A SURVEY OF PARENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMMING IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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A SURVEY OF PARENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMMING IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

BY

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A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

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Memorial University of Newfoundland

February, 1992

St. John's Newfoundland

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the perceptions of kindergarten teachers and parents of kindergarten children in Newfoundland and Labrador concerning kindergarten programming. The parent and teacher samples were selected using a random sampling procedure with one third of each sample chosen from each of the three main denominational systems operating schools in the province: Integrated, Roman Catholic, and Pentecostal.

In general, both parents' and teachers' perceptions of kindergarten programming were consistent with recent research on quality programming for young children. However, findings suggest that kindergarten education may be experiencing an overcrowded curriculum because both teachers and parents want to include everything in kindergarten. Additional findings indicate strong agreement in both groups with various types of parental involvement. In comparing parents' and teachers' responses, major findings suggest that parents differ from teachers in believing that it is important that children (a) spend a part of each day in school sitting quietly, listening to the teacher and following directions and (b) complete paper and pencil tasks in the subject areas. Also, parents, more so than teachers, were in agreement with parents becoming involved in making important decisions concerning their children's kindergarten

education. An additional difference related to estimates of the importance of Health Education, with parents rating it significantly higher than teachers did. Further comparisons of parents' and teachers' responses showed that there were areas of kindergarten education where both groups were similar in their perceptions.

Several factors were found to be related to parents' and teachers' responses. Teachers' responses were most strongly related to their teaching qualifications and the denominational affiliation of the school district where the teacher worked, while parents' responses were most strongly related to their educational levels and the denominational affiliation of the school their child attended.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Noel Shuell, for his assistance throughout this study. I would also like to thank Dr. R. McCann for her guidance in the early stages of this study as well as Dr. D. Mulcahy for his help. To my husband, I express my gratitude for his assistance and support during all stages of this project. As well, I would like to thank Mrs. June Warr for her assistance. Finally, recognition is given to Memorial University for its financial help in carrying out this research.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the problem

Kindergarten education in the United States and Canada has developed in response to a variety of social, political, and economic pressures. In recent years, kindergarten education and its proper function in early childhood education have come under the close scrutiny of educators, child psychologists, parents, and the general public. Traditionally, kindergarten was seen as bridging the gap between home and school; therefore, the primary focus was one of social development. Presently, however, there has been a trend toward shifting the focus from social to academic development. This has been in response to a number of factors, including interpretations of research in child development such as those of Bruner (1960) and Bloom (1962). In addition, there has been ever-increasing social pressure to push children to succeed in some tangible, measurable way at the youngest age possible. Added to this is the fact that we live in a very technological age with children being expected to acquire skills quite different from those of the past.

The parent and the teacher, as arms of the institutions of the home and the school respectively, share the

responsibility of educating the child. Basically, both groups want the same thing for children, that is, to allow them to reach their full potential in all areas of development. However, the possibility exists that parents may differ from teachers in how they perceive the function of the school, given the fact that the home and the school are in many ways quite separate and distinct. Katz (1980), recognized that the home and the school engage in many of the same behaviors in interacting with young children. She noted that the two are discontinuous on certain dimensions of those interactions. Hess, Price, Dickson and Conroy (1981), noted dissimilarities in perceptions between mothers and teachers, particularly regarding goals, expectations and behavior for young children. Differences are likely to arise because mothers and teachers differ in their training and experience in dealing with young children. The types and intensities of interactions with children also are different for the two. In addition, the setting in which they interact with children is different.

In the first four to five years, parents build a perception of their child's potential and needs. They may be familiar enough with school to have some ideas about what to expect their child to be doing during the kindergarten year. Magsino and Baksh (1980) recognized that parents possess certain perceptions regarding education and warned that parents

> may possess certain "taken-for-granted knowledge", certain unquestioned assumptions about what teachers would typically be doing. If the school appears to them not to share their views of what the typical goals of education are they are likely to withhold their support for and may even question or oppose what the school is attempting to do. (p. 15)

This study attempted to determine the similarities and the differences in the perceptions of parents and teachers on selected aspects of kindergarten programming in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Need for the study

For several reasons, there is a need to examine parents' and teachers' perceptions of the kindergarten program in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 1985, the Department of Education in the province authorized a new kindergarten curriculum guide. As a result of the implementation of this guide, changes occurred within the province's kindergartens. The guide suggests a child-centered, activity-based approach to kindergarten education through the use of learning centers, an increased emphasis on play and activity, and a 'whole language' approach to literacy development.

Cabler (1974) cautioned that when an organization establishes a new program, "the success of the program, to a great extent, is dependent upon a general consensus of opinions regarding its goals and objectives by those who are

implementing and participating in the program" (p. 1). How parents and teachers perceive kindergarten education in light of the implementation of the new program needs to be studied. Newhook (1985), in a master's thesis on parent-teacher communication, when interviewing a sample of parents in St. John's, Newfoundland, found that parents had only a vague idea of the content of their child's kindergarten program. Goodall's (1983) study had similar findings.

The involvement of parents in the development and education of their children has received a great deal of attention in recent years. More and more educators and researchers are becoming aware of the role parents play in facilitating the development of intelligence, achievement and competence in their children (Beecher, 1986). In the Kindergarten Curriculum Guide, the Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador (1985) recommended that, through a planned program of involvement, parents are to become an integral part of their child's school life. As well, teachers must explain the curriculum to the parents, enlist their cooperation, give them practical suggestions on how to help their child learn, and use them as a valuable resource in obtaining information about the child.

One of the benefits of a planned program of parental involvement is that the parent develops "an understanding of what goes on in a Kindergarten class and why" (Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1985, p. 6). There is

a pressing need to study whether existing approaches to parental involvement in kindergarten classes in Newfoundland and Labrador are enabling parents to have an understanding of the kindergarten program.

Parents can be connected to parental involvement programs in many different ways. Teachers can encourage parent participation in educational programs through workshops, parent-teacher conferences, and other meetings in order to help them learn about the kindergarten program. Parents can also participate by becoming teacher-helpers through working in the classroom, helping supervise children, teaching a lesson, or preparing materials. Furthermore, teachers can encourage participation of parents in making decisions about their child's education. Beecher (1986) maintains that in successful parental involvement programs parents' views, feelings and understandings are sought before asking them to become involved in any activities. Seefeldt (1985a) tells educators that it is time for an evaluation of parental involvement programs. Before parents are asked to become involved, efforts must be made to ensure that "this involvement responds with sensitivity to the needs of the parents, offers them real support, and involves them in true collaboration of decision-making" (Seefeldt, 1985a, p. 102).

One way to help ensure the success of a parental involvement program is to gain some insights into the

participants' opinions regarding the different ways of becoming involved. This study attempted to evaluate parents' and teachers' level of agreement with some of the ways that parents can become connected with the established kindergarten program.

The educational system in Newfoundland and Labrador is somewhat unique among Canadian provinces in that the rights and privileges of various churches in operating schools were recognized as a result of Confederation in 1949. Therefore, at the present time in the province, 56.2% of the student population attend schools operated under the auspices of the Integrated Education Council (Presbyterian, Salvation Army, Anglican, Moravian, and United Church), 38.5% in schools under the Roman Catholic Education Council, 5.1% under the auspices of the Pentecostal Education Council, and less than one percentage (0.2%) are in schools operated by the Seventh Day Adventist (Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1989). Given the denominational system of education in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the researcher believes that parents' and teachers' perceptions of kindergarten education may vary according to the denominational affiliation of the school the children attend. The experience of the researcher, in teaching kindergarten for twelve years in an area that has schools operated by two denominational systems, is that parents and teachers often have explicit reasons for supporting their

school system. Those reasons seem to be most often related to some aspect of the school program. In support of the denominational system of education, it is often stated that the one-denominational schools with their stress on religion, unlike the multi-denominational schools, offer an alternate education based on principles and values that are necessary for good Christian living. Because of this, parents and teachers are often led to believe that education at a school operated by one educational system can be better for their child than the education provided by another system.

Two surveys of public opinions towards the province's denominational system have been undertaken: one by M. W. Graesser, a Political Science Department professor, and an earlier one by P.J. Warren, a Faculty of Education professor, both at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Graesser (1986) and Warren (1983) found that 45% and 47% of the respondents, respectively, favoured the existing system. Those favouring the denominational system must have some reasons for doing so. The present study which focuses on a specific area of the educational system may provide some insights into the influence of denomination on perceptions of specific aspects of the system.

Finally, no studies in Newfoundland and Labrador have yet compared parents' and teachers' perceptions of kindergarten, although several studies have looked at the

public's attitudes toward education in general (Stockley, 1969; Grace, 1973; Waye, 1974; Moss, 1975; and Warren, 1983).

The significance of the present study of parents' and teachers' perceptions of kindergarten rests upon the following premise: insights into differences (a) between the perceptions of parents and teachers and (b) between any research on appropriate kindergarten programming and the perceptions of parents and teachers can be used to improve kindergarten education.

Scope and limitations

In order to investigate teachers' and parents' perceptions of kindergarten programming in Newfoundland and Labrador, samples of both kindergarten teachers and parents of kindergarten children were required. The teacher sample was obtained from the total population of kindergarten teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador employed by the Integrated, Roman Catholic, and Pentecostal school districts. The small number of kindergarten teachers employed by the Seventh Day Adventist school district and kindergarten teachers working in private schools did not warrant inclusion in this study. Teachers and parents from French Immersion kindergarten classes, which make up approximately 3.6% of the total number of kindergarten

classes, were also excluded from the study because the researcher believes that the perceptions of this group may be different from those of regular kindergarten parents and teachers. Therefore their perceptions of kindergarten education may not be representative of the general population of kindergarten teachers and parents. The parent sample was selected from the total list of parents of children in the classes taught by the teachers in the teacher sample.

Neither the teacher nor the parent sample are proportional to the total population of kindergarten teachers and parents of kindergarten children in the province with respect to denominational affiliation. Therefore, generalizations with respect to the population of teachers and parents will be made for variables influenced by denomination using calculations based on proportional weighting of the data.

Through the use of a questionnaire, a sample of parents with children in kindergarten were asked to express their opinions, attitudes and beliefs toward selected aspects of their child's program. Through the use of a second questionnaire, a sample of kindergarten teachers were asked to express their opinions, attitudes and beliefs toward selected aspects of the kindergarten program. The questionnaires focused on the following areas of the kindergarten program: the purpose of kindergarten, subject

areas, children with special needs, reporting, teacher characteristics, improvements to kindergarten, home learning activities, parental involvement, and kindergarten practices describing activities that the children would be involved in on a daily basis. These areas were selected for study because it was felt that parents were knowledgeable enough about them to express an opinion. Questions concerning teaching methodologies and classroom scheduling were considered inappropriate for this study because they were areas in which parents generally would not have the necessary background to be able to express an informed opinion. It was decided not to seek opinions regarding the school facility or about equipment and materials in the schools because of the great variability of resources available to schools in our province. To facilitate comparisons between the responses of the parents and teachers, the teacher questionnaire was similar to the parent questionnaire.

Nature and purpose of the study

This study attempted to examine the perceptions which teachers and parents have with respect to kindergarten education by focusing on the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers regarding aspects of the kindergarten

program?

2. What are the perceptions of parents regarding aspects of the kindergarten program?
3. What differences exist among parents regarding their perceptions of aspects of kindergarten programming as related to the denominational affiliation of the school their child attends; the population of the school their child attends; mother's educational level; father's educational level; their age; the extent of their child's preschool experience; their previous experience with children in kindergarten; and the extent of their involvement in their child's kindergarten education?
4. What differences exist among kindergarten teachers regarding their perceptions of aspects of kindergarten programming as related to the denominational affiliation of the school; their qualifications; extent of upgrading; teaching experience at the kindergarten level and at other levels; instances of specialized training; and school population?
5. To what extent do the perceptions of teachers differ from the perceptions of parents?
6. To what extent are the perceptions of teachers similar to the perceptions of parents?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature is divided into the following sections: (a) kindergarten education--a historical view, (b) kindergarten education--a contemporary view, (c) quality kindergarten program--North American context, (d) quality kindergarten program--Newfoundland and Labrador context, and (e) parents' and teachers' perceptions of kindergarten programming. The historical presentation of kindergarten education follows a progression from the past to the present. The review of the literature pertaining to quality programming focuses on some of the most important issues in early childhood education today, including: definitions of quality programming; children and learning; the purpose of kindergarten education; approaches to kindergarten programmming; the physical environment; the role of kindergarten teachers; children with special needs; and the role of parents. First, this review gives a national and international perspective concerning quality programming, and then follows with a review of what educators in Newfoundland and Labrador consider quality programming for kindergarten children in the province. The review of the literature pertaining to parents' and teachers' perceptions of kindergarten education focuses first on general issues pertaining to kindergarten education

such as approaches to programming, and then proceeds to research on perceptions regarding specific aspects of kindergarten programming such as the importance of play in kindergarten.

Kindergarten education--A historical view

Kindergarten education was first introduced in the United States about 135 years ago. Since then it has undergone a number of changes paralleling changes in the economic, political and social milieu of the time. Kindergarten education has also been influenced by advances in child development research which provided changing information on the nature of children and their learning capabilities. Varying curriculum models have arisen reflecting extremes in philosophies and resulting in a myriad of methodologies and program content.

Kindergarten was first conceived by Friedrick Froebel (1782-1852) as a more humane approach to the education of young children (Spodek, 1982). Froebel devised his first kindergarten in 1837 on the premise that play was the most natural and educational activity of young children. He believed that education was a process of development resulting from self-activity. Many of the educational principles and practices evident in kindergarten today are reflections of Froebel's beliefs. The kindergarten movement

began in the United States in 1856 at Watertown, Wisconsin. Kindergartens then grew rapidly in both the United States and Canada, supported by a variety of agencies. The first public-supported kindergarten in the United States opened in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1873 and in Toronto, Canada, in 1878 (Spodek, Saracho and Davis, 1987).

By the beginning of the 20th century, kindergarten education and education in general were beginning to receive more public attention and undergo a change (Spodek et al., 1987). There appear to have been several reasons for this. First, the growth of a progressive movement in education led by John Dewey (1859-1952), whose belief that the child's education should reflect his/her life, the home, and the community, was initiating changes in programs for young children. Second, the child study movement led by G. Stanley Hall resulted in a more scientific approach to the whole educational process. Third, the work of leading educators in the field had direct impact upon kindergarten education. For example, Maria Montessori's work was especially significant; for she led educators to acknowledge and respect the uniqueness of each child and acknowledge the importance of sensory training through the manipulation of materials (Montessori, 1964).

By the 1920's the reforms in kindergarten that had begun at the turn of the century were essentially completed (Spodek et al., 1987). Later the work of behavioral

psychologists such as John Watson, A.H. Thorndike, and B.F. Skinner began to greatly influence the educational process by presenting the traditional or behaviorist approach to education. Here the "development of the child's mind, moral values and emotions is seen as a result of specifically acquired associations under the control of environment (via reinforcements)" (Wadsworth, 1984, p. 216).

According to Elkind (1986), until the 1960's early childhood programs, for the most part, were well adapted to the developmental needs of the children they served. Kindergartens in public schools enjoyed a special status and were generally free of the social pressures that influenced other levels of education. During the 1960s, kindergarten and early childhood education in general again began to receive public attention and criticism.

Kindergarten education--A contemporary view

Since the early 1960s, kindergarten education has undergone drastic changes. Two major forces appear to be shaping the nature of present-day kindergarten programming in North America. One force has been a massive shift in orientation from developmental to academic. The other major influence has been the work of Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist, whose theory of child development has been widely applied to early childhood programs (Spodek, 1985).

Leading educators and researchers attest to a shift in orientation to programming (Spodek, 1982; Webster, 1984; Bartolini, 1985; Elkind, 1986). Spodek (1982) warned, "the concern for young children's development and for the creation of programs reflecting their needs and interests seems to be lessening. In its place can be found a concern for achievement of specific learning goals" (p. 179).

Bartolini (1985), defined the two orientations as follows: developmentally-oriented curriculum that is oriented to the principles of child development and academically oriented curriculum that is oriented toward the achievement of specific learning goals, or emphasizing a downward extension of primary education.

Many reasons account for this shift in focus. They include: the launching of Sputnik in 1957 (Elkind, 1986), which quickly and abruptly alerted America to the deficient education of its youth; and the research of leading educators and psychologists, such as Bloom (1962) and Bruner (1960), who believed that children at a young age were capable of learning more than was previously thought. Both of these reasons provided the impetus for the massive curriculum movement of the 1960's, as well as the impetus for the "curriculum shove down", which resulted in kindergarten programs including much of what previously had been taught in first grade (Elkind, 1981; Uphoff and Gilmore, 1986). The boost in initial I.Q. gains attained by

preschoolers in Head Start programs also attested to the fact that young children could learn much prior to Grade 1. As a result, there arose a greater emphasis on academics in kindergarten (Spodek, 1982).

Another factor contributing to this changed emphasis in kindergarten was ever-increasing societal pressure to have children mature earlier and achieve more (Elkind, 1981). Some parents believe that our technological age, especially television, has prepared children to handle an academic program better than children in the past could have done (Elkind, 1986), even though the way in which children grow and learn has not changed (Seefeldt, 1985b; Elkind, 1986). Furthermore, because many young children have attended preschool, many parents today do not see the kindergarten role as primarily one of socialization. As a result, parents are demanding a more academic kindergarten curriculum (Davis, 1980). Finally, kindergarten attendance has become the rule rather than the exception. In the United States, as of 1986-1987, all states offered kindergarten (Robinson 1987). In Canada, as of 1990, all provinces except Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick require kindergarten. With kindergarten education being the norm and the expected starting point of schooling, program developers are more likely to become involved in producing materials in order to build educational continuity into school programs.

It is evident that these factors are present and influencing the status of kindergarten offerings. It is also evident that formal academic programs are on the rise in kindergarten. For example, a recent Illinois State Board of Education Survey of public and non-public elementary school principals revealed that 90% of all kindergartens in that state took an academic rather than a developmental approach to kindergarten (Thomas & Peterson, 1987). In spite of this emphasis on academics in kindergarten, there exists a growing body of research which points to the possible harmful effects of introducing children to academic learning too early (Ames, 1980; Ballanger, 1983; Elkind, 1986; Katz, 1987b). Elkind (1986) warned that in introducing formal academic programs too early "the potential psychological risks of early intervention far outweigh any potential educational gain" (p. 634).

Parallel to this increased emphasis on an academic focus in kindergarten programming, is attention to the work of Jean Piaget. His explanation of how children learn has implications for the education of young children. Since only a few of Piaget's writings have dealt directly with matters relating to education, much of the how and what of education has to be derived from an understanding of the factors involved in intellectual development (Almy, 1976).

The basic features of Piaget's theory of intellectual development that have direct bearing upon how young children

should be educated include the notions that children must construct and reconstruct their own knowledge as they act upon their environment, and that children learn when they sense disequilibrium, or a contradiction, between what they observe and what they already know (Piaget, 1962). Of equal importance to education is Piaget's belief that intellectual development follows a consistent pattern progressing through stages beginning early in life and continuing to adulthood (Piaget, 1963).

The implications of Piaget's theory of intellectual development are far-reaching and are being applied to many early childhood programs today, including the kindergarten program outlined in Kindergarten Curriculum Guide produced by the Department of Education for the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Piaget's work has not gone unchallenged, however. There exists some evidence that Piaget's interpretations of some of the results of his studies may not have been accurate; therefore the implications for educating young children derived from these interpretations are also questionable (Donaldson, 1978).

Both the increasing emphasis on academic learning and the implications of Piagetian theory are presently exerting influences on curriculum development for young children. In ensuring quality kindergarten programming, consideration has to be given to what is known about how children learn and

what knowledge they will need in order to meet the demands of today's society.

Quality kindergarten programs--North American perspective

Over the last two decades, quality programming for young children has received much attention. Much of this attention has been and still is controversial as educators, programmers, researchers, and parents continue to debate issues such as the length of the kindergarten day, the major function of kindergarten, and approaches to programming. Because of the controversial nature of this first year of schooling, attempts have been made in recent years by various early childhood associations, interest groups, and educational departments to formulate a set of criteria for quality kindergarten programs. This has been attempted by defining quality programming and addressing various aspects of programming such as the nature of children and learning, the purposes of the program, the physical environment, the teacher, children with special needs, and parental involvement.

Definition of quality programs

In 1986, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (hereafter referred to as NAEYC), in its

position paper on developmentally appropriate practices in programs for four- and five-year olds, defined a quality program as "one which meets the needs and promotes the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of the children and adults--the parents, staff, administrators--who are involved in the program" (p. 20). The association also noted that the program has to be designed for the age group served and must be implemented with attention to the needs and differences in individual children; the program must be developmentally appropriate.

Moyer, Edgertson, and Isenberg (1987), in a position statement of the Association for Childhood International, entitled "Child-Centered Kindergarten", outlined in detail a developmentally appropriate program for kindergarten. First, the program should provide for the education of the whole child. Second, attempts should be made to organize instruction around the child's developmental needs, interests, and learning styles. Third, the process of learning rather than the product should be emphasized, and recognition should be given to the fact that each child follows a unique pattern of development. Finally, it must be recognized that children learn best through first-hand experiences and that play is very important.

Children and learning

In England, the Plowden Report (1967), Children and their Primary Schools. A Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education, recognized that knowledge of the manner in which children develop is of prime importance in establishing an effective program for young children. Not only are kindergarten children uniquely different from older children or adults in their characteristics, but Elkind (1986) reminded educators that "given the well established fact that young children learn differently the conclusion that educators must draw is a straightforward one: the education of young children must be in keeping with their unique modes of learning" (p. 631). It is known that children cannot be passive recipients of knowledge; they learn best by doing (Dewey, 1902; Montessori, 1914; Kamii, 1985; Elkind, 1986; Katz, 1986). Also, it is known that learning in all domains of development--physical, social, emotional and cognitive--is integrated. They "continuously work together to affect behavior and development. They do not function independently but are integrated" (Spodek et al., 1987, p. 90). The conclusions that can be drawn from this are (a) kindergarten programs must encourage activity (Felton & Peterson, 1976; Moyer et al., 1987), and (b) all areas of development must be emphasized.

Purpose of programs

In determining what constitutes quality kindergarten programming, it is important to delineate the purposes of the program. In the past, the main purpose of kindergarten was one of socialization. Today, however, because many children attend preschool or daycare centers, kindergarten is not their first group experience away from home. With this decreased need for the socialization function of kindergarten, what is now seen as its main function?

Hill (1987) stated that kindergarten has three distinct but overlapping functions: (a) to administer to the nature and needs of four- to six-year-olds, (b) to look forward to the nature and needs of children as they develop through to sixth grade, and (c) to look back to the home, narrowing the gap between what occurs at home and what occurs at school. Within this framework, the goals for kindergarten can be met by providing experiences that will meet the children's needs and stimulate learning in the context of daily living.

The Department of Education, Quebec (1983), in a document entitled The Curricula for Preschool Education, stated that the major objective of kindergarten is to "allow the preschool child to pursue his own path, to encourage his abilities, to develop relationships with others, and to interact with his environment" (p. 10). Also, the objective for kindergarten education can be met "in the context of

daily activities involving motor skills, art, language, awareness of mathematics, science, and a spiritual awakening" (p. 13).

Such a statement raises questions regarding learning in the academic areas in kindergarten. Hill (1987) proposed that the goals of kindergarten education can be met in any number of ways, one of which is the academic areas. Day and Drake (1986) stated that academics have a place in a quality program, but children must learn academics in the context of daily experiences. Moyer et al. (1987) claimed that a well defined kindergarten program will capitalize on the interest some children may show in academic learning. In the document, early childhood - a time for learning, a time for joy, The Department of Education, Manitoba (1979), in clarifying the role of emerging academic needs in the kindergarten classroom, emphasized that

> it is not the kindergarten teacher's responsibility to teach reading, writing, and mathematical skills per se, but an environment should be created in which pre-reading, pre-writing, and pre-mathematics skills will emerge for the child who is developmentally ready to acquire them ... for those children who begin to read and work with numbers, additional planning is required in order to offer activities to them. (pp. 33-34)

Instruction in the 3R's, as writing, reading and mathematics have traditionally been known, has shifted from a concentration on specific skill development along narrowly defined subject areas to a focus on the whole child with

attention to each child's needs, interests, and developmental levels. Pre-reading instruction is carried out in a whole language environment in which instruction takes advantage of a child's emergent literacy abilities through activities that encourage a natural desire to read and write.

The importance of academic learning is recognized by others in the education field as well, including the Department of Education, Saskatchewan, (1978); Ministry of Education, British Columbia (1985); Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador, (1985); NAEYC, (1986); Cheever and Ryder, (1986); Moyer et al., (1987).

What constitutes an appropriate environment in which learning in all areas will emerge including learning in the content areas? The NAEYC (1986) recommended that "teachers prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials" (p. 23). Evans (1982) defined a prepared environment as one in which the teacher arranges the activities, experiences and materials in such a way as to reflect the needs and interests of the child, while encouraging active involvement and promoting discovery and integration of learning.

Approaches to programming

A successfully prepared environment may be implemented by the teacher through a variety of techniques, one of which is the integration of curriculum objectives across subject areas. This technique is seen by many, including the Department of Education, Saskatchewan, (1978); Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador, (1985); Ministry of Education, British Columbia (1985); Blakely, Schroeder and Fox, (1985); NAEYC, (1986); and Moyer et al., (1987), as an effective teaching strategy. Another successful technique includes the use of varying instructional strategies when working with young children (Katz, 1986). Moyer et al., (1987), suggested small group, large group, individual instruction, role-enactment activities, and activity centers as possible instructional strategies.

The activity center or learning center, according to Myers and Maurer (1987), is consistent with what leading early childhood professionals have defined as a developmentally appropriate practice for young children. Day (1983) described the learning center approach as one which provides an intentional strategy for the active involvement of children. This allows for experience-based learning and individualization based upon the children's developmental abilities, interests and learning styles. A variety of learning centers may be prepared, including

dramatic play, blocks, science, math, games, puzzles, and others.

In such a center, learning is facilitated through the child's active involvement and child-initiated discovery. Schweinhart (1988) defined child-initiated activity as the selection and carrying out of an activity within the framework provided by the teacher. Dunn (1987), in a position paper clarifying the nature and purposes of kindergarten for the state of Oregon, acknowledged that

> it is important for children to choose their own activities because they (1) are more likely to be intrinsically motivated in the activities, (2) will most often choose activities that are stimulating and which give them needed opportunity to practice, and (3) can feel in control of their own learning. (p. 99)

Of all the questions asked by critics about early education the one most often addressed has to do with play (Almy, Monighan, Scales & Van Hoorn, 1986). Yet the value of play has been well documented. It has been shown to be related to cognitive development (Piaget, 1962; Pepler & Ross, 1981; Wolfgang, MacKender and Wolfgang, 1981); social development (Parten, 1932; Smilansky, 1968); language development (Piaget, 1962; Smilansky, 1968; Pelligrini, 1980; Sherrod, Siewart & Cavellaro, 1981; Bruner, 1983; Gentile & Hoot, 1983); and physical development (Gallahue, 1976). Rudolph and Cohen (1984) amplified the point that play is important for the total development of the child by

stating that "play is a totally integrating experience and one that teachers of young children must take seriously. It is not accidental that children love to play. Play is in their own best interest" (p. 97).

Quality play experiences occur when teachers engage in systematic observations of children at play in order to provide and support developmentally appropriate activities for children in the classroom (Phyfe-Perkins, 1980). Play experiences are enhanced greatly when teachers provide experiences that allow children to engage in exploring, testing, initiating, constructing, discussing, planning, problem-solving, resolving disputes, dramatizing, creating, generating ideas and experimenting (Ministry of Education, British Columbia, 1985).

In sum, as Moyer et al. (1987) stated, "when viewed as a learning process, play becomes a vehicle for intellectual growth and continues to be the most vital avenue of learning for kindergartens" (p. 238).

Physical environment

According to Day and Drake (1986), consideration must also be given to the actual physical setting in order to provide a quality program. The Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador (1985), in Kindergarten Curriculum Guide, stated that "classroom organization is the tool to

achieving goals and implementing plans" (p. 57). In its curriculum guide, Children First, the Department of Education, Saskatchewan (1985) described the physical environment as one that allows "space for a variety of learning and activity centers, for large and small group work, for quiet carpeted areas and for tiled areas that allow for play with water, sand, paint and other messy materials" (p. 18). Ramsey and Bayless (1980) noted that a well-designed and equipped room is paramount to helping children learn and manage themselves.

Role of teachers

According to Day and Drake (1986), other areas of concern in developing quality programs for young children are the teacher and the interactions between the teacher and child. Moyer et al. (1987) stated that "next to parents, teachers frequently tend to be the most significant adults in young children's lives. Quality kindergarten programs must be staffed by caring teachers who have faith in every child's potential to achieve and to succeed" (p. 40).

The teacher's job in a kindergarten classroom is complex, imbued with extensive responsibility (Wahlstrom, Donohue, Clandinin and O'Hanley, 1980), and becoming ever more complex (Blakey, Schroeder and Fox, 1985). The

kindergarten teacher's job demands that the teacher have a knowledge of child development (Day & Drake, 1986) and genuinely believe that what he/she does in the classroom makes a difference (Phyfe-Perkins, 1981).

Wahlstrom et al. (1980), in a research report funded by the Ministry of Education in Ontario, Canada, concluded that the most valuable qualities for a teacher of young children included being perceptive of individual differences; being knowledgeable about child development; being sensitive to children's feelings; being able to communicate with and understand children; and being committed to the child's well being.

Adequate and appropriate teacher training is essential if teachers are to be effective in the classroom (Cheever & Ryder, 1986). The NAEYC (1986), in a position paper on developmentally appropriate practices in programs for four- and five- year olds, recommended that in order to work with four-and five-year-olds teachers must receive college-level preparation in Child Development or Early Childhood Education and have supervised experience with this age group.

Children with special needs

A quality kindergarten program must be sensitive to the needs of all children, including those with exceptional

needs. For example, in recent years, the issue of the education of exceptional children has dramatically changed. Karagianis & Nesbitt (1980) stated that this has been due, in part, to the rulings of the courts in various countries concerning the education of handicapped children. An increasing need to provide an appropriate education for handicapped children was recognized in all rulings. For many children, an appropriate education could be provided, not by segregating handicapped children into separate classes, but by integrating them into non-handicapped ones.

The integration of exceptional children at the kindergarten level is recommended by many in the education field. In the document, early childhood - a time for learning, a time for joy, the Department of Education, Manitoba (1979) stated, "since early intervention for the purposes of prevention and amelioration is advisable for children with special needs, these children should be placed in the regular kindergarten and primary programs whenever possible" (p. 154).

Integration, or mainstreaming as it is often called, has been shown to be beneficial to both handicapped and non-handicapped children (Guralnick, 1982; New Brunswick Teachers' Association, 1988). However, the success of the integrated class depends on the teacher (Johnson, 1962). The teacher has to be skilled and sensitive, able to facilitate positive peer relations and motivate learning,

and able to value and respond to the individuality of each child (Dunlop, 1977). The results of both Corbett's (1984) and the New Brunswick Teachers' Association (1988) studies on teachers' perceptions of integration indicated that teachers were experiencing some difficulties because of integration, especially with increased workloads and stress levels.

Role of parents

Quality programs for kindergarten children must acknowledge the role that parents play in educating their children. Spodek et al. (1987) stressed the importance of viewing parents and teachers as partners when stating,

> while the child is the first priority in early childhood education, parents are the second priority. Parents and teachers are partners in helping children to learn. Parents are their children's first teachers, and they continue to have the primary responsibility for their children's development even after the beginning of school. While teachers have an important role in guiding a child, an early education program that does not respect the importance of the parent cannot be successful. (p. 140)

Involving parents in school activities is a long-standing tradition based on both theory and research (Epstein, 1984). The need to involve parents grew as a result of experimental preschools which sprang up in the United States in the 1960s. After failing to maintain initial I.Q. gains of children in programs such as Head

Start, program developers began to realize that they had overlooked two important influencing variables in their program--parents and family situations. This realization led to the implementation of a family involvement component in some existing programs (Honiz, 1982). Research has shown educators that when parents are involved in their children's education, cognitive development and achievement increased (Coleman, 1966; Jencks, 1972; Herman & Yeh, 1980; Hewison, 1981; Walberg, 1984). Epstein (1984) found that parental involvement increased knowledge about the school and their children's educational program. Beecher (1986) noted far-reaching benefits of parental involvement for the parent as well as the child.

Parental involvement can take many forms. In the past, it has revolved around the welfare of the schools (Seefeldt, 1985a). The first four of Jackson and Stretch's (1976) categories of parental involvement are traditional in nature. They include involving parents (a) as recipients and supporters, (b) as educators and learners, (c) as instructional or non-instructional volunteers, or (d) as decision makers. Seefeldt (1985a) maintained that involving parents as decision makers is the only one that allows for true collaboration between the parents and the school.

In sum, the components of a quality kindergarten program have to be derived from a variety of sources, including child psychology, educational research and

societal expectations. Curriculum developers and educators of young children must attempt to integrate the knowledge gained from all sources in order to provide a program that is appropriate for the children whom it is meant to serve. The Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador in 1985, attempted such a task when it prepared a document entitled Kindergarten Curriculum Guide. This, the first of its kind in the province, was a comprehensive document detailing all aspects of kindergarten education.

Kindergarten education--Newfoundland and Labrador perspective

Around the 1920's, kindergartens were found to be in existence in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (Department of Education, Statistical Supplements and Annual Reports of the Department of Education, 1927, 1928, 1944-75). However, school boards were not required to offer kindergarten until 1974, as a result of an amendment to the 1968 Schools Act.

In 1981, the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education established the Provincial Kindergarten Committee to examine existing policies and programs and to recommend changes. The committee, through a comprehensive examination of existing kindergarten programs in the various school boards in the province, through examination of kindergarten

programs in other provinces, and through involvement of the Early Childhood Association and the Parent-Teacher Committee of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, was able to make the following statement concerning kindergarten education:

> Kindergartens of today are being beckoned in two directions. To some it seems appropriate to hasten young children's entry into formal academic learning by borrowing from the grades and turning kindergarten into a watered down version of Grade 1. To others, among whom can be counted the members of the Provincial Kindergarten Committee, it seems that kindergartens can and ought to be strengthened in the direction of supporting more effective total learning growth for five year olds, not focusing on specific academic skills, but supplying the ground for them.... (Provincial Kindergarten Committee, 1981, p. 3)

The committee's major recommendation was that the Division of Instruction at the Department of Education develop a kindergarten curriculum guide to be presented in regional inservice sessions no later than the school year 1981-1982. As well, the Department of Education, in 1983, provided to all kindergarten teachers a resource book entitled Early Experiences (Eden, 1983). This provided the teacher with a guide for meeting the developmental needs of four- to six-year-olds both from a theoretical as well as from a practical viewpoint.

In 1985, the Department of Education produced the Kindergarten Curriculum Guide which comprehensively dealt with most aspects of kindergarten programming for the province. It delineated the "why", "what" and "how" of kindergarten for the province's educators. In the Foreword,

it is stated that "a good kindergarten program helps each child become the person only she can be .... It takes advantage of the developmental characteristics of five year olds....allows for differences in maturation and readiness....considers the needs and interests of parents" (Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1985, p. i).

Kindergarten education in the province was given a diversity of objectives that must be realized. Objectives specific to kindergarten education are outlined by the Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador (1985) in the Kindergarten Curriculum Guide and include the following:

1) To nurture the child's sense of personal worth.
2) To foster moral and spiritual development.
3) To promote language development as a means of expression and communication.
4) To foster social responsibility.
5) To foster independence.
6) To develop the capacity to think.
7) To encourage creativity, discovery, and imagination through spontaneous and directed play.
8) To broaden concepts of mathematics and of the social and scientific world.
9) To produce opportunities for large and fine motor control.
10) To promote healthful and safe ways of living.
11) To provide satisfying aesthetic experiences. (Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education, 1985, pp. 2-3)

The Provincial Kindergarten Committee (1981) noted that these objectives can be thought of in terms of content and method. Regarding content, the committee acknowledged that there is a body of knowledge to be taught in kindergarten; but the learning experiences the child will have will differ

from those of older children. The "what" of kindergarten is contained in Chapter IV of the Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador (1985) Kindergarten Curriculum Guide, which states that children must be exposed to learning in Language Arts, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, Physical Education, Health, Family Life, Religious Education, and Music.

Just as there is a "what" of kindergarten curriculum, there is also a "how". The guide states, "together with the children, the teacher translates the curriculum into a pattern for daily living in the kindergarten classroom" (Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1985, p. 19). There are many ways to teach, but according to the guide, a "methodology of integration" is an effective teaching technique. Integration is achieved when related learnings in the subject areas are brought together by some instructional method. Thematic work, learning centers, individualized lessons, field trips (inside and outside the school), and seizing opportune teachable moments are all ways of integrating learning experiences.

Good parent-teacher relationships are encouraged in the guide. Open lines of communication between parents and teachers are not achieved accidentally; parental involvement has to be a planned part of the total school program in order to be beneficial for all involved. Approaches to parental involvement include preregistration programs to

acquaint parents with the kindergarten program and to suggest ways in which parents can help children prepare for school. It is also stated that attempts have to be made throughout the child's kindergarten year to keep parents in touch with the school and the kindergarten program.

The Provincial Kindergarten Committee (1981) recommended that "efforts must be made also to increase and strengthen linkages between the home and school by involving parents as advisors and volunteers" and that, "if we are to have better kindergartens in this province, we must enhance and support the role of parents in childhood education" (p. 29).

Reporting to parents about their child's progress in kindergarten is an integral part of the program of keeping open lines of communication between the school and home. According to the Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador (1985) in Kindergarten Curriculum Guide, there are a number of ways that teachers can use to share with parents information about their child. Parent-teacher conferences, during which teachers can relate the child's progress and can plan future school and home experiences for the child, are essential. Written reports and report cards are two more methods of reporting that may be used in conjunction with parent-teacher conferences.

Children with special needs also have a place in the province's kindergartens. The Government of Newfoundland

and Labrador (1988) issued the document Special Education Policy Manual in which it proposed that, with special help, most handicapped children should begin formal education in regular classroom settings. According to the Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador (1985) in Kindergarten Curriculum Guide, teachers must be prepared to individualize their instruction in order to meet the needs of exceptional children.

Kindergarten programming in Newfoundland and Labrador, in many respects, is consistent with what educators, researchers and various organizations consider appropriate practice for kindergarten children. The guide recommended the "Cognitive Discovery Model" for kindergarten programming in the province. This model, based on the child development theory of Jean Piaget and the instructional philosophies of Maria Montessori and John Dewey, requires a child-centered, activity-based program.

Parent - teacher perceptions of programming

Research has shown that parents and teachers often have different perceptions of certain areas of programming. Sometimes parents want certain things from kindergarten that the actual program does not deliver. Their concerns are often revealed through the questions they ask. Abbey (1987) stated some questions that parents ask and then answered

them in light of today's knowledge. Several questions relate directly to kindergarten education, namely: Why is there less paper work being done? Why is there less homework being assigned? Why are children writing stories without correct spelling, grammar or punctuation? Why is reading not introduced in kindergarten? How can parents help children with reading? Why isn't phonics being taught as much as before? What can parents do to help their children in school?

As a result of an intensive study of the existing kindergarten programs and practices in Morrison Valley, California, Katz (1987a) and her team discovered that parents were expressing concerns about a number of things, two of which were kindergarten screening procedures and childrens' stress levels. As well, they wanted teachers to be more responsive to the needs of their children and work with them in needed areas. Parents were also concerned about district matters and policies. The researchers also found that parents, teachers, principals and school board members all seemed to be concerned about the same issues; all their concerns reflected underlying confusion and doubts about the extent to which kindergarten curriculum should include academics. Simmons and Brewer (1985) believed that, often "motivated by genuine concern, parents sometimes ask questions that reveal misconceptions about the goals of a kindergarten program which cause them to focus only on

cursory academic skills like knowing the alphabet or reciting numerals" (p. 177). In addition, Rudolph and Cohen (1984) believed that many kindergarten parents were strongly interested in particular aspects of kindergarten life such as discipline, reading and play.

Overall, parents are concerned about their child's first year of schooling. They want to know what is going on, and often a lack of knowledge leads to misconceptions which can be damaging to the success of the kindergarten program.

Several studies have asked parents and teachers to assess preferences toward approaches to programming for young children. Leeper, Dale, Skipper and Witherspoon (1974) warned that a lack of understanding between parents and teachers regarding appropriate approaches can interfere with the development of positive relationships between the home and school. Van-Cleaf (1979) attempted to assess parents' and teachers' preference for a behavioral or a cognitively oriented curriculum. Using a questionnaire, with 16 goals selected from descriptors of early childhood programs and reflecting four categories including social, personal, intellectual and physical, Van-Cleaf found that most of his sample of 33 teachers and principals and 233 parents favored a cognitively-oriented curriculum. However, significant differences were found between parents and teachers in the desired methods for teaching intellectual

skills and social skills. Parents preferred more teacher-directed methods. Perhaps this indicates that parents attach greater importance to their child's intellectual and social development and would rather see teaching in those areas under the direct control of the teacher.

According to Hitz and Wright (1988), a recent study not including parents, conducted by the Oregon Department of Education found that principals, kindergarten teachers, and grade one teachers agreed there had been an increased trend toward formal education even though they generally favored a more developmental approach. From this study and Katz's (1987a) Morrison Valley study, it appears that educators are forced into adopting practices that they feel are not suited for the optimal learning of young children. As discussed earlier, there may be a number of reasons for this trend; but according to Katz (1987a), the parents, teachers and school board officials in her study were all blaming each other for the academic rigors present in kindergarten, and they all felt this was too stressful for the child.

However, parents certainly seem to favor an academic orientation to kindergarten, as evident in Webster's (1984) survey. After receiving 701 responses from all areas of the state of South Dakota, the researcher concluded that parents believed preschool programs should be highly academic and should teach children the social skills necessary for easier adjustment in kindergarten. Webster (1984) also maintained

that the findings were not restricted to her study but represented a growing trend toward starting children in academic learning early.

If parents of preschool children want a more academic program for their children, then these same parents will certainly want this academic learning to continue into kindergarten and possibly become more intense. This is often the case as noted in the literature by authors such as Spodek (1982) and Elkind (1986).

Parents' desire for an academically oriented kindergarten was also found by Webster and Wood (1986) in a survey which asked parents what they wanted kindergarten to provide for their children. In South Dakota, over 2,200 parents of kindergarten children responded to a 15-item questionnaire about the necessity of various kindergarten teaching practices. From the data the researchers concluded that parents wanted a curriculum with academic acitivities as well as developmental activities. Phonics, alphabet, counting and number recognition were the items that parents considered very necessary for inclusion in the kindergarten program. Other items deemed highly necessary included language development through rhymes, games, and finger plays; learning to sit still and doing seatwork; beginning handwriting; daily physical activities and exercises; daily reading of books and stories; learning health, safety and nutrition; and working with manipulative materials such as

clay, and puzzles. Two items, social studies and science, and blocks of time for free play were considered unnecessary by 30% or more of the responding parents. Whether or not the kindergarten programs of South Dakota are meeting the expectations of the parents was not investigated in this study. The results indicate, however, the likelihood of discrepancies in certain areas, especially regarding the priority of academics in the curriculum and the lack of priority given to free play in the program.

Not only is there disagreement about the approach to kindergarten programming, there is also disagreement about particular goals of kindergarten. Goulet (1975) recognized that the history of kindergarten is characterized by a lack of agreement in emphasizing particular goals. He designed a study to investigate parents' and kindergarten and grade one teachers' perceptions of the importance of eight domains of development, including academic, emotional, language, "other intellectual", physical, self-concept, sensory perceptual, and social development. Also, the groups were asked to rank the importance of a list of items within each domain. Goulet found that there was considerable agreement on ranking the importance of the eight domains even though no group selected the same domain as most important. Parents selected the social domain, kindergarten teachers the "other intellectual" domain, and grade one teachers the self-concept domain as most important. Futhermore, Goulet found

considerable disagreement on ranking items within each domain. The most important finding of this study was that the least agreement between parents and both teacher groups was in the areas of language and academic goals. The groups disagreed on what language or academic goals to emphasize, although they agreed about the importance of each domain; that is, no group gave those domains priority rankings. Overall, this study showed that parents and teachers agree about the major goals of kindergarten, but they disagree about more specific aspects of programming. The findings of this mid-seventies study showed that academics did not hold an important place in the kindergarten program, in contrast to the literature of the later seventies and the eighties where academics dominated the curriculum as is evident in the Webster (1984) survey.

The importance of various kindergarten goals was also studied by Cabler (1974) in a statewide survey of Kentucky kindergarten programs. This study investigated what goals were desirable as perceived by 100 teachers, 100 principals, and 600 parents of kindergarten children. The results indicated that the respondents had significantly different perceptions of what the task of kindergarten should be. Parents usually placed higher priority on intellectual development than did educators, who were more inclined toward task items in the personal dimension. Cabler also found religious affiliation to be a significant factor on

two of the task items: physical tasks and citizenship. In addition, occupational background, level of education and race were related to differences in perceptions among parents.

Further research has shown that teachers and parents have different opinions regarding play and learning to read. "In a society that values literacy, perhaps nothing is more important to parents and teachers than having children read" (Stewart, 1985, p. 356). Parents are bombarded on all sides as to the importance of beginning reading early--through the media, from other parents, from toy manufacturers and from books advising how to get their children reading early. Many parents, who do not understand what the reading process involves, will become very disappointed when their child does not start formal reading instruction in kindergarten.

Benedict (1975) devised a study to compare parents' and teachers' expectancy and appraisal of childrens' reading performance in kindergarten. He warned that "as schools increase reading instruction in kindergarten, some parental expectations for their children's reading development may be different from the expectations held by the children's kindergarten teachers" (p. 7). He further cautioned that if parents' and teachers' expectations are different regarding reading readiness, there is greater possibility of reading problems in later years. After interviewing a sample of 93 mothers and fathers and two of their children's kindergarten

teachers, he concluded that there were differences in the expectations of fathers, mothers and teachers regarding reading development and school success. He also found that mothers held higher expectations than did fathers or teachers.

Often parents, who are not aware of what activities facilitate reading readiness, believe their children are not learning to read when in fact they are. Suchorsky (1983) attempted to determine if parents knew what developmental activities should be employed during their child's early years to facilitate reading readiness. The researcher found that approximately one-half of the 123 parents in the study erroneously thought coloring and counting contributed to reading development and that one quarter of the parents did not recognize that visual stimulation, categorizing and rhyming contributed to reading development. This study is significant in that it shows that parents may not be aware of what is actually involved in learning to read. This means that many parents will not understand the importance of certain activities in the kindergarten classroom which help children learn to read.

Considering the contentious nature of play as an educational activity, it is no wonder that parents and teachers may differ regarding its function in kindergarten even though the importance of play in childhood has been well documented (Issacs, 1930; Piaget, 1962; Vygotsky, 1962;

Smilansky, 1968; Sutton-Smith, 1979; Pelligrini, 1980). Parents or teachers, or both, are not always convinced of the value of play in the kindergarten program. Sometimes, even when convinced of the importance of play, teachers may be somewhat reluctant to acknowledge it. Hess, et al. (1981) found that teachers were more permissive than parents toward children's play and more often emphasized learning through play.

Rothleen and Brett (1984), after surveying 60 teachers, 73 parents, and 103 children from private and public preschools in Dade County, Florida, found that parents defined play in terms of fun and amusement; but teachers were more likely to define play as an opportunity for cognitive and social adjustment. Many parents and teachers thought play was unimportant and should be limited. This study revealed that the importance of play is not always realized by parents and teachers. Although the study involved preschool parents and teachers, there is no reason to believe that these parents and teachers would be more approving of play in kindergarten.

Bloch and Wichaidit (1985) conducted a cross-cultural study to determine if, in the country of Thailand, the attitudes of parents and teachers toward play were similar to those of American parents and teachers. In summarizing the results of American studies toward play, they stated,

> Western studies of both parents and teachers have shown that differences in adult experience, education, specific training and child-rearing roles affect their behavior with children, their attitudes about the appropriateness of activities such as play, and their expressed goals for young children. (p. 198)

They found that in Thailand, as in America, teachers were more favorable to play than parents, and the more education the parents had the more favorable they were toward play. Because of its importance in the learning of young children and of its central role in kindergarten, play has to be perceived by parents and teachers as a worthwhile activity or children will lose their most natural and appropriate mode of learning.

Another area where parents and teachers may differ is in home-school communication. Cattermole and Robinson (1985), in conducting a study involving 215 parents from 36 schools in Abbotsford, British Columbia, found that, for information about their children's school, parents relied on their children, their children's teachers, and report cards or school newsletters. However, parents did not think those were effective and perferred to be communicated with by phone or in person, and through parent-teacher conferences.

Cassidy (1977), through the use of a questionnaire involving 352 teachers and parents also found that the parents, although agreeing with teachers on the means of reporting progress in reading, tended to view the whole reporting process as much more crucial than teachers. If

this is the case, more parental input is necessary in determining what they perceive as important in the reporting process.

Parents and teachers also may differ with regard to their perceptions of parental involvement in their child's program. Jackson and Stretch (1976) used a sample of 24 teachers, 36 administrators and 87 parents involved with kindergarten in the Edmonton Public schools to determine through one questionnaire the actual forms of parental involvement, and through a second questionnaire the preferred forms of parental involvement. They found that all three groups indicated they would prefer more parental involvement except for parents who did not prefer more involvement in the area that asked them to be recipients and supporters, or in the area that asked them to be educators and learners (teaching their children at home). For all types of involvement where parents and teachers differed significantly parents perceived less actual and perferred involvement than the educators. This study indicates that educators share common perceptions on parental involvement, but these do not coincide with those of parents.

Finally, parents and teachers may differ in their perceptions with regard to mainstreaming, that is, assigning handicapped children to a regular classroom. Parents of both handicapped and normal children have concerns about their children and the program. Naumann and Harris (1977)

investigated this issue in a study to determine the attitudes of: parents of preschool and kindergarten handicapped and non-handicapped children; teachers; and administrators. They found that administrators were more favorable toward mainstreaming than teachers or parents, with parents being the least favorable. Parents were concerned about the adjustment of both their handicapped and their non-handicapped children in the class. Parents of non-handicapped children generally agreed that mainstream participation should be restricted to handicapped children of normal intelligence.

Blacher and Turnbull (1982) compared the perspectives of teachers and parents of handicapped children, regarding some issues in preschool mainstreaming. From the data gathered from both a parent questionnaire and a teacher questionnaire, the researchers concluded that generally parents and teachers favored preschool mainstreaming, unlike the general findings of Naumann and Harris (1977) in which educators were more in favor of mainstreaming. However, Blacher and Turnbull found that parents and teachers differed concerning some items on the questionnaire, including the value of preschool maninstreaming, social interactions, and parental involvement. Even though this study did not involve parents of nonhandicapped children, the researchers in citing earlier studies by McAfee and Vergason (1979), noted that

> it may also be important to document the perspectives of parents of nonhandicapped children regarding mainstreaming, since there are reports in the literature indicating a growing concern on the part of these parents that mainstreaming is contributing to unequal educational conditions for their children. (p. 197)

To conclude, mainstreaming handicapped children in the regular class can be benefical to all children; however, educators and parents have to be convinced of its value. If parents perceive mainstreaming as interfering with the education of either their handicapped or nonhandicapped children, they cannot be expected to be in agreement with the process. This also holds true for teachers. All groups involved need to be informed and helped in their adjustment to a mainstreamed setting.

Conclusions

Kindergarten education in North America is 135 years old. During this time many educators, theorists and child psychologists have contributed much to the field of child development and learning. This has resulted in ever-changing views of children and their learning. As well, parents and educators are anxious about education. "Report after report warns that history will not be kind to idlers" (Hymes, 1987, p. 47). One response to such warnings is to hurry children to succeed. This sense of urgency is also felt in kindergarten. Some people are confused about its

function and purpose. On the one hand there is the need to teach young children basic skills to give them a good head start for all they will need to learn. On the other hand research points to the possible harmful effects of formal academic learning when introduced too early.

In recent years, in an attempt to alleviate some of this confusion and to clarify the nature and purpose of kindergarten, a number of national and international organizations and various government education departments have begun to develop guidelines for kindergarten education. Most of these groups agree that kindergarten education today has to include academic learning, but it has to be taught in accordance with the unique characteristics and modes of learning of four- and five-year-olds. Children need to be actively involved in learning in order to benefit from it; they cannot be passive recipients of knowledge. Therefore, reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, and other content areas must be presented in such a way as to maximize the child's active involvement and to make the learning meaningful to the child. Self-directed or teacher-directed play is the major ingredient in making learning meaningful for the child. The teacher arranges the environment in such a way as to interest the child in participating, and encourages maximum learning from the experience. A quality kindergarten program incorporates all that is known about child development and learning. It

seeks to meet the needs of young children in accordance with their unique modes of learning. It does not attempt to fill children with knowledge, but leads children to discover and learn.

Parents and teachers agree as to the overall goals of education, but opposing opinions may arise with regard to specific aspects of programming in any grade. Kindergarten education is not free from dissension. The areas of reading instruction and other academic learnings, and the issue of play are among some of the most controversial. Parents often have preconceived notions of what a kindergarten program should do for their children and if these notions differ from those of the teachers, misunderstandings are likely to arise. To alleviate this problem, teachers must make every effort to involve parents. They must be made aware of the kindergarten program, its goals, its practices and educational policies affecting it. It is only then that parents will offer their support and become partners in the education of their child.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Design of the study

The design of this study was a survey. This study of parents' and teachers' perceptions of kindergarten education was conducted during the 1989-1990 school year in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Because of the large geographical area involved, it was decided that a mailed questionnaire would be the most feasible method of obtaining information. Also, a questionnaire would provide a broad range of information on many aspects of kindergarten programming.

A parent questionnaire was designed to determine their perceptions of their children's kindergarten. A teacher questionnaire was also designed to determine kindergarten teachers' perceptions of the kindergarten program. Questions on both questionnaires covered a variety of aspects of kindergarten programming.

The sample

The teacher sample included one hundred and fourteen teachers - forty from each of the two largest denominational systems operating schools in the province of Newfoundland

and Labrador: the Integrated, and the Roman Catholic; and the remainder from the Pentecostal system. To make the sample of Pentecostal teachers large enough to allow for comparisons, it was necessary to include all kindergarten teachers in Pentecostal schools. The large number of kindergarten teachers in the remaining two systems allowed for the selection of a sample using a random sampling procedure. Kindergarten classes in French Immersion schools were excluded from the sample because it was felt that the perceptions of parents and teachers in those schools may differ significantly from those of the majority of parents and teachers.

The parent sample included two hundred and forty parents of kindergarten children who had children being taught by the teachers in the teacher sample.

The sampling method

The teacher sample was comprised of 114 kindergarten teachers. Eighty kindergarten teachers were randomly selected, forty from the Integrated school system and forty from the Roman Catholic school system. The total population of 34 kindergarten teachers from Pentecostal schools completed the sample. Using the 1988-1989 directory of schools for Newfoundland and Labrador, two lists of schools were compiled; one was a listing of all the Integrated

schools with kindergarten classes, and the other was a listing of all the Roman Catholic schools with kindergarten classes. Schools in each list were assigned a number according to their position in that list; for example, the first Integrated school having kindergarten classes was given the number one, the second school number two, and so on for each of the lists. In a table of random numbers, a starting point was arbitrarily selected, and all numbers that followed were selected until a list of forty numbers was obtained. The schools in both lists that corresponded to the numbers chosen from the table of random numbers became the sample of schools with kindergarten classes. In the event that there was more than one kindergarten class in the school, only one teacher was asked to participate in the study, specifically, the teacher whose name appeared last in an alphabetical listing of kindergarten teachers in that school.

The parent sample of two hundred and forty was randomly selected from the total population of parents who had children in the kindergarten classes taught by teachers in the teacher sample. The names of parents with children in kindergarten were obtained from the teachers in the teacher sample. Parents' names were listed, as they were received by the researcher, in three separate lists (one for each of the denominational systems) and then assigned a number according to their position in each list. For example, the

first name of a parent with a child attending an Integrated school was assigned the number one, the second name was assigned the number two, and so on for each of the three lists. In a table of random numbers, a starting point was arbitrarily selected and all numbers that followed were selected until a list of eighty numbers was obtained. The parents whose names in each of the lists corresponded to the selected numbers became the parent sample.

Instruments and materials

After an extensive review of the literature pertaining to quality programming for young children, the researcher designed a parent and a teacher questionnaire. Information on questionnaire design was considered in designing the questionnaires (Bradburn and Sudman, 1979). Ideas for questions came from several other sources, including the National Association for the Education of Young Children on developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs, (1986); Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador, (1985), Kindergarten Curriculum Guide; and Warren, (1976). The questionnaires were divided into the following sections: (a) perceptions of kindergarten education in general, (b) perceptions of daily kindergarten activities, (c) perceptions of parental involvement, and (d) background information on the respondents.

The questionnaires were examined by an early childhood specialist at Memorial University of Newfoundland; and in the light of criticism changes were made. The revised questionnaires were then used in the pilot study (see Appendixes A and B).

Procedure

The following procedure was followed in conducting the study:

1. A pilot of the questionnaire was undertaken in September, 1989. Twenty teachers, ten from each of two school districts, were selected to participate in the pilot study. The Green Bay Integrated School District and the Exploits Valley Roman Catholic School District were arbitrarily selected by the researcher. It was decided not to include teachers from the Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland and Labrador in the pilot study because they would all be needed for the main study. It was decided also to use, in the pilot study, parents of children who were in kindergarten in the 1988-1989 school year because parents of children enrolled in the 1989-1990 school year would not have had enough experience with the kindergarten program to allow them to respond adequately to some of the questions. Kindergarten teachers for the 1989-1990 school year were used in the pilot. The ten teachers from each district were

selected randomly from schools that were not selected to be in the sample for the main study. Twenty parents, one parent from each of the classes of the teachers in the pilot study, comprised the parent pilot sample.

2. Letters were sent to the superintendents of the school districts which employed teachers who were selected to be in the pilot teacher sample, requesting permission to have their kindergarten teachers participate in the pilot study (see Appendix C). If they requested, they were sent a copy of both the pilot teacher and the pilot parent questionnaires.

3. After receiving the superintendent's permission, letters were sent to the principals of the schools with teachers selected to be in the pilot study, asking for their cooperation. They were asked to forward the pilot teacher questionnaire with accompanying cover letter and the pilot parent questionnaire with accompanying cover letter to the kindergarten teacher (see Appendix C).

The kindergarten teacher was asked to give the pilot parent questionnaire to the child in the Grade 1 class whose name appeared last in the Grade 1 school register. The child was asked to take an accompanying cover letter and the questionnaire home for their parents to complete (see Appendix C).

Parents and teachers were asked to relate any problems encountered while completing the pilot questionnaires, on a

comment sheet (see Appendix D). The comments of the parents and teachers were used to improve the questionnaires, where necessary. Responses to each question were analyzed to assess the need for further changes. For example, a need for some rearranging of the questions was evidenced when parents and teachers answered a particular question similar to the two previous questions although it required a different means of responding (see Appendixes E and F).

4. In the fall of 1989, a summary of the research plan was submitted to Memorial University of Newfoundland's Faculty of Education Ethics Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, and approval was received from the committee in the winter of 1990.

5. For the main study, letters were sent to the superintendents of the school districts which employed teachers who were selected to be in the main study teacher sample, requesting permission to have their kindergarten teachers participate in the study (see Appendix G). Upon request they were sent a copy of both the main study teacher and the main study parent questionnaires.

6. After receiving the superintendent's permission, letters were sent to the principals of the schools with teachers selected to be in the main study sample, asking for their cooperation. They were asked to forward the enclosed main study teacher questionnaire with accompanying cover letter to the kindergarten teacher (see Appendix G).

7. In the cover letter, the kindergarten teacher was requested to list the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the parents of children in kindergarten. The teachers also received with the letter and the questionnaire, take-home notes (see Appendix H) to be given to the children explaining to their parents that they might be selected within the next couple of weeks to participate in the study. Teachers were asked to return the completed questionnaire, and the list of parent names, addresses, and telephone numbers (see Appendix I) to the researcher.

8. After receiving the parent names from the teachers, the researcher compiled lists for each of the denominational groups, randomly selected the main study parent sample, and mailed the main study parent questionnaire and cover letter to selected parents.

9. Three weeks following the mailing of the main study teacher questionnaire, the researcher telephoned the teachers who had not yet responded, asking them whether they would complete the questionnaire and whether they required another mailed to them. When necessary a second follow-up by telephone was made three weeks following the first.

10. Three weeks after the mailing of the main study parent questionnaire, the researcher telephoned the parents who had not yet responded, asking them whether they would complete the questionnaire and whether they required another mailed to them.

Sample characteristics

The study was conducted throughout the winter of 1990. Information was gathered from a parent questionnaire and a teacher questionnaire. The theoretical teacher sample consisted of 114 kindergarten teachers, and the theoretical parent sample consisted of 240 parents of children attending kindergarten classes of the teachers in the teacher sample. Each sample represented 17 Integrated school districts, 11 Roman Catholic school districts and one Pentecostal school district. An initial follow-up procedure was utilized for approximately 70% of the teachers and 20% of the parents. A second follow-up was necessary for 25% of the teachers, but a second follow-up proved unnecessary for the parents. A return rate of 84 (73.7%) for the teacher questionnaire and 184 (76.7%) for the parent questionnaire was obtained, and these return rates were sufficient for an evaluation of parents' and teachers' perceptions of kindergarten programming.

Teacher sample characteristics

The questionnaire was returned by 84 teachers, but not all teachers responded to every item on the questionnaire. In this study, 88.7% of the 77 teachers responding had education degrees, in contrast to Sharpe's (1977) study in

which only 36% of the kindergarten teachers had education degrees. Sixty percent of the teachers in the present study had education degrees with a focus on the primary level, 25.4% on the elementary level, and 3.8% on the high school level.

Only 22.1% of the 77 respondents indicated any specialized training. Instances of specialized training included the Harlow, England, internship in early childhood, the Kindergarten Institute offered by Memorial University during the summer of 1988, Master's Degree in early childhood, and experience in working at preschools or day-care centers.

Teaching experience is summarized in Table 1. More than half of the teachers had less than 5 years experience teaching at the kindergarten level. All had some experience teaching at other grade levels.

Subgrouping by denomination of the school system in which teachers worked revealed that of the 83 respondents, 35% taught in Integrated schools, 33.7% in Roman Catholic schools, and 31.3% in Pentecostal schools.

Teachers in small schools (fewer than 100 children) and medium-sized schools (100-299 students) each represented 42.7% of the 82 respondents, while teachers in large schools (300 or more students) represented 14.6%.

Half of the teachers were willing to involve parents as recipients of information (workshops, meetings, parent-

teacher conferences) and as non-instructional volunteers (preparing materials, supervising) more than 30% of the time. However, 73.9% of the teachers would not involve parents as instructional volunteers (teaching, working with the children) any more than 30% of the time.

Table 1

Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	Kindergarten Level (N = 83) %	Other Levels (N = 83) %
0-5 years	57.8	44.5
6-10 years	13.3	22.8
11-15 years	16.9	18.0
16+ years	12.0	14.7

Parent sample characteristics

The questionnaires were returned by 184 parents, but not all parents responded to each item. As expected, most of the 177 parents, responding to this item, had fewer than 3 children who had ever attended kindergarten including their presently enrolled child, with 41.8% having had one,

32.8% having had two, 18.6% having had three and 6.8% with four or more.

About one-third of the 177 parents who responded had children attend preschool for 1-4 months in the year prior to beginning kindergarten; 7.9% had children attend for 5-8 months; 10.2% had children attend for 9-12 months; and 49.2% had children with no preschool experience.

The information on age of parents revealed that 70.9% of the sample were in the 26-35 age group. Parents younger than 25 and older than 35 showed a fairly equal distribution of 13.7% and 15.4% respectively.

The information concerning the denomination of the school system revealed that, of the 183 parents who responded, 34.4% had children attending Roman Catholic schools, 33.9% in Integrated schools, and 31.7% in Pentecostal schools.

Of the 177 parents who responded, parents of children attending small schools (less than 100 students) represented 18.6% ; medium-sized schools (100-299 students) represented 47.5%; and large schools (more than 299 students), 33.9%.

The educational levels of the parents are shown in Table 2. For both the mother and the father, over half had received less than or only a high school education. The extent of education appeared to be fairly equal for both parents.

Table 2

Parent Education Levels

Parent Education Level	Mother (N =180) %	Father (N =172) %
No High School	-	0.6
Some High School	38.3	43.0
Finished High School	29.4	18.6
Vocational/Trades	18.9	26.2
Other Training (nurse, police, etc.)	6.1	3.5
Some University	5.0	3.5
Graduated University	0.6	3.5
Other	1.7	1.1

Of 175 respondents, 57.7% had been involved in Type 1 activities (activities that would have parents involved in attending meetings, parent-teacher conferences, concerts and fund-raising activities) for less than five hours, 24% for six to ten hours, and 18.3% for eleven or more hours in the six months since their child began kindergarten. The majority of parents (73.6%) had spent no time involved in Type II activities (activities that would have parents

involved by working with the children in the classroom, helping the teacher, observing classroom activities, and attending meetings to plan programs).

To summarize the characteristics of the teacher and parent samples, it was found that the majority of teachers were highly qualified with nearly a third having primary education degrees. Over half had less than five years experience teaching kindergarten. Almost three-quarters of the parents were in the 26-35 age group. Only about a quarter of the fathers or mothers had received higher than a high school education. Over 90% of the parents had fewer than three children attend kindergarten, including their child presently enrolled. Only half of the children presently in kindergarten had any preschool experience with only 10% attending preschool for 9-12 months. Approximately a third of both the parent and teacher samples represented each of the school systems: the Integrated, the Roman Catholic, and the Pentecostal. In the teacher sample, large schools were under-represented and small and medium-sized schools were equally represented, while in the parent sample small schools were under-represented in comparison to large and medium-sized schools. Parents were most likely to be involved in kindergarten by attending meetings, parent-teacher conferences, concerts and fund-raising activities. Nearly three-quarters of the parents were never involved in working with the children in the classroom, helping the

teacher, observing classroom activities, and attending meetings to plan programs. This compares somewhat with the teacher sample concerning involvement; for teachers would not involve parents any more than 30% of the time in activities, teaching, or working with children.

Analysis of the data

The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed in the following manner:

1. A descriptive analysis of the characteristics of the teacher sample was made regarding their qualifications, instance of specialized training, extent of upgrading, teaching experience, the denomination of the school system worked in, the student population of the school worked in, and the perceived extent of parental involvement in the kindergarten program. As well, a similar analysis was made of the characteristics of the parent sample from their past and present experience with children in kindergarten, the length of time their child attended a preschool arrangement, age, educational level, the denomination of the school system their child attended, the student population of the school their child attended, and the extent of their involvement in their child's kindergarten program.

2. An item by item analysis of the parent and the teacher questionnaires was conducted to obtain frequencies

and percentages of responses.

3. A discussion of each question on the teacher questionnaire was prepared including: (a) the function of kindergarten, the importance of various subject areas, the education of handicapped children, the reporting process, ways to improve kindergarten education, desirable teacher characteristics, the value of various learning activities; (b) the importance of daily kindergarten practices; and (c) parental involvement. Tables accompany the discussions where necessary.

4. A discussion of each question on the parent questionnaire was prepared, including: (a) function of kindergarten, importance of subject areas, education of handicapped children, reporting process, ways to improve kindergarten education, desirable teacher characteristics, value of home learning activities, knowledge of kindergarten education; (b) importance of daily kindergarten practices; and (c) parental involvement. Tables accompany discussion where necessary.

5. Differences between the perceptions of the teacher sample and the parent sample were analyzed using the chi-square test of independence. To evaluate differences between the groups, a significance level was set at .05. Where significant differences were found between parents and teachers, an appropriate correlational statistic was computed to determine the magnitude of the relationship

between group membership and the item-response. Findings were presented using tables and written descriptions. For example, the chi-square statistic was computed to compare the responses of parents and teachers on the item concerning the most important function of kindergarten. The computed chi-square was compared to a table of chi-square values to evaluate the probability that there was no statistically significant difference between the parents and the teachers with regard to what they perceived to be the function of kindergarten.

6. Chi-square tests of independence were conducted to evaluate any differences between parents' perceptions of selected aspects of the kindergarten program when the parent sample was subgrouped according to their educational level, their age, the denominational affiliation of the school their child attends, their child's preschool experience, the student population of the school, their past experience with children in kindergarten, and their level of involvement in the kindergarten classroom. To evaluate differences between the subgroups of parents, a significance level was set at .05. Where significant differences were found between the parent subgroups, an appropriate correlational statistic was computed to determine the magnitude of the relationship between subgroup membership and item-response. Findings were presented using tables and written descriptions. For example, the chi-square statistic was computed to compare

parents' responses, subgrouped by religious denomination, on the item concerning the function of kindergarten. The computed chi-square was compared to a table of chi-square values to evaluate the probability that there were no significant differences between the parents, subgrouped by religious denomination, in what they perceived to be the function of kindergarten.

7. Chi-square tests of independence were conducted to evaluate any differences between teachers' perceptions of selected aspects of the kindergarten program when the teacher group was subgrouped according to their teaching experience, their teaching qualifications, denominational affiliation of the school they work in, instances of specialized training, extent of upgrading, and student population of the school. In order to evaluate differences between the subgroups of teachers, a significance level was set at .05. Where significant differences were found between the teacher subgroups, an appropriate correlational statistic was computed to determine the magnitude of the relationship between subgroup membership and item-response. Findings were presented using tables and descriptions. For example, the chi-square statistic was computed to compare teachers' responses, when subgrouped by religious denomination, on the item concerning the most important function of kindergarten. The computed chi-square was compared to a table of chi-square values to evaluate the

probability that there were no significant differences between the teachers, subgrouped by religious denomination, in what they perceived to be the function of kindergarten.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study was conducted using mailed questionnaires to 114 kindergarten teachers and 240 parents of children who were enrolled in kindergarten during the 1989-1990 school year in Newfoundland and Labrador. Seventy-three percent of the teachers and 76% of the parents completed and returned questionnaires. Findings are presented below using the research questions as a format for discussion. All items in the questionnaires are presented.

Teachers' perceptions of kindergarten programming

Question 1. What are the perceptions of teachers regarding aspects of kindergarten programming?

The questionnaire attempted to determine the teachers' perceptions of: (a) the function of kindergarten, the importance of various subject areas, the education of handicapped children, the reporting process, ways to improve kindergarten education, desirable teacher characteristics and the value of various learning activities; (b) the importance of daily kindergarten practices; and (c) parental involvement.

Function of kindergarten

Of the 77 teachers responding to this item on the questionnaire, 70.1%, believed that the most important function of kindergarten was for children to develop positive feelings about themselves and learning, while 22.1% believed that the main function was for children to develop the social skills of sharing, helping and cooperating. These findings are consistent with those of a 1980 survey (Walhstrom et. al.) of 39 Ontario teachers' associations which found that the first goal of kindergarten education should be to develop in children a good image of themselves as persons and learners, and the second goal should be for children to learn social skills. In the present study, developing basic skills in the 3 R'S (math, reading and writing) and developing the ability to think were chosen by only 5.2% and 2.6%, respectively.

Rating subject areas

As shown in Table 3, teachers placed the greatest emphasis on Pre-reading/Reading and Math followed by Health, Science, and Religion, showing the degree of emphasis that each of the subject areas in the kindergarten curriculum should receive. Music, Art, and Social Studies were least likely to receive a first place rating. Examination of the

subjects ranked first and second in importance indicates that Art and Religion received the lowest ratings.

Table 3

Teachers' Ratings of Subject Areas

Subject Area	Rating 1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	N =
Pre-reading/ Reading	85.7	11.9	-	2.4	84
Math	78.3	18.1	1.2	2.4	83
Health	42.7	39.0	15.9	2.4	82
Science	37.5	52.5	8.8	1.2	80
Religion	35.0	36.3	27.5	1.2	80
Physical Education	32.9	48.8	17.1	1.2	82
Music	29.6	50.6	19.8	-	81
Art	29.3	46.3	22.0	2.4	82
Social Studies	27.2	55.6	16.0	1.2	81

Placement of handicapped children

Of the 80 teachers who responded, 75% believed that handicapped children should begin their schooling in the regular kindergarten class either full-time or part-time. Only 13.8% believed they should begin their schooling in classes especially designed for them. Also, 11.2% believed that handicapped children could be placed in the regular kindergarten with support help, or placed wherever their needs best could be met.

Reporting progress

Table 4 shows teachers' selections of valuable procedures for reporting childrens' progress to the parent. Nearly all the teachers felt that parent-teacher conferences were valuable which is in line with a statement in the Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador (1985), Kindergarten Curriculum Guide which considered parent-teacher conferences the best way of sharing information about the child. The table shows also that only 6% chose home visits by the teacher.

Table 4

Teachers' Ratings of Procedures for Reporting Progress

Reporting Technique	Rating		N =
	Selected %	Not Selected %	
Conferences	94.4	3.6	84
Report Cards	38.1	61.9	84
Notes	34.5	65.5	84
Telephone Calls	32.1	67.9	84
Home Visits	6.0	94.0	84
Other	3.6	96.4	84

Improving kindergarten education

Table 5 shows teachers' views concerning ways to improve the quality of kindergarten education. Two-thirds of the teachers indicated that having fewer children in the class, and having more equipment and materials would improve the quality of kindergarten education. Only 13% of the teachers chose lengthening the kindergarten day.

Table 5

Teachers' Choices of Improvements to Kindergarten Education

Improvement	Rating		N =
	Selected %	Not Selected %	
Fewer Children	66.7	33.3	84
More Equipment & Materials	65.5	34.5	84
More Parental Involvement	27.4	72.6	84
Lengthen Day	13.1	86.9	84

Desirable characteristics of kindergarten teachers

Table 6 shows teachers' beliefs regarding desirable characteristics of a kindergarten teacher. Seeing each child as an individual was given a first or second ranking by 80% of the teachers, while having a warm and friendly personality was given a first or second ranking by 67.2%. To knowledge of subject matter, only 10% of the teachers gave a first, second or third rating.

Table 6

Teachers' Ranking of Desirable Teacher Characteristics

Characteristic	Ranking 1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	N =
Personality	42.9	24.3	28.5	4.3	-	70
Sees Children as Individuals	41.4	38.6	17.1	2.9	-	70
Knowledge of Development	12.9	32.9	45.7	7.1	1.4	70
Knowledge of Subjects	2.9	2.9	4.3	85.6	4.3	70
Other*	-	4.3	4.3	-	1.4	70

* 63 (90%) did not include choice in this category.

Home learning activities

Table 7 shows that teachers ranked reading to the child most valuable of the various things that a parent can do to help the child learn. Encouraging children to participate in household activities such as cooking and shopping was ranked second by over half of the teachers. Encouraging children to view television programming was not ranked as high in value as homework was ranked.

Table 7

Teachers' Ranking of Home Learning Activities

Activity	Ranking 1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	N =
Reading	94.3	4.3	1.4	-	-	70
Home Activities	-	52.9	24.3	21.4	1.4	70
Homework	1.4	28.6	34.3	34.3	1.4	70
Television	-	14.3	40.0	41.4	4.3	70
Other*	5.8	1.4	-	-	1.4	70

* 64 (91.4%) did not include choice in this category.

Kindergarten practices

In Section II of the questionnaire, teachers were asked to rate the importance of various kindergarten practices. The findings are indicated in Table 8.

With one exception, teachers considered all practices important. Over two-thirds of teachers believed that it was unimportant for children to spend at least one hour of each day sitting quietly, listening to the teacher and following directions. Reading to children and small muscle

Table 8

Teachers' Responses to Importance of Kindergarten Practices

Practice	Rating				N =
	Very Important %	Somewhat Important %	Somewhat Unimportant %	Very Unimportant %	
Read Daily	98.8	1.2	-	-	84
Small Muscle Development	75.0	23.8	1.2	-	84
Basic Skill Development	72.6	23.8	3.6	-	84
Play at Centers	60.7	31.0	7.1	1.2	84
Cooking/ Field Trips	44.6	48.2	7.2	-	83
Rewards	42.9	45.2	9.5	2.4	84
Teacher-Directed Instruction	43.4	39.8	14.5	2.3	83
Devotions	43.2	38.3	12.3	6.2	81
Large Muscle Development	40.5	54.8	3.6	1.1	84
Free Choice	39.3	57.1	3.6	-	84
Paper & Pencil Activities	29.8	35.7	25.0	9.5	84
Sitting Quietly	4.9	24.7	30.9	39.5	81

development were considered very important by three-quarters or more of the teachers, while paper-pencil activities were considered important by only one-third of the teachers. Overall, teachers believe that kindergarten education should involve children in all types of activities: not only those that have been deemed to be appropriate for inclusion in a kindergarten program (NAEYC, 1986; Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1985), but also those that are considered somewhat inappropriate such as daily paper and pencil tasks, daily teacher-directed instruction in the subject areas, and receiving extrinsic rewards (NAEYC, 1986).

Parental involvement

Table 9 shows the findings of Section III of the questionnaire which asked teachers to show their level of agreement with various types of parental involvement in the kindergarten program.

Except with having parents involved as decision-makers regarding their child's program, most teachers agreed with all types of involvement. Seefeldt (1985a) emphasized that teachers must try to involve parents more in ways that allow them opportunities to make important decisions about their child's education, and involve them less in ways that make demands on their time or create feelings of guilt. She

maintained that many parents are unable to get involved in ways that the teachers may want because of work and

Table 9

Teachers' Agreement with Types of Parental Involvement

Type of Involvement	Rating				N =
	Strongly Agree %	Somewhat Agree %	Somewhat Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	
Supervising	78.3	20.5	1.2	-	83
Meetings	60.7	35.7	3.6	-	84
Attending Workshops	60.2	33.7	4.8	1.3	83
Special Events	53.0	34.9	12.1	-	83
Raising Funds	48.8	50.0	-	1.2	84
Religious Activities	39.3	53.6	7.1	-	84
Preparing Materials	38.6	54.2	4.8	2.4	83
Observing	35.7	45.2	17.9	1.2	84
Helping by Teaching	28.9	53.0	12.0	6.1	83
Working	23.8	50.0	17.9	8.3	84
Making Decisions	6.0	39.3	32.1	22.6	84

family commitments and that allowing them to get involved in decision-making concerning their child's education is the only true form of parent-teacher collaboration. One-quarter of the teachers in the present study did not agree that parents should come in the classroom to help the children as they go about their daily activities.

In conclusion, this study showed that the majority of teachers believed a kindergarten program should, most importantly, allow children to develop emotionally and mentally. Over three-quarters of the teachers believed Pre-reading/Reading and Math were the most important subjects in the kindergarten curriculum, while less than 30% believed Music, Art, and Social Studies were most important. Three-quarters of the teachers preferred that handicapped children be integrated with the regular kindergarten children either full-time or part-time. Parent-teacher conferences and report cards were perceived by teachers to be most valuable procedures for reporting children's progress. Teachers believed that having fewer children in the classroom, and having more equipment and materials would improve the quality of kindergarten education. Seeing each child as an individual, and having a warm, friendly personality were considered the most desirable characteristics of the kindergarten teacher. Teachers believed that the most valuable thing parents could do to help their children learn was to read to them. Two-thirds of the teachers believed

that all kindergarten practices were important with the exception of having children sit quietly, listen to the teacher and follow directions. As well, over two-thirds of the teachers agreed with all the types of parental involvement except for involving parents in making decisions about their child's program.

Parents' perceptions of kindergarten programming

Question 2. What are the perceptions of parents regarding selected aspects of kindergarten programming?

The questionnaire attempted to determine the parents' perceptions of: (a) the function of kindergarten, the importance of subject areas, the placement of handicapped children, the reporting process, ways to improve kindergarten education, desirable teacher characteristics, the value of home learning activities, their knowledge of kindergarten education; (b) the importance of daily kindergarten practices; and (c) parental involvement.

Function of kindergarten

Most parents believed the function of kindergarten to be one of two things. Approximately one-half of the parents believed that kindergarten should help children develop

positive feelings about themselves and about learning, while 31.8% believed it should help children develop the social skills of sharing, helping or cooperating. Only 10.2% believed that teaching basic skills in the three R's was the most important function. This finding does not support recent literature which notes an increased pressure by parents and educators to have kindergarten programs focus on the acquisition of specific learning goals in the academic areas (Spodek, 1982). Only 4% of the parents believed that teaching moral and ethical values was the principal purpose of kindergarten.

Rating subject areas

Table 10 shows parents' ratings of subject areas in the kindergarten curriculum. Parents considered Health to be the most important subject in the kindergarten curriculum with over 80% giving it a first place rating. As well, Pre-reading\Reading was given a first place rating by more than three-quarters of the parents. Slightly less than two-thirds of the parents believed that Science, Art, and Music should receive the most emphasis.

Table 10

Parents' Ratings of Subject Areas

Subject Area	Rating 1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	N =
Health	83.6	12.0	2.7	1.7	183
Pre-Reading/ Reading	76.8	14.9	4.4	3.9	181
Math	59.7	26.0	10.5	3.8	181
Religion	43.1	34.3	16.6	6.0	181
Physical Education	35.4	43.8	15.7	5.1	178
Science	28.8	35.0	27.7	8.5	177
Social Studies	28.1	50.0	16.3	5.6	178
Art	25.3	38.8	30.3	5.6	178
Music	22.2	40.9	27.8	9.1	176

Placement of handicapped children

Parents' opinions were somewhat divided regarding the placement of handicapped children in the school system. A small majority felt that the handicapped child should spend some time in the regular kindergarten class either part-time

(40.3%), or full-time (15.5%). However of the parents, 43.6% believed that handicapped children should begin their schooling in special schools or classes, especially designed for them in the regular school and separate from the regular kindergarten. This finding is similar to King's (1989), from a survey of parents' perceptions of preschool programs in Newfoundland and Labrador, in which 33% of the parents believed that preschool handicapped children should be in special centers designed for them.

Reporting progress

Table 11 shows parents' choices of valuable procedures for receiving information about their child's progress in kindergarten. Most parents chose parent-teacher conferences and report cards. Less than half chose personal notes and telephone calls from the teacher. Chosen least often (by 4.3%) were home visits by the teacher. Some of these findings are consistent with those in Cattermole and Robinson's (1985) survey of parents in Abbotsford, British Columbia, in that most parents preferred parent-teacher conferences and report cards for communicating with the school. In contrast, most British Columbia parents ranked direct communicationm, by phone or in person, most valuable. Also in contrast to the present study, Newhook (1985) found that only 9 (45%) of the Newfoundland and Labrador parents

Table 11

Parents' Ratings of Procedures for Reporting Progress

Reporting Technique	Rating: Selected %	Rating: Not Selected %	N =
Conferences	87.0	13.0	184
Report Cards	62.3	37.7	183
Notes	29.5	70.5	183
Telephone Calls	17.5	82.5	183
Home Visits	4.3	95.7	184

in her survey did not agree with home visits from the teacher as a valuable procedure for reporting children's progress.

Improving kindergarten education

When parents were asked to indicate ways to improve the quality of kindergarten education, as shown in Table 12, about two-thirds selected having more equipment and material in the kindergarten class. Less than 40% of the parents believed that having fewer children in the class, more

parental involvement, and a longer school day would improve kindergarten education.

Table 12

Parents' Choices of Ways to Improve Kindergarten Education

Improvement	Rating		N =
	Selected %	Not Selected %	
More Equipment & Materials	64.4	35.6	180
Fewer Children	39.9	60.1	178
More Parental Involvement	29.6	70.4	179
Lengthen Day	24.4	75.6	180
Other	3.9	96.1	179

Desirable characteristics of kindergarten teachers

Table 13 shows parents' ranking of desirable characteristics of a kindergarten teacher. Nearly one-half of the parents ranked having a warm friendly personality first, while approximately three-quarters ranked it first or second. However, about 80% ranked seeing children as

individuals first or second. About 60% of the parents gave the lowest rankings of three, four, or five to knowledge of child development, and more than 95% gave the lowest rankings of three, four or five to knowledge of subject matter.

Table 13

Parents' Ranking of Desirable Kindergarten Teacher Characteristics

Characteristic	Ranking 1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	N =
Personality	49.4	25.3	21.7	3.6	-	83
Sees Children as Individuals	34.1	44.7	16.5	4.7	-	85
Knowledge of Development	10.8	27.7	43.4	16.9	1.2	83
Knowledge of Subjects	3.6	1.2	17.8	76.2	1.2	84
Other*	3.6	-	1.2	-	1.2	84

* 74 (94%) did not include anything in this category.

Home learning activities

When parents were asked to rank, according to value, as shown in Table 14, the activities they could do at home to help their child learn, about three-quarters of them chose reading each day to their child above all other activities. Helping their child with homework assignments was also considered valuable, with over 65% of the parents giving it a first or second ranking. Encouraging their child to participate in household activities, such as shopping and

Table 14

Parents' Ranking of Home Learning Activities

	Ranking					
Activity	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	N =
Reading	76.1	19.3	3.4	1.2	-	88
Homework	15.9	50.0	26.1	6.8	1.2	88
Home Activities	5.8	13.8	32.2	44.8	3.4	87
Television	1.2	16.2	34.9	44.2	3.5	86
Other*	2.3	2.3	3.4	2.3	2.3	87

* 76 (87.4%) did not include anything in this category.

cooking, and to watch children's television programming were given the lowest ranking of three, four, or five by more than 80% of the parents.

Kindergarten practices

Section II of the questionnaire asked parents to judge the importance of some kindergarten practices. Table 15 shows parents' responses.

Overall, parents considered all practices to be very or somewhat important, with reading to the child rated very important by 86.7%. The second, third, fourth, and fifth practices, listed in Table 15, considered very important by approximately 90% of parents, are among the ones that the NAEYC (1986) referred to as inappropriate practices in programming for children four- and five-years-old. Most parents also rated small muscle development very important. About 30% of parents believed that large muscle development was unimportant, and 25% believed that free choice was unimportant.

The data suggest that parents want all of these practices in a kindergarten program. Webster and Wood's (1986) study revealed a similar finding, in that parents wanted everything in a kindergarten program. Parents wanted for their children a program that was both highly academic (that is a program that encourages learning through formal

Table 15

Parents' Responses to Importance of Kindergarten Practices

Practice	Ranking				N =
	Very Important %	Somewhat Important %	Somewhat Unimportant %	Very Unimportant %	
Read Daily	86.7	10.5	2.8	-	181
Paper & Pencil Activities	75.0	20.1	4.4	0.5	184
Rewards	70.7	21.2	6.5	1.6	184
Teacher Directed Instruction	67.8	26.2	4.4	1.6	183
Sitting Quietly	58.2	30.0	7.1	4.9	184
Small Muscle Development	53.8	39.7	6.0	0.5	184
Devotions	46.8	38.0	14.1	1.1	184
Basic Skill Development	38.8	47.0	13.1	1.1	183
Cooking/Field Trips	29.4	51.1	17.9	1.6	184
Play at Centers	28.3	53.8	16.3	1.6	184
L[illegible] Muscle Development	26.2	44.3	24.0	5.5	183
Free Choice	23.9	51.1	19.0	6.0	184

teacher-directed activities), as well as developmental (a program that encourages learning through play and more student-directed activities). These researchers could suggest no reason for this except that "parents want everything offered in Kindergarten and more" (Webster and Wood, 1986, p.8).

Parental involvement

Section III of the questionnaire asked parents to indicate their level of agreement with types of parental involvement. Their responses are shown in Table 16. For all items, at least 60% of the parents indicated agreement.

Half or more of the parents strongly agreed with the first seven items in the table, but they most strongly agreed with attending meetings. Approximately one-third of the parents disagreed with getting involved by preparing materials, working in the classroom, and helping by teaching.

Overall, parents in this study agree with all types of parental involvement, however they agree least with active classroom participation.

Table 16

Parents' Agreement with Types of Parental Involvement

Type of Involvement	Ranking				N =
	Strongly Agree %	Somewhat Agree %	Somewhat Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	
Meetings	68.9	25.1	5.5	0.5	183
Observing	59.6	35.5	3.3	1.6	183
Supervising	59.9	35.7	4.4	-	182
Making Decisions	53.5	38.3	4.9	3.3	183
Special Events	52.4	35.0	11.5	1.1	183
Raising Funds	50.5	33.0	9.9	6.6	182
Attending Workshops	50.0	40.1	9.3	0.6	182
Planning/ Religious	39.3	43.7	11.5	5.5	183
Preparing Materials	23.1	46.2	23.6	7.1	182
Working	22.5	42.9	29.1	5.5	182
Helping By Teaching	19.1	50.8	23.0	7.1	183

Knowledge of program

Most parents felt that they were knowledgeable about their child's kindergarten program, with 88.3% indicating that they knew some or a lot about their child's program.

In summarizing parents' perceptions, this study showed that half of the parents believed that a kindergarten program should allow children to develop emotionally and mentally, while approximately one-third believed that it should help them develop socially. Most parents believed that Health, and Pre-reading/Reading, were the most important subject areas in the kindergarten curriculum, while Science, Art, and Music were least important. Slightly over half of the parents believed in integrating handicapped children with the regular kindergarten children. Slightly less than half felt that handicapped children should be separated from the remainder of the kindergarten children by placing them in special schools or in special classes. Parents believed that parent-teacher conferences and report cards were most valuable in reporting children's progress. Nearly two-thirds of the parents believed having more equipment and material in the kindergarten classroom would improve the quality of kindergarten education, while significantly fewer parents believed having fewer children in the kindergarten class would improve kindergarten education. Having a warm, friendly personality, and seeing

each child as an individual were considered the most desirable characteristics of the kindergarten teacher. Parents believed that the most important thing they could do at home to help their children learn was to read to them. Over two-thirds of the parents believed that all kindergarten practices were important. As well, over two-thirds of the parents agreed with all types of parental involvement.

Parent differences

Question 3. What differences exist among parents regarding their perceptions of aspects of kindergarten programming as related to denominational affiliation of the school their child attends, the population of the school their child attends, mother's educational level, father's educational level, their age, the extent of their child's preschool experience, their previous experience with children in kindergarten, and the extent of involvement in their child's kindergarten program.

The data from the parent questionnaire were analyzed, using a chi-square test of independence, with a significance level set at .05, to determine if parents' responses were related to the denominational affiliation of the school their child attends, the population of the school their

child attends, mother's educational level, father's educational level, their age, the extent of their child's preschool experience, their previous experience with children in preschool, and the extent of their involvement in their child's kindergarten program. If a relationship was detected, an appropriate measure of correlation was calculated to determine the magnitude of the relationship. According to Borg and Gall (1983), the contingency coefficient (C) is appropriately calculated when the variables to be correlated are in the form of categories, such as denominational affiliation and function of kindergarten education. Spearman's rho (ρ) is the appropriate correlation coefficient when the two variables to be correlated are in the form of ranks, such as school size and ratings of the importance of the subject areas in kindergarten. The correlation ratio eta (η) is appropriate when one of the variables to be correlated is in the form of unordered data and the other is ordered data, such as denominational affiliation (unordered) and ratings of the importance of the subject areas (ordered). Eta is also used to detect non-linear relationships between ordered variables, such as length of preschool experience and ratings of subject areas. In interpreting and describing the appropriate correlation coefficient, coefficients ranging from .02 to .24 were taken to indicate a "slight" relationship; from .25 to .49 a "moderate" relationship;

and .50 and beyond, a "strong" relationship.

Denomination

Shown in Table 17 are significant differences within the parents' responses as related to the denominational affiliation of their child's school. For all the variables the relationships were slight, except for devotions, supervising, and special events where moderate relationships were found.

Of the Roman Catholic group, 64% believed Religion should receive the most emphasis in kindergarten in contrast to only 37% of the Integrated and 27% of the Pentecostal. Regarding the importance of daily devotions in kindergarten, 91% of both the Roman Catholic and the Pentecostal groups and 74% of the Integrated group indicated it was important. For the remaining three subject areas, Science, Art, and Music, approximately three-quarters of the Pentecostal group, two-thirds of the Integrated, and half of the Roman Catholic rated them first or second.

For parental involvement where denomination made a difference, namely, supervising, helping with special events, fund raising, and attending workshops, the Integrated parents were most likely to strongly agree, except for attending workshops where the Pentecostal group was most likely to agree. Overall, Roman Catholic parents

were least likely to agree with these types of parental involvement.

Table 17

Significant Relationships Between School's Denominational Affiliation and Parents' Responses to Aspects of Kindergarten Programming

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p <)	Correlation Coefficient eta
Devotions	181	.05	.338
Supervising	180	.01	.267
Special Events	181	.01	.248
Raising Funds	181	.01	.238
Religion	178	.01	.231
Music	173	.01	.226
Small Muscle Development	181	.05	.215
Attending Workshops	180	.01	.204
Sitting Quietly	181	.05	.176
Rewards	181	.05	.172
Art	175	.05	.168
Science	174	.05	.164
Preparing Materials	180	.05	.160

Regarding the estimated importance of kindergarten children's small muscle development, receiving rewards, and sitting quietly, over 80% of the parents considered them important; however, there were some slight differences between the denominational groups. Roman Catholic parents did not think that small muscle development was as important as did the Pentecostal or Integrated parents, while the Integrated parents did not think that receiving rewards or sitting quietly were as important as did the Roman Catholic or Pentecostal parents.

Since the parent sample is not proportional to the total population of parents of kindergarten children in the province with respect to denominational affiliation, further calculations had to be made. Therefore, table 18 shows the weighted percentages for parents' responses on variables related to denomination. For all these variables the differences between the actual and the weighted percentage were very small (less than 5%). Of the total number of children attending kindergarten classes in schools in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1989-90, approximately 54% attended Integrated schools, 41% attended Roman Catholic schools, and 5% attended Pentecostal schools (Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1989). However in the parent sample, parents with children attending schools under the auspices of each of the three denominational systems were proportional. Therefore, the weighted percentages for

Table 18

Weighted Values for Parents' Responses on Variables Related to Denominational Affiliation (and References to Earlier Tables Containing Unweighted Values)

Variable	Rating 1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %
Section 1 (See Note 1 at end of Table)				
Devotions (Table 15)	44.3	37.5	17.3	0.9
Small Muscle Development (Table 15)	50.7	42.7	5.9	0.7
Sitting Quietly (Table 15)	55.2	29.9	8.9	6.0
Rewards (Table 15)	66.8	22.7	7.8	2.7
Section 2 (See Note 2 at end of Table)				
Supervising (Table 16)	62.8	33.5	3.7	0.0
Special Events (Table 16)	53.8	35.4	10.1	0.7
Raising Funds (Table 16)	49.2	31.9	12.1	6.8
Attending Workshops (Table 16)	48.1	41.7	9.3	0.9
Preparing Materials (Table 16)	22.2	46.4	22.4	9.0
Section 3 (See Note 3 at end of Table)				
Religion (Table 10)	47.6	32.4	13.7	6.3
Music (Table 10)	19.5	40.8	29.4	10.3
Art (Table 10)	23.2	37.2	34.2	5.4
Science (Table 10)	26.1	34.0	29.7	10.2

(Table 18 continues on the following page)

Table 18 (continued from previous page)

Notes:
1. Section 1 ratings are: 1 - Very Important, 2 - Somewhat Important, 3 - Somewhat Unimportant, 4 - Very Unimportant.
2. Section 2 ratings are: 1 - Strongly Agree, 2 - Somewhat Agree, 3 - Somewhat Disagree, 4 - Strongly Disagree.
3. Section 3 Ratings are: 1 - Highest Emphasis, 2 - Less Emphasis, 3 - Lesser Emphasis, 4 - Least Emphasis.

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parents' responses were calculated using the following proportions: Integrated, .54; Roman Catholic, .41; and Pentecostal, .05.

School population

Shown in Table 19 are significant differences within the parent responses as related to population of the school their child attended. For all the variables where school size was related to parents' responses, the relationships were slight.

Religion in the kindergarten curriculum was rated first in importance: by 49% of the small school group (fewer than 100 students); by 46% of the middle-sized school group (100-299 students); and only by 33% of the large school group (greater than 300 students). Regarding the importance of daily participation in devotions, 97% of the small school

group, and 87% of the middle-sized school group considered it important, compared to 77% of the large school group. Over 90% of the large school group believed that basic skill development was important, while approximately 80% of the other groups believed it was important.

Table 19

Significant Relationships Between School Population and Parents' Responses to Aspects of Kindergarten Programming

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p <)	Correlation Coefficient rho
Devotions	175	.01	.175
Basic Skill Development	174	.05	-.173
Religion	172	.05	.157

Mother's educational level

Table 20 shows all significant differences within the parents' responses as related to mother's education. For all the variables where the level of mother's education was related to parents' responses, the relationships were slight

except for moderate relationships to the first two variables in the table. In the following discussion, educational levels have been grouped as follows: (a) "some high school" and "graduated high school" will be referred to as high

Table 20

Significant Relationships Between Mothers' Education and Parents' Responses to Aspects of Kindergarten Programming

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p <)	Correlation Coefficient
Home Activities	85	.01	rho = -.287
Handicap Placement	175	.01	eta = .262
Television	84	.05	rho = .242
Sitting Quietly	178	.01	rho = .231
Rewards	178	.01	rho = .228
Homework	85	.05	rho = .194
Teacher-Directed Instruction	177	.01	rho = .184
Math	176	.05	rho = .154
Paper & Pencil Activities	178	.05	rho = .145
Teaching	178	.05	rho = -.143
Small Muscle Development	178	.05	rho = -.135

school; (b) "vocational", "trades", and "other" training, as vocational\trades\other; and (c) "some university" and "graduated university", as university.

All of the ten parents in the university group believed that handicapped children should be integrated into the regular kindergarten on a full-time or part-time basis. Only, 66% of the vocational/trades/other group and 51% of the high school group believed similarly. Regarding the value of home learning activities for children, namely, participating in household activities, watching television, and helping with homework, only 17% of the vocational\ trades\other group and 10% of the high school group ranked participation in household activities first or second, while 63% of the parents in the university group ranked it first or second. Watching television was ranked first or second by 60% of the high school group, 45% of the vocational\ trades\other group and 38% of the university group. Parents helping children with homework was ranked first or second by more than 70% of the high school and the vocational\trades\ other groups, but by only 25% of the university group.

The high school group was most likely (75%) to think that it was very important for kindergarten children to receive rewards for work well done or for behaving properly, compared to 60% of both the vocational\trades\other and university groups. As well, 82% of the vocational\trades\ other group believed that it was important that children sit

quietly, listen to the teacher, and follow instructions compared to 90% or more of the other two groups. Also, 80% of the university and 63% of the vocational\trades \other group, compared to only 50% of the high school group, judged that small muscle development in kindergarten was important. The university group (84%), and the high school group (79%) were most likely to consider it very important that children complete paper and pencil activities in kindergarten, while the vocational/trades/other group (63%) were least likely to consider it very important. Regarding the estimated importance of teacher-directed instruction, one-half of the university group, two-thirds of the vocational/trades/other group, and 70% of the high school group rated it as very important. The high school group (66%) was much less likely than the vocational/trades/other group (80%), and the university group (90%) to agree that parents should get involved in their child's kindergarten by coming into the classroom and teaching.

Around two-thirds (65%) of the high school group believed Math should receive the highest emphasis in the kindergarten curriculum, compared to 51% of the vocational\ trades\other group and only 30% of the university group.

In short, in regard to the value of learning activities, the high school group was most likely to rank high in value children watching television and parents helping children with homework; but less likely to rank high

in value children's participation in household activities. Also, in contrast to the other groups, this group did not think that small muscle development or teacher-directed instruction were as important; but they did think that rewards were more important. They were also least likely to agree with parental involvement through teaching.

When compared to the other groups, the vocational/ trades/other group did not think it was as important that children sit quietly, receive rewards, or complete paper and pencil tasks.

The university group was least likely to rank high in value children watching television, and parents helping children with homework; but most likely to rank high in value children's participation in household activities. This group was most likely to believe that it was important for children to complete paper and pencil tasks, but they were least likely to believe that teacher-directed instruction and small muscle development were important. Both this group and the high school group equally judged sitting quietly more important than the vocational/trades/ other group judged it to be. The university group was also most likely to agree with parental involvement by teaching in kindergarten.

Father's educational level

Shown in Table 21 are significant differences within the parents' responses as related to the educational level of the father. For all the variables where the father's educational level was related to parents' responses, the relationships were slight, except for sitting quietly where a moderate relationship was found. In the following discussion, educational levels have been grouped as follows: (a) "some high school" and "graduated high school" will be

Table 21

Significant Relationships Between Fathers' Education and Parents' Responses to Aspects of Kindergarten Programming

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p <)	Correlation Coefficient rho
Sitting Quietly	170	.01	.263
Religious Activities	170	.05	.177
Raising Funds	169	.05	.163
Devotions	170	.05	.146
Rewards	170	.05	.140
Working	169	.05	.135

referred to as high school (b) "vocational", "trades", and "other" training, as vocational\trades\other; and (c) "some university" and "graduated university", as university.

In regard to children participating in daily devotions, 93% of the high school group, 73% of the vocational\trades\other group, and 67% of the university group considered it important. About one-quarter (26%) of the university group considered it unimportant for children to sit quietly; but only 14% of the vocational\trades\other and 9% of the high school groups considered it unimportant.

Age

Shown in Table 22 are significant differences within the parents' responses as related to parents' age. For all the variables where age was related to parents' responses, the relationships were slight.

Only 36% of the under 26-group believed that it was important that children participate in daily devotions. However, about three-quarters (73%) of the 36-45, and 100% of the two respondents in the over-45 group judged this practice to be important.

The younger parents were most likely to think it was important for children to sit quietly, follow directions, and listen to the teacher, with 76% of the under 26 group, 59% of the 26-35 group and 46% of the 36-45 group strongly

agreeing. As well, 40% of the younger parents believed that it was very important for children to have some choice over what they want to do in kindergarten, but only 23% of the 26-35 group and 15% of the 36-45 group believed similarly. Finally, receiving rewards was considered important by 92% of the younger parents, 67% of the 26-35 group and 62% of the 36-45 group.

Table 22

Significant Relationships Between Age of Parents and Parents' Responses to Aspects of Kindergarten Programming

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p <)	Contingency Coefficient rho
Free Choice	180	.05	.192
Sitting Quietly	180	.01	.182
Devotions	180	.05	-.171
Attending Workshops	179	.05	.151
Rewards	180	.05	.151
Making Decisions	180	.05	.128

Length of preschool

Shown in Table 23 are significant differences within the parents' responses as related to the length of time their child attended preschool during the year prior to kindergarten. For all of the variables where length of preschool was related to parents' responses, there were slight relationships, except for function of kindergarten where a moderate relationship was found.

The amount of time parents had their child in preschool

Table 23

Significant Relationships Between Length of Preschool and Parents' Responses to Aspects of Kindergarten Programming

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p <)	Correlation Coefficient
Function	168	.01	eta = .269
Raising Funds	174	.01	rho = -.199
Report Cards	174	.05	eta = .170
Religion	172	.05	rho = .160
Devotions	175	.05	rho = .150
Music	168	.05	rho = -.137

in the year before kindergarten was related to their perceptions of the most important function of kindergarten. About two-thirds (64%) of parents whose children had had no preschool experience, and half of the parents whose children attended preschool for 9-12 months believed that the most important function of kindergarten was to develop positive concepts about self and learning. However, slightly less than 40% of the 1-4 month group and the 5-8 month group chose it as the most important function of kindergarten.

Furthermore, parents who had had their children in preschool for 9-12 months (62%), or not at all (50%) were more likely than those in the other two groups to agree strongly with raising funds for the school.

Previous kindergarten experience

Shown in Table 24 are significant differences within the parents' responses as related to parents' previous experience with children in kindergarten. For all of the variables where previous kindergarten experience was related to parents' responses, the relationships were slight, except for attending workshops where a moderate relationship was found.

For both Music and Physical Education, it was the more experienced parents who were most likely to feel that these subjects should receive more emphasis than other subjects.

Less experienced parents were more likely to perceive that parent-teacher conferences as a valuable way of receiving information about their child's progress. In selecting ways to improve the quality of kindergarten education, it was

Table 24

Significant Relationships Between Parents' Previous Kindergarten Experience and Parents' Responses to Aspects of Kindergarten Programming

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p <)	Correlation Coefficient
Attending Workshops	174	.01	rho = .246
Function	168	.01	eta = .230
Devotions	175	.01	rho = -.218
Physical Education	170	.01	rho = .210
Parent\Teacher Conferences	175	.01	eta = .191
Music	169	.01	rho = .183
More Equipment & Materials	171	.05	eta = .163
Playing at Centers	175	.05	rho = .158
Special Events	175	.05	rho = .148
Making Decisions	175	.05	rho = .140

less experienced parents who were most likely to select more equipment and materials. Playing at centers was considered more important by less experienced parents. For the three types of parental involvement (attending workshops, planning special events, and making decisions) the less experienced parents were more likely to agree with each type of involvement.

Overall, this study indicated that denominational affiliation and mother's education were the strongest factors related to parents' responses. Denominational affiliation was most strongly related to parents' estimates of the importance of daily devotions, and to agreement with parents' supervising and helping with special events. Roman Catholic and Pentecostal parents were more likely than Integrated parents to consider daily devotions important, while Roman Catholic and Integrated parents rated Religion higher in importance than Pentecostal parents. Roman Catholic parents were less likely to agree with parental involvement, while, generally, Integrated parents showed the most agreement.

Some of the strongest relationships between mother's education and parents' responses were with regard to estimates of the value of learning activities, including children's participation in household activities and watching television, and parents helping children with homework. Less educated parents believed that watching

television and helping children with homework were more valuable than did the more educated parents, while more educated parents believed that allowing children to participate in household activities was more valuable than did the less educated parents. Father's educational level was most strongly related to parents' estimates of the importance of having children sit quietly in kindergarten. The higher the father's education the less important parents thought it was for children to sit quietly in kindergarten. The length of time children spent in preschool in the year before kindergarten was most strongly related to parents' opinions of the most important function of kindergarten. Finally, parents' previous kindergarten experience was most strongly related to parents' agreement with attending workshops and with their opinions of the most important function of kindergarten.

Teacher Differences

Question 4. What differences exist among kindergarten teachers regarding their perceptions of aspects of kindergarten programming as related to the denominational affiliation of the school, their qualifications, extent of upgrading, teaching experience at the kindergarten level and at other levels, instances of specialized training, and school population?

The data were analyzed, using a chi-square test of independence with a significance level set at .05, to determine if teachers' responses were related to the denominational affiliation of the school, their qualifications, extent of upgrading, teaching experience at the kindergarten level and at other levels, instances of specialized training, and school population. Upon finding a relationship, an appropriate measure of correlation was calculated to determine the magnitude of the relationship, namely, the contingency coefficient (C), Spearman's rho (ρ), or eta (η), as discussed above for Question 3. In interpreting and describing the appropriate correlation coefficient, coefficients ranging from .02 to .24 were taken to indicate a "slight" relationship; from .25 to .49, a "moderate relationship"; and .50 and beyond, a "strong' relationship.

Denomination

Shown in Table 25 are significant differences within teachers' responses as related to denominational affiliation of the school. For most of the variables the relationships were moderate, except for devotions where there was a strong relationship was strong. For the remaining three variables, rewards, reading and homework, the relationships were slight.

In rating the importance of Religion in kindergarten,

Table 25

Significant Relationships Between Denominational Affiliation and Teachers' Responses to Aspects of Kindergarten Programming

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p <)	Correlation Coefficient eta
Devotions	78	.01	.523
Religion	77	.01	.407
Attending Workshops	80	.01	.361
Raising Funds	81	.05	.330
Home Activities	67	.01	.299
Health	79	.01	.293
Television	67	.01	.284
Religious Activities	81	.05	.280
Basic Skill Development	81	.05	.279
Math	80	.05	.261
Music	78	.01	.254
Rewards	81	.05	.240
Reading	81	.05	.223
Homework	67	.05	.223

64% of the Pentecostal teachers, compared to 27% of the Roman Catholic teachers and 14% of the Integrated teachers, believed that this subject should receive the highest degree of emphasis. One hundred percent of the Pentecostal teachers believed that participation in daily devotions was important; however, only 74% of the Roman Catholic teachers and 72% of the Integrated teachers considered it important. As well, one hundred percent of the Pentecostal teachers and 97% of the Roman Catholic teachers agreed with parents helping plan and participate in religious celebrations, while fewer Integrated teachers (83%) agreed with this type of involvement. Overall, the Pentecostal and Roman Catholic teachers believed that Religion, daily devotions and parental participation in religious activities played a more important role in kindergarten education than the Integrated teachers did. Most (89%) of the Pentecostal teachers and three-quarters of the Roman Catholic teachers believed that it was very important that children learn basic skills through play; however, only 55% of the Integrated teachers believed that it was very important. Three-quarters of the Roman Catholic teachers and two-thirds of the Integrated teachers agreed with parents' attending workshops, compared to only 40% of the Pentecostal teachers. As well, three-fourths of the Pentecostal teachers and half of the Roman Catholic teachers agreed with parents' raising funds for the school, while only 28% of the Integrated teachers agreed.

Since the teacher sample is not proportional to the total population of kindergarten teachers in the province with respect to denominational affiliation, further calculations had to be made. Therefore, table 26A and 26B show the weighted percentages for teachers' responses on variables related to denominational affiliation. For most of the variables the differences between the actual and weighted percentages were small (less than 6%) except for (a) agreement with parents raising funds for the school, and (b) estimates of the importance of Religion, basic skill development, daily devotions, and receiving rewards. For these variables, the difference between the actual and weighted percentages did not exceed 15%. Of the total number of schools with Kindergarten classes in Newfoundland and Labrador, 59% were Integrated, 32% were Roman Catholic and 9% were Pentecostal (Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1989). However in the teacher sample, teachers teaching in schools under the auspices of each of the three denominational systems were proportional. Therefore, the weighted percentages for teachers' responses were derived by using the following proportions: Integrated, .59; Roman Catholic, .32; and Pentecostal, .09.

Table 26A

Weighted Values for Teachers' Responses on Variables Related to Denominational Affiliation (and References to Earlier Tables Containing Unweighted Values)

Variable	Rating 1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %
Section 1 (See Note 1 at end of Table)				
Devotions (Table 8)	28.4	47.0	16.9	7.7
Basic Skill Development (Table 8)	64.5	31.2	4.3	0.0
Rewards (Table 8)	36.3	50.3	9.3	4.1
Section 2 (See Note 2 at end of Table)				
Attending Workshops (Table 7)	65.4	31.1	3.2	0.3
Raising Funds (Table 7)	38.8	60.0	-	1.2
Religious Activities (Table 7)	36.9	51.8	11.3	-
Section 3 (See Note 3 at end of Table)				
Religion (Table 3)	22.7	42.1	34.0	1.2
Health (Table 3)	40.8	34.9	21.9	2.4
Math (Table 3)	77.8	19.4	1.3	1.5
Music (Table 3)	27.6	52.6	19.8	-
Reading (Table 3)	86.1	12.4	-	1.5

(Table 26A continues on the following page)

Table 26A (continued from the previous page)

Notes:

1. Section 1 ratings are: 1 - Very Important, 2 - Somewhat Important, 3 - Somewhat Unimportant, 4 - Very Unimportant.
2. Section 2 ratings are: 1 - Strongly Agree, 2 - Somewhat Agree, 3 - Somewhat Disagree, 4 - Strongly Disagree.
3. Section 3 Ratings are: 1 - Highest Emphasis, 2 - Less Emphasis, 3 - Lesser Emphasis, 4 - Least Emphasis.

Table 26B

Weighted Values for Teachers' Responses on Variables Related to Denominational Affiliation (and References to Earlier Tables Containing Unweighted Values)

Variable	Ranking				
	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %
Homework (Table 7)	1.4	32.2	34.3	30.7	1.4
Home Activities (Table 7)	-	46.5	29.7	21.4	2.4
Watching Television (Table 7)	-	13.2	34.5	46.1	6.2

Qualifications

Shown in Table 27 are significant differences within the teacher responses as related to teachers' qualifications. For all the variables where qualifications were related to teachers' responses, the relationships were moderate.

Health was given a first or second place rating by only one-third of the high school trained teachers, whereas about 80% of the teachers with other qualifications rated it first or second. None of the teachers with high school training, compared to 40% of the teachers with other qualifications considered it important that children have opportunities for large muscle development. All high school trained teachers rated Science first or second in importance; but only two-thirds of the teachers with other qualifications rated it similarly.

Elementary trained teachers (15%) were much less likely than teachers with other qualifications (56%) to rank having a warm, friendly personality as the most desirable characteristic of a kindergarten teacher. Teachers with this type of training believed that parents helping children with homework was a valuable learning activity with about one-third ranking it first or second, while only 14% of teachers with other qualifications ranked it similarly. Those teachers were also much more likely (69%) than

Table 27

Significant Relationships between Qualifications and Teachers' Responses to Aspects of Kindergarten Programming

Variable 1	Variable 2	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p <)	Correlation Coefficient eta
High	Health	75	.05	.287
High	Large Muscle Development	77	.05	.269
High	Science	73	.05	.265
High	Special Events	77	.05	.249
Elementary	Personality	63	.01	.332
Elementary	Math	76	.05	.280
Elementary	Homework	63	.05	.276
Elementary	Making Decisions	77	.05	.270
Elementary	Play at Centers	77	.05	.269
Elementary	Knowledge of Development	63	.05	.261
Primary	Homework	63	.01	.328
Primary	Planning/ Religious	77	.01	.313
Primary	Science	73	.05	.300

Notes:
High - education degree with training in grades 7 - Level III
Elementary - education degree with training in grades 4 - 6
Primary - education degree with training in grades Kindergarten - 3

teachers with other qualifications (38%) to agree with parents making decisions about their children's program. Only about one-third of the elementary trained teachers considered it very important that children play at centers; however, three-quarters of the teachers with primary or high school training considered it very important.

Teachers with primary training (78%) were more likely than teachers with other qualifications (34%) to rank parents helping children with homework first, second , or third. Only one-third of teachers with primary training strongly agreed with parents becoming involved by helping plan and participate in religious celebrations, in contrast to approximately half of the teachers with training at the high school or elementary level.

Upgrading

The number of education courses teachers had taken in the last five years was moderately related to their estimates of degree of emphasis for Science ($p < .01$, $df = 77$, $rho = .287$). Nearly two-thirds of the teachers (61%) who had not upgraded at all rated Science highest, while only 11% of the 6-10 course group and about one-third of the 1-5 and the 11-or-more course group rated it highest.

Teaching experience

Shown in Table 28 are significant differences within teachers' responses as related to teaching experience. Teaching experience at the kindergarten level was moderately related to these variables, except for function where a slight relationship was found. Teaching experience at other levels was slightly related to three other variables. The teachers with less than six years teaching kindergarten were most likely to agree with parents helping plan and participate in religious celebrations (100%), and making decisions (50%).

Overall, this study indicated that some of the teachers' responses to aspects of kindergarten programming were related to denominational affiliation, qualifications, extent of upgrading, and teaching experience. Instances of specialized training and school population were not found to be related to the teachers' responses. Denominational affiliation was most strongly related to teachers' estimates of the importance of daily devotions, and to their ratings of Religion as a subject in kindergarten. Overall, Pentecostal teachers rated Religion higher in importance, were more likely to believe daily devotions were important, and were more likely to agree with parents helping plan and participate in religious activities. Qualifications were most strongly related to elementary trained teachers'

opinions regarding the value of a kindergarten teacher having a warm, friendly personality; and to primary trained teachers' opinions of the value of parents helping children with homework, and planning and participating in religious

Table 28

Significant Relationships Between Teaching Experience and Teachers' Responses to Aspects of Kindergarten Programming

Variable 1	Variable 2	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p <)	Correlation Coefficient rho
Kindergarten Level	Planning/ Religious	81	.01	.310
Kindergarten Level	Sees Child as Individual	67	.01	.291
Kindergarten Level	Making Decisions	81	.05	.247
Kindergarten Level	Function	74	.05	.233
Other Levels	Television	67	.05	-.213
Other Levels	Music	78	.05	-.202
Other Levels	Supervising	80	.05	.200

Notes:
Kindergarten Level - teaching experience from teaching kindergarten
Other Levels - teaching experience from teaching grades other than kindergarten.

celebrations. Finally less experienced kindergarten teachers were most likely to agree with parents helping plan and participate in religious celebrations in kindergarten.

Differences between parents and teachers

Question 5. To what extent do the perceptions of teachers differ from the perceptions of parents?

The data were analyzed, using a chi-square test of independence with a significance level set at .05, to determine if there were any significant differences between parents and teachers in their responses to aspects of kindergarten education. If a significant difference was found, an appropriate measure of correlation was calculated to determine the magnitude of the relationship. Eta (η) was calculated when investigating the strength of a relationship between the parents and teachers on variables that were in the form of ordered data, such as the rating of the subject areas; and the contingency coefficient (C) was calculated in determining the strength of a relationship between the parents and teachers on variables that were in the form of unordered data, such as their perceptions of the placement of handicapped children in kindergarten. In interpreting and describing the appropriate correlation coefficient, coefficients ranging from .02 to .24 were taken

to indicate a "slight" relationship; from .25 to .49, a "moderate" relationship; and .50 and beyond, a "strong" relationship between role (teacher or parent) and another variable.

Ratings of subject areas, placement of handicapped children, value of home learning activities, improving kindergarten education, and value of procedures for reporting progress

Table 29 shows significant relationships between parent's or teacher's role and their responses regarding the placement of handicapped children, their estimates of the importance of four subject areas, the value of home learning activities, improvements to kindergarten education, and the value of procedures for reporting progress. For the first four variables in the table, the relationships were moderate; for the remaining variables the relationships were slight.

A moderate difference was found between parents and teachers regarding their views on placement of handicapped children during their first year of schooling. Over half of the parents (58%), believed that children should begin their schooling in special schools or in special classes; but only 14% of the teachers believed similarly. Furthermore, 59% of the teachers believed that handicapped children could begin their schooling in the kindergarten class part of the time and in special classes the remainder of the time; but only

40% of the parents were of the same belief.

Table 29

Significant Relationships Between Teacher or Parent Role and Responses Regarding Subject Area Rating, Placement of Handicapped Children, Value of Home Learning Activities, Improving Kindergarten Education, and Value of Procedures for Reporting Progress

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p <)	Correlation Coefficient
Homework	156	.01	eta = .401
Health	263	.01	eta = .368
Handicap Placement	259	.01	C = .351
Home Activities	155	.01	eta = .280
Fewer Children	260	.01	eta = .243
Reading	156	.01	eta = .224
Report Cards	265	.01	C = .220
Science	255	.01	eta = .220
Math	262	.01	eta = .184
Music	255	.01	eta = .184
Lengthen Day	262	.01	eta = .166
Telephone Calls	265	.01	C = .161
Parent/Teacher Conferences	266	.05	C = .144

Parents and teachers differed in rating the importance of Health, Science, Math, and Music, as shown in Table 30. However, they differed most in their estimate of the importance of Health education in kindergarten. Parents (84%) were much more likely than teachers (43%) to believe

Table 30

Comparisons of Teachers' and Parents' Ratings of Subject Areas

Subject	Rating: Highest Emphasis %	Less Emphasis %	Lesser Emphasis %	Least Emphasis %	N =
		Teachers			
Health	42.7	39.0	15.9	2.4	82
Science	37.5	52.5	8.7	1.3	80
Math	78.3	18.1	1.2	2.4	83
Music	29.6	50.6	19.8	-	81
		Parents			
Health	83.6	12.0	2.7	1.7	183
Science	28.8	35.0	27.7	8.5	177
Math	59.7	26.0	10.5	4.0	181
Music	22.2	40.9	27.8	9.1	176

Health should receive the highest emphasis in kindergarten. Teachers were more likely than parents to believe that Science, Math, and Music were to be the most emphasized in kindergarten.

Table 31 shows differences between the parents and the teachers in their estimates of the value of certain learning activities. Even though the majority of the parents and the

Table 31

Comparisons of Teachers' and Parents' Responses to Value of Home Activities

	Ranking				
Activity	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	N =
		Teachers			
Homework	1.4	28.6	34.3	35.7	70
Home Activities	-	52.9	24.3	22.8	70
Reading	94.3	4.3	1.4	-	70
		Parents			
Homework	15.9	50.0	26.1	8.0	88
Home Activities	5.7	13.8	32.2	48.3	87
Reading	76.1	19.3	3.4	1.2	88

teachers considered reading to the child the most valuable learning activity, more teachers (94%) than parents (76%) considered it most valuable. Parents were much more likely to believe that helping their children with homework was a valuable learning activity, while teachers were more likely to value children's participation in household activities.

Finally, more parents (62%) than teachers (35%) considered report cards a valuable procedure for reporting children's progress.

Kindergarten practices

For the kindergarten practices listed in Table 32, a strong difference between parents and teachers was found regarding their estimates of the importance of children sitting quietly in kindergarten. For six of the variables the relationships were moderate, while slight relationships were noted for the remaining four variables.

Table 32

Significant Relationships Between Teacher or Parent Role and Responses Regarding Kindergarten Practices

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p <)	Correlation Coefficient eta
Sitting Quietly	263	.01	.620
Paper & Pencil Activities	266	.01	.478
Basic Skill Development	265	.01	.305
Play at Centers	266	.01	.270
Free Choice	266	.01	.259
Large Muscle Development	265	.01	.250
Teacher-Directed Instruction	264	.01	.233
Small Muscle Development	266	.01	.210
Rewards	266	.01	.210
Field Trips	265	.01	.191
Read Books	263	.01	.187

Table 33 shows that parents believed more than teachers did that sitting quietly, paper and pencil activities, and teacher-directed instruction were important. Over 88% of

Table 33

Comparisons of Teachers' and Parents' Responses to Importance of Sitting Quietly, Paper and Pencil Activities, Basic Skill Development, Playing at Centers, and Teacher-Directed Instruction

Practice	Ranking* 1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	N =
	Teachers				
Sitting Quietly	4.9	24.7	30.9	39.5	81
Paper & Pencil Activities	29.8	35.7	25.0	9.5	84
Basic Skill Development	72.6	23.8	3.6	-	84
Play at Centers	60.7	31.0	7.1	1.2	84
Teacher-Directed Instruction	43.4	39.8	14.4	2.4	83
	Parents				
Sitting Quietly	58.1	29.9	7.1	4.9	184
Paper & Pencil Activities	75.0	20.1	4.4	0.5	184
Basic Skill Development	38.8	47.0	13.1	1.1	183
Play at Centers	28.3	53.8	16.3	1.6	184
Teacher-Directed Instruction	67.8	26.2	4.4	1.6	183

* Ranking: 1 - Very Important, 2 - Somewhat Important, 3 - Somewhat Unimportant, 4 - Very Unimportant.

the parents, compared to only 30% of the teachers, considered it was important for children to spend a part of each day in kindergarten sitting quietly. Teachers were much more likely than parents to think that playing at centers and learning basic skills through play were very important. Also, for both groups, learning basic skills through play was considered more important than play at centers. The findings of the present study regarding play are unlike those of Rothleen and Brett (1984), in their survey of Dade County, Florida preschools, in which many of the parents and teachers did not think play was important. Bloch and Wichaidit's (1985) findings, however, resembles those of the present study, in that the teachers in their study were more favourable toward play than parents were.

One-third of the parents believed that large muscle development was not important in kindergarten, compared to only 5% of the teachers. The differences between parents and teachers concerning small muscle development was very small; however, more teachers (75%) than parents (59%) believed that it was very important.

One-quarter of the parents considered it unimportant for children to have opportunities in kindergarten for free choice; wheras only 4% of the teachers considered it unimportant.

Parents (71%), more than teachers (43%), believed that it was very important that children receive rewards.

Parental involvement

Table 34 shows the differences between parents and teachers regarding agreement with types of parental involvement in kindergarten. A strong relationship was found regarding their agreement with parents making decisions; a moderate relationship, regarding agreement with parents preparing materials; and a slight relationship, regarding agreement with parents supervising.

Table 34

Significant Relationships Between Teacher or Parent Role and Responses Regarding Types of Parental Involvement

Types of Involvement	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p <)	Correlation Coefficient eta
Making Decisions	265	.01	.558
Preparing Materials	263	.01	.246
Supervising	263	.01	.182

Table 35 shows that teachers (55%) were much more likely than parents (8%) to disagree with parents making decisions about their children's program. Teachers were more likely than parents to strongly agree with parents preparing materials and supervising.

Table 35

Comparisons of Teachers' and Parents' Agreement with Involvement Through Making Decisions, Preparing Materials, and Supervising

Types of Involvement	Ranking				N =
	Strongly Agree %	Somewhat Agree %	Somewhat Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	
			Teachers		
Making Decisions	6.0	39.3	32.1	22.6	84
Preparing Materials	38.6	54.2	4.8	2.4	83
Supervising	78.3	20.5	1.2	-	83
			Parents		
Making Decision	53.5	38.3	4.9	3.3	183
Preparing Materials	23.1	46.2	23.6	7.1	182
Supervising	59.9	35.7	4.4	-	182

In sum, any differences between parents' and teachers' responses were generally moderate or slight. However, for estimating the importance of children sitting quietly in kindergarten and for agreeing with parents making decisions about their child's education, strong relationships were found with parent or teacher role. Moderate relationships were found concerning the estimated importance of paper and pencil activities, Health as a subject area, basic skill development, play at centers, tree choice, and large muscle development; and concerning the estimated value of parents helping children with homework and children's participation in household activities; and concerning opinions regarding the placement of handicapped children in the school. For all other variables where significant differences between parents and teachers were found, the relationships with role were slight.

Similarities between parents and teachers

Question 6. To what extent are the perceptions of teachers similar to the perceptions of parents?

Parents and teachers strongly agreed in several areas, including the estimated importance of Social Studies, Physical Education, and Pre-reading\Reading in kindergarten. Most teachers (86%) and parents (77%) believed that Pre-

reading\Reading should receive the highest emphasis in kindergarten. Both groups also agreed that Social Studies should receive a somewhat lesser degree of emphasis with 56% of the teachers and 50% of the parents giving it a second rating. With regard to Physical Education, both groups agreed that it should be given priority, with 72% of the teachers and 79% of the parents rating it first or second.

Neither teachers nor parents believed that home visits from the teacher were valuable in communicating children's progress; for only 6% of the teachers and 4% of the parents believed it was valuable. By contrast, in a study on home-school communication in kindergarten, by Newhook (1985), it was found that slightly more support (30%) towards home visits was given by kindergarten parents.

About two-thirds of parents and teachers agreed that having more equipment and materials in the kindergarten class would improve the quality of kindergarten. Slightly more than one-quarter of parents and teachers also agreed that the quality of kindergarten education would not be improved by having more parental involvement.

Parents and teachers agreed on the order of importance of desirable kindergarten teacher characteristics. They ranked having a warm friendly personality and seeing each child as an individual highest; while knowledge of child development and knowledge of subject matter were ranked

lowest.

About half of the parents and teachers considered that having children watch television programming was the least valuable home learning activity.

Over 80% of both parents and teachers agreed on several areas of parental involvement, including: helping plan and participate in religious celebrations; helping make plans for special events; and attending meetings to learn more about the kindergarten program.

Overall, the areas of greatest agreement between parents and teachers regarding aspects of kindergarten education included their estimated importance of Social Studies, Physical Education, and Pre-Reading/Reading. They also strongly agreed that home visits from the teacher were not a valuable procedure for reporting children's progress. Both groups believed that having more equipment and material would improve kindergarten education, and that more parental involvement would not improve it. Futhermore, they closely agreed about the ranking of desirable characteristics of kindergarten teachers, with personality and seeing each child as an individual ranked highest, and knowledge of subject matter ranked lowest. They also agreed that watching television was not a valuable learning activity. As well, they both believed that it was important for children to participate in daily devotions in kindergarten. Finally, they strongly agreed with parents attending

meetings, helping plan for special events, and helping plan and participate in religious activities.

Conclusions

The findings of this study indicate generally that parents' and teachers' views of kindergarten education are in harmony with what is considered a quality education program for young children. Even though parents' and teachers' perceptions of some aspects of kindergarten programming were similar, they differed on others. There were considerable differences for two variables, namely, their estimates of the importance of kindergarten children sitting quietly in kindergarten and their agreement with parents being involved as decision makers. Both parents' and teachers' responses were found to be significantly related to several variables; however denominational affiliation was the variable that was most strongly related to both groups' responses.

For parents, denominational affiliation was most strongly related to their estimates of the importance of devotions and their agreement with parents helping supervise and helping with special events. Mother's education was also related to parents' responses. This variable was most strongly related to the value parents gave to helping their children with homework, and to their opinions regarding the

placement of handicapped children in kindergarten. Father's education was also related to some parents' responses, but the strongest relationship was found in their estimates of the importance of children sitting quietly in kindergarten. Parents' age was found to be slightly related to parents' responses on several items, as was school population. The length of time children spent in preschool in the year before attending kindergarten was most strongly related to parents' opinions regarding the function of kindergarten. Finally, parents' past experience with children in kindergarten was related to parents' responses with the strongest relationships found regarding parents' opinions of the function of kindergarten and their agreement with attending workshops.

For teachers, denominational affiliation was most strongly related to teachers' estimates of the importance of children participating in daily devotions. Qualifications were moderately related to teachers' responses to some aspects of kindergarten programming. The strongest relationship was found regarding responses and an elementary degree, specifically, teachers' ranking of personality as a desirable characteristic of kindergarten teachers. A primary degree was related to teachers' estimates of the value of parents helping children with homework, their agreement with parents planning and participating in religious celebrations, and their rating of Science; while a

high school degree was related to teachers' responses to several variables, including ratings of Science and Health, estimates of the importance of small muscle development, and agreement with parents helping with special events. Extent of upgrading was related to teachers' rating of Science. Finally, teaching experience was related to several variables, with the strongest relationships found for teachers' agreement with parents planning and participating in religious celebrations, the ranking of seeing each child as an individual as a desirable kindergarten teacher trait, and agreement with parents making decisions. Instances of specialized training and school population were not related to teachers' responses on any of the items on the questionnaire.

Further conclusions to the findings of this study are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Presented in this chapter are the conclusions to the findings of this study of parents' and teachers' perceptions of kindergarten programming in Newfoundland and Labrador. Recommendations, and suggestions for further research are also presented. Since the samples are not proportional denominationally to the population of parents and teachers, generalizations to teachers and parents in Newfoundland and Labrador are made using weighted percentages for variables related to denominational affiliations.

The results of this study indicate several general patterns concerning teachers' and parents' perceptions of kindergarten education in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. First, while parents and teachers are generally similar in their perceptions of aspects of kindergarten programming, statistically significant differences between the two exist. Second, parents and teachers believe that it is important that kindergarten children be involved in many different types of activities ranging from play activities to formal academic activities. Third, teachers and parents generally agree with all types of parental involvement. Fourth, parents' and teachers' perceptions of some aspects of kindergarten education are related to the denominational affiliation of the school. Fifth, within the teachers'

responses, other factors such as teaching qualifications, extent of upgrading, and teaching experience are related to teachers' perceptions of aspects of kindergarten education. Sixth, within the parents' responses, other factors such as the parents' previous experience with kindergarten, their experience with children in preschool, age, educational levels, and student population of the school their child attends are related to parents' perceptions of aspects of kindergarten education.

Function of kindergarten

Both teachers and parents agree that basic skill development in the 3R's (Reading, Writing and Math) is not an important function of kindergarten education. Teachers and parents believe that foremost a kindergarten program should help children develop positive feelings about themselves and learning. Parents, more so than teachers, believe that a kindergarten program should also help children develop social skills. Overall, parents and teachers do not view the kindergarten year as a time for the acquisition of academic knowledge but rather as a time for emotional, mental, and social growth.

Rating subject areas

Generally, parents and teachers believe that Math, Health, and Pre-reading/Reading should receive the most emphasis in kindergarten. Parents and teachers differ regarding their estimates of the importance of Health, Science, Music, and Math. Teachers rated Science, Music, and Math more important than parents did. However, it is in their estimate of the importance of Health Education that parents and teachers show the greatest difference, with parents rating it much higher than teachers. The parents' view may reflect growing societal concern over health issues, such as substance abuse, diet and nutrition, and AIDS. As well, parents may see the school as the most effective agency for the transmission of health information to children and believe that it should begin as early as possible. Teachers, on the other hand, seem not to view the school as the primary agency for health education.

Placement of handicapped children

Most teachers believe that handicapped children should be integrated into the regular kindergarten classroom, but almost half of the parents do not view integration as a desirable option in the placement of handicapped children. Parents of non-handicapped children may be concerned that

their child is in some way disadvantaged due to integration. Parents may need reassurance from the teacher that their child is still learning and is not being sacrificed because of integration. Teachers and school districts will have to work with parents to make them aware of the purpose of integration and the benefits to all children, non-handicapped and handicapped.

Reporting progress

Both parents and teachers consider parent-teacher conferences and report cards the most valuable procedures for reporting children's progress in kindergarten. Parents differ from teachers, however, in their perceptions of the value of report cards, with more parents than teachers believing that they are valuable. Possibly, parents need the report card as tangible evidence of their child's success in school or as a reminder of what has transpired at a parent-teacher conference. Also, report cards are traditional and are usually saved by the parents with other mementoes of childhood. If parents believe that report cards serve an important function, then teachers need to exercise much caution about eliminating them from their reporting program. As well, since parents find report cards so valuable, then school boards and teachers should evaluate their present report card to ensure that it is effective in

relaying information to parents about their child's progress.

Less than 10% of parents and teachers believe that home visits from the teacher are valuable for reporting progress. It is unknown whether this dislike applies only to the reporting process or if it reflects a more general dislike of teacher visits. Either way, educators need to be cognizant of parents' and teachers' feelings and be cautious about implementing home visits as a component of any program.

Improving kindergarten education

Parents and teachers agree that having more equipment and materials in the kindergarten class would improve kindergarten education. As well, teachers believe that having fewer children in the class would also improve the quality of kindergarten education. Parents and teachers differ significantly in their perceptions of the value of having fewer children in the class and the value of lengthening the kindergarten day as ways to improve the quality of kindergarten education. Teachers more than parents believe that having fewer children in the class would improve kindergarten, while parents more than teachers believe that lengthening the kindergarten day would lead to improvements.

It is noteworthy that approximately two-thirds of parents and teachers believe that having more equipment and materials would improve kindergarten education. If this belief suggests a problem of insufficiently supplied kindergarten classrooms, then teachers may be experiencing difficulty in delivering the kindergarten program. As well, parents must be aware of this problem.

Characteristics of kindergarten teachers

Parents and teachers agree completely about the desirable characteristics of a kindergarten teacher: first, having a warm, friendly personality; and second, having the ability to see each child as an individual. Knowledge of subject matter and knowledge of child development are considered desirable characteristics of a kindergarten teacher by very few parents and teachers, even though, among professionals, knowledge of child development is considered a necessity for teachers of young children (NAEYC,1986).

Home learning activities

Both teachers and parents believe that reading to children is the most valuable home learning activity and that allowing children to watch children's television programming is the least valuable; however, they differ

significantly regarding the value of helping children with homework and allowing children to participate in activities such as cooking or shopping. Parents are more likely than teachers to believe that helping their children with homework is a valuable learning activity. Teachers are more likely than parents to see the value of children's participation in activities such as shopping or cooking.

In addition, results of this study show that younger parents are likely to rank children's participation in cooking and shopping lowest in value, while older parents rank it higher. Younger parents working outside the home often may experience difficulties in finding the time to involve their children in such activities. Older parents may be more settled in careers or remain at home; therefore, they have the time to involve their children in those activities. Other results of this study indicate that the more educated the mother, the more parents value their children's participation in household activities such as cooking or shopping. The less educated the mother, the more parents value their children's watching television and their helping children with their homework. Parents may not be aware of the educational benefits of allowing their children to participate in household activities and possibly believe that children's television programming is an important part of their children's education. However, parents need to be made aware of the fact that children learn best by becoming

involved in meaningful activities, not by participating in passive activities such as watching television. Therefore, schools need to initiate parent education programs to help parents become better educators of their own children.

Kindergarten practices

Earlier findings, in 1981, by the provincial committee on kindergarten education in Newfoundland and Labrador, revealed the existence of various orientations to kindergarten programming, with certain kindergarten classes focusing on formal academic learning and others focusing on the total development of the child (Provincial Kindergarten Committee, 1981). However, in the present study, when asked to indicate how important they consider some everyday kindergarten practices, the majority of parents agree that all are important, including both formal academic activities as well as informal activities. For example, parents feel that it is important that children be given opportunities to play at the housekeeping, block and other centers and learn basic skills through play; but at the same time they feel it is more important that children have daily opportunities to complete paper and pencil tasks in the subject areas, receive daily teacher-directed instruction in the subject areas, and sit quietly, listen to the teacher and follow directions. The majority of teachers feel similarly with

the exception that they do not think it is important that children sit quietly, listen to the teacher and follow directions.

Parents and teachers differ significantly in their estimates of the importance of all kindergarten activities, except daily devotions. The majority of parents and teachers believe it is important that children participate in daily devotions. The greatest difference between parents and teachers pertains to the estimated importance of having the children sit quietly, listen to the teacher and follow directions, and having children complete paper and pencil exercises in the subject areas. For both activities, parents are more likely than teachers to believe that they are important.

It is also worth noting that one quarter of the parents do not think that free choice or large muscle development is important in kindergarten. Children who are given some choice concerning which activities they are to be involved in will feel more in control of their own learning (Dunn, 1987). Small muscle development has traditionally been an important function of kindergarten education; however, large muscle development has become a priority in kindergarten education and is included in the objectives for kindergarten education for Newfoundland and Labrador (Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1985). For example, children need to run, hop, skip and jump before they can sit

and perform tasks that require fine eye-hand coordination.

Teachers, it seems, need to work with parents through workshops, meetings, or correspondence from the school to inform them of the benefits of large muscle development and the merits of giving children some choice over what they do in kindergarten and at home. Possibly parents fear that children may not learn if left to decide what they will become involved in. But parents need to be convinced that if children's choices occur within a framework set up by the teacher, learning will occur. Parents also need to realize that large muscle development is an important aspect of physical development and cannot be ignored in a quality kindergarten program.

The results of this study indicate that it is the teachers with the most teaching experience who feel that daily teacher-directed instruction in the subject areas is important. Younger parents are twice as likely as older parents to agree with playing at the centers; also, the parents with the least experience with kindergarten are most likely to believe that it is important that children play at centers. Parents with a high school education and those with a university education are similar in believing that sitting quietly in kindergarten is important; and more parents in the high school group believe that daily teacher-directed instruction in the subject areas is important.

In short, teachers as well as parents are similar in

being unable to make a clear decision about what focus kindergarten programming should have. This ambivalence makes it very difficult for parents or teachers to clarify the exact nature of kindergarten. The danger exists that, because parents and teachers are unable to formulate the exact nature of a kindergarten program, children may be subjected to an overcrowded kindergarten curriculum. Evidently parents and teachers believe that kindergarten children need experiences with both developmental and academic activities; but realistically the half day kindergarten does not provide enough time for emphasis on both. As well, it is generally believed by researchers that early formal instruction may be more harmful than beneficial to young children (Elkind,1986).

Parental involvement

Approximately three-quarters of the teachers agree with all types of parental involvement with the exception of allowing parents to participate in decision-making. They are least likely to agree with parents observing, parents teaching, and parents working in the classroom.

Over two-thirds of the parents agree with all types of involvement. They are least likely to agree with parents helping prepare materials, working in the classroom with the children, and parents teaching.

The greatest difference between the parents and the teachers is with regard to agreement with parents becoming involved by making decisions about their child's education. Most parents agree with this type of involvement, while slightly less than half of the teachers agree. It is likely that teachers do not consider parents knowledgeable enough to make decisions about their child's education. However, teachers need to bear in mind that parents know their children better than anyone else. They have watched and facilitated their child's learning since birth and have much to contribute. Teachers need to work with parents and use the knowledge they have about their children in order to make sound educational decisions. Teachers may not have the skills required to work effectively with parents in making educational decisions; therefore in-service by school boards may be necessary to improve teachers' skills in cooperative planning.

There are also significant differences between the parents and teachers with regard to agreement with parents helping prepare materials for the teacher, and parents supervising children during school activities, with parents more likely than teachers to strongly agree with parents supervising, and teachers more likely than parents to agree with parents preparing materials.

The fact that teachers and parents are in agreement with most types of parental involvement reflects the

increased emphasis in the last decade on expanding the role parents play in educational programs (Beecher,1986). It shows that parents, as well as teachers, recognize the importance of the parents' role in the education of their children, and that their involvement can take many different forms, thus giving opportunities for all parents to become involved. For example, many parents are unable to become active participants in their child's classroom because they may work outside the home and are unable to offer their help during the regular kindergarten day. Parental involvement programs should be designed to promote involvement by all parents and enable parents to become involved without putting too great a burden on their time or placing them in situations that may be unusually stressful to them.

Denomination

Denominational affiliation of the school is the variable most strongly related to parents' and teachers' perceptions.

Teachers' responses on all items on the questionnaire relating to aspects of religious education, such as rating the deg ee of emphasis for Religion as a subject area in kindergarten, indicating the importance of daily devotions, and agreeing with parents planning and participating in religious celebrations, are related to denomination.

Teachers working in Pentecostal schools are most likely to give Religion the highest rating, most likely to perceive participation in daily devotions as important, and most likely to agree with parents planning and participating in religious celebrations. Teachers working in Integrated schools are least likely to give Religion the highest rating, least likely to perceive daily devotions to be important, and least likely to agree with parents planning and participating in religious celebrations. This pattern is also evident in teachers' agreement with parents helping by raising funds for the school and in teachers' perceived importance of learning basic skills through play.

Parents' responses are also related to denomination, including their estimates of the importance of Religion, Music, Art, and Science in kindergarten. The Roman Catholic parents are most likely to believe that Religion should be given highest degree of emphasis, while the Pentecostal parents give it least emphasis. For Music, Art, and Science, it is the Pentecostal parents who give them highest emphasis, while the Roman Catholic parents give them the lowest emphasis.

Parents of children attending Pentecostal schools are most likely to perceive participation in daily devotions as important, followed by parents of children attending Roman Catholic schools, and lastly by parents of children attending Integrated schools.

Furthermore, parents of children attending Pentecostal and Integrated schools are more likely than parents of children attending Roman Catholic schools to agree with parental involvement by supervising children, helping with special events, raising funds, attending workshops, and helping prepare materials.

The findings of this study indicate that, in the case of kindergarten education, there is a relationship between denominational affiliation and the perceptions of parents and teachers. It is more strongly related to teachers' perceptions than to parents' perceptions. These findings also suggest that kindergarten education may vary according to denominational affiliation of the school; that is, kindergarten education in one school may be significantly different from kindergarten education in another school of a different denominational affiliation.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made:

1. School districts should know that ambiguity may exist about the purpose of kindergarten education in this province; therefore, they should make an effort to clarify the exact nature of kindergarten education, especially in schools where the kindergarten curriculum is overcrowded.

2. Kindergarten teachers should stress, as a part of parent education programs, that developmental activities are more important for inclusion in a kindergarten program than more formal academic activities.

3. Since both parents and teachers largely agree about parental involvement, teachers should make every effort when planning parent involvement programs to provide various types of involvement in order to include parents in ways that are most beneficial to the children and agreeable to the parents.

4. Schools boards should provide teacher-education programs to allow teachers to acquire skills necessary for cooperative educational planning between parents and teachers.

5. Kindergarten teachers and school boards should work together to develop and deliver parent-education programs which (a) teach parents to become better educators of their own children, and (b) make them aware of what is involved in a quality kindergarten program.

6. Additional research should be conducted to discover the nature and extent of parental involvement programs presently operating in kindergartens in this province and assess whether the programs are allowing opportunities for all parents to become involved in ways that are preferable to the parents and beneficial to the children.

7. As well, further research needs to be conducted to

determine whether kindergarten programs in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador are experiencing an overcrowded curriculum.

8. Research into the resources and materials present in schools in Newfoundland and Labrador should be conducted to determine whether they meet the needs of the kindergarten teachers and the students.

9. Finally, further research into the relationship between denominational affiliation and kindergarten education needs to be conducted to determine the extent of differences in kindergarten programs in this province.

In conclusion, parents and teachers generally agree concerning aspects of kindergarten education. They agree that the kindergarten year plays an important role in the education of the child and that there is much for the child to learn. They widely agree with parental involvement. Denominational affiliation of the school is related to parents' and teachers' responses to aspects of kindergarten programming. Within the teacher group, other factors such as qualifications, extent of upgrading, and teaching experience are slightly related to teachers' perceptions of aspects of kindergarten education. Within the parent group, other factors such as the parents' past experience with children in kindergarten, their experience with children in preschool, their age, their educational levels, and population of the school their child attends are slightly

related to parents' perceptions of some aspects of the kindergarten education.

As kindergarten education progresses through the 1990's and into the twenty-first century, educators must strive to provide programs that meet the needs of four- and five-year-olds. Kindergarten education must be good education allowing for cognitive, social, and emotional development of the child. Educators must continue to meet the challenge of involving parents in ways that meet the needs of parents, teachers and children. Finally, it is essential that there be continuity in the expectations and views for kindergarten education between parents and educators in order to ensure the best education for the child.

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APPENDIX A

PILOT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

ID NO ____

PLEASE FOLLOW DIRECTIONS AND ANSWER EACH QUESTION.

SECTION I

This section is designed to determine your opinions of Kindergarten education in general. Please place an (x) in the appropriate response space.

1. What do you feel is the most important purpose of Kindergarten? Choose one only.

   1. to teach children moral and ethical values .....____
   2. to develop in children positive feelings about themselves and about learning .....____
   3. to teach children the 3 R's.....____
   4. to develop in children social skills of sharing, helping, and cooperating .....____
   5. to teach children to think.....____
   6. other(please specify) _____

2. Kindergarten programs promote learning in all of the following subject areas. Indicate the degree of emphasis each area should receive by circling (1) to indicate a high degree of emphasis, (2) to indicate a lesser degree, and so on.

   1. Health and safety instruction.....1 2 3 4
   2. Religious education instruction.....1 2 3 4
   3. Art instruction.....1 2 3 4
   4. Social Studies instruction.....1 2 3 4
   5. Science instruction.....1 2 3 4
   6. Mathematics instruction.....1 2 3 4
   7. Music instruction.....1 2 3 4
   8. Physical education instruction.....1 2 3 4
   9. Pre-reading/reading instruction.....1 2 3 4

3. Children with special needs (e.g. physically disabled, hearing impaired, mentally disabled) should begin their schooling

   1. in the regular Kindergarten classroom .....____
   2. in schools especially designed for them .....____
   3. in classes especially designed for them in the regular school .....____
   4. in the regular Kindergarten part of the time and in special classes for the remainder of the time....____
   5. other (please specify) _____

4. Having handicapped and non-handicpped children in the same Kindergarten class benefits

   1. the handicapped.....____
   2. the non-handicapped.....____
   3. all children.....____
   4. none.....____

5. There are a number of ways in which the teacher can report a child's progress to the parent. Please indicate which one you think is the most valuable in letting parents know about their child's progress. You may choose more than one if necessary.

   1. through the report card .....____
   2. through parent-teacher conferences .....____
   3. through regularly scheduled home visitations by the teacher .....____
   4. through telephone conversations .....____
   5. through personal notes from the teacher .....____
   6. other (please specify) _____

6. The following are some desirable characteristics of a Kindergarten teacher. Space is provided for you to add your own choice in the space provided. Rank order the following characteristics, including your own, using number (1) to indicate the most important characteristic, number (2) to indicate one of lesser importance, and so on.

   1. He/she has a warm, friendly personality.....____
   2. He/she has a great deal of knowledge about many subject matters.....____
   3. He/she sees each child as an individual with different interests and abilities .....____
   4. He/ she has knowledge of the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of children..____
   5. other _____

7. The following things can be done at home to help the child learn. You may add your own choice in the space provided. Rank order the following, including your own, using number (1) to indicate the one you think is the most valuable thing parents can do, number (2) to indicate one of lesser value, and so on.

   1. reading to their child each day.....____
   2. helping their child with homework assignments....____
   3. encouraging their child to participate in household activities such as cooking and shopping .....____
   4. encouraging their child to watch television programs such as Sesame Street and Mr. Dressup .....____
   5. other_____

8. To improve the quality of Kindergarten education would you have

   1. fewer children per classroom .....____
   2. more equipment and materials available .....____
   3. the Kindergarten day lengthened .....____
   4. more parental involvement .....____
   5. other (please specify) _____

SECTION II

This section is designed to determine your opinions regarding day-to-day activities of the Kindergarten program. Please circle one response to each statement according to the following code:

1. very important
2. somewhat important
3. somewhat unimportant
4. very unimportant

9. Children should have daily opportunities to play at the block, sand, water, and/or housekeeping areas of the classroom 1 2 3 4

10. Children should have daily opportunities to work through paper and pencil tasks in the subject areas such as mathematics and language 1 2 3 4

11. Children should have daily opportunities to use their large muscles through running, hopping, and jumping 1 2 3 4

12. Children should have daily opportunities to participate in devotions 1 2 3 4

13. Children should have daily opportunities to develop their small muscles through activities such as painting, cutting, using scissors, and stringing beads 1 2 3 4

14. Children should have daily opportunities to sit quietly, listen to the teacher, and follow directions 1 2 3 4

15. Children should learn basic skills in the subject areas through manipulating materials such as clay, blocks, and games (teacher-made and commerical) 1 2 3 4

16. Children should have books and stories read to them every day 1 2 3 4

17. Children should be free to choose among a variety of play and work activities 1 2 3 4

18. Children should receive daily teacher-directed instruction in the subject areas 1 2 3 4

19. Children should have opportunities to take part in activities such as cooking and going on field trips 1 2 3 4

20. Children should receive rewards such as stickers or special privileges for completing work or exhibiting proper behavior 1 2 3 4

SECTION III

There are a number of types of involvement that parents can have in their child's Kindergarten. Please indicate how much you agree with each type of involvement by circling one response to each statement according to the following code:

1. strongly agree
2. somewhat agree
3. somewhat disagree
4. strongly disagree

21. Visiting the classroom to observe Kindergarten classroom activities 1 2 3 4

22. Helping make decisions about their child's program such as which areas of interest to study, which books and materials to use, and which instructional methods to use 1 2 3 4

23. Attending workshops and special meetings to learn more about the Kindergarten program 1 2 3 4

24. Meeting with the teacher on a regular basis (weekly or monthly) to discuss their child ..1 2 3 4

25. Helping in the classroom by working with children as they go about their daily activities 1 2 3 4

26. Helping by preparing materials that the children will use in the classroom 1 2 3 4

27. Helping supervise children on field trips 1 2 3 4

28. Helping make plans for special events such as graduations, picnics, and holiday celebrations 1 2 3 4

29. Helping in the classroom by taking charge of some activities such as planning and preparing a puppet play or teaching a lesson in their area of expertise 1 2 3 4

30. Helping to raise money for the school 1 2 3 4

31. Helping make plans and/or participating in religious activities and celebrations 1 2 3 4

SECTION IV

This section is designed to provide background information which will help in the interpretation of the information you have provided.

32. Please indicate your teaching qualifications.

1. B.A.(Ed.) with emphasis in the primary area .....____
2. B.A.(ED) with emphasis in the elementary area ...____
3. B.A.,B.ED .....____
4. B.Ed. Elementary .....____
5. B.Ed.Primary .....____
6. Other (please specify) _____

33. Have you had any specialized training in early childhood education?

1. yes (please specify) _____
2. no .....____

34. Indicate how many education courses you have taken in the last 5 years?

1. none .....____
2. 1-5 .....____
3. 6-10 .....____
4. 11 or more .....____

35. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

1. at the Kindergarten level .....____
2. at other grade levels .....____

36. What is the denomination of the school in which you teach?

1. Pentecostal .....____
2. Roman Catholic .....____
3. Integrated .....____
4. Other .....____

37. What is the student population of your school?

1. fewer than 100 students .....____
2. 100-299 students .....____
3. 300 or more students .....____

38. What percentage of the time, in which parents are involved in the Kindergarten program, would you allocate for each of the following:

1. as recipients of information (parent-teacher conferences, workshops, having parents in the class just to observe, etc.) .....____%
2. as non-instructional volunteers (preparing materials, helping with classroom arrangements, helping on field trips, etc.) .....____%
3. as instructional volunteers (working at centers, reading to the children, teaching a lesson, etc.) .....____%

Total = 100 %

APPENDIX B

PILOT PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

ID NO ____

PLEASE FOLLOW DIRECTIONS AND ANSWER EACH QUESTION.

SECTION 1

This section is designed to determine your opinions of kindergarten education in general. Please place an (x) in the appropriate response space.

1. How much do you know about your child's Kindergarten program? Please choose one only.

   1. very much.....____
   2. some .....____
   3. a little .....____
   4. very little .....____
   5. nothing.....____

2. What do you think should be the most important function of Kindergarten? Please choose one only.

   1. to teach the children moral and ethical values ..____
   2. to develop in children positive feelings about themselves and about learning .....____
   3. to teach children the 3 R's (reading, writing and arithmetic) .....____
   4. to develop in children the social skills of sharing, helping and cooperating.....____
   5. to teach children to think.....____
   6. other (please specify).....____

3. Kindergarten programs promote learning in all of the following areas. Indicate the degree of emphasis each area should receive by circling (1) to indicate a high degree of emphasis, (2) to indicate a lesser degree, and so on.

   1. Health and safety instruction.....1 2 3 4
   2. Religious education instruction.....1 2 3 4
   3. Art instruction.....1 2 3 4
   4. Social Studies instruction.....1 2 3 4
   5. Science instruction.....1 2 3 4
   6. Mathematics instruction.....1 2 3 4
   7. Music instruction.....1 2 3 4
   8. Physical education instruction.....1 2 3 4
   9. Pre-reading/reading instruction.....1 2 3 4

4. Children with special needs (e.g., physically disabled, hearing impaired, mentally disabled) should begin their schooling

   1. in the regular Kindergarten classroom .....____
   2. in schools especially designed for them .....____
   3. in classes especially designed for them in the regular school .....____
   4. in regular Kindergarten part of the time and in special classes the remainder of the time ....____
   5. other (please specify) _____

5. Having handicapped and non-handicpped children in the same Kindergarten class benefits

   1. the handicapped.....____
   2. the non-handicapped.....____
   3. all children.....____
   4. none.....____

6. There are a number of ways a teacher can report the child's progress to the parent. Which do you feel is the most valuable in letting you know about your child's progress? You may choose more than one if necessary.

   1. through the report card .....____
   2. through parent-teacher conferences.....____
   3. through regularly scheduled home visitations by the teacher.....____
   4. through telephone conversations.....____
   5. through personal notes from the teacher.....____

7. The following are some desirable characteristics of a Kindergarten teacher. You may add your own choice in the space provided. Rank order the following characteristics, including your own, using number (1) to indicate the most important characteristic, number (2) to indicate one of lesser importance, and so on.

   1. He/she has a warm, friendly personality.....____
   2. He/she has a great deal of knowledge about many subject matters.....____
   3. He/she sees each child as an individual with different interests and abilities .....____
   4. He/ she has knowledge of the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of children..____
   5. other _____

8. The following things can be done at home to help your child learn. You may add your own choice in the space provided. Rank order the following, including your own, using number (1) to indicate the one you think is the most valuable thing you can do, number (2) to indicate one of lesser value, and so on.

   1. reading to my child each day ..... ____
   2. helping my child with homework assignments ..... ____
   3. encouraging my child to participate in household activities such as cooking and shopping ..... ____
   4. encouraging my child to watch television programs such as Sesame Street and Mr. Dressup ..... ____
   5. other _____

9. To improve the quality of Kindergarten education would you have

   1. fewer children per classroom ..... ____
   2. more equipment and materials available ..... ____
   3. the Kindergarten day lengthened ..... ____
   4. more parental involvement ..... ____
   5. other (please specify) _____

SECTION II

This section is designed to determine your opinions regarding day-to-day Kindergarten activities. Please indicate the importance of each statement by circling one response to each according to the following code:

1. very important 2. somewhat important
3. somewhat unimportant 4. very unimportant

10. My child should have daily opportunities to play at the block, sand, water, and/or housekeeping areas of the classroom 1 2 3 4

11. My child should have daily opportunities to work through paper and pencil tasks in the subject areas such as math and language 1 2 3 4

12. My child should have daily opportunities to develop large muscles through activities such as running, jumping, and hopping 1 2 3 4

13. My child should have daily opportunities to participate in devotions 1 2 3 4

14. My child should have daily opportunities to develop small muscles through activities such as painting, cutting, using scissors, or stringing beads 1 2 3 4

15. My child should have daily opportunities to sit quietly, listen to the teacher and follow directions.....1 2 3 4

16. My child should learn basic skills in areas such as Math and Science through playing with clay, blocks, beads, and games (teacher-made and commercial).....1 2 3 4

17. My child should have books read to him/her every day 1 2 3 4

18. My child should be free to choose among a variety of play and work activities 1 2 3 4

19. My child should receive daily instruction from the teachers in the subject areas such as Science, Mathematics and Language.....1 2 3 4

20. My child should have opportunities to take part in activities such as cooking, and going on field trips 1 2 3 4

21. My child should receive rewards such as stickers or special privileges for completing work or showing good behavior 1 2 3 4

SECTION III

There are a number of types of involvement that parents can have in their child's Kindergarten. Please indicate how much you agree with each type of involvement by circling one response to each statement according to the following code:

1. strongly agree
2. somewhat agree
3. somewhat disagree
4. strongly disagree

22. Visiting my child's Kindergarten class to observe what is going on 1 2 3 4

23. Helping make decisions about my child's program such as what areas of interest to study, what books to use or what to do in cases where my child is experiencing difficulty 1 2 3 4

24. Attending workshops and special meetings to learn more about the Kindergarten program 1 2 3 4

25. Meeting with the teacher on a regular basis (weekly or monthly) to discuss my child 1 2 3 4

26. Helping in the Kindergarten class by working with all the children as they go about their daily activities 1 2 3 4

27. Helping the teacher by preparing materials that the children will use in the classroom ..1 2 3 4

28. Helping supervise children on field trips 1 2 3 4

29. Helping make plans for special events such as graduations, picnics, and holiday celebrations 1 2 3 4

30. Helping in the classroom by taking charge of some situations such as preparing and presenting a puppet play, or teaching a lesson on something that I know a lot about such as a hobby or my work 1 2 3 4

31. Helping to raise funds for the school 1 2 3 4

32. Helping make plans for and/or participating in religious activities and celebrations.....1 2 3 4

SECTION IV

This section is designed to provide background information which will help in the interpretation of the information you have provided.

33. How many children (include any child presently Kindergarten) have you had attend Kindergarten? .....____

34. Indicate the amount of time your child attended a preschool arrangement (preschool, daycare, nursery school, playschool, etc.) in the year prior to going to Kindergarten.

1. 1-4 mts .....____
2. 5-8 mts.....____
3. 9-12 mts .....____
4 none .....____

35. To which age group do you belong?

1. 25 and under .....____
2. 26-35 .....____
3. 36-45 .....____
4. Over 45 .....____

36. Indicate the level of education received by the mother and the father. You may need to indicate more than one.

	Mother	Father
1. some high school only	____	____
2. finished high school	____	____
3. vocational/trades school	____	____
4. other training (nurse, police, etc.)	____	____
5. some university	____	____
6. graduated from university	____	____
7. other (please specify) _____		

37. Your child presently attends a

1. Roman Catholic school .....____
2. Integrated school .....____
3. Pentecostal school .....____
4. Other (please specify) _____

38. The student population of your child's school is

1. Fewer than 100 students .....____
2. 100-299 students .....____
3. 300 or more students .....____

39. Since your child began school in September approximately how much time have you spent involved in the following?

1. Going to the school to attend meetings, arent-teacher conferences, concerts and to take part in fund raising activities. ____hours
2. Going to the Kindergarten class to work with the children, helping the teacher, observing classroom activities and attending meetings to plan my child's program. ____hours

APPENDIX C

PILOT STUDY LETTERS

Rattling Brook
Green Bay, Newfoundland
AOJ IPO

xxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Dear Superintendent:

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University where I am enrolled in a Master's Degree program with a specialty in Early Childhood. In the work of my thesis, I a conducting a survey of both parents' and teachers' perceptions of the Kindergarten program in Newfoundland and Labrador. Prior to conducting the study, however, I am planning to pilot both the teacher and the parent questionnaires.

I am seeking your permission to distribute the questionnaires to a randomly selected group of ten Kindergarten teachers employed by your school district. In addition to responding to the questionnaire, I will be asking the teachers to give a parent questionnaire to the parents of a grade one child who attended Kindergarten at that school in the 1988-1989 school year. The parents will be asked to respond to the parent questionnaire.

I thank you for your cooperation in what I feel is a worthwhile study. I am willing to answer any inquiries you may have concerning the study.

Yours truly,

Valerie Lambert

Rattling Brook
Green Bay, Newfoundland
AOJ IPO

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Dear Principal:

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University where I am enrolled in a Master's Degree program with a specialty in Early Childhood. In the work of my thesis, I am conducting a survey to determine the perceptions of Kindergarten teachers and parents of Kindergarten children regarding the Kindergarten program in Newfoundland and Labrador. Prior to conducting the study, however, I am undertaking a pilot study of both the teacher and the parent questionnaires. Your school has been randomly selected to participate in the pilot study.

To assist in obtaining the information I need to make the pilot study successful, I am seeking the cooperation of Kindergarten teachers and parents of children who were in Kindergarten in the 1988-1989 school year. Would you please forward the enclosed teacher questionnaire and the parent questionnaire to the Kindergarten teacher in your school? In the event that there is more than one Kindergarten teacher in your school, please give the questionnaire to the teacher whose name would appear last in an alphabetical listing of all your Kindergarten teachers.

I thank you for your cooperation in what I believe will be a worthwhile study. I am willing to answer any inquiries you may have concerning the study.

Yours truly,

Valerie Lambert

Rattling Brook
Green Bay, Newfoundland
AOJ IPO

Dear Kindergarten Teacher:

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University where I am enrolled in a Master's Degree program with a specialty in Early Childhood. In the work of my thesis, I am conducting a survey among Kindergarten teachers and parents of Kindergarten children to determine their perceptions of the Kindergarten program in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Prior to conducting the study, however, I am undertaking a pilot study of both the teacher and the parent questionnaire.

To help me with this pilot study, I would like to ask for your assistance in several ways. First of all, would you please take 15 minutes of your time to respond to the enclosed teacher questionnaire? If you are uncertain of how to respond to an item or if you have any suggestions for improving the item, would you please write your comments in the space provided on the attached comment sheet? Please return the completed questionnaire and comment sheet, within the next week, in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope. Also, would you give the enclosed parent questionnaire to a Grade one child who was in Kindergarten in your school last year and whose name now appears last in the Grade one register? Please instruct the child to take the questionnaire home to his/her parents. For the purposes of the pilot study it is necessary to involve parents who are very familiar with the Kindergarten program.

I realize how busy you are and thank you for taking the time to help me out with what I believe is a worthwhile study. All information will be kept strictly confidential and used only for the purposes of this study. No attempts will be made to identify the parent, the teacher, or the school. The returned, completed questionnaire will be recognized as consent to participate in the study. I am willing to answer any inquiries you may have concerning the study.

Yours truly,

Valerie Lambert

Rattling Brook
Green Bay, Newfoundland
AOJ IPO

Dear Parent:

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University where I am enrolled in a Master's Degree program with a specialty in Early Childhood. I am also a Kindergarten teacher at King's Point, Newfoundland. As part of my studies at the university, I have developed a questionnaire to help me find out what parents think about Kindergarten education. However, before using the questionnaire in my study, I want to find out from you and nineteen other parents, from other schools, your opinions of the items on the questionnaire.

I realize that your child is now in Grade 1, but I also realize that you have had a full year of experience with a child in Kindergarten. I need your experience to help me make any needed changes to the questionnaire.

Would you please take approximately 15 minutes and complete the attached questionnaire? If you are uncertain of how to answer the items or if you have any suggestions for improving them would you please write them in the space provided on the attached comment sheet? Your comments will be used to change the questionnaire. All the information you give me will be kept strictly confidential and used only for the purposes of improving the questionnaire. Please return the questionnaire and the comment sheet, within the next week, in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope. Your return of the completed questionnaire will indicate your consent to participate in the pilot study.

I realize that with young children you are very busy so I would especially like to thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire and will look forward to receiving it shortly. I am willing to answer any inquires you may have concerning the study.

Yours truly,

Valerie Lambert

APPENDIX D

PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENT SHEET

COMMENT SHEET

FEEL FREE TO MAKE COMMENTS ON ANY OF THE ITEMS ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE, HOWEVER, DO NOT FEEL YOU HAVE TO WRITE SOMETHING ABOUT EACH ITEM. ONLY DO SO IF YOU THINK IT IS NECESSARY.

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

4: _____

5: _____

6: _____

7: _____

8: _____

9: _____

10: _____

11: _____

12: _____

13: _____

14: _____

15: _____

16: _____

17: _____

18: _____

19: _____

20: _____

21: _____

22: _____

23: _____

24: _____

25: _____

26: _____

27: _____

28: _____

29: _____

30: _____

32: _____

32: _____

33: _____

34: _____

35: _____

36: _____

37: _____

38: _____

39: _____

OTHER COMMENTS

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX E

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

ID NO _____

PLEASE FOLLOW DIRECTIONS AND ANSWER EACH QUESTION. ALL RESPONSES WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND USED SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY.

SECTION I

This section is designed to determine your opinions of Kindergarten education in general. Please place an (x) in the appropriate response space.

1. What do you feel is the most important purpose of Kindergarten? Choose one only.

   1. to develop in children moral and ethical values .....____
   2. to develop in children positive feelings about themselves and about learning .....____
   3. to develop basic skills in the 3 R's .....____
   4. to develop in children social skills of sharing ,helping, and cooperating .....____
   5. to develop in children the ability to think .....____
   6. other(please specify) _____

2. Kindergarten programs promote learning in all of the following subject areas. Indicate the degree of emphasis each area should receive by circling (1) to indicate a high degree of emphasis, (2) to indicate a lesser degree, and so on.

1. Health and safety	1	2	3	4
2. Religious education	1	2	3	4
3. Art	1	2	3	4
4. Social studies	1	2	3	4
5. Science	1	2	3	4
6. Mathemathics	1	2	3	4
7. Music	1	2	3	4
8. Physical education	1	2	3	4
9. Pre-reading/reading	1	2	3	4

3. Children with special needs (e.g. physically disabled, hearing impaired, mentally disabled) should begin their schooling

   1. in the regular Kindergarten classroom .....____
   2. in schools especially designed for them .....____
   3. in classes especially designed for them in the regular school .....____
   4. in regular Kindergarten part of the time and in special classes for the remainder of the time....____
   5. other (please specify) _____

4. There are a number of ways in which the teacher can report a child's progress to the parent. Please indicate which one you think is the most valuable in letting parents know about their child's progress. You may choose more than one if necessary.

   1. through the report card .....____
   2. through parent-teacher conferences .....____
   3. through regularly scheduled home visitations by the teacher .....____
   4. through telephone conversations .....____
   5. through personal notes from the teacher .....____
   6. other (please specify) _____

5. To improve the quality of Kindergarten education would you have (You may choose more than one if necessary):

   1. fewer children per classroom .....____
   2. more equipment and materials available .....____
   3. the Kindergarten day lengthened .....____
   4. more parental involvement .....____
   5. other (please specify) _____

6. The following are some desirable characteristics of a Kindergarten teacher. Space is provided for you to add your own choice. Rank order the following characteristics, including your own, using number (1) to indicate the most important chacteristic, number (2) to indicate one of lesser importance, and so on.

   1. He/she has a warm, friendly personality .....____
   2. He/she has a great deal of knowledge about many subject matters .....____
   3. He/she sees each child as an individual with different interests and abilities .....____
   4. He/she has knowledge of the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of children..____
   5. other _____

7. The following things can be done at home, by the parent, to help the child learn. You may add your own choice in the space provided. Rank order the following, including your own choice, using (1) to indicate the one you feel is the most valuable thing parents can do, (2) to indicate one of lesser value, and so on.

   1. reading to their child each day .....____
   2. helping their child with homework assignments ...____
   3. encouraging their child to participate in household activities such as cooking and shopping .....____
   4. encouraging their child to watch television programs such as Sesame Street or Mr. Dressup ...____
   5. other _____

SECTION II

This section is designed to determine your opinions regarding day-to-day activities of the Kindergarten program. Please circle one response to each statement according to the following code:

1. very important
2. somewhat important
3. somewhat unimportant
4. very unimportant

8. Children should have daily opportunities to play at the block, sand, water, and/or housekeeping areas of the classroom 1 2 3 4

9. Children should have daily opportunities to work through paper and pencil tasks in the subject areas such as mathematics and language 1 2 3 4

10. Children should have daily opportunities to use their large muscles through running, hopping, and jumping 1 2 3 4

11. Children should have daily opportunities to participate in devotions 1 2 3 4

12. Children should have daily opportunities to develop their small muscles through activities such as painting, cutting, using scissors, and stringing beads 1 2 3 4

13. Children should spend at least one hour a day sitting quietly, listening to the teacher, and following directions 1 2 3 4

14. Children should learn basic skills in the subject areas mainly through manipulating materials such as clay, blocks, and games (teacher-made and commerical) 1 2 3 4

15. Children should have books and stories read to them every day 1 2 3 4

16. Children should be free to choose among a variety of play and work activities 1 2 3 4

17. Children should receive daily teacher-directed instruction in the subject areas 1 2 3 4

18. Children should have opportunities to take part in activities such as cooking and going on field trips 1 2 3 4

19. Children should receive rewards such as stickers or special privileges for completing work or exhibiting proper behavior 1 2 3 4

SECTION III

There are a number of types of involvement that parents can have in their child's Kindergarten. Please indicate how much you agree with each type of involvement by circling one response to each statement according to the following code:

1. strongly agree
2. somewhat agree
3. somewhat disagree
4. strongly disagree

20. Visiting the classroom to observe Kindergarten classroom activities 1 2 3 4

21. Helping make decisions about their child's program such as which areas of interest to study,which books and materials to use, and which instructional methods to use 1 2 3 4

22. Attending workshops and special meetings to learn more about the Kindergarten program 1 2 3 4

23. Meeting with the teacher on a regular basis (weekly or monthly) to discuss their child ..1 2 3 4

24. Helping in the classroom by working with children as they go about their daily activities 1 2 3 4

25. Helping by preparing materials that the children will use in the classroom 1 2 3 4

26. Helping supervise children on field trips 1 2 3 4

27. Helping make plans for special events such as graduations, picnics, and holiday celebrations 1 2 3 4

28. Helping in the classroom by taking charge of some activities such as planning and preparing a puppet play or teaching a lesson in their area of expertise 1 2 3 4

29. Helping to raise money for the school 1 2 3 4

30. Helping make plans and/or participating in religious activities and celebrations 1 2 3 4

SECTION IV

This section is designed to provide background information which will help in the interpretation of the information you have provided.

31. Please indicate your teaching qualifications.

    1. B.A.(Ed.) with emphasis in the primary area .....____
    2. B.A.(ED) with emphasis in the elementary area ...____
    3. B.A.,B.ED .....____
    4. B.Ed. Elementary .....____
    5. B.Ed.Primary .....____
    6. Other (please specify) _____

32. Have you had any specialized training in early childhood education?

    1. yes (please specify) _____
    2. no .....____

33. Indicate how many education courses you have taken in the last 5 years?

    1. none .....____
    2. 1-5 .....____
    3. 6-10 .....____
    4. 11 or more .....____

34. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

    1. at the Kindergarten level .....____
    2. at other grade levels .....____

35. What is the denomination of the school in which you teach?

    1. Pentecostal .....____
    2. Roman Catholic .....____
    3. Integrated .....____
    4. Other .....____

36. What is the student population of your school?

    1. fewer than 100 students .....____
    2. 100-299 students .....____
    3. 300 or more students .....____

37. What percentage of the time, in which parents are involved in the Kindergarten program, would you allocate for each of the following:

    1. as recipients of information (parent-teacher conferences, workshops, having parents in the class just to observe, etc.) .....____%
    2. as non-instructional volunteers (preparing materials, helping with classroom arrangements, helping on field trips, etc.) .....____%
    3. as instructional volunteers (working at centers, reading to the children, teaching a lesson, etc.) .....____%

    Total = 100 %

APPENDIX F

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

ID NO ____

PLEASE FOLLOW DIRECTIONS AND ANSWER EACH QUESTION. ALL RESPONSES WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND USED SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY.

SECTION 1

This section is designed to determine your opinions of kindergarten education in general. Please place an (x) in the appropriate response space.

1. What do you think should be the most important function of Kindergarten? Please choose one only.

   1. to develop in children moral and ethical values ..____
   2. to develop in children positive feelings about themselves and about learning .....____
   3. to develop basic skills in the 3 R's (reading, writing and arithmetic) .....____
   4. to develop in children the social skills of sharing, helping and cooperating .....____
   5. to develop in children the ability to think.....____
   6. other (please specify).....____

2. Kindergarten programs promote learning in all of the following areas. Indicate the degree of emphasis each area should receive by circling (1) to indicate a high degree of emphasis, (2) to indicate a lesser degree, and so on.

1. Health and safety	1	2	3	4
2. Religious education	1	2	3	4
3. Art	1	2	3	4
4. Social Studies	1	2	3	4
5. Science	1	2	3	4
6. Mathematics	1	2	3	4
7. Music	1	2	3	4
8. Physical education	1	2	3	4
9. Pre-reading/reading	1	2	3	4

3. Children with special needs (e.g., physically disabled, hearing impaired, mentally disabled) should begin their schooling

   1. in the regular Kindergarten classroom .....____
   2. in schools especially designed for them .....____
   3. in classes especially designed for them in the regular school .....____
   4. in regular Kindergarten part of the time and in special classes the remainder of the time .....____
   5. other (please specify) _____

4. There are a number of ways in which a teacher can report the child's progress to a parent. Which do you feel is the most valuable way of receiving information about your child's progress? You may choose more than one if necessary.

   1. through the report card .....____
   2. through parent-teacher conferences .....____
   3. through regularly scheduled home visitations by the teacher .....____
   4. through telephone conversations .....____
   5. through personal notes from the teacher .....____

5. To improve the quality of Kindergarten education would you have (You may choose more than one):

   1. fewer children per classroom .....____
   2. more equipment and materials available .....____
   3. the Kindergarten day lengthened .....____
   4. more parental involvement .....____
   5. other (please specify) _____

6. The following are some desirable characteristics of a Kindergarten teacher. You may add your own choice in the space provided. Rank order the following, including your own, using number (1) to indicate the most important characteristic, number (2) to indicate one of lesser importance, and so on.

   1. He/she has a warm, friendly personality .....____
   2. He/she has a great deal of knowledge about many subject areas .....____
   3. He/she sees each child as an individual with different interests and abilities .....____
   4. He/she has knowledge of the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of children ..____
   5. other _____

7. The following things can be done at home to help your child learn. You may add your own choice in the space provided. Rank order the following, including your own, using number (1) to indicate the one you think is the most valuable thing you can do, number (2) to indicate one of lesser value, and so on.

   1. reading to my child each day .....____
   2. helping my child with homework assignments .....____
   3. encouraging my child to participate in household activities such as cooking and shopping .....____
   4. encouraging my child to watch television programs such as Sesame Street and Mr. Dressup .....____
   5. other_____

8. How much do you know about your child's Kindergarten program? Please choose one only.

   1. very much .....____
   2. some .....____
   3. a little .....____
   4. very little .....____
   5. nothing.....____

SECTION II

This section is designed to determine your opinions regarding day-to-day Kindergarten activities. Please indicate the importance of each statement by circling one response to each according to the following code:

1. very important 2. somewhat important
3. somewhat unimportant 4. very unimportant

9. My child should have daily opportunities to play at the block, sand, water, and/or housekeeping areas of the classroom 1 2 3 4

10. My child should have daily opportunities to work through paper and pencil tasks in the subject areas such as math and language 1 2 3 4

11. My child should have daily opportunities to develop large muscles through activities such as running, jumping, and hopping 1 2 3 4

12. My child should have daily opportunities to participate in devotions 1 2 3 4

13. My child should have daily opportunities to develop small muscles through activities such as painting, cutting, using scissors, or stringing beads 1 2 3 4

14. My child should should spend at least one hour of each day sitting quietly, listening to the teacher and following directions 1 2 3 4

15. My child should learn basic skills in the subject areas <u>mainly</u> through playing daily with clay, blocks, beads, and games (teacher-made and commercial) 1 2 3 4

16. My child should have books read to him/her every day 1 2 3 4

17. My child should be free to choose among a variety of play and work activities 1 2 3 4

18. My child should receive daily teacher-directed instruction in the subject areas 1 2 3 4

19. My child should have opportunities to take part in activities such as cooking, and going on field trips 1 2 3 4

20. My child should receive rewards such as stickers or special privileges for completing work or showing good behavior 1 2 3 4

SECTION III

There are a number of types of involvement that parents can have in their child's Kindergarten. Please indicate how much you agree with each type of involvement by circling one response to each statement according to the following code:

1. strongly agree
2. somewhat agree
3. somewhat disagree
4. strongly disagree

21. Visiting my child's Kindergarten class to observe what is going on 1 2 3 4

22. Helping make decisions about my child's program such as what areas of interest to study, what books to use or what to do in cases where my child is experiencing difficulty 1 2 3 4

23. Attending workshops and special meetings to learn more about the Kindergarten program 1 2 3 4

24. Meeting with the teacher on a regular basis (weekly or monthly) to discuss my child 1 2 3 4

25. Helping in the Kindergarten class by working with all the children as they go about their daily activities 1 2 3 4

26. Helping the teacher by preparing materials that the children will use in the classroom ..1 2 3 4

27. Helping supervise children on field trips 1 2 3 4

28. Helping make plans for special events such as graduations, picnics, and holiday celebrations 1 2 3 4

29. Helping in the classroom by taking charge of some situations such as preparing and presenting a puppet play, or teaching a lesson on something that I know a lot about such as a hobby or my work 1 2 3 4

30. Helping to raise funds for the school 1 2 3 4

31. Helping make plans for and/or participating in religious activities and celebrations in my child's class 1 2 3 4

SECTION IV

This section is designed to provide background information which will help in the interpretation of the information you have provided.

32. How many children (include any child presently Kindergarten) have you had attend Kindergarten? .....____

33. Indicate the length of time your child attended a preschool arrangement (preschool, daycare, nursery school, playschool, etc.) in the year prior to going to Kindergarten.

1. 1-4 mts .....____
2. 5-8 mts.....____
3. 9-12 mts .....____
4. none .....____

34. To which age group do you belong?

1. 25 and under .....____
2. 26-35 .....____
3. 36-45 .....____
4. Over 45 .....____

35. Indicate the level of education you regard as the highest one you have received. Indicate <u>one</u> for both the father and the mother.

	Mother	Father
1. some high school only	____	____
2. finished high school	____	____
3. vocational/trades school	____	____
4. other training (nurse, police, etc.)	____	____
5. some university	____	____
6. graduated from university	____	____

7. other (please specify) _____

36. Your child presently attends a

1. Roman Catholic school .....____
2. Integrated school .....____
3. Pentecostal school .....____
4. Other (please specify) _____

37. The student population of your child's school is

1. Fewer than 100 students .....____
2. 100-299 students .....____
3. 300 or more students .....____

38. Since your child began school in September (1989) approximately how much time have you spent involved in the following?

    1. Going to the school to attend meetings, parent-teacher conferences, concerts and to take part in fund raising activities. ____hours
    2. Going to the Kindergarten class to work with the children, helping the teacher, observing classroom activities and attending meetings to plan your child's program. ____hours

APPENDIX G

MAIN STUDY LETTERS

Rattling Brook
Green Bay, Newfoundland
AOJ IPO

xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Dear Superintendent:

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University where I am enrolled in a Master's Degree program with a specialty in Early Childhood. In the work of my thesis, I am conducting a study to determine the perceptions of Kindergarten teachers and parents of Kindergarten children regarding the Kindergarten program in Newfoundland and Labrador. As part of the study, I have developed a questionnaire for Kindergarten teachers which I hope to distribute to a randomly selected sample of teachers in your district. I have also developed a parent questionnaire which I hope to distribute to a randomly selected sample of parents of the Kindergarten children in your district.

I would be grateful for your permission to distribute the questionnaires to your teachers. I am willing to answer any inquiries you may have concerning the study.

I thank you for your cooperation in what I believe will be a worthwhile study.

Yours truly,

Valerie Lambert

Rattling Brook
Green Bay, Newfoundland
A0J 1P0

xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Dear Principal:

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland where I am enrolled in a Master's Degree program with a specialty in Early Childhood. In the work of my thesis, I am conducting a survey to determine the perceptions of Kindergarten teachers and parents of Kindergarten children regarding the Kindergarten program in Newfoundland and Labrador. Your school has been randomly selected to participate in the study.

Would you please assist me in the study by forwarding the enclosed questionnaire to the Kindergarten teacher in your school? It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. In the event that there is more than one Kindergarten teacher in the school, please give the questionnaire to the teacher whose name would appear last in an alphabetical listing of all your Kindergarten teachers.

I thank you for your cooperation in what I believe will be a worthwhile study. I am willing to answer any inquiries you may have concerning the study.

Yours truly,

Valerie Lambert

Rattling Brook
Green Bay, Newfoundland
AOJ IPO

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Dear Kindergarten Teacher:

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University where I am enrolled in a Master's Degree program with a specialty in Early Childhood. In the work of my thesis, I am conducting a survey among Kindergarten teachers and parents of Kindergarten children to determine their perceptions of the Kindergarten program in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I am asking you to help me with this study by taking approximately 15 minutes of your time to complete the attached questionnaire. When you return the completed questionnaire would you also <u>enclose a list of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the parents of the children in your Kindergarten class?</u> Your list is necessary in order to compile a parent sample for this study. Some of the parents on your list may be contacted to complete a parent questionnaire. Return both the questionnaire and the name list, <u>within the next week</u>, in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope. Last of all, could you please distribute the enclosed notes to the children in your Kindergarten class and instruct them to take them home to their parents?

I realize how busy you are and thank you for taking the time to help me out with what I believe is a worthwhile study. The code number at the top right hand corner of the questionnaire allows the researcher to determine whether or not you have returned the questionnaire. It will not be used to identify you in the coding and analysis of data. Your return of the completed questionnaire will indicate your consent to participate in the study. I am willing to answer any enquiries you may have concerning this study.

Yours truly,

Valerie Lambert

Rattling Brook
Green Bay, Newfoundland
A0J IPO

Dear Parent,

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland where I am enrolled in a Master's Degree program with a specialty in Early Childhood. As part of my work at the university, I have developed a questionnaire to help me find out what parents and Kindergarten teachers think about Kindergarten education in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Your child's teacher has completed a teacher questionnaire for me and now I am asking you to take approximately 15 minutes of your time to complete the attached parent questionnaire. Please return the completed questionnaire, **within the next week**, in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope. The code number at the top right hand corner of the questionnaire allows me to determine whether or not you have returned the questionnaire. It will not be used to identify you in the study. Your return of the completed questionnaire will indicate your consent to participate in the study.

I realize that with young children you are very busy so I would especially like to thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire and look forward to receiving it shortly. I am willing to answer any inquiries you may have concerning the study.

Yours truly,

Valerie Lambert

APPENDIX H

TAKE-HOME NOTES

Dear Parents:

I am a Kindergarten teacher at Valmont Academy in King's Point, Newfoundland. As part of my work at the University, I am trying to find out what parents of Kindergarten children and Kindergarten teachers think of Kindergarten education. Your child's teacher has been asked to complete a questionnaire. You may soon receive a questionnaire in the mail. If you do receive one, could you please take 15 minutes to complete and mail it to me in the stamped, self-addressed envelope included with the questionnaire.

Valerie Lambert

APPENDIX I

PARENT NAME LIST

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING OR ENCLOSE A PHOTOCOPY OF THE REQUIRED INFORMATION.

PARENT'S NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE NO.