission to use something that belongs to someone else. | | | |

Social Raw Score
(max. = 40)

Part 4. Overall Development

Directions: Place an X in the column that best describes your level of worry about each area of your child's development. We understand that you are naturally concerned about all of these areas. We would like to know any areas that you think may be problem areas for your child. Think of your child at home. Responses will be used to help us understand your child's growth and needs.

| Area of Development | My child is doing OK | I'm a little worried | I'm somewhat worried | I'm very worried |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| General development | | | | |
| Health | | | | |
| Motor skills | | | | |
| Understanding and thinking skills | | | | |
| Language skills | | | | |
| Self-help skills | | | | |
| Social skills | | | | |
| Vision | | | | |
| Hearing | | | | |

Please describe any other specific worries you have about your child: _____

Part 5. Evaluation of the Screening Program

Directions: We would appreciate your evaluation of this screening.

1. How did you find out about preschool screening? _____

2. What information were you given about preschool screening? _____

3. What did you like about this screening? _____

4. What did you dislike about this screening? _____

5. Do you feel that preschool screening is worthwhile? _____

6. What changes do you recommend? _____

HELP ME GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILD

1. Did your child attend a preschool and/or daycare?

Where? _____ How many years? _____

2. List others living in your child's household. Please indicate their relationship to your child. (Example: Joe - step brother)
Also indicate shared custody households.

3. What would you like your child's teacher to know about your child and your family? _____

4. What is your child's attitude about attending school? _____

5. Have there been any recent circumstances in your child's life that may affect his/her progress in school? (i.e. divorce, death, moving, etc.) _____

6. Please list your child's interest. _____

7. Do you have any concerns about your child's learning style or behavior patterns? _____

8. Does your child have any major health concerns? (premature, major illnesses, allergies, birth defects, ADD, medications, etc.) _____

Child's Name _____

Parent's Name _____

Date _____

APPENDIX E

Preschool Age Transition

Student: _____ Name Used by Student: _____
Birthdate: _____ Sex: Male ___ Female ___ Home Phone: _____
Address: _____
Parents/Guardian: _____ Work Phone: _____
Names of people residing in the child's home: _____
IEP?: ___ Disability Category: _____
Related Services: _____
Medical Condition: _____ Allergies: _____

Pre School

Name of Preschool Center: _____
Early Childhood Service Provider: _____
Teacher: _____ Program Director/Title Name: _____
Contact at center: _____ Center Phone: _____ Fax: _____
Name of Curriculum Used: _____
Assessments used: _____
Enrolled in program from _____ to _____ Attends regularly: _____ (yes or no)
Comments:

Consent for Release of Information

I give permission for this provider to share all information pertinent to the education and safety of my child with the school district indicated on this form.

Parent / Guardian - signature _____ School District of Residence: _____

Parent / Guardian - printed name _____

Name of the Child's Elementary School they will be attending: _____

Date: _____

Child's name written by child (see attached)

Student: _____

Key: LP = Limited Progress M = Mastered N = Not at this time P = Progressing

Classroom Setting

- ____ Follows classroom rules
 - ____ Follows classroom daily routine
 - ____ Attends for 5-10 minutes in a group setting
 - ____ Uses restroom independently
- Comments: _____

Makes transition

- ____ from home to school
- ____ throughout the building
- ____ within the classroom
- ____ when there are changes in the daily routine

Social and Emotional Development

- ____ Cooperates with others during play.
- ____ Interacts with others appropriately (shares, waits for turn, keeps hands to self).
- ____ Adjusts to changes in routine..
- ____ Seeks security from familiar adults.
- ____ Helps others(shows empathy).
- ____ Shares with peers.

Approaches toward Learning

- ____ Works appropriately with puzzles, Legos, other manipulatives.
- ____ Takes risks
- ____ Follows directions
- ____ Carries out simple plans to obtain a goal
- ____ Focuses on an activity despite distractions
- ____ Manages clothing independently
- ____ Carries out activities from beginning to end

Cognition and General Knowledge

- Identifies colors red blue green yellow
 orange black brown purple

- Identifies shapes: circle square
 triangle rectangle

- ____ Identifies and describes a picture
- ____ Recognizes first name in print
- ____ Recognizes letters in first name
- ____ Identifies words that begin with the same sound
- ____ Identifies words that rhyme
- ____ Sings simple songs / repeat rhymes
- ____ Counts to 20
- ____ Demonstrates one-to-one correspondence when counting objects to 10.
- ____ Counts to solve simple addition and subtraction problems.
- ____ Sorts and classifies objects by one or more attribute.
- ____ Demonstrates understanding of the relative position of objects using terms such as in/on/under/inside/outside

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development

Gross Motor

- ____ Demonstrates ability to hop jump
 climb balance
- ____ Demonstrates spatial awareness, position of body.
- ____ Works appropriately with crayons, markers, pencils
- ____ Demonstrates awareness of spatial relationships
- ____ Works appropriately with scissors
- ____ Identify and describe the function of body parts
- ____ Demonstrates basic understanding that physical activity helps the body grow and be healthy.
- ____ With modeling and support, identifies and follows basic safety rules.
- ____ Independently completes personal care tasks (toileting, teeth brushing, hand-washing, dressing).

Language and Literacy Development

- ___ Responds when name is called
- ___ Communicates wants and needs
- ___ Uses intelligible speech
- ___ Verbally expresses feeling/emotions appropriately
- ___ Answers simple questions about a story
- ___ Follows simple directions
- ___ Recites first and last name when asked
- ___ Asks meaning of words.
- ___ Uses familiar nouns and verbs to describe persons, animals, places, events and actions.
- ___ Forms regular plural nouns orally by adding /s/ or /es/. (Example: boys, shoes)
- ___ Asks and answers questions.
- ___ Retells familiar stories.
- ___ Demonstrates an understanding between fantasy and reality.

Handedness: ___right ___left

Comments: (Is there any information specific to this child that would assist the kindergarten teacher?)
Include information about successful teaching strategies, child's strengths, needs, etc.

Teacher _____
Contact: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Have the child write their own name on this sheet.

APPENDIX F



Learn for Life

Prospect Elementary School

Girard City Schools
700 E. Prospect Street
Girard, Ohio 44420
(330) 545-3854

Mrs. Debra Gratz
Principal

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Success by Six Program is scheduled to begin the week of July 18th. This communication is being sent as a reminder of some of the particulars of the program. The weeks the program is in operation include the weeks of July 18th, July 25th, August 1st, and August 8th. Please be reminded that we will be in session Monday through Thursday from 8:00 A.M. until 12:00 Noon. It is very important that you attend the parent workshops that we have planned. A drawing for a school supply basket and \$10.00 gas card will be conducted at the end of each session. The workshop will run from 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 noon. The first workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, July 19th. Mr. Flannigan, our school psychologist, will be our presenter sharing with our parents information about helping to get your child ready for the school experience. The remainder of the workshops is as follows:

Tuesday, July 26, 2011
Tuesday, August 2, 2011
Tuesday, August 9, 2011

The phone numbers for the school is as follows:

School Phone Number – 330-545-3854
Classroom Phone Number – 330-240-6913
Bus Garage Number – 330-545-6047

The school bus coordinator will be calling or sending a letter via mail to your house indicating where and approximate time for pick-up of your child. If for some reason you do not receive notification, the bus garage number is listed above. This adventure will be very productive for your child and we are looking forward to engaging them in this enriching experience before entering kindergarten in the fall.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Gratz

APPENDIX G

Item 7. Writing Name

(Give only to children aged 4 years or older.)

Materials: record form (page 6), primary pencil or No. 2 pencil

Place the record form on the table directly in front of the child. Make sure that page 6 is facing up and is oriented correctly. The child should still have whatever pencil was used in Item 6. Point to the Name line on the record form. Say:

Please print your name here.

Item Scoring

To determine the raw score for this item, use the following criteria. Score only the child's first name or nickname, even if the child has written more.

3 points if the child prints all letters in the name, any style, with *only one* error (reversal or omission of a letter, transposition of two letters, unrecognizable letter).

2 points if the child prints all letters in the name, any style, with *two* errors.

1 point if the child prints *at least one* letter in the name, any style, with no errors.

0 points if the child scribbles, makes no recognizable letters, makes a letter or letters that are not part of the name, or makes any other response.

(Total possible raw score for Item 7 = 3)

APPENDIX H

Welcome
to

Success By Six

We are so excited that you have chosen to enroll your child into this wonderful kindergarten readiness program. Our vision is that every family gains the tools their child needs to develop a positive social, emotional, and academic advantage for their child's education. This readiness will lay the foundation for a healthy, safe, and stable learning environment in years to come.

The *Success By Six* program will focus on the skills that your child will need to be prepared for their primary schooling. These concepts will include: small and large motor activities, recognizing their name, letters, numbers, colors, shapes, and writing, following directions, and interacting with others. By the end of the program you will have the advantage in knowing where your child's strengths and weaknesses are and can better assist them in their learning and development.

Here is a daily schedule of our planned curriculum:

8:00- 8:30 Arrival/ Sign in
Morning Paper, Puzzles, Books, Calendar (Morning Meeting)

8:30-9:30 Concept Instruction (letters, numbers, phonics)
Storytime

9:30-10:30 Learning Centers (children will rotate through stations to practice new skills and receive small group instruction)

10:30-11:00 Restroom break
Snack

11:00-11:15 Recess/Free play (socialization)

11:15-11:30 Art/Music/Concept Review

11:30-12:00 Clean up/Story time/Prepare for dismissal

Please send in on the first day a change of clothes labeled with your child's name.
Please place the items in a shoebox or bag that are also labeled with their name.

Please be sure that your child can manage the fasteners on his/her clothing to make restroom time run more smoothly. Also, be sure that your child's shoes are appropriate for outdoor play.

This is going to be a wonderful experience for your child to gain the *Success By Six* advantage.

Thank you for taking part in the building blocks of your child's education!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Gratz

APPENDIX I

September 10, 2012

Dr. Karen Larwin, Principal Investigator
Ms. Debra Grutz, Co-Investigator
Department of Educational Foundations, Research, Technology & Leadership
UNIVERSITY

RE: HSRC Protocol Number: 013-2013
Title: Impact of Parental Involvement in Pre-Kindergarten Program to Close Gaps in Learning—"Success by Six" Program

Dear Dr. Larwin and Ms. Grutz:

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed the abovementioned protocol and determined that it is exempt from full committee review based on a DHHS Category 5 exemption.

Any changes in your research activity should be promptly reported to the Institutional Review Board and may not be initiated without IRB approval except where necessary to eliminate hazard to human subjects. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects should also be promptly reported to the IRB.

The IRB would like to extend its best wishes to you in the conduct of this study.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Kasvinsky
Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Research
Research Compliance Officer

PK/ec

c: Dr. Richard McEwing, Chair
Department of Educational Foundations, Research, Technology & Leadership