MOTHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRESCHOOLERS' EXPERIENCES: CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the University of North Texas in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Martha M. West, B.A., M.Ed.

Denton, Texas

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In this qualitative investigation, the ways in which four ethnically diverse mothers' perceptions of early childhood education combined with the school experiences of their children were examined. Research tools included audiotaped interviews with Mexican-American, Korean-American, African-American, and Anglo mothers; videotaped school experiences; and a video message with a viewing guide requesting written reaction.

The findings indicate that the Anglo dyad experienced the least discontinuity between the mother's perceptions and the child's school experiences, and the Mexican-American dyad experienced the greatest discontinuity. The Korean-American and African-American dyads experienced similar degrees of discontinuity, with both showing slightly less discontinuity than the Mexican-American dyad.

Findings further indicate that all four mothers' preferences for treating boys and girls differently varied from the teachers' practice of making no gender-based distinctions. Traditional written notices from the school appeared to be completely congruent with only the Anglo mother's information needs. The Mexican-American and Korean-American mothers experienced discontinuity in terms of their belief in
the benefits of parent-teacher collaboration coupled with limited relationships with teachers. The Korean-American and African-American dyads shared discontinuity in terms of emphasis on drill and practice and the school's lack of drill and practice emphasis. Overall, evidence of continuity outweighed evidence of discontinuity, suggesting that a majority-administered school can provide continuity.

The findings suggest ways of increasing continuity. These include the use of personal and specific requests from the teacher directed to culturally diverse parents, pairing volunteer majority families with minority families, hiring bilingual teachers, experimenting with novel ways of communicating with parents, educating school staff with regard to non-Anglo cultures, seeking ways to work with early-academics oriented families, and serving ethnic foods at school.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

One purpose of American education traditionally has been to instill the attitudes of the dominant culture (Katz, 1971). As a result, many minority children have experienced discontinuity between home and school. For minorities today, discontinuity corresponds to nonsuccess in school, with failure being especially likely for minority children who encounter a mismatch between language demands in the classroom and language use in the home (Feagans, 1982). In this study the discontinuity issue was addressed by describing how maternal perceptions of education combine with school experiences for young children of varying ethnic backgrounds.

By the year 2050, about one-half of the United States population will be of non-European background (McCracken, 1993). This increase in cultural diversity suggests future needs. Therefore, a descriptive snapshot of the population and discontinuity is needed to provide information relative to those needs.

The social, financial, and political climate of the 1980s and 1990s has focused attention on families and education. Advocates for children and families urge implementation of strategies that bring schools into collaboration with home and communities (Boyer, 1991). The Center for
the Future of Children, the Children's Defense Fund, and the Research and Policy Committee of the Committee for Economic Development (1991) have joined the crusade for collaborative home-school-community efforts. The National Association of State Boards of Education Task Force on Early Childhood Education (1988) has called for (a) improved home-school communication; (b) parents as volunteers in schools; (c) education and support for parents; (d) parental involvement in decision making; and (e) integrated, collaborative, comprehensive family services.

This emphasis on family support and involvement in education suggests research needs. Powell (1992) stated:

I believe research on parents' cognitions, beliefs, and perceptions regarding children and early childhood programs is particularly fruitful because the findings have significant implications for practice. For too long, the research literature has ignored the complexities of parents' thinking about children and programs. (p. 1)

Goodnow (1988) also has addressed the need for studying parents' internal processes: "To focus only on parents' overt behaviors is to treat parents as unthinking creatures, ignoring the fact that they interpret events, with these interpretations probably influencing their actions and feelings" (p. 287).

Goodnow's (1988) view finds support in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of human development, which is defined as:

the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between those settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded. (p. 21)
Thus, parental perceptions of early childhood education and the child’s school experiences are interrelated parts of the child’s life.

Parents’ attitudes and children’s school experiences have been studied separately and extensively. However, ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) implies that current research needs extension to describe and evaluate the relationship of these two components, particularly in terms of ethnic-minority mothers’ perceptions and their children’s early school experiences. An in-depth description of this dyad could provide a base for meeting future needs and establishing the home-school continuity in early childhood programs called for by Heath (1983), Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988), Powell (1989), and Bowman (1992).

Statement of the Problem

Families need support; economic pressures, dual-employment of parents, ever-increasing cultural diversity, and social concern for quality child care have created a demand for home-school-community collaborative efforts. If a partnership existed among these systems, children’s fragmented world might be changed into one of continuity and successful school experiences. Understanding the correspondence between the viewpoints of parents and their children’s school experiences can facilitate continuity. However, educators need current, authentic, contextual, research-based descriptions of parents’ perceptions and children’s experiences in order to support families effectively.
Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were to (a) describe the perceptions of four mothers regarding early childhood education as a function of their ideas on child rearing, education, and their children's current experiences in a preschool program; (b) determine the nature of the correspondence between the parents' perceptions and their children's actual school experiences; and (c) recommend changes to increase the continuity between parents' perceptions and children's actual school experiences.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research toward the accomplishment of its purposes:

1. What are mothers' perceptions of early childhood education? In the context of those perceptions,
   a. What are mothers' expectations of schools for young children?
   b. What are the characteristics of the information and sources mothers use to form their perceptions of school?
   c. What are mothers' views regarding the interaction between family and school?
   d. What and how do mothers teach children at home?

2. What are the characteristics of school experiences for the children?

3. What is the correspondence between mothers' perceptions of early childhood education and children's school experiences?
Significance of the Study

Four issues and their implications contribute to this study’s significance. These issues are parent education, parent involvement, home-school continuity, and cultural diversity.

Most parents lack education for parenting. Therefore, they tend to parent the way they were parented, regardless of the effect of the method on their children’s school success. Goal-oriented parent education can empower parents to foster children’s healthy development. However, a goal for effective parent education has not been defined, and cannot be defined, without knowledge of the characteristics of parents (Schaefer, 1991). These characteristics include culturally diverse parents’ perceptions of early childhood education, which are described in the present study.

Parent involvement and its correlate, continuity, are promoted in this study by informing the school of the ways that parents want to be involved in their children’s education and of obstacles to involvement, such as conflicting perceptions of schooling. The findings suggest approaches to maintaining home-school continuity, particularly in terms of sociocultural variables. Thus, this research responds to Laosa’s (1977) challenge to provide knowledge about the total ecologies of children in various cultural groups and to the need for schools to conform to the needs of children (Heath, 1983).

By the year 2000, more than one-third of America’s school children are expected to be of ethnic origins other than Caucasian. The cultural multiplicity that already exists among the population under the
age of 18 years in the United States and in Texas is reflected in Table 1. Thirty-one percent of all United States residents under the age of 18 years are minorities. Forty-nine percent of all Texas residents under the age of 18 years are from minorities. African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanics constitute a sizeable portion of these statistics, thus highlighting the importance of understanding parental perceptions within these cultures (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1992).

Table 1

Minority Residents Under the Age of 18 Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United States in 1990</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Minority under age 18</td>
<td>19,797,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans under 18</td>
<td>584,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics under 18</td>
<td>7,757,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
<td>2,083,387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Americans</td>
<td>696,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other minorities</td>
<td>3,611,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43,530,824</td>
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<th>Texas in 1990</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minority under age 18</td>
<td>2,372,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans under 18</td>
<td>657,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics under 18</td>
<td>1,620,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
<td>96,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Americans</td>
<td>18,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other minorities</td>
<td>688,740</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,454,329</td>
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</table>

A review of the literature reveals that qualitative parent-child-education studies involving participants from a variety of cultural
backgrounds are amazingly sparse. Yet, changing demographics and current interest in collaborative home-school-community efforts make such studies particularly significant. Furthermore, research is needed to explore the interpretations that culturally diverse parents give to their children's early education, because symbolic interaction theory (Mead, 1934) suggests that individuals act on the basis of their interpretations of experiences. Therefore, this study expands current knowledge about early education as interpreted by four culturally diverse mothers. Moreover, likenesses and differences between mothers' perceptions and their young children's school experiences are described. This investigation provides answers to the question, How do maternal perceptions of early childhood education combine with school experiences for young children of varying ethnic backgrounds to determine continuity and discontinuity?

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms are defined for this study:

Parents’ perceptions are the attitudes, values, ideas, beliefs, opinions, views, perspectives, and cognitions that characterize parents' interpretation of early childhood education. This inclusive definition reflects Schaefer's (1991) usage rather than that of Holden and Edwards (1989), who interpret attitudes, values, ideas, and beliefs as clearly distinct domains.

School is the name given to an environment designed solely for the purpose of providing learning experiences. The terms school, preschool,
preschool program, nursery school, play school, child development center, child care, and educare (Caldwell & Hilliard, 1985) are used interchangeably in early childhood education literature. All such terms refer to school in this study. School is considered only one part of early childhood education.

**Early childhood education** is the learning and experiences of children from birth through age 8 years (Bredekamp, 1987). It may occur in any of the child's environments, such as home or school, and addresses child development. It is a function of both biological factors (Sameroff & Fiese, 1992) and environmental elements such as child-rearing approaches, parents' education, and parental expectations (Baumrind, 1967; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cochran-Smith, 1984; Dix, 1992; Heath, 1983; Sameroff & Fiese, 1992).

**Affective development** is the area that “centers on the self-concept and the development of social, emotional, and personality characteristics” (Charlesworth, 1987, p. 382).

“**Acculturation** is seen as a process actively involving the immigrant, and is a matter dependent upon his [or her] own course of action. **Assimilation** is considered to be a process involving the host society's decision to accept a member of another culture” (Yu, 1977, p. 179).

**Limitations**

This study was limited to four mothers and their children in one school. Purposive selection of the school and the participants limits the
generalizability of the findings. Because the school is university-based, the parents’ education, interests, and income levels may not be representative of other preschool populations. The findings are further limited in that criteria other than the children’s birth order and the mothers’ background of experiences influenced the selection of the sample.

Although every effort was made to limit researcher bias, the study may not be entirely bias-free. Likewise, even though interviews and observations occurred in environments chosen by the participants, there is no way to know the effects of the researcher’s presence.

Assumptions

The following assumptions are made for this study:

1. When interviewed and observed by a researcher trained and experienced in qualitative research methods and early childhood education, parents reveal the nature of their perceptions of early childhood education.

2. When studied by the trained researcher at a preschool site, young children participate in typical school experiences which give the researcher a measure of insight into children’s perceptions.

3. Mothers’ perceptions of school and their young children’s school experiences correspond in some way.

Theoretical Base

Piaget’s (1926) theory of human intellectual development forms this study’s theoretical base. Piaget developed his theory to explain
children's unique ways of thinking. However, his findings hold significance for understanding adult thought as well, particularly in this study. Piaget's study of biology, philosophy, the history of science, and psychology equipped him to explain the problem of knowing, epistemology. Hence, his theory represents a biological explanation of knowledge, genetic epistemology. The theory holds potential, therefore, for the explanation of parents' knowledge. Figure 1 represents an overview of the contributions of Piaget and other theorists (Lightfoot & Valsiner, 1992; Weber, 1889-1924/1983) whose views are discussed in Chapter 2.

Piaget (1926) described mental development as a progression through definite stages which occur in a fixed sequence. Each stage incorporates the previous stage. Rate of progression varies from person-to-person (Berk, 1991). The stages are (a) sensori-motor, spanning birth to 2 years; (b) preoperational, 2 to 7 years; (c) concrete operational, 7 to 11 years; and (d) formal operational, 12 years and up. These stages account for differences between children's and adults' thinking. However, most adults operate in the concrete operational stage much of the time. The perceptions described in this study tended to originate in concrete experiences.

Each stage is described here as a foundation for the lifelong development of maternal perceptions. In the sensori-motor stage, children from birth to 2 years of age learn through their senses. They touch, taste, and fixate on objects to understand them. Repetitive
Figure 1. Theories that explain perceptions formation.
understanding that objects exist even when they cannot be seen (Piaget, 1954). Six substages within this stage describe the progression from reflexes in the first 2 months to problem solving by the age of 2 years.

In the preoperational stage, children between the ages of 2 and 7 years begin to use language to represent things that are not visible. Their thought is egocentric. That is, they are unaware that another person’s viewpoint may not be the same as theirs. Thus, these children explain the world in terms of how it appears to them rather than with logic. As the stage nears completion, children begin to establish perceptual constancy, the understanding that things are the same even though viewed from different perspectives.

In the concrete operational stage, children between the ages of 7 and 11 or 12 years begin to conserve, or understand that things continue to have the same amount, length, and volume if nothing is added or subtracted but their form is changed. Children of this age also develop the concepts of number, relationships, and processes, but rely upon concrete objects to assist their thinking (Piaget, 1952). Mothers in this study generally moved one step beyond concrete objects, to concrete experiences as aids in making sense of early education.

In the formal operations stage, individuals 11 or 12 years and older become capable of thinking in terms of abstractions. They can make predictions in this level of potential adult thought. This study deals with abstractions such as how children learn and, when possible, includes descriptions of the nature of those conceptions.
In Piagetian theory, four interrelated factors combine to facilitate movement from one stage to the next (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). These factors are (a) maturation, which is physical and physiological growth; (b) experience, which is sensori-motor input; (c) social interaction, which includes playing, talking, working, and otherwise socializing with other people; and (d) equilibration, which is the process of bringing maturation, experience, and interaction together to build systems for contemplating the world. Mothers' responses to interview questions in this study necessitated equilibration. Thus, the data represent each mother's unique combination of maturation, experience, and interaction at a given time.

According to Piaget (1952), operations are actions carried out mentally. Two ways in which individuals change their thought processes as they progress through the stages are conservation and reversibility. Conservation refers to understanding the constancy of number, length, or amount when shape, position, or grouping is changed. Reversibility is the understanding that change in properties such as shape or order can be reversed. Mothers presumably were capable of these operations, and thus could think as logical adults.

Piaget and Inhelder (1969) described three main types of knowledge. These are (a) social learning, which focuses on things learned by association rather than logic; (b) physical learning, which deals with learning through action and the observation of effects; and (c) logico-mathematical relationships learning, which involves creating and inventing relationships between objects and symbols. Traditional
teaching has not differentiated among these types even though each requires different learning processes. The mothers' perceptions appeared to involve all three knowledge types.

Assimilation, accommodation, and construction of the reality are central terms in Piagetian theory (Phillips, 1981). Through assimilation a person takes in new information. Through accommodation individuals change their thinking patterns to be consistent with that new information. Instances of both assimilation and accommodation characterized the participants' thinking in this study. Moreover, each mother actively engaged in a construction of reality that, according to Piaget (1954) cannot be imposed from without. Thus, four unique views of early childhood education emerged.

Piaget (1926) declined to suggest classroom implications for his theory. However, other scholars (Peterson & Felton-Collins, 1986) have proposed applications. Three of those suggestions provided guidance for data collection and analysis in this study. First, the individual's point of view was considered an important source of learning. Second, each mother was thought to learn at her individual rate through personal interests. Third, experience was considered essential for the mothers' learning in some areas of knowledge.

Summary

This study was designed to provide a description of how maternal perceptions of early childhood education combine with school experiences for young children of varying ethnic backgrounds to
determine continuity and discontinuity. Piaget's theory of human intellectual development forms the investigation's theoretical base. The procedures used involved interviewing Mexican-American, Korean-American, African-American, and Anglo mothers and videotaping their children's experiences at school. Present and future needs associated with families, schools, and increasing cultural diversity in the United States led to this project.

A review of pertinent research on maternal perceptions, including related literature on cultural similarities and differences, is presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 provides a description of the methodology and procedures used in the study. Chapter 4 provides a detailed analysis of the data. A summary, findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research are described in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Early Recognition of Parents' Perceptions

Parental perceptions probably date back to the beginning of parenthood for homo sapiens. In terms of Western civilization, history reveals the influences that have shaped and reshaped parents' views over time. Beginning in the 1600s, many parents were exposed to Comenius' belief that from birth to 6 years a child learns the rudiments of all knowledge in the "school of the mother's lap" (Osborn, 1991, p. 29). During the 19th century, parents were informed of Comenius' philosophy, as reflected in Pestalozzi's *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children* (cited in Freidus, 1992). By the 1800s, many mothers in the United States were joining newly founded maternal associations, with the belief that parents should teach their children religion and morals. By 1900, scores of parents had become convinced of the benefits of kindergarten and enrolled their preschoolers in programs that were available primarily in cities (Osborn, 1991).

Although parents' beliefs and cognitions have a long history, studies of parental perceptions are a product of the 20th century, particularly in terms of parents' views of education. Rather than targeting education, early studies were focused on parents' perceptions of (a) the parent-child relationship in the 1920s (Watson, 1953),
(b) motherhood in the 1930s (Moore, 1933; Rogers, 1939), and (c) breastfeeding in the 1930s and 1940s (Freeman, 1932).

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, research of parental perceptions was dominated by the popular tool of the day, the questionnaire. Researchers administered questionnaires to measure correlations between (a) parents' attitudes about parental control and children's social behavior, (b) child-rearing approaches and children's mental health, (c) discipline approaches and children's racial attitudes, and (d) parents' expectations and children's achievement (Schaefer & Bell, 1958).

In the 1960s, the employment rates of women increased, researchers reported the importance of the preschool years, President Lyndon Johnson launched the War on Poverty, and Head Start was born (Lazerson, 1992). Head Start's strong parent component set the stage for extensive expansion of parent education and the investigation of parent attitudes (Fein, 1980). Thus, the focus of research remained on parenting and child development, but began broadening to include education.

Studies generated by Head Start indicate that parent involvement improves parents' attitudes concerning (a) their children's worth (Leik & Chalkley, 1989), (b) the parent-teacher relationship (Pyle, 1989), and (c) the parent-as-teacher role (Pyle, 1989; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1993). Involved parents tend to view parental knowledge as valuable to teachers and teachers' advice as beneficial to parents (Pyle, 1989).
In spite of the attitudinal benefits of parent involvement, many parents distance themselves from their children’s school. Ironically, parental attitudes often account for this distancing behavior (Honig, 1979). These attitudes include fear of institutions of “power-structure' people” (p. 56), suspicion of educators’ motives, lack of confidence in parents’ ability to teach, feeling left out of what is going on in the child’s preschool or day care center, disparate expectations and methods of parents and teachers, and difficulty in seeing self as educator and responsible person in the life of their children.

Post-Head Start Era

Parents’ perceptions research has expanded in the last 30 years in response to social change, early childhood program proliferation, and concern for program quality. From the late 1960s into the 1990s, investigators have analyzed relationships between parental perceptions and (a) child development, (b) parenting or child-rearing styles, (c) special education, (d) quality early childhood education, and (e) cultural diversity.

Child Development

Recent studies of parents’ child development cognitions have been focused primarily on socioemotional and cognitive development. In the social domain, parental beliefs seem to be related to young children’s social competence in four ways. First, mothers of socially competent children usually expect earlier acquisition of developmental skills (Holloway & Reichart-Erickson, 1989). Second, children whose parents
view them as socially skillful are often described by peers as desirable playmates (Budd & Itzkowitz, 1990). Third, children of mothers who believe in power-assertive approaches to discipline seem to be less accepted by their peers and tend to expect successful outcomes for unfriendly methods of resolving peer conflict (Hart, Ladd, & Burleson, 1990). Fourth, mothers' perceptions of their competence as parents generally predict children's degree of control and organization (George & Solomon, 1989), as well as the amount of mother-infant interaction (Johnson, 1989).

Current studies regarding parental perceptions and cognitive development are amazingly few. However, links found between mothers' beliefs about listening and children's listening skills (McDevitt, 1990; McDevitt, Ewers, & Oreskovich, 1991) suggest the value of parent-teacher collaboration for children's school success. Similarly suggestive correlations have been found between children's cognitive level and parents' beliefs that children construct knowledge through experimentation and cognitive reorganization. According to McGillicuddy-deLisi (1985), parents who value a constructivist approach to learning tend to have children with higher cognitive abilities. Moreover, mothers of preschoolers generally view the task of fostering their children's learning as a relatively easy one (Melson, McVey, & Ladd, 1989).
Parenting Style

Baumrind's (1967) authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles are usually considered functions of parents' views. Only recently, however, has a relationship been found between what parents believe about children and how they behave toward children (Miller, 1988). The correspondence between their beliefs and behavior partially explains why mothers' endorsement of authoritative parenting at the toddler stage predicts maternal autonomy-granting to their children 2 to 3 years later (Kochanska, 1990).

To carry the belief-behavior relationship a step further, child-rearing style tends to be related to mothers' attributional processes. Mothers usually evaluate behavior as more favorable when they infer that children understand the rules they violate, have the ability to act appropriately, and are responsible for their negative behavior (Dix, Ruble, & Zambarano, 1989). Moreover, mothers who believe they know reasons for children's behavior, such as shyness, are unlikely to try to change the behavior (Mills & Rubin, 1990). Thus, mothers' actions toward their children seem to correspond to mothers' perceptions and interpretations of what constitutes appropriate, reasonable, understandable behavior under particular circumstances.

Special Education

Researchers have also found a correspondence between maternal beliefs and parenting behaviors in families with special-needs children (Campbell, Goldstein, Schaefer, & Ramey, 1990). In fact, special
education researchers have been highly aggressive in exploring parental perceptions. Literature reviews reflect that many special education researchers have analyzed the maternal perceptions of (a) child development (Campbell et al., 1990; Sexton, Thompson, Perez, & Rheams, 1990), (b) intervention services (Mahoney, O'Sullivan, & Dennebaum, 1990), and (c) child-rearing competency (Haldy & Hanzlik, 1990).

Special education studies have contributed further by providing models for comparing and contrasting the perceptions of mothers and fathers. Differences have been found between mothers' and fathers' perceptions of the family environment in families that include a son with attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity (Brown & Pacini, 1989). By pointing to differences between spouses' thinking, this study echoes LeBlanc and Reynolds' (1989) finding that mothers and fathers outside the special education field differ significantly in their ratings of their children's behavior, thus suggesting that parent norming should be separated. Conversely, Goodnow, Knight, and Cashmore's (1985) outside-the-field comparison of mothers' and fathers' ideas about child development revealed similarities between spouses' thinking.

**Quality Early Childhood Education**

According to parents, what is quality early childhood education? Some say it is high health and safety standards and appropriate staff-to-child ratios (Camp & Moore, 1989). Others say it is love and attention, trained caregivers, and a place for learning how to get along...
with other children (Sponseller, 1980). Still others say quality is convenient, reliable care at the right price (Galinsky, 1990). Some parents think it is dependable, loving care given in a clean, safe place; or the "type of care that the child likes" (Galinsky, 1990, p. 20). Others consider the hours a program is open, program flexibility, and parents' input into decision making important (Galinsky, 1988, 1989a). Some equate quality with desirable program goals such as social relationships, independence, self-reliance, language development, and motor development (Adams & Farquhar, 1992).

But parents sometimes say one thing and do another. They may say they value certain standards in quality early childhood programs, yet enroll their children after little or no investigation of alternatives (Bogat & Gensheimer, 1986). Or, they may say that parental care is the highest quality of child care, but enroll their children in a child care center (Mason & Kuhlthau, 1989).

Parents' attitudes and quality child care are important in terms of their combined effect on children. The effect of maternal employment on young children depends, in part, on the attitudes of parents toward working and the quality of the child care provided (Galinsky, 1989b). From a review of studies of the effects of maternal employment, Scarr, Pauls, and McCartney (1989) concluded that employment is neither the major issue in either marital relations or child development. Rather, attitudes and expectations of both parents combine with family circumstances and the distribution of available time to produce important effects. Neither is employment the major issue in parents'
perceptions of their children, for mothers' and fathers' degree of investment in parenting affects their perceptions of their children more than does their degree of investment in work (Greenberger & Goldberg, 1989).

Parents' perceptions about teaching young children have been influenced by the press and other news and entertainment media. Popular literature encourages parents to teach babies to read (Doman, 1964), do mathematics (Doman, 1979), and grow smarter (Doman, 1984; Eastman & Barr, 1985; Engelmann & Engelmann, 1981). Opponents of the academic approach warn of the possible dangers of imposing academic pressures on young children (Bredekamp, 1987; Elkind, 1981, 1987; Gallagher & Coche, 1987; Kagan & Zigler, 1987; Sigel, 1987).

The academic debate can be described in terms of home and school influences:

At the core of this debate on the role of early academics for preschoolers is the question of child outcomes. How do academic orientations in the home and school affect the development of our children? . . . Academic pressure or challenge is not likely to come from a single source but rather from the combination of academic environments that interactively influence each child. (Hirsh-Pasek, 1991, pp. 40-44)

Some parents' preferences for teaching their children vary with the children's age. Nontraditional approaches such as play are often deemed appropriate for the early grades, but a more traditional academic approach is valued for the upper elementary grades (Cohen, 1981; Goodnow, 1985). Many parents' penchant for the traditional classroom may stem from distinctions between work and play that are part of
modern Western thinking and are, therefore, hard to change (Berger & Luckman, 1966). However, mothers who believe in early adult-directed instruction and high performance standards tend to direct their children’s play (Hyson, 1991), thus erasing, or at least blurring, the distinctions between work and play for the children.

Differences in parents’ and teachers’ views have been part of the debate over teaching approaches. Parents typically place more value on early academic skills than do teachers, who rate curiosity and independence as more important qualities for young children (Hess, Price, Dickson, & Conroy, 1981; Knudsen-Lindauer & Harris, 1989; Rescorla, 1991). Teachers also tend to differ from parents in believing that parents could do more to prepare children for school (Harris & Lindauer, 1988). Not surprisingly, parental attitudes seem to be more discrepant from teacher attitudes in low-academic than in high-academic preschools (Rescorla, 1991).

The Role of Culture

Overview

Parents’ perceptions, child development, and cultural context are inseparable, for parents in all cultures guide their children’s development in directions that are consistent with their family and cultural values (Valsiner, 1987). Parental interest in developing new ideas about child development depends on cultural values (Sameroff & Feil, 1985). Even children’s play is significantly influenced by the cultural orientations of their parents (van der Kooij & Slaats-van den Hurk, 1991).
Even though culture is of primary importance, little was known about the relationship of parental perceptions and children’s learning environments in minority cultures until rather recently. In a trailblazing portrait of education in a low-income California neighborhood, Ogbu (1974) described Mexican-American and black parents’ educational goals for their children and parents’ frustrating efforts to change the school system.

Ogbu’s (1974) ethnography provided a model for other qualitative studies of minority parents’ views, but relatively few new investigations resulted. Those that did, however, expanded knowledge in significant ways. Heath (1983) provided the first description of minority parents’ perceptions as part of a study of younger children’s literacy environments. Heath’s pioneer ethnography captured everyday life in Trackton, a black working-class community; Roadville, a white working-class community; and the town, where both black and white mainstream townspeople lived. Heath described these parents as possessing influential attitudes and customs that shaped their children’s world, particularly their school experiences. Heath’s research portrayed young children at home and at school, two environments which were incongruent in values and experiences until teachers made a determined effort to change.

Like Heath (1983), Cochran-Smith (1984) provided one of the first in-depth analyses of young children’s learning environments. Her description of how a group of children in a nursery school became readers includes a report of middle-class parents’ goals and expectations
of the school. Teaching about reading and writing was not a goal of the parents or teachers. Rather, literacy was simply the background of daily nursery-school events, not imposed integration of print into lessons. When daily exposure to many uses of reading and writing resulted in their children's learning to read, some parents expressed puzzlement. They wondered how their children could read without instruction.

Two other significant qualitative analyses of early literacy have described the education viewpoints of white middle-class families living in the suburbs (Taylor, 1983) and black economically challenged families in the inner city (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). Like Heath (1983), Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines presented images of parents'--particularly mothers'--perceptions and educative styles that shape their children's literacy development and suggest implications for early schooling.

Other less comprehensive qualitative studies have reported insensitivity toward black families who are served by special education (Kalyanpur & Rao, 1989); cultural differences in parents' thoughts about how emergent literacy should be taught (Spiegel, Fitzgerald, & Cunningham, 1993); and mothers' culture-based thoughts about their children's writing, interactions with their children about writing, expectations for their children as writers, and their own early experiences with writing (Roderick, 1990).

Within the context of ever-increasing cultural diversity, should minority groups maintain their values for understanding and educating young children, or should they adopt the values of the dominant culture? The answer is unclear. Among Mexican-Americans, highly acculturated
mothers tend to have more understanding of Anglo experts’ views on child development, suggesting a complex picture of diversity in Mexican-American mothers who retain values and beliefs from their own culture, as well as taking on values and beliefs of Anglo culture. Further research designed to answer this question in the context of other minorities could be fruitful in terms of directing teaching practice.

The challenge of the classroom can be illustrated by some of the differences in Japanese and Western expectations. Japanese parents tend to expect self-control, courtesy, and obedience from their children; whereas, Western parents generally expect verbal assertiveness (Hess, Kashiwagi, Azuma, Price, & Dickson, 1980). Japanese parents also often consider sympathy, empathy, concern for others, and cooperation to be the most important things for children to learn in preschool; whereas, Western parents often value self-reliance and self-confidence first, and cooperation and being a member of a group second (Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989). Thus, the challenge to schools as expressed in cultural diversity is immense, and research-based insights regarding parents’ perceptions of young children’s learning environments need expansion.

Phelan, Davidson, and Yu (1993) cited 14 studies of the 1980s regarding relationships between parents’ cultural expectations and beliefs and students’ engagement with educational settings. These studies document parents’ viewpoints and older students’ experiences. Similar data describing links between perceptions held by mothers of various ethnic backgrounds and young children’s school experiences have not yet become a substantial part of the literature.
Research of the 1990s continues to offer valid reasons for attending to cultural variables. Negative teacher attitudes toward nonwhite parents of low socioeconomic status present one such finding (Galinsky, Shinn, Phillips, Howes, & Whitebrook, 1990). Davidson and Phelan (1993) summarized the current status of research regarding cultural diversity in American schools:

Educators of the 1990s want to know how to build optimal learning environments for diverse student populations, and educational researchers are concerned with articulating clearer understandings of the intersection of culture, ethnicity, and learning. Issues contributing to interest in exploring the implications of cultural diversity for educators include the differences in attitude of immigrant and domestic minority youth; the consequences of tracking; the psychosocial costs to students of having to adjust to new and different circumstances; the dynamics and consequences of second language acquisition; the implications of home, school, and community relationships; and the overall circumstances in the society that impact people's lives in schools. (pp. 2-3)

A promising study is now in progress by the International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement Preprimary Project. That assessment of early education in 14 countries includes parental views and is projected for completion by 1997.

The amount of research regarding Mexican-American, Korean-American, African-American, and Anglo families varies from group to group. The following sections provide details of what is known about the cultures addressed in this study and how culture affects perceptions.
Mexican Americans

Most Mexican Americans live in the Southwestern United States and constitute only one part of the Hispanic population and one agent of Hispanic culture (Bean & Tienda, 1987). Many ancestors of the current population lived in Spanish-speaking areas since the 1600s and became citizens of the United States as a result of the Mexican-American War and the annexation of Texas. The early 1900s brought a great influx of Mexican Americans who were upper-class political refugees. Then in 1916, many Mexicans were hired to maintain the United States railroad system. Most of them became permanent residents. The third migration surge occurred during World War II when Mexicans began working farm crops north of their border. Mexican-American families still come to the United States to work in low-wage sectors of the Southwest (Becerra, 1988).

Patriarchy has long characterized the traditional family structure of Mexican Americans. Although that ideology as a system of values and beliefs still exists, everyday life tends to disconfirm it (Becerra, 1988). Today’s father is likely to earn family respect by providing for the family and treating family members with fairness (Hamner & Turner, 1990).

Social scientists have traditionally depicted Mexican Americans from a stereotypical, pathological view. However, more recent researchers have departed from the approach of describing family patterns as deviant. Two unique cultural values have emerged: familism and respect for the father (Hamner & Turner, 1990). The Mexican-American family is a warm, nurturing institution in which
sharing and cooperation are emphasized. It provides basic emotional support for children and tends to include relatives, friends, and godfathers. Frequent contact with the extended family promotes cohesiveness (Hamner & Turner, 1990).

The literature depicts the modern Mexican-American mother as nurturant and warm, with expectations for obedience from her children (Hamner & Turner, 1990). She seems intent on being a good wife and taking care of the home and children (Williams, 1990). Research shows that maternal teaching strategies relate to maternal education level rather than to ethnicity. There appear to be sex differences in child rearing, with mothers being particularly close to their daughters and more indulgent with their sons (Hamner & Turner, 1990).

In the past, clearly defined roles typified traditional Mexican-American family life. Elders were viewed as wise and worthy of respect, and women, as childbearers, were viewed as needing protection. A daughter was taught the roles and skills of wife and mother early in preparation for marriage or her mother’s absence. The eldest daughter was expected to care for younger children, thus freeing the mother for other tasks (Becerra, 1988).

Mexican-American families tend to be large and to depend upon income received from blue-collar jobs. Thus, families maintain a low socioeconomic level. The high school dropout rate is high among Mexican Americans, as is fertility rate. Families are usually stable and include two parents, although many Mexican men who aspire to higher
wages come to the United States seeking work and leave their wives behind (Becerra, 1988).

Evidence suggests several value differences between Anglo and Mexican-American families. Anglos value doing; Mexican Americans value being. Anglos tend to be future-oriented; Mexican Americans are more present-oriented. Anglos emphasize individual action; Mexican Americans emphasize group cooperation. These differences may be at least partially related to social conditions (Hamner & Turner, 1990). Mexican-American culture contains elements of both cultures. However, proximity of the Mexican border, regardless of the amount of flow back and forth, tends to reinforce Mexican familial ties and family values (Becerra, 1988).

Mexican-American cultural values can be summarized in five concepts shared by other Hispanic groups: familism, personalism, hierarchy, spiritualism, and fatalism (Ho, 1987). Familism serves as the basis of self-esteem. Personalism implies the expectation of giving and receiving respect in relationships. Hierarchy defines the roles of rich and poor, men, women, and children. Men are expected to provide for the family; women, to care for the home; children, to obey parents; and younger children, to obey older children in the family. Spiritualism finds expression through folk remedies and Roman Catholicism among the less educated. Fatalism encourages an attitude of acceptance toward all life events.

Health, poverty, and educational problems in the Mexican-American population are prevalent and difficult to separate. Behavior,
heredity, and family structure seem to affect the interaction of these variables (Bailey, 1988). Similarly, lack of appropriate education can exacerbate health and economic problems. The interaction of these stressors is sometimes compounded by language barriers (House Select Committee on Hunger, 1988).

Discrimination in education has long been a problem for Mexican Americans. It was most pronounced in the early 1900s when whites showed a lack of concern for educating migrant workers' children. During the Great Depression, Mexican-American children were segregated from their classmates for the purpose of learning American values, English, and vocational skills. Although New Mexico and California improved their schooling practices somewhat, in the 1930s and 1940s, Texas did not. Because farm workers were needed during World War II, token, shallow outreach efforts were made in the name of the Texas Good Neighbor Commission, but appropriate education remained little more than rhetoric until the War on Poverty in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Even then, well-intentioned compensatory efforts assumed a cultural deprivation approach, with the goal of changing children rather than modifying schools. By 1979, school discrimination had been modified, but not eliminated or radically changed (Carter & Segura, 1979).

Carter (1970) described more modern school discrimination and its consequences. As he explained,

In attempting to convert Mexican Americans to "our way of life," the school inadvertently creates an environment that does not
reflect the real American culture. Rather, the climate is ideal middle class: the "unsavory" aspects of American culture, its diversity and controversial elements are excluded. The enforcement of strict behavioral standards promotes serious culture conflict. Children learn a culture (language, values, expectations, roles, and so on) in their homes or from their peers. The school enforces another and different culture. In order to persist in the school, the child is required to drop the other culture, at least outwardly, and manifest the cultural characteristics demanded by the institution. Many cannot do this and flee the hostile school environment, removing themselves mentally in the elementary school years and physically as soon as local law or practice permits. (Carter, 1970, p. 99)

Parents' reactions to school matters vary. Most poor parents seem to appreciate school professionals' good intentions, but tend not to recognize the value of parent participation. They usually view elementary school more favorably than high school because it is self-contained, less subject-based, and more flexible (Carter, 1970).

Some Mexican-American students succeed in spite of the problems of education. Research findings indicate five success factors: mothers' aspirations, educational attainment of parents, teachers who defy system policies (Carter & Segura, 1979), learning through cooperative activities (Berger, 1991), and relevant curriculum (Carter, 1970).

**Korean Americans**

Since the Immigration Act of 1965, the Korean population in the United States has grown so fast that researchers have not been able to provide current data at the same rate. Most data come from the observations of researchers such as Min (1988) and Korean historical records.
The first Korean immigrants came to Hawaii between 1903 and 1905, to work on sugar plantations for economic reasons. Between 1906 and 1924, more than 2,000 of them moved from Hawaii to the West Coast. The majority of immigrants during that time were “picture brides” (Min, 1988, p. 200). With the adoption of the national-origins quota system in 1924, Korean immigration practically ended. However, Korean War brides and the adoption of orphans raised the number of Koreans entering the United States substantially beginning in the 1950s. Another immigration surge occurred with the passing of the 1965 Immigration Act which allowed admission based on job skills needed in the United States. Thousands came as a result of this act, especially doctors and their nuclear families. After their own naturalization, these professionals brought their extended families. Now, most Korean Americans are these relatives who were lured by economic, social, and education opportunities as well as family ties (Min, 1988).

Unlike Mexican Americans, Koreans historically have come for permanent settlement rather than temporary labor. Since the 1980s, Korean Americans have been one of the most rapidly increasing immigrant groups, but their numbers remain small in comparison to other Asian groups. Most live in metropolitan areas, namely Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago. Their comparatively small numbers and physical resemblance to Chinese and Japanese residents have been associated with researchers’ tendency to overlook them (Hurh & Kim, 1984).
More recent immigrants, who differ from the early uneducated and unskilled immigrants, surpass native-born Americans in education. Korean wives end their careers after marriage, but recent immigrants tend to be employed as an economic necessity, because United States wages are attractive, and because their values are influenced by American values. Moreover, today’s immigrants are achievers, with aspirations for success (Min, 1988).

Ethnic community organizations and informal friendships, rather than geographically segregated ethnic communities, undergird the Korean-American social system (Min, 1988). Although most Korean Americans are in the middle and upper socioeconomic brackets, many are plagued with social problems. An analysis of Korean immigrants in the Chicago area ranked their problems from greatest to least as follows: language, busy routine, concern for children, social isolation, job-related areas, inadequate income, and racial discrimination (Hurh, Kim, & Kim, 1979). Language remained the greatest difficulty in a nationwide analysis 5 years later, with social difficulties and transportation problems being added to the list (Hurh & Kim, 1984). In attempting an explanation for social difficulties, Choy (1979) and Min (1988) described a relationship between difficulty with speaking English and the tendency to be self-employed and, thus, socially isolated.

In spite of their differences from early immigrants, more recent Korean Americans retain some of the traditional values. In fact, traditions are so important that young Korean-American males usually spend 1 month in Korea for the purpose of finding a marriage partner
with traditional Korean values. Traditional Korean culture was first influenced by United States Protestant missionaries who established the first modern schools in Korea in the early 1900s. United States political, economic, and military connections have further affected Korean culture (Min, 1988).

Korean culture also has roots in Chinese Confucianism. Chinese influences include ancestor worship and the expectation that children give one-sided obedience and respect to anyone older. Marriage roles reflect Confucian influence also. The wife's self-esteem is grounded in her role as bearer of children. The husband has the final authority in all matters, including the children's education, and sons are considered more valuable than daughters. Further Chinese influence is represented by the 10th century Chinese civil service examination that led to the current Korean emphasis on education as the means for advancement (Chang, 1977; Hurh et al., 1979; Min, 1988).

At least three traditional views have contributed to Korean American's coping abilities as immigrants. First, the family is the foundation of all aspects of life and, thus, a reliable resource. Even extended family members are well loved. "A young immigrant child may suffer few adjustment problems if his family buttresses him against the impact of the strange culture" (Yu, 1977, p. 187). Second, planning ahead is thought to bring unhappiness because it necessitates hard work. Dealing with life 1 day at a time is viewed as more desirable (Chang, 1977). Third, the belief that satisfaction can be achieved regardless of
objective conditions promotes optimism, even in the presence of low expectations (Hurh & Kim, 1984).

Historically, the church was important as a teacher of Korean language, history, and culture in America. Current church involvement contrasts with other Asian American’s spiritual allegiances. Korean Americans report that they attend church for peace of mind, religious reasons, psychological comfort, and to meet people. Church fellowship resembles communal bonds similar to the family bonds left behind in Korea. Therefore, church has become a means of survival (Hurh & Kim, 1984; Hyung-chan, 1974).

Child rearing also occupies a place of priority in Korean-American life. In the home, children learn values such as familism, authoritarianism, emotional humanism, anti-materialism (Banks & Banks, 1989), courtesy, formality, modesty, friendship, achievement, and respect for others’ feelings (Loridas, 1989). If a mother’s child-rearing approach is traditional, her motives are unspoken:

For typical Korean mothers, the notion of disciplining--"doing this only because I love you"--does not need to be verbalized because they see the long-term benefits of establishing self-motivated cooperation through "love-oriented intimacy" techniques. Such attitude stands in direct contrast with the Western approach, embodied in the saying "Spare the rod, and spoil the child," which is based on the assumption that severe sanctioning is not only good for the immediate correction of a fault or misdeed, but also for its long-range correction as well. (Loridas, 1989, pp. 124-125).

In reality, most younger Korean immigrants whose children were born and reared in this country are similar to middle-class American parents in emphasizing mutual respect within the family. However,
Korean-American parents do tend to use negative reinforcement more often and positive reinforcement less often than do middle-class American parents. Concerned that their children do not learn respectful ways of interacting with adults in the American schools, many Korean immigrant parents try to teach Korean social norms at home. Korean-American parents are generally stricter than American parents in teaching different social roles to boys and girls (Min, 1988).

Korean-American child-rearing orientation seems to be linked, in part, to parental English-speaking proficiency, education, and employment. Mothers who work outside the home tend to value creativity and autonomy in their children more than do mothers who remain at home. Parents with more education appear to have more positive feelings about play, child independence, and autonomy. More-highly-educated parents are also more likely to view themselves as teachers. The more parents speak English, the more likely they are to encourage creativity in their children (Choi, 1992).

Korean-American parents emphasize the importance of their children’s education. Many families send their children to private schools in preparation for college. Others engage tutors to help their high school children study after school. Still others establish after-school study programs for examination preparation (Min, 1988).

Selective ethnic attachment characterizes Korean acculturation. Korean Americans tend toward “adhesive adaptation . . . certain aspects of American culture are added onto the Korean culture, without replacing or modifying any significant part of it” (Hurh & Kim, 1984,
For example, Korean Americans frequently Anglicize their first names, indicating a desire to Americanize, yet use their Korean first names within the ethnic community. They tend to retain traditional Korean values such as family duty as priority, the Korean language, ethnic pride, and within-group marriage (Hurh & Kim, 1984; Min, 1988).

Investigators have searched for reasons why language remains the greatest adjustment problem for Korean Americans. Hurh and Kim (1984) found five explanations. First, Korean high schools emphasize written, rather than conversational, English. Second, Korea historically has had no colonial experiences in which to acquire conversational English. Third, Korean Americans speak English in the workplace, but Korean in the home. Fourth, Korean Americans limit their participation in American society, opting instead for within-group social relationships. Fifth, Korean Americans limit their exposure to United States media. They prefer media that reflects Korean concerns.

Korean-American children's difficulties with the English language may be related to some degree to factors in the United States school system. As recently as 1979, no sequential textbooks for Korean children were available anywhere in the nation. Neither were there enough Korean-speaking bilingual teachers. Over the years, many Korean children have been placed in classes with Chinese students because of the small number of Korean-American children in a particular school or school district. Most schools have had few Korea-related materials until recently, and teachers' minimal knowledge about Korea has reflected public unawareness (Choy, 1979).
Moreover, limited research on the Korean-American population has left children's needs overlooked. As Choy (1979) explained,

Korean immigrant children usually take from six months to one year to adjust to the American school system. During this period, many suffer mentally and physically because they do not speak English and do not play with their American "friends" who sit next to them. Immigrant children keep silent during class hours and the recess period, and feel isolated and rejected by both teachers and peers. (p. 247)

Of the few studies that are available regarding Korean Americans, most involved subjects in Los Angeles, New York City, and Chicago. The research in one such study suggested that bilingual programs for Korean-American students may benefit from including cultural events, attending to students' self-esteem, and informing parents of school activities (Kester, 1989). In a second study researchers found a relationship between school success and (a) parental emphasis on education, (b) authoritative parenting, (c) parental expectations for success, (d) parental emphasis on effort and perseverance, (e) strict control of study time by parents, (f) tutoring for remediation or acceleration, and (g) excusing the child from other time commitments for the purpose of studying (Mardkowitz & Ginsburg, 1986).

The California State Department of Education periodically generates manuals and handbooks for teachers of Korean-American students. The 1992 handbook informs teachers that children who say "teacher" instead of the teacher's name probably do so out of respect, according to Korean tradition. Similarly, children who refrain from initiating conversation or answering difficult questions may be showing
respect. In Korean culture, giving a wrong answer humiliates the child and insults the teacher. Moreover, many Korean children are taught not to venture personal opinion comments unless confronted with dishonest, unfair, or immoral behavior.

Tradition may also guide parental behavior. A Korean-American parent may not respond to a teacher’s invitation or request for general assistance that is issued only one time. Persistence and specificity may be necessary to assure the parent that the offer is genuine (California Department of Education, 1992).

**African Americans**

A knowledge of slavery practices leads understanding to modern African-American culture. Slaves were not permitted to legally marry, but families formed nevertheless. Slave owners regulated spousal choices on the basis of selective breeding and plantation needs. Consequently, family members were frequently separated. In slavery, families provided a means of survival by equipping family members with empathy, self-esteem, love, and uniquely black socialization skills to cushion the harsh realities of life. In contrast, white, middle-class values and lifestyle characterized free blacks (Staples, 1988).

After emancipation, freed slaves married and families, especially children, became highly valued. However, no education and limited work opportunities resulted in low wages and the need for all family members to work. Role sharing preserved the family, although urbanization reduced family support. Urbanization also brought pressure
to conform to white culture, thus diluting black culture. Religion, speech, and other expressive arts survived somewhat. Emancipation created a new culture, the black American (Staples, 1988).

African Americans today face a host of problems. Racism, health, and poverty threaten their well being. Racism shows itself in the form of biased literature, avoidance, withholding of power, and physical attacks (Sherman, 1990). Health problems in the form of hypertension (Bailey, 1988), AIDS (McBride, 1988), substance abuse, malnutrition, heart disease, diabetes, and sexually transmitted disease threaten the community. Poverty breeds violence, especially against young black males. African Americans have not only fewer financial resources, but also less education than Anglos. Women tend to be more educated than men, but earn little. These circumstances further broaden the unemployment gap between blacks and whites (Staples, 1988). Both African Americans and Anglos are experiencing changing life patterns, including increased divorce rates, more teen mothers, and more single mothers living in poverty. As of 1990, 62 to 70% of all African-American children were being reared by single parents (Kunjufu, 1990).

Researchers have described black families from a pathological perspective and have misinterpreted family forms that may meet the needs of the black community (Staples, 1988). Assumptions about mothers and single parents have been particularly misunderstood. The African-American mother is strong in her ability to maintain a household and work outside the home, but that does not imply a matriarchal society.
(Hale-Benson, 1986). Similarly, some single parents may appear to have the sole responsibility for child rearing, but relatives, friends, religion, and group affiliation provide significant support for parenting (Hamner & Turner, 1990; Staples, 1988). Support often comes from grandmothers who take young children into their homes (Staples, 1988), thus eliminating child care expenses.

A common goal of African-American parents is bicultural adaptation. Black children are taught different types of appropriate behavior, as determined by the ethnic context (Holden & Ritchie, 1988). Teaching generally takes a casual approach that rewards strength of character (Staples, 1988), respect for authority, verbal and nonverbal communication, maturity, interpersonal skills (Hamner & Turner, 1990), work, and achievement (Hale-Benson, 1986).

Closeness characterizes the African-American parent-child relationship. Thus, young children often sleep with their parents. In middle-class families, egalitarian parenting is common. Parenting tends to be authoritative (Hamner & Turner, 1990), with middle-class fathers having a better record than mothers for parenting through nurturing relationships. Even though black parents use physical punishment more than do whites, love accompanies punishment (Staples, 1988). Children may be punished for not fighting back when attacked (Hale-Benson, 1986). They are typically given responsibilities early in life (Staples, 1988), along with a high level of support. The home environments of black families tend to have a high noise level (Hamner & Turner, 1990)
and flexible mealtimes in terms of who eats together (Hale-Benson, 1986).

Child-rearing philosophies differ somewhat for boys and girls. Black girls are encouraged to be independent (Staples, 1988) and to develop their own style (Hamner & Turner, 1990). Although females are rewarded for expressing emotions, boys are taught to control emotions (Hale-Benson, 1986).

Black children's development reflects their upbringing. African-American babies tend to be motorically precocious, to be more active, and to have higher energy levels than do Anglo babies. They are also more likely to become feeling- and people-oriented adults than are their Anglo counterparts, who tend to become object-oriented (Hamner & Turner, 1990). Moreover, Staples' (1988) review of the literature alludes to high self-esteem among black girls. Black children in general seem to possess a relational cognitive style rather than an analytic style (Hale, 1980).

Black fathers often view their children as both a confirmation of their masculinity and an economic liability (Hamner & Turner, 1990). Researchers have found that black fathers want their children to imitate them, and that they think assisting children with homework is an important responsibility (Price-Bonham & Skeen, 1979). Both mothers and fathers typically want education (Hamner & Turner, 1990) and upper mobility for their children (Hale-Benson, 1986).

In spite of parental aspirations, American educators have not found ways to encourage black students to remain in school equally as
long as their Anglo counterparts. Moreover, Ogbu’s (1982) review of the literature cites extensive documentation showing that black children perform less well than their white peers on standardized intelligence and academic achievement tests, beginning at age 4 and increasing in subsequent years. Ogbu suggested that

> It is easier to improve black academic orientation and perseverance when the black way of doing things is no longer seen as opposite to the white way and when it is not threatening to adopt the white way. In this context, some means must be devised to bring blacks and schools together in ways that make for mutual acceptance of standards, goals, and rules of behavior. (p. 135)

Ogbu (1982) has urged researchers to pay attention to the double stratification of class and race in the black community. However, that viewpoint stands in direct contrast to Hale’s (1980) observation that culture rather than race or class is most likely to affect children’s behavior in school, and the school’s response to black children. Hale and Ogbu agreed that more research is needed to facilitate coordination of the culture of the black home and the culture of the school.

Cultures often clash in classrooms in which children are expected to be still and quiet. Many black students are accustomed to the chronic activity level of their homes. Speaking, listening, labeling, storytelling, chanting, imitating, and reciting, combined with music and a variety of cooperative learning activities, create a more appropriate school environment for African-American children (Hale-Benson, 1986).

Some educators believe that black children learn best in high quality black schools. The Visions for Children Program (Hale-Benson, 1992) represents a current innovative attempt to implement and measure
The results of a uniquely African-American school experience for young black children. The goal of the demonstration program is to facilitate the intellectual development and academic achievement and enhance the self-concepts of African-American preschool children. Longitudinal evaluation will be used to measure the value of the program.

Misguided teaching and stressful life circumstances seem to affect some black children less than others. Researchers recently attempted to uncover the factors responsible for producing competence among a group of impoverished rural black children in Georgia. Their findings indicated that children whose parents valued obedience and respect for authority had (a) low teacher evaluations of competence, (b) high levels of conduct and anxiety problems, and (c) low academic achievement. Conversely, children whose mothers valued individual development and whose family caregivers valued education-related goals scored high in academic achievement (Brody & Stoneman, 1992). These findings, coupled with those of other researchers, indicate the interrelatedness of home and school factors in child development. The findings also indicate that ideas that certain behaviors are typical need to be tempered by observations of individual differences in order to avoid stereotyping.

Anglos

Anglo culture sprouted primarily from the seed of the Judeo-Christian and European cultures. Jewish parents of the Old Testament, who valued their children and taught them diligently, foreshadowed Anglo parenting practices. Early Christian parents’
paternalistic orientation and expectations for obedience from their children also adumbrated Anglo child-rearing approaches (Osborn, 1991).

Similarly, the philosophies of Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, and Quintilian contributed to modern Anglo thought. From Socrates came the model for teaching through questions (cited in Barnes, 1992). From Aristotle, a proponent of parent education, came a curriculum emphasizing nutrition and moral education (cited in Morris, 1992). Through Plato came the concepts of guardians caring for children and equal education for boys and girls (cited Morris, 1992). From Quintilian came the beliefs in appropriate role models and interesting learning activities (cited in Williams, 1992).

Later prominent figures also shaped Anglo thought about parenting and learning. Martin Luther gave Western civilization a desire to read and understand the Bible and encouragement to educate parents during pregnancy (cited in Berger, 1991; Osborn, 1991). John Comenius, a Moravian monk, instilled the importance of early education through activities. He also wrote the first children's picture book, a publication designed to facilitate multisensory learning (cited in Osborn, 1991). John Locke implanted the belief that children come into the world equipped with individuality and a learning capacity, somewhat similar to an empty slate. He also promoted learning through experience and interaction rather than through memorization (cited in Williams, 1992). Building upon Locke's philosophy, Rousseau advocated learning through nature,

Meanwhile John Wesley, John Calvin, and Puritan leaders preached the virtues of learning to read the Bible. They also proclaimed that children should obey their parents unequivocally. Furthermore, they taught that breaking a child’s spirit is a parent’s duty (cited in Osborn, 1991). Anglos wrestle with this heritage as well as a legacy of child abuse dating back to antiquity (DeMause, 1975).

In the 1800s, three forebears contributed significantly to the Anglo value system. Johann Pestalozzi gave parents the book *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*, a guide that discouraged punishment and encouraged play as a learning vehicle (cited in Berger, 1991). Fredrich Froebel, the father of kindergarten, introduced songs, fingerplays, choral readings, movement, puzzles, geometric shapes, blocks, classification materials, and crafts such as sewing and stringing beads for young children (cited in Downs, 1978). John Dewey instilled the idea that children learn through curiosity, construction, and talking. He established the University of Chicago’s laboratory school, an institution that combined the Western passion for rational understanding and America’s rapidly evolving interest in child development (cited in Cuffaro, 1992). Similarly, G. Stanley Hall taught American mothers to make written records of their children’s development (cited in Berger, 1991).

These and other influences combined to produce the individualist Anglos whose families settled the Colonies, conquered the West, and
formed small communities across the nation. As the nation changed during the Industrial Revolution, however, immigrants poured into America’s cities. Until that time, Anglos had garnered strength from their extended families, neighbors, and the church. Now other systems were needed to support new immigrants living in urban poverty. Their plight spawned private family service organizations. With the aid of these social services, Anglos became urbanized, early childhood education established roots, and parent education became an institution (Osborn, 1991).

Modern parenting has been influenced by human development and education experts such as Arnold Gesell, Maria Montessori, James Hymes, Benjamin Spock, Erick Erikson, Abraham Maslow, and T. Berry Brazelton. Gesell (1948) suggested norms for developmental tasks, thus facilitating the identification of abnormal development in children. Montessori taught that play is a child’s work (cited in Hainstock, 1968). Hymes (1952) provided easy-to-read descriptions of children during each year of life. Spock (1957) answered parents’ questions about medical and behavioral problems. Erikson (1950) communicated the importance of cultivating trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, identity, intimacy, generativity, and integrity throughout the lifespan. Maslow taught Anglos the meaning of self-actualization. T. Berry Brazelton (1987) empowered families to recognize and work through parent-child issues.

Today the theme of American child rearing is independence (Borenstein, Tal, & Tamis-LeMonda, 1991; Levine, 1980). Babies have their own beds, if not their own rooms. Parents expect young children to
comfort themselves back to sleep, reinforcing the goal of self-sufficiency. To instill self-confidence, parents provide attention and, thus, give their children the emotional strength to conquer fear.

Mothers, in particular, promote physical and verbal independence. Through conversation they stimulate infant attention to the object world (Borenstein et al., 1991). Both Anglo mothers and Anglo fathers tend to reward very young children with immediate feedback in conversation. This immediacy contrasts with the approach of African-American parents, who seem to focus more on physical nurturance in the early years and ongoing feedback reciprocity. Anglos also generally spend more money on children than do African Americans (Levine, 1980).

Anglo mothers and fathers typically share child-centered goals, even though the mother is usually the primary caregiver. Parents want their children to succeed through educational achievement and economic security (Borenstein et al., 1991; Levine, 1980).

Anglo families experience a culture of (a) changing family structures, (b) socioeconomic stratification, (c) divorce, (d) social services, (e) restructuring in business and education, (f) time pressures, (g) politics, (h) economic problems, (i) early education emphasis, (j) sophisticated technology, (k) homelessness, (l) teen mothers, (m) later-life childbearing, (n) anti-bias initiatives, (o) violence, (p) rapid transit, (q) religious fervor, (r) racial discrimination, (s) aging issues, (t) mobility, (u) mass media, (v) environmental concerns, (w) mental and physical health issues, (x) dual-career marriages, and (y) changing gender role expectations. Life circumstances and personal culture affect the
ever-individualistic Anglo's degree of involvement with these and other issues. However, the typical Anglo approaches such issues from an analytical perspective, with the belief that clear thinking will yield answers to almost any problem (Hale, 1980).

Gender role expectations and dual-career marriages, in particular, reflect the history of Anglo culture and challenge its ability to adapt. Historically, the Judeo-Christian patriarchal model has placed restrictions on females in terms of fertility and adultery, domestic confinement, property, and civil rights. Industrialization led to changes in the model and, thus, to changed gender role expectations (Hutter, 1988). In the United States, equality of the sexes is now policy; however, in practice, women still tend to carry an inequitable workload at home (Hochschild, 1989).

Dual-employment parenting has been more stable than gender roles. The literature suggests four cycles of joint-employment in the United States. First, dual employment thrived in the Colonies with mothers and fathers sharing toil and child guidance roles to varying degrees (Osborn, 1991). Second, parents toiled long hours at factory labor during the late 1800s and early 1900s, with agencies of the social services movement providing child care (Williams, 1992). Third, mothers and fathers worked outside the home during the Great Depression and World War II, when the government funded nursery schools and child care centers (Almy, 1989). Fourth, the number of dual-career families has continued to increase over the past 30 years (Hochschild, 1989).
Anglo women seem to be affected more by dual-career parenting than do men, perhaps because women typically (a) perceive themselves as having more responsibility for the home and children; (b) do more housework; (c) do two tasks at once; and (d) do the less enjoyable tasks, such as cleaning bathrooms, while men take the children to the park or to the movies (Anderson & Leslie, 1991; Hochschild, 1989). Involvement with family-related tasks usually does not spill over into fathers’ careers as it does with mothers’ careers (Burley, 1991).

In many Anglo families, the spouse with the greater income carries somewhat less child care responsibility. Similarly, the spouse who views career as important may have more authority at home, particularly in financial matters (Hochschild, 1989; Steil & Weltman, 1991). Some parents reportedly feel a lack of societal support for parent-child relationships in dual-career parenting. Hochschild described the cultural climate:

> For all the talk about the importance of children, the cultural climate has become subtly less hospitable to parents who put children first. This is not because parents love children less, but because a “job culture” has expanded at the expense of a “family culture.” (p. 231)

Although hard work began as a religious virtue in Western culture, it has come to be thought of as a necessity for survival (Weber, 1889-1924/1983).

Contradiction characterizes much of Anglo culture. Families experience success and stress, affluence and poverty, education and drug abuse, morality and child abuse. Likewise, many parents talk about
gender equity but hold fast to sex stereotypes (Berk, 1991). Other parents want their children to be autonomous but practice authoritarian parenting. Still others value liberty and justice for all but practice racial, ethnic, and social discrimination.

**Context of Perceptions**

Parents' perceptions and beliefs are formed within a cultural context. An overview of that context is provided in Figure 1, of Chapter 1. That is, the collective culture provides material for constructing a personal culture. However, belief systems that exist within a collective culture are not copied directly by individuals. Rather, those systems provide resources from which each person constructs a uniquely personal belief structure (Lightfoot & Valsiner, 1992).

Parental beliefs are constructed by coordinating inductive and deductive reasoning. Inductive knowledge stems from personal child-rearing experiences. Deductive knowledge grows out of meanings and values maintained in the collective culture. Personal culture results when parents act upon the messages communicated by sources such as other parents, mass media, teachers, and physicians. Parents accept, modify, or reject those ideas, thereby continually forming and reforming their personal belief system (Lightfoot & Valsiner, 1992).

Lightfoot and Valsiner (1992) summarized the task of constructing parental perceptions as follows:

As with any social role, the role of parent is guided by social institutions that function to ensure the internalization of role-relevant values, meanings, and action plans. Individuals,
however, do not passively appropriate cultural roles, but pursue and construct them actively, in conjunction with their emerging role belief system, and their experiences acting within it. Thus, parental belief systems are under the influence of role beliefs and expectations communicated by other adults, and experiences acting with children.  

Parents’ beliefs about the school system develop within the context of bureaucracy, the only structure through which a task as complicated and massive as universal schooling can be implemented (Katz, 1971; Weber, 1889-1924/1947). Parents of varying ethnic backgrounds are likely to hold differing perceptions about bureaucratic administration and, thus, about school administration and policies. Differences in Eastern and Western history account, in part, for these divergent views.

In the China model, ancient Eastern cities had no specific political role. Because no city law existed, citizens could not act as a corporate body. Revolts occurred against a specific official or act rather than for the purpose of gaining a new charter to guarantee freedom. Strong clan ties inhibited autonomy. Thus, no Western equivalent of oath-bound community developed in the East (Weber, 1889-1924/1983).

Geography influenced Eastern thinking in that China’s inland status limited contact with foreigners and encouraged tradition. China’s first emperor bought his office and thereby established a hierarchy of offices based on money. Being removed from the people, the emperor was dependent on unofficial advisers. This method of administration became the first Chinese bureaucracy. Usurpation of the throne meant only a different tax collector, never a new social order, so bureaucracy developed and thrived. A perpetual cycle enabled retired officials to use
their money to buy land which was passed along to wealthy heirs. Wealth meant education opportunities, which bred government officials who hired clan employees who rose to the rank of officials. Clans were, and still are, a part of ancestor worship and, thus, are exempt from control. Thus, bureaucracy found spiritual foundations and virtual immortality in the clan (Weber, 1889-1924/1983).

In contrast, Western bureaucracy is a relatively recent development, with origins in autonomous city-states. Early cities routinely formed alliances for the purpose of changing tradition. Prosperity in cities depended upon citizens' energy, courage, and entrepreneurial skills rather than on government or clan favors. Thus, modern capitalism, with its fervor for competition and impatience with tradition, was born (Weber, 1889-1924/1983).

Capitalism demands efficiency. Capitalism and bureaucracy, therefore, have a symbiotic relationship. Because the capitalistic business entrepreneur maintains knowledge, and thus control, this person is least subject to bureaucratic control. In a capitalistic society power ultimately goes to the person or group capable of controlling the bureaucratic machinery (Weber, 1889-1924/1947).

Both Eastern and Western cultures have adopted bureaucratic structure, in varying degrees and forms, to accomplish the purposes of society. However, the roots of Eastern bureaucracy predispose members of Eastern cultures to embrace a reverence for tradition and cooperative relationships such as those bred by clan affiliation. Conversely, the history of Western bureaucracy encourages an orientation that defies
tradition and honors individualism and competition. Mexican-American, Korean-American, African-American, and Anglo parents can be expected to lean more toward tradition and cooperation or toward individualism, early adoption of new ideas, and competition to the degree that parents have been immersed in a particular culture.

These and other cultural differences are ignored in the popular melting-pot theory of acculturation. Glazer and Moynihan's (1963) theory of cultural pluralism first challenged the notion that minorities’ progressive acculturation involves assimilation and regressive ethnic attachment. Schools not only have discouraged ethnic attachment, but also have practiced ethnic discrimination. School reformers signal their concern:

American public schools are in trouble. Characterized by racial and class segregation, grossly unequal teaching, learning, and facilities, mammoth bureaucracies, lost confidence, and a plethora of contradictory policies and goals, the school systems of the United States seem far removed from the powerful early nineteenth-century vision of the common school for all. (Katznelson & Weir, 1985, p. 8)

Summary

Research addressing parents’ perceptions parallels United States history in that social, economic, and political concerns have predicted the amount of research and its focus. With the development of Head Start, the relationship between parents’ perceptions and children’s education became a popular focus.

Head Start ultimately called attention to child development, parenting approaches, children with special needs, quality programs for
young children, and increasing cultural diversity. Investigators have studied, to some degree, each of these topics in relationship to parents' perceptions. Cultural diversity, as it relates to parents' perceptions, has been the least studied of these issues, and it has been addressed in more quantitative than qualitative investigations. Studies of both kinds describe gross inequalities in American schools.

Each child brings to school a unique cultural background, which is expressed in parents' perceptions of the learning environment. What is already known about the cultures addressed in this study suggests that further research is needed, particularly in terms of early childhood education. Qualitative studies of the perceptions, education, and cultural diversity of parents of young children present the greatest possibilities for research expansion. Educators have been more diligent at giving minority parents information than at studying their backgrounds and listening to their concerns. As cultural diversity increases, so does the need for research regarding Mexican-, Korean-, and African-American parents' perceptions about early childhood education.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The Pilot Study

A 1992 pilot study of maternal perceptions laid the foundation for this research. The pilot project was inspired by Powell's (1992) reference to the fruitfulness of research on "parents' cognitions, beliefs, and perceptions regarding children and early childhood programs" (p. 1), for the purpose of establishing continuity between home and school. Thus, the pilot study was a first step in addressing the problem of home-school discontinuity. Further impetus for the pilot project lay in the abundance of literature on mother-child interaction (Jacobson, 1978) in the presence of relatively little data regarding mothers' interpretations of early childhood programs (Powell, 1992).

The purposes of the pilot study were to (a) describe one mother's views of early childhood education, (b) evaluate the worth of a qualitative design using in-depth interviews to elicit maternal perceptions, (c) refine ethnographic interview skills, and (d) determine ways to make a future study worthwhile in terms of contributions to the literature and implications for parents and educators.

The pilot investigation was focused on one mother's answers to four questions: How do you interpret the term early childhood education? What is your family's role in early childhood education?
What, in your opinion, is the school's role? What is the role of other community components?

The mother of three young children participated in eight informal, audiotaped interviews of approximately 45 minutes each in her home over a period of 8 weeks. She described her perception of early childhood education as a set of cooperative relationships limited to children, parents, and teachers. She talked of children as the most important thing, parents as the first teachers, and parent-teacher teamwork as necessary for schools to work. The idea of community resources as agents of family support was unfamiliar to her. She discounted the family's membership in the local "Y" as a resource because she paid for it. Her high level of commitment to parental involvement at school closely paralleled the Protestant work ethic demonstrated in other areas of her life, and suggested culture-based values. Her views appeared to be strongly related to her childhood experiences and a negative experience with her children in a child care center in the 1980s. These findings echo the adage that experience is a great teacher and reinforces belief in parents and teachers working together for the child's benefit.

The pilot study established that an investigation using inductive theory and ethnographic interview and observation techniques is a viable means of gaining insight into mothers' perceptions. Although the significant results of the pilot study were limited to the cognitions of one Anglo mother, they suggested that a survey of the viewpoints of mothers from a variety of cultural backgrounds would be worthwhile. Results of
the study further suggested that describing similarities and differences between mothers’ perceptions and children’s school experiences could extend current knowledge. These findings contributed to the design of the current study.

The Current Study

In this study, qualitative design was used to (a) describe the perceptions of four mothers regarding early childhood education as a function of their ideas on child rearing, education, and their children’s current experiences in a preschool program; (b) determine the nature of the correspondence between the parents’ perceptions and their children’s actual school experiences; and (c) identify changes that can be made in order to increase the continuity between parents’ perceptions and children’s actual school experiences.

Bogdan and Biklen’s (1992) five-part framework for qualitative research was adopted for this study: (a) question for meaning, (b) dynamic inductive data analysis, (c) focus on process, (d) researcher as primary research instrument, and (e) contextual description. The need for personal knowledge of mothers’ perceptions suggested in-depth interviews and a researcher-as-confidant relationship with participants, both familiar features of qualitative research methodology. As Bogdan and Biklen noted:

There are five features of qualitative research as we define it. All studies that we would call qualitative do not exhibit all the traits with equal potency. Some, in fact, are almost completely barren of one or more. The question is not whether a piece of research is or is not absolutely qualitative; rather it is an issue of degree . . .
participant observation and in-depth interview studies tend to be exemplary. (p. 29)

In keeping with Bogdan and Biklen's (1992) definition, the first part of the framework was to discover meaning—to find and understand the reasons for continuity or discontinuity between mothers' perceptions of early childhood education and children's school experiences. Finding meaning was essential in terms of informing future responses to cultural diversity increases. Open-ended questions guided the search for meaning, thereby encouraging mothers to reveal their perspectives.

The second part of the framework was that grounded theory emerged as data accumulated and meaning took shape (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Thereby, new insights surfaced throughout the investigation, giving rise to new questions that were explored with the mothers. In this way, data collection and data analysis were inextricably interrelated.

The third part of the framework was to explain the process (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Primacy was given to how continuity or discontinuity between mothers' perceptions and children's experiences evolved. Understanding that process, it was thought, would suggest ways to address present and future needs precipitated by increases in cultural diversity. To that end, active listening as well as questioning was necessary, and mothers were frequently asked to clarify and expand their responses. Thick descriptions which facilitated understanding and generated still more questions resulted.
The fourth part of the framework was that the researcher act as the key instrument for data collection and analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). In-depth interviews provided opportunities for clarification of ambiguous questions, reduced the risk of response-set responses, and minimized the influence of education on responses associated with questionnaires (Beck & Krug, 1965; Holden & Edwards, 1989). In keeping with Koch, Dentler, Dysart, and Streit’s (1934) classic guidelines for effective interviewing, parents were encouraged to speak “in terms of small segments of behavior and more or less specific situations” (p. 258), except when such directness seemed threatening. Questions were asked to discover an existing pattern rather than to justify a presupposed supposition (Enright & Tammivaara, 1984).

The fifth part of the framework required that considerable time be spent observing and interviewing the mothers and children in their natural environments (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Everything that happened there pertaining to the participants became data, once it was noted (Mead, 1977). Thus, casual dinner conversation, brief verbal exchanges at the school, and interview responses were all recorded in a separate file that was maintained for each mother-child dyad.

### The Population and Sample

The population consisted of 58 children who were enrolled in a Texas university-based school for young children, and their mothers. The school served families with children ages 3 through 5 years. The children’s families varied in income from upper-middle to lower class.
Some children were receiving need-based scholarships. When the study began, the age of the youngest child in the population was 35 months, and the oldest was 60 months.

Although university based, the school was fairly typical of the community in terms of the population served. Children of professors and other university staff were not given enrollment priority. Rather, the prime enrollment consideration was to provide future teachers, researchers, and other university students opportunities to study and teach children with a broad spectrum of needs and abilities. Additional information about the school is provided in Chapter 4.

Because the school served a variety of ethnic groups, a purposive sample of four mother-child dyads was selected to represent Mexican-American, Korean-American, African-American, and Anglo cultures. The African-American and Mexican-American children were included because most young children in these two groups tend to be cared for at home by family members, thus making school-related data about these children especially valuable. Conversely, the Asian-American and Anglo dyads were chosen to represent the largest ethnic groups in many schools for young children. Language barriers were not a factor in the selection for two reasons. First, all of the mothers demonstrated sufficient English-speaking skills. Second, children were not interviewed because the eligible Asian-American and Mexican-American children had not yet learned enough English to make interviews valid.
In addition to ethnicity, two other factors determined the sample selection. First, if either the mother's or father's relationship to the university provided the family with privileged information about the child's school or early childhood education as practiced in the United States, the mother was considered ineligible for the study. Second, selection preference was given first to children attending all day and then to those attending mornings only. Because neither of the school's two classrooms included eligible participants from all four ethnic groups, the sample of three girls and one boy was necessarily drawn from the two classrooms. The sample consisted of two children from the older class and two from the younger class. The ethnicity and enrollment of the school population are reflected in Table 2. The sample is described in Table 3.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>All Day</th>
<th>Morning Only</th>
<th>Afternoon Only</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican American</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

Ethnicity and Enrollment of School Population
Table 3

Ethnicity and Enrollment of Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>All day</td>
<td>Older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>All day</td>
<td>Older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>All day</td>
<td>Younger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Mexican American</td>
<td>Mornings</td>
<td>Younger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sample generally reflected the population of the school in terms of ages and maternal employment. Mothers of the two younger children were homemakers. One of the two older children’s mother was a full-time student and the other was an executive administrator. These demographics are reflected in Table 4. The dyads are described in more detail in Chapter 4.

Table 4

Dyads’ Ages and Mothers’ Employment Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Procedures for Collection of the Data

As soon as the potential participants were identified, the school director gave each mother a copy of a university-approved letter of permission and consent form. The letter described plans to audio tape conversations with the mothers and to videotape the children at school. The letter stressed that confidentiality would be preserved and that participants’ identity would remain anonymous. Copies of the letter and consent form are provided in Appendix A.

Potential participants were asked to read the documents and a private meeting was arranged with those who were interested in the project. The Mexican-American and African-American mothers responded immediately and enthusiastically, and data collection began. The Anglo mother volunteered to participate, but indicated that her schedule would delay the first interview. The Asian-American mother, from Taiwan, responded affirmatively but had to be excluded because she planned to return to Taiwan with her child before the conclusion of the study. The second potential Asian-American participant, from Korea, readily agreed to participate, and data collection with that dyad began. Data collection procedures are included as Appendix B.

Observations and video taping in the school, audiotaped interviews in home and work sites, and informal visits with mothers and teachers at the school served as the primary methods for collecting data. Open-ended preliminary questions formed a base for the interviews. Extra time was allotted for establishing rapport prior to questioning. Each mother’s schedule determined the length of interviews. At times,
5-minutes with a parent yielded rich data. At other times, 90 minutes over a meal spawned family stories resplendent with cultural values. As shown in Table 5, each mother was interviewed seven times, and the total interview time for each mother ranged from about 3 hours for Ruth, the Anglo mother, to 7 hours for Judy, the African-American mother.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Total Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maradel</td>
<td>Mexican American</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5 hr. 30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haesook</td>
<td>Korean American</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4 hr. 45 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7 hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3 hr. 5 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The schedule used to guide the initial interview planning is provided in Appendix C. The schedule reflects lines of inquiry previously posed in (a) the pilot study (West, 1992); (b) Lally and Wright's (1973) parent evaluation form; (c) Hyson, Hirsh-Pasek, and Rescorla's (1989) Classroom Practices Inventory; (d) Charlesworth's et al. (in press) beliefs and practices scale; and (e) the Home Observation and Measurement of the Environment instrument (Caldwell & Bradley, 1984). As the study progressed, participants' responses, informants' statements, and the journal of impressions and reflections recorded.
during and after each interview furnished additional questions. Thus, questions were rarely posed exactly as stated in the schedule. Rather, the actual interviews resembled reciprocal conversation in which an interested but uninformed listener asks a question, then probes to find out who, what, when, where, why, or how (Agar, 1980; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Spradley, 1979, 1980).

All questions were presented with sensitivity to each mother’s cultural background. Similarly, inquiries were made with an awareness that the mode of inquiry can increase or diminish the likelihood of gathering idealized data or data that represent only what is sought (Enright & Tammivaara, 1984). Mothers were also asked to verify or correct what was said in interviews throughout the investigation.

The interviews were recorded verbatim in field notes. When verbatim notes were not feasible, key ideas were jotted down and were reconstructed as soon as possible after leaving the field. Audiotape recordings of the interviews were also transcribed without delay.

After all of the interviews had been completed, the mothers were asked to view and respond in writing to a video message depicting interactions among parents, teachers, and young children in several cultures (Wozniak, 1991). The mothers were requested to note ideas, techniques, and customs appropriate for their children’s early education, and to explain their choices. An invitation was also extended to specify and explain inappropriate actions depicted in the message. The complete video viewing guide is provided in Appendix D.
Immediate transcription and reconstruction procedures were used to preserve the data gathered from key informants, who included each participant's child, the child's teachers, and the school director. This verification data, collected in the school through interviews and observations, provided potential topics for interviews with the four mothers. Classroom video tapes, work samples, and the demographic form found in Appendix E also supplied data.

Observations and videotaping at the preschool site were the primary means used for gathering data about the children's school experiences. Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines' (1988) Growing Up Literate provided the model for these observations, with modification on one point. Three researchers, rather than two, coded field notes, and viewed and coded the video tapes.

Time in the field spanned 12 weeks, from the first week in October through December. During that time, 24 hours of videotaping documented the school activities of each of the two full-day 5-year-olds. Twelve hours of videotaping documented the activities of each of the two half-day 3-year-olds. Thus, the total taping time for each child equalled 3 school days. Observation and taping were spaced as evenly as possible throughout the 10-week period, in an effort to record 3 typical days, while minimizing interference in the classroom and maintaining observer alertness. An additional day for each child was videotaped using time-interval techniques. The first 5 minutes out of every 15-minute period were documented as a check on outlier behavior.
during lengthier taping sessions. Outlier behavior refers to behavior that is extremely different from other documented behavior.

Neither videotaping procedures nor the campus-based status of the preschool posed problems in the collection of data. In fact, the frequent presence of university students and other outsiders in the classroom may have reduced observer effect somewhat. The teachers knew that this study was focused on children and their mothers rather than on the teachers. This awareness may have limited the teachers' tendencies to function in nontypical ways. An attempt was made to blend into the school environment a natural, unobtrusive, nonthreatening manner. Consequently, participant-observer status was granted occasionally by the highly sociable children in the two classrooms. Within that status, it was possible to accept the level of privileged observer (Lundsteen, 1983) more often than active participant because of the need to keep the video camera focused on the active children.

Teachers served as informants in three ways. First, because of their knowledge of each child's behavior patterns, the teachers were able to verify the regularity of videotaped behaviors. Second, because of their acquaintance with parents, the teachers were able to verify the parents' degree of involvement with the school. At times, the teachers' comments also provided new avenues to explore with the mothers. Third, each teacher completed a personal profile form such as the one in Appendix F. These profiles contributed to the site description.
Instrumentation

This project, unlike experimental and quasi-experimental research, did not use standardized instruments, such as inventories, scales, and test scores, to measure effects. Rather, in this study, the interview was the key research instrument (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992), assisted by the tentative interview schedule detailed in Appendix C and audio and video tape recorders. No attempt was made to incorporate standardized instruments into the design, for the goal of qualitative research is to better understand human behavior in a particular naturalistic context, rather than to verify a theory under conditions that imply generalizability to the population (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). In the interest of sound qualitative methodology and the uniqueness of this investigation, the interview schedule was adapted from instruments (Caldwell & Bradley, 1984; Charlesworth et al., in press; Hyson et al., 1989; Lally & Wright, 1973) routinely used by child development and early childhood education researchers to measure home and school beliefs and practices.

The expectation that there would be consistency in the results of observations made by more than one researcher over time was replaced by concern regarding the fit between what was recorded as data and what actually occurred in the study site (Heider, 1988). Triangulation, the gathering of data from more than one source, was used to address that concern. Means of triangulation included interviews with participants and informants; observation in homes, the school, and work sites; audio taping; video taping; field notes; school records; demographic
forms; and the video message *Life's Lessons* (Wozniak, 1991) accompanied by a viewing guide requesting written responses.

As the study advanced, the data suggested new questions to explore. Thus areas for exploration were noted as they evolved and fitting ways to pursue them were developed. In the end, the study's worth depended upon the accurate reporting and interpretation of the data gathered through observation, interviews, audiotaping, and videotaping.

**Procedures for Analysis of Data**

Data analysis was an on-going process, concurrent with data collection as well as succeeding collection. Throughout the analysis, field note reflection contributed to evolving patterns (Tesch, 1990). After reflective comments were added to the field notes, emerging patterns were indicated and field notes were summarized regularly. Flexible patterns contributed to the formation of preliminary categories of mothers' perceptions and children's experiences that, in turn, guided the collection of the data.

Several other analysis techniques suggested by Miles and Huberman (1984) contributed to the study's value. First, gathering data from a number of sources to corroborate findings addressed the issue of triangulation. Thus, data collected from mothers were examined for likenesses and differences from data gathered from teachers. Similarly, mothers and teachers were asked to substantiate or refute many
impressions and the evolving hypotheses. In addition, relevant numerical data were retained as a means of clarifying and validating written data.

Second, data were categorized by mothers' perceptions and children's experiences. Similar perceptions and experiences were clustered into chunks that were provisionally coded and recoded with the aid of the computer program HyperCard (Claris Corporation, 1991). Data reduction resulted from combining seemingly unrelated data into one category. Such data sometimes became significant later and were recategorized. Double coding addressed the matter of internal consistency, and matrix displays clarified data patterns.

Two other trained researchers reviewed the investigator's work to foster inter-rater reliability. One rater held a doctor of philosophy degree in early childhood education. The second rater was a candidate for the doctor of philosophy degree in early childhood education. Both were familiar with microethnographic research methods.

Finally, the data were reviewed throughout the study to ensure appropriate matches between data and codes. If data were inappropriately matched, they were recoded. If they were incomplete, the source was revisited for further research. As the study neared completion, categories, codes, charts, diagrams, and hypotheses were further refined. An overview of the data analysis process is provided in Appendix G.
Summary

A qualitative design with emphasis on process, inductive analysis, finding meaning, and contextual description was adopted for this study. Data were gathered from many sources and analyzed to establish triangulation. A sample of four mother-child dyads was selected from a school serving 58 young children and their families. Sample selection was purposive to include Mexican-American, Korean-American, African-American, and Anglo cultures. Data collection modes included observation, audiotaped interviews with mothers, videotaped school activities, interviews with informants, school documents, field notes, demographic forms, and written reactions to a video message featuring early childhood education in several countries. A description of the video is found in the section "Procedures for the Collection of the Data."
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND FINDINGS

In this study the perceptions of four mothers regarding early childhood education and their children's school experiences were investigated to determine how mothers' perceptions correspond to the school experiences of young children of varying ethnic backgrounds. In this chapter, the school is described in terms of its physical properties, administrative structure, and faculty. The remainder of the chapter is organized to present the analysis of data and findings according to the four research questions as they pertain to each mother-child dyad. A summary concludes the chapter.

School

Physical Features

In order to preserve anonymity, the town in which the school was located is called Palmer, and the school is referred to as Springfield. The names of all participants and informants are also fictitious.

The school occupied much of the lower floor in a university classroom building. Just down the hall from the school, future teachers gathered for class. Behind the school doors lay a playful world where 3- through 5-year-olds learned.
The children and their parents entered the school through an enclosed porch that separated the classrooms from the playground. Child-high cubbies lined the porch walls. On the walls above the cubbies, children’s paintings, drawings, stories, and collages outnumbered notices about school events and community resources. Long porch windows and French doors revealed a playground just beyond the porch. Windows and cubbies along the opposite wall separated the porch from the classrooms. The location of the director’s office at the end of the porch provided privacy for meetings with parents and teachers.

Behind the classrooms lay a large multi-purpose room, a spacious kitchen, two small offices for teachers, two closet-size restrooms for adults, and a hallway lined with shelves and cabinets full of supplies. An elevated observation booth and small office separated the two classrooms. From the booth, undergraduates viewed activities in both classrooms and the multi-purpose room. A diagram of the school is included in Appendix H.

Children gathered in the multi-purpose room for large motor activities, video viewing in inclement weather, and singing. The children whose parents suggested a daily nap lay on cots in this room, where the blinds were closed, and a teacher played music or read a story to encourage relaxation.

The children rarely entered the kitchen. They knew it as the place where assistant teachers prepared snacks and found icepacks for children’s bumps and bruises. The teachers knew it also as the place for
sipping coffee, washing dishes, and washing and drying towels or children's soiled clothing.

The teachers' offices provided a place for planning, filing children's portfolios, stowing teachers' personal belongings, and storing materials intended for a particular class. A teacher's desk and chair dominated each small office. Occasionally a university student practiced assessment techniques there with one child.

Each of the two teachers' offices opened onto a classroom. The classrooms were similar in that both had nametags and information for parents on a small table near the entryway. Nametags were for the benefit of university students who observed or worked with the children briefly. Both rooms had an adult-sized rocking chair adjacent to the information table, print-rich walls, open shelves for art supplies, children's art prominently displayed, similar furnishings and architectural features, and identical toileting facilities. Walls about 4 feet high enclosed two toilets and two sinks, which were centrally located in each classroom. The arrangement provided privacy from the child's point of view and easy access for teachers to lend assistance.

Learning center choices in both rooms were also similar--family living, blocks, manipulatives, books, computers, art, puzzles, science, and listening. However, the classrooms differed in a number of ways. Room 2, the room for 3-year-olds and younger 4-year-olds, housed a tarantula; Room 1, the room for older 4-year-olds and young 5-year-olds had gerbils. Room 2 accommodated large cardboard blocks and some wooden unit blocks; Room 1 had no cardboard blocks, but had many
wooden unit blocks. Other materials varied primarily in size; Room 2 had larger puzzles, toy vehicles, and manipulatives. Diagrams of Room 1 and Room 2 are provided in Appendices I and J.

Children in both classrooms walked through the porch a distance of about 10 or 12 feet to the playground. When the study began, approximately one-third of the playground was off limits to children. Workmen had recently removed a large, somewhat-dangerous play structure, leaving a gaping hole nearly 30 feet in diameter and 4 inches deep. In the early fall parents installed a new climbing piece. When school dismissed for winter holidays, the project was awaiting completion by university grounds employees.

A sidewalk surrounded the construction area, forming a track for wheeled vehicles. A barn-red shed along the back fence housed toys for outdoor play--balls, tricycles, wagons, sandbox accessories, and hula hoops, to name a few. To the left of the shed was a semi-grassy area flanked by two trees where boys from the older class frequently played soccer. The ball occasionally landed in the big sandbox between the soccer area and the school. A full-size picnic table rested in the middle of the sandbox, but plenty of digging room remained for as many as a dozen children, who seemed to enjoy dumping sand on the table.

Landscape timbers stacked six deep contained the sand and created a balance beam. A similar border surrounded a tire swing that hung from a large oak tree on the playground. Actually, the oak's trunk was outside the wooden fence, but leaves fell onto the playground, and
the tree’s resident squirrel amused the children below. A wooden ramp made the swing easily accessible.

The school building on one side and a privacy fence on the other three sides enclosed the entire playground. On the building side, potted red geraniums flanked two sturdy wooden benches provided for student observers. Flowering hanging baskets, pink crepe myrtles, colorful rose bushes, and various other foliage made the grassy border just inside the fence attractive. Nearby, children worked at the carpentry table, filled buckets from the garden hose, drew with sidewalk chalk, or waterpainted a table. A diagram of the playground is provided in Appendix K.

**Administration**

The school was a laboratory nursery school within the university’s College of Education, with teacher-training as its primary purpose. Parents were aware that the school is a place where university students study child development and observe child behavior.

Children ages 3 through 5 years from both the university and the community-at-large were eligible for enrollment. Hours of operation, following the university schedule were as follows: Monday through Friday, morning session--8:00 a.m. to noon; supervised lunch--noon to 1:00 p.m.; and afternoon session--1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Children were enrolled in one of the sessions or for all day, including the lunch period. Lunches were brought from home. All of the children were enrolled for a 5-day week, but the school encouraged parents to bring children later than the beginning of a session or to pick them up earlier than the end
of the session to meet family needs. The school operated year-round, following the university calendar. The daily schedule for each class is included as Appendix L.

The school was licensed by the State Department of Human Resources and accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The philosophy of education was child development-oriented. The school had a perpetual waiting list for enrollment.

The number and kinds of items accessible to parents when they entered through the porch each day suggested the school’s commitment to families. In October an inventory yielded the following items: a poster advocating play, a chart describing how to tell your child goodbye, a shelf of child care books for borrowing, descriptions of community resources, parenting magazines, immunization guidelines, a layout of playground improvements, a newspaper photograph taken at the school, a notice about child abuse, procedures for responding to emergencies, and a school newsletter. Newsletters frequently referenced special events for families such as a school picnic or holiday singalong. In addition, parents received a handbook when their child enrolled.

The handbook informed parents of the philosophy on which the Springfield program was based. The philosophy was rooted in children’s need to learn through (a) play, (b) a teacher-facilitated environment, (c) individualized curriculum, (d) positive learning experiences, (e) creative problem-solving, (f) small-group interaction, (g) concrete
materials, (h) positive guidance techniques, and (i) authentic language and literacy experiences.

**Faculty**

The director began her affiliation with the school as head teacher for the younger class. She had been the director for 6 years when the study began. Her teaching experience was extensive, and her early childhood doctoral dissertation study was underway. She described her reasons for choosing the directorship: "I can do all the things I love to do—work with young children and their families, teach and influence students, work with others of like mind, and continue to learn."

The school employed four head teachers and four assistant teachers, two teachers per class for each session. The lead teachers had teaching experience in, and formal knowledge of, early childhood education or child development. The assistant teachers were graduate students whose studies were related to child development in some way. Of the eight teachers employed in the fall semester, four were Anglo and spoke only English. The fifth English-speaking Anglo teacher also spoke Spanish, but not fluently. The remaining three teachers spoke either Korean, Mandarin, or Hakka as their first language and English as their second. Future teachers in training who did activities with the children and extra staff hired to assist briefly during lunch and teachers' meetings were Anglo, with the exception of two who were African Americans. One future teacher spoke Spanish as a second language. A picture of the match between teachers and study participants is shown in Table 6.
Table 6
Teachers’ Languages and Children’s Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Older Class, Room 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lerner</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang</td>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Chinese &amp; English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vale</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blair</td>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Younger Class, Room 2 | | | |
| Cain     | Lead     | Morning     | English & Spanish     |
| Park     | Assistant | Morning     | Korean & English      |
| Mason    | Lead     | Afternoon   | English               |
| Ming     | Assistant | Afternoon   | Mandarin & Hakka      |

Note. Subjects in the older class, Room 1, were Adam (Anglo) and Andrea (African American) and in the younger class, Room 2, were Lisa (Mexican American) and Paul (Korean American).

The presence of four teachers in a classroom of 15 to 20 children was a common sight at Springfield. At times, only the lead teacher was present while the assistant prepared snacks in the kitchen or arranged mats for a rainy-day tumble in the multi-purpose room. Teachers came and went throughout the day, as did the children. Thus, a class might consist of 6 children at 8:30 a.m., 10 children at 9:30, and 20 children at 3:00 p.m., with 3 of the original 6 having gone home. The teachers’ schedules overlapped to provide continuity in leadership.
Research Questions

The first research question asked: What are mothers' perceptions of early childhood education, and in the context of those perceptions, (a) What are mothers' expectations of schools for young children? (b) What are mothers' views regarding the interaction between family and school? (c) What are the characteristics of the information and sources mothers use to form their perceptions of early childhood education? and (d) What and how do mothers say they teach children at home? Audiotaped interviews, observations, informal visits before and after school, telephone calls, and a videotaped message with accompanying response forms were used to collect data to answer this question and its ancillary parts.

The second research question asked: What are the characteristics of school experiences for the children? Observations, anecdotal records, teacher interviews, and videotaping in the classroom over a period of 12 weeks provided information regarding this question. Each child's videotaping equaled 3 school days, with taping spaced over a period of 12 weeks.

The third research question asked: What is the correspondence between mothers' perceptions of early childhood education and children's school experiences? To answer this question, data gathered in response to the first two questions were analyzed for similarities and differences.
Mothers, Children, and Correspondence

Maradel, Lisa’s Mother

Introduction

Maradel, born and reared in Mexico by Spanish-speaking parents, was a 27-year-old college graduate. She was the mother of three preschoolers, twin infants Ramos and Luis and 3-year-old Lisa. Just prior to the study, Maradel’s 28-year-old husband, Juan, suffered a back injury at work. Consequently, their income was limited to workman’s compensation benefits. Even before Juan’s injury, family finances were strained. Juan’s paycheck for blue-collar labor came nowhere near satisfying the medical bills for the Caesarean birth of their 7-month-old twin boys, one of whom underwent heart surgery shortly after birth. The enormous expenses were one factor in the family’s decision to live in the United States. Juan could make more money north of the Mexican border, and the family would be eligible for medical benefits.

Finances could have become Maradel and Juan’s focus in life. Instead, the couple chose to invest their energies in their family. Maradel expressed eagerness to participate in a study that involved her daughter. Just moments after Maradel and I met for the first time, she invited me to her house for “supper, a real Mexican meal.”

At 6:50 that evening I parked on the narrow blacktop road in front of the house. Juan stepped out onto the porch and motioned for me to park in the gravel driveway. While I was moving my car, he went inside and Maradel came out. She walked toward the car as I was
getting out and asked if I had trouble finding the house. We chatted like long-time friends as we walked inside. Maradel introduced me to Juan who smiled warmly and initiated a handshake. The three of us sat in the living room where Lisa was napping on one of two sofas. After only a minute or so, Maradel went to the kitchen to finish preparing supper. Juan remained seated in the rocker perpendicular to me. We visited until supper was ready.

The Juarez home was a small frame house surrounded by a chainlink fence. Similar houses lined the street. Open fields behind the houses gave the impression of being in the country even though a shopping center was nearby and the drive to town was less than three miles. Inside, the three-bedroom home was carpeted. A picture of Jesus hung on the wall at one end of the dining table. The table backed up to the sofa on which I sat before supper. A microwave oven on an oak veneer cart and a refrigerator completed the dining area furnishings. In the adjacent living area, two sofas, a rocking chair, playpen, baby swing, and television suggested that the family probably spent considerable time in this part of the house.

Sitting in the rocker, Juan told me that he had attended college 2 years in Mexico, then married, and started working. He seemed eager to talk about his infant son Ramos’ heart surgery, his pride in Lisa’s enthusiasm for school, and his appreciation for the opportunities that living in the United States afforded his family. When Maradel announced suppertime, Juan gently awakened Lisa and walked with her
to the table. Such gentleness was characteristic of this father who hugged and kissed his daughter upon picking her up at school.

Maradel seemed completely absorbed in putting food on the table, but upon hearing Juan describe the Mexican meal to me, she located a current *Parents’ Magazine* that provided more information about the main course, *moles*. As we ate, Maradel told me about her transition from teaching preschoolers in Mexico to being a homemaker in Palmer, where the study was conducted.

I came with my husband, and Lisa was born here. Then I went home to Mexico for 1 year. I put Lisa in preschool in Mexico, and I was a teacher in another nursery school. She was only 2 years old, but she remembers every child. They took a picture, and the picture told each name. I could see that Lisa was right. . . . Then we came here for the twins to be born. Ramos needed heart surgery, so we stayed and put Lisa in school here.

I was beginning to think that Maradel’s life revolved around her family. To test that conclusion, I asked Maradel to tell me about a typical day in her life, since Lisa started school. She replied:

Well, I wake up at 6 o’clock. The babies are my alarm (laughs). Sometimes they wake up at 6:30. Today I had to wake Lisa. Maybe she was dreaming a lot of dreams because she usually wakes up when her brothers cry. Even if it’s midnight, 4, or 4:30, she says, “I want to go to school.” But I say, “No, it’s not morning. Go to sleep.” It’s just like Saturday and Sunday. She says, “I want to go to kinder, Mommy.” And I say, “Noooo” (laughs).

Maradel showed strong commitment to keeping Lisa in school and making the most of her need-based scholarship. She explained, “Every morning I take Lisa to school. I am not ready. When I get home I feed the babies and put them to sleep. Then I take my bath or shower.”
Taking Lisa to school involved dressing the 7-month-old babies and Lisa, getting all three children into their car seats, taking the babies out of the truck and into the school to accompany Lisa to her classroom, pushing the double stroller back to the truck, swapping the boys from the stroller to car seats, and carrying the babies from the truck into the house—all of this without the benefit of covered driveways.

In inclement weather, Maradel became especially concerned about the arrangement's effect on all three children. She pondered the matter aloud:

I try not to have sick children. I protect them very much from the weather. I wrap them up and take them with me [to school] if it's raining just a little. But if it's raining very much, I don't . . . Lisa doesn't go to school when she is really sick. I prefer she stay home because I know this is contagious to other children. And sometimes the babies are awake before morning. Then in the morning when it's time to take Lisa, they sleep, and it is hard to wake. So then I prefer not to go.

On days like that, going to school was not worth the risks.

Maradel's children were important to her, and she would not ask for more problems than she already had. I suspected that she would have high expectations for schools.

Perceptions of Early Childhood Education

Maradel summed succinctly her understanding of early childhood education. "I take care of my children," she said, "feed them, dress them, educate. In Spanish, principios, give them a good start, parents and teachers teaching the foundation." The fact that she spoke in terms of all three of her children suggests an expanded view that included
infants in early childhood education. However, her perceptions more often related directly to school experiences. In the four sections that follow, data regarding Maradel’s perceptions are described as they relate to the four subdivisions of Research Question 1.

**Expectations of schools for young children.** Within this sub-question, the data fit into three categories: (a) how children learn, (b) purpose of school, and (c) school environment. These categories represent themes that either Maradel or I initiated. Maradel generated the sub-categories reflected in Table 7.

Her training as a preschool teacher in Mexico was apparent in Maradel’s many references to how children learn, the largest data segment. She expected good schools to provide appropriate activities, especially stories. Reflecting upon her teaching experience, she mused:

> When I tell stories in my room, I try to make it interesting to the children. I don’t know if it’s the same stories here, but sometimes I tried to dramatize with the children. I would dress like the story so there was not any child that did not want to listen.

She intimated further that a good school would encourage children to take initiative in terms of doing activities. “You know they are doing very good when you hear ‘I want to do, I want to do,’” she said.

Her comments about the Childhood Telecourse video message that was described in Chapter 3 further reflected her belief in addressing the needs of the whole child and learning through play. She wrote:

> I saw psycho-motor development in the children doing Jean Piaget’s example. When they worked with Jerome Kagan, the
Table 7
Maradel's Perceptions of Early Childhood Education

*Principios: Parents and teachers giving children a good start*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations of Schools</th>
<th>Information Sources</th>
<th>Family-School Interaction</th>
<th>Teaching at Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How children learn</td>
<td>Parent-child interaction</td>
<td>Parent involvement</td>
<td>Philosophy of teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories</td>
<td>Desire to attend</td>
<td>Invitations</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing</td>
<td>Friends named</td>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk</td>
<td>Questions &amp;</td>
<td>Informing teachers</td>
<td>Pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Answers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parenting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Singing</td>
<td></td>
<td>satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Playing school</td>
<td></td>
<td>Familism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of school</td>
<td>Cultural backgrounds</td>
<td>Parents as teachers</td>
<td>Language</td>
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children used their mind and body together. I have studied about that. We did classification and seriation tasks to find children’s level of knowledge. Their responses showed their level. I remember that it works! The children learn by playing.

The remainder of Maradel’s comments, especially the sections Information Sources and Teaching at Home, provide evidence of her conviction that children also learn by relating to their peers, asking questions, and experiencing music.

Maradel seemed to say that the purpose of school is to foster social and cognitive development. She explained how that expectation related to her reasons for enrolling Lisa:

I want her to know English here in the United States. I want her to play, to socialize with other children. I know that is important because I was a teacher . . . I think she doesn’t really know everything to do. I watch from upstairs [the observation booth], and I feel very sad when she is not talking with the other children. I feel sorry that she doesn’t understand, so the other children don’t talk to her. They just talk between themselves. I think she likes to play alone there because she doesn’t speak the language. She is so quiet there . . . I notice that my child is alone. But I notice too that when she goes, the other children say, “Adios, amiga.”

Maradel’s focus on language as a tool for socialization was not surprising. Talk seemed to be a salient component of her personality. From the beginning of our acquaintance she talked freely, usually offering examples to illustrate her views. One evening I thanked her for sharing so much of herself and her culture with me. She responded with a chuckle, “My husband says, ‘Maradel, you talk a lot and write a lot.’ On a long distance phone he says I talk so much like his mother when we are together.”
Maradel's concerns about socialization also seemed consistent with the family customs she described:

For fun we do things with relatives in Tuscom Valley. The twins' godfather lives there. We have many relatives there. The children play together. We have picnics, go to the park, and cook out. We cook out at our house and our friends come. Lisa and our friends' children play together.

By the time Lisa had been in school 10 weeks, Maradel's expectations for social and cognitive development were beginning to find fulfillment. Maradel smiled broadly when she related this account:

Lisa has learned many new things. When she comes home, she counts numbers in English better than in Spanish. I try to teach her in Spanish and she doesn't learn. She knows colors in Spanish and English. I think she learned this in school. And she points to things and says English. She tells me about her friend Marcy [at school]. . . . And she had a box with clowns she got at the circus. She counts the clowns very well.

Maradel mentioned the school's responsibility for physical development only once. She indicated reliance on the school to provide for Lisa's physical needs during the school day, particularly in terms of a morning snack. She explained, "Lisa doesn't like to eat [breakfast] in the morning. And I know she has something at school. That way I don't insist much."

I wondered what Springfield School would be like if Maradel taught there. In what ways, if any, would Lisa's class be different? Hoping to learn more in a nontoxic way, I asked, "What would a school for young children be like if you were in charge?" In spite of my probing, Maradel stuck by the following answer, which addressed changes in the physical environment only:
It would be a big school with room for all ages with kitchen, bathrooms, and cafeteria. Also a lot of toys outside and inside, and cartoons like Minnie Mouse on the walls so kids would feel it is a good place to be.

Characteristics of information sources. Within this sub-question, the data fit into four categories: (a) parent-child interaction, (b) cultural background, (c) school network, and (d) other sources. These categories represent the conversation themes that Maradel initiated, with one exception. She did not introduce school network, perhaps because her network was in its infancy. Therefore, I asked about her affiliation with teachers and other parents. She generated the sub-categories shown in Table 7.

The fact that parent-child interaction was by far the largest data segment suggests that Maradel's perceptions of school in the United States were strongly associated with feedback from Lisa. In fact, Maradel made the following two comments together four times, illustrating the strength of this link: "Lisa really likes school. I am very happy there."

Maradel's expectation that school should facilitate social and cognitive development found expression in mother-daughter conversation after Lisa's first day in school. I probed, "How did you know she liked it?" Maradel smiled and answered, "I asked her about friends at her new school, and she said, 'I have friends.' And when she came home she sing for me songs she heard at school. After school she sings and says 'Five Little Monkeys.'"
Three weeks into Lisa’s school experience, she began playing school at home. Dramatic play let Maradel know that singing and counting were probably part of Lisa’s school day. Maradel reported, "She tells me, 'Mommy, I am the teacher, and you are the students. You do like I tell you. She sings with her dolls and holds up her fingers and counts one, two, three.'"

In addition to informing Maradel of opportunities for social and cognitive development at school, Lisa reports on her physical needs. According to Maradel, "Every day Lisa comes home hungry. Every day I ask her if she ate at school, and she tells me what she ate there. And she always says, 'Yes, but I'm hungry.' She is ready to eat."

Knowledge of school also came from Maradel's cultural background, especially her teaching experience in Mexico. As described earlier, in the section "Expectations of Schools for Young Children," Maradel’s training and brief teaching experience led her to notice developmentally appropriate activities and other opportunities for social, cognitive, and physical development at school.

Knowledge gained through Lisa’s school experience in Mexico provided a starting place for Maradel to explore school terminology in the United States. The following comments illustrate her attempts to connect those experiences. "I put her in one kindergarten, and I was in another preschool [in Mexico]. She was in nursery school, you might call it. What is nursery school, kindergarten, preschool in the United States?"
I told her that many people are asking that question nowadays. Then I asked, "How did you choose the Mexican kindergarten?" She explained, "In the town or little city, there are not many kindergartens for children—just two, both private. I chose one of them." So choosing between two programs in the Mexican town had been simpler than selecting one program from several in Palmer.

I asked Maradel why she chose one program over the other in Mexico. Her answer suggested that she had an informal network of friends who were her source of information about the school. "I knew some of the teachers," she said, "and some of the parents that sent children to that kindergarten more than the other. And Lisa knew some of the children."

Wondering if a similar network existed for Maradel in the context of Springfield School, I asked, "Do you sometimes see the teachers or other parents from the school when you go other places in Palmer?" "No, never," she replied, her eyes cast downward. "But I am very happy that the teacher takes care and asks me about my children. I don't want to change that." The teacher, then, was the beginning of Maradel's new network. Maradel valued that relationship, even confined as it was to the classroom.

If a prior network of friends was not available to influence Maradel's choice of schools in Palmer, who or what did? I asked, "How did you find this school?"

Maradel: In the yellow pages.

Martha: How did you know it was the right one for Lisa?
Maradel: I called. Then I came and visited. I looked first. I talked with the director about the school. And Lisa liked it the first day.

Martha: How about now? Tell me what you know about the school's policies—rules, schedule, or suggestions for parents—things like that.

Maradel: I don't really know any because they are in English. But I can read the letter Ms. Ginn gave me. It has the words of all the rules.

School had only been in session a few weeks when Maradel again indicated the importance of print for transmitting school-related information to her. She corrected me about the date for the school's annual family picnic. "It's Friday, October 8," she said, "I have my ticket." The picnic was actually free, and families brought food to share, but the director had printed free tickets to communicate information about the event.

Throughout the study, Maradel referred to her personal experience as a source of knowledge about school. At times, she dared not venture a guess about matters outside her direct experience. When asked, "On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate this school?" she replied, "I don't know because this is the first school where Lisa is going and I can't compare. I think it's good. I'm happy there."

Family-school interaction. Within this sub-question, the data fit into three categories: (a) family involvement, (b) parent as teacher, and (c) priorities. These categories represent themes demonstrated in behavior or introduced in conversation by Maradel or me. Family
involvement formed the largest data segment. Maradel generated the sub-categories in Table 7.

"By invitation only" seems to have been Maradel's theme regarding parental presence at school. I asked what she thought about parents coming into the classroom. She replied with this example from her experiences in Mexico:

We visit the school, but outside. We would walk around the school and watch your children, but not in the classroom and not upstairs [observation booth]. In Mexico, parents are allowed to go into the classroom if it's a special day or special night. When they pick up the children, the teacher tells them about the special time to come. At this school I find out from the teacher and from Ms. Ginn.

"Do teachers in Mexico ask parents to do things for the school, maybe like make party food or something?" I asked. Maradel was quick to tell me, "Only in private school. Never in public school. In Lisa's private school, yes. Here, if there is something the teacher wants me to do, I will be happy to do it." The eagerness I thought I detected in that last sentence made me wish that a Springfield teacher had asked for Maradel's help in a specific way. Maradel, her eyes sparkling and hands gesturing rapidly, confirmed my feeling with the following story:

The last Christmas in Mexico the teachers told the mothers, "We want your help. We want each mother to make toys for her children." And I did that box in Lisa's room with Minnie Mouse. Every mother made something and they choose [sic] just two. They choose [sic] my box. I felt good. And that pillow, the Minnie pillow. Lisa felt so proud because in the plaza each kindergarten in the city showed their toys. There was my box and my pillow. Lisa told me, "Mommy, there is my toys."
Maradel described a good teacher as one who cares about children. She seemed to think that caring is expressed through teachers' asking for parent input regarding their children. She stressed the word "me" when she said, "I am very happy that the teacher takes care and asks me what about my children. I don't want to change that, ever."

She voiced explicit ideas about her role as a minority parent at Springfield School. She explained:

I try to tell the teachers what Lisa needs. I think that is my job to tell them. She is a different child because she is Mexican. Maybe the teacher thinks there is another tradition. The teacher told me about the Halloween party. She asked me if Mexico celebrates it, and I said yes they do.

I thought of how surprised that teacher might have been to see what I saw at Lisa's house that day. To the left of the front porch hung a black ghost made of cardboard boxes linked together with string and covered with black plastic. A skeleton face drawn on white paper was attached to the head. Several lollypop ghosts hung from a string attached to a porch rafter. Maradel grinned as she explained how she had made it and how much people in her hometown love Halloween.

Maradel's English was easy enough to understand, but she apologized for it repeatedly. Her feelings of inadequacy regarding English spilled over into her relationship with teachers. I asked if she sometimes mentioned personal problems to teachers. "Oh, no, no, no, only a problem about Lisa," she said. "Only a problem about my daughter because I don't speak English very well."
As if to illustrate personal things that she did not share with teachers, Maradel confided that she was pregnant with her fourth child. She had not told anyone at Springfield. I promised to keep her secret, but wondered aloud if the director might not want to hear the news. Maradel responded:

Yes, but I don’t know how to tell her. Maybe I will wait and she will notice. . . . When I told Lisa, her first reaction was, “I don’t want another baby. I don’t want a girl baby here.” She was thinking about being jealous. But I said, “Lisa, you are the queen. You are the first baby.” And she said, “Okay, I want. What will you call her name?”

Was this not a family matter that affected Lisa? Could Lisa’s teachers have supported her if they had known? I jotted these thoughts in my journal.

In early December I overhead a conversation that helped me better understand Maradel’s frustration with English. I began to suspect that what Maradel thought was her problem was sometimes the Anglo’s difficulty with English. Even an English-speaking parent unfamiliar with the university campus probably would not have been able to understand the following directions to Springfield’s holiday sing-along.

Maradel: Where is the program today?
Teacher: Over in the union building.
Maradel: Where is that?
Teacher: (Pointing) If you go around this block and back there, it’s the big building kind of behind this one.
Maradel: (Wrinkles brow) Okay, at eleven?
Teacher: 11:45.
Maradel: Okay. (Calling to Lisa) Goodbye, Lisa. (Leaves and returns a few seconds later.) Where do I park?

Teacher: You will need to get a guest parking pass at the information booth. Do you know where that is?

Maradel: No.

Teacher: (Pointing) Well, you have to go up this street and around there.

Maradel did not attend the program.

Language differences frustrated Maradel, but she believed in home-school collaboration and parents as teachers. She illustrated how school and home should work cooperatively to teach appropriate behavior and discipline:

The important thing is how do you teach your children so that they learn in the best way. For example, in the home I try to teach my daughter our Hispanic customs. But not just that. I teach her the rules of our house, and now she knows about that. When she comes to the school, she knows the rules of her house and then she works on that at the school. Later the teachers teach their rules and she will know about the school's rules. Parents and teachers work with the children to be sure they know behaviors and discipline. That's the way I think about the education of my daughter.

Teachers invite parents to participate in specific ways at appointed times. That seemed to be Maradel's view of parental involvement in the classroom. This perspective implied that school is the teacher's domain, and that the parent is a guest there. That viewpoint lessened neither Maradel's desire for parent-teacher collaboration nor her parent-as-teacher commitment. The following example illustrates how Maradel blended the two ideas. She stated emphatically:
If Lisa needs discipline at school, I want the teacher to tell me. I would talk with Lisa and find out why she did that. She tells me, "Mom a boy hit me." And I say, "Did you tell the teacher?" And she say, "Yeah." And I say, "Okay, okay, that's fine."

Lisa seemed to understand that school was not Maradel's domain. When Maradel walked her to the classroom, they did not kiss goodbye as most other parents and children at Springfield did. Lisa removed her coat by herself and placed it in her cubbie. She and Maradel typically said little or nothing to each other at this time. School was the teacher's turf, the perfect place for Lisa to draw upon the independence Maradel instilled at home, primarily through verbal interaction. Maradel described some of the ways she prepared Lisa for school:

I teach her to brush her teeth, wash her hands, take her bath. I try to speak English to her to tell the teacher and the children what she wants. We talk a lot in Spanish and in English, numbers and colors. We spend a lot of time talking. In the morning she can say, "Good morning, how are you?" I tell her when she does good every day. She asks me many questions and I answer them.

Maradel's emphasis on independence does not imply that Lisa lacked parental support during the school day. To the contrary, Maradel described her strong support:

I know our sons or daughters need our support to go to school because it will be something different for them. They need to feel trust when they go there. Then when they stay at the school, it is important that they feel the support from their parents. One way to support is talking with our sons and daughters and asking how they feel about going to the school and asking, "What are you doing there? What do you like to do there?" and so on. I think our kids will feel much better if we show interest in them. This encourages social development.
Interest in Lisa's school activities seemed interrelated with maternal pride. "Lisa learns very quickly," Maradel asserted, "That makes me very happy. Here at home I keep all her papers in a box."

Maradel kept intangible things, too, things suggestive of Lisa's priority status with her parents. Maradel and I were trying to visit one evening when Lisa began singing loudly just an arm's length from where we sat. Maradel put her finger to her lips and told Lisa to be quiet. Lisa lowered the volume only slightly and briefly. Maradel told me that this song, being sung in English, was something Lisa had learned at school. Maradel smiled as though very proud, then continued talking over the music. I sensed that maybe she did not really want the singing to stop.

Maradel's commitment to parenting seemed intense. I asked, "What do you like best about being a parent?" Without hesitation she answered, "I take care of my children--feed them, dress them, educate. In Spanish, principios, give them a good start, parents and teachers teaching the foundation." She had clearly defined her priorities.

Teaching at home. Within this sub-question, data fit into four categories: (a) language, (b) independence, (c) teaching strategies, and (d) philosophy of teaching. These categories represent themes observed in behavior or initiated in conversation by Maradel or me. Maradel introduced the sub-categories depicted in Table 7.

The double and triple coding which dominated the analysis patterns suggest interrelated patterns. Being able to talk enabled family
members to show independence. Affirmation and modeling of independence facilitated language. Language provided a teaching tool, a means of expressing teaching philosophy, and emotional support for the teaching task. Thus, these four components represent what Maradel taught at home, how she taught it, and some of her motivation for teaching.

Love, pride, and parenting satisfaction seemed to be salient features of Maradel’s philosophy of teaching. Her voice tone resembled that of someone with boastful thumbs in a vest when she said,

When my family is here alone, Lisa eats very well then, and she plays a lot and asks for something to do. She is a happy child. She tells me, “I love you, Mommy,” and something like that. She has a very strong temperament, a strong character. . . . She likes to go to the mall and grocery shopping with me. One day we went to a different store and she said, “This is not Pack a Sack. What is this? Are we going to the store across from Wal-Mart?” She’s very smart. She learns by asking questions, questions, questions, always questions. . . . Each child is different and unique because each has her own sensibility [sic] and personality.

Maradel believed that “what children learn depends on how you teach them.” She seemed to teach primarily through modeling. She encouraged language development by singing and talking with Lisa. She modeled language and etiquette by thanking Lisa for amusing her brothers. She also suggested that Lisa show her room to me. There Maradel translated Lisa’s Spanish. Not to be outdone, Lisa switched from providing tour information to doing fingerplays that she could recite in English.

The preceding examples represent Maradel’s overt teaching strategies. However, Maradel probably unwittingly modeled both
language and independence in her lifestyle, as shown by her account of an occurrence in her mother’s home:

Discipline was difficult when we were in my mother’s house. And you know the grandmother with the children is different. I would say, “Don’t do that, Lisa.” But her grandmother. I’m trying to educate my child. I tell my mother, “I’m the mother. Please let me do it.”

Dining with Lisa’s family revealed other ways her parents teach independence. Lisa had been asleep on the living room sofa. Her father woke her and led her to the table. Maradel encouraged her to eat but did not insist. Lisa just sat there looking half asleep. After 10 minutes had passed, Maradel asked Lisa if she wanted a tortilla. Lisa nodded and pointed to the guacamole. Maradel spread the tortilla with guacamole, one of Lisa’s favorite foods. Lisa ate without interference regarding manners. Thus, her decisions were honored, laying the foundation for even greater autonomy and initiative.

Before Lisa had finished eating the tortilla, along came another opportunity for asserting herself. The telephone rang. Lisa jumped up and answered it. Maradel and Juan continued talking with me, leaving Lisa to her task. Lisa talked and listened to the caller for a couple of minutes before summoning her father. He thanked her, and took the receiver. Wearing a smile, Lisa returned to the table.

I witnessed two other teaching strategies that evening. Before dinner, Lisa was permitted to nap on the sofa, the place and time of her choice. However, Juan woke her and led her to the family supper table when the food was served. In that way the priority of familism was
taught. In the second incident, Lisa sang and talked loudly while Maradel and I tried to talk. Maradel ignored her for some time, then began telling me about the things Lisa had learned to do. She said:

Lisa made her bed this morning. I did not ask her or show her how. She plays with her brothers, too. Sometime she dresses herself. She can put on her shoes and socks. She pulls on her pants and underwear, but I help her with the top. She cannot do that yet.

Although Maradel spoke English, Lisa listened. The singing stopped.

Maradel referred to Lisa's role of helping with the babies six times during the study. Entertaining Ramos and Luis seemed to be a favorite pastime. I asked, "Are you rearing Lisa and the boys in the same ways, or do you treat them differently because there is a sex difference?"

Immediately Maradel answered, "Differently. Not so different right now, but later. They will have different toys and clothes." I probed further and learned that "Lisa helps me very much at home. The boys maybe not so much. She follows me in the house. She just likes to help."

**Summary.** As a whole, these data described Maradel's three expectations of schools for young children. First, she believed that consideration should be given to how children learn. They learn through stories, doing, talk, play, being with friends, asking questions, and music. Second, she viewed the purpose of school as fostering child development in all domains with the support of parent-teacher collaboration. Third, she expected quality schools to provide materials and space for learning and meeting personal needs in an appealing environment.
The data described the parents' school-related information in terms of the cultural background in which it is received, parent-child interaction as an information source, parents' social networks as a contributing component, and additional sources. Lisa's desire to attend school, the school friends she reported, the way she answered questions, the songs she sang, and her dramatic play activities all contributed to her parents' knowledge about school. Maradel interpreted this knowledge in terms of her understanding of *principios*, her experience as a preschool teacher, the schools she knew firsthand, her struggles with English, and her interpretation of the parenting role. She contrasted her expansive social network within the context of Mexican schools with her limited network in Palmer. In addition, she referenced printed materials and teachers as information sources.

Next, family-school interaction was presented from the standpoint of parent involvement, parents as teachers, and parents' priorities. Invitations to participate, benefits gained, and parents as informants constituted the description of the parents' involvement. Parents as collaborators, champions of children's uniqueness, socialization facilitators, and supporters described the parents' relationship to teachers. Children, their culture, and parent-teacher collaboration were portrayed as priorities in family-school interaction.

Finally, the data provided a picture of teaching at home in terms of maternal philosophy of teaching, language, child independence, and teaching strategies. Maradel's maternal philosophy included references to language, love, pride, parenting satisfaction, familism, independence,
gender role differences, and expectations. Language was depicted as a teaching tool and a means of knowing. Independence was defined in terms of its relationship to language, familism, and modeling as a teaching strategy. Examples of language usage, modeling, and choices were examined as teaching strategies.

Maradel's perceptions of early childhood education are depicted in Table 7. *Principios*, parents and teachers giving children a good start, provided the frame of reference for answering the following sub-questions: (a) What are mothers' expectations of schools for young children? (b) What are the characteristics of the information and sources mothers use to form their perceptions of school? (c) What are mothers' views regarding the interaction between family and school? and (d) What and how do mothers teach children at home?

Three themes seem noteworthy because of their absence in these data. Some of the other participants expressed concerns about time, safety, and structure in schools for young children. Although opportunities were presented for Maradel to address these matters, the fact that she never did suggests that none of them was an issue for her at the time of the study.

Lisa's School Experiences

Introduction

Lisa enrolled at Springfield for the first time in September before the study began in October. She was born in Mexico and spoke very little English. She attended the morning session only, typically arriving
around 8:15 and departing with her mother at 12:15. Her father came for her occasionally. School records showed that she enjoyed playing with dolls, viewing cartoons, and riding bikes at home. Her play experiences outside her home had been with two preschoolers, daughters of family friends. Lisa's parents reported that she got along well with other children and tended to be a leader when playing with younger friends. Her toilet habits were well established, and she preferred using the toilet without assistance.

**Characteristics of School Experiences**

This section includes data related to Research Question 2, What are the characteristics of school experiences for the children? Lisa's experiences are described in terms of what she did at school--how she used her time. A summary of her activities is provided in Table 8. Numbers in the rank column order the activities from most frequent to least frequent. If numbers in the minutes-per-day column are totaled, their sum exceeds 4 hours, the length of Lisa's school day, because two or more experiences usually occurred simultaneously.

**Large motor activity.** Lisa spent 90 minutes of each school day engaged in large motor activity, her most frequent experience. This activity occurred under a variety of circumstances, including rest time, as described here:

Lisa rises to her knees and scratches her face. She lies down again, propped on elbows. She crawls and scoots her towel forward, then lies down again. Repeats this. Tara moves her towel back about 6 inches. So does Lisa. They lie down. Tara moves forward again. So does Lisa. Tara stands, turns around
Table 8

Frequency of Lisa’s School Experiences

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<th>Rank</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Minutes Per Day</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Large motor activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Listening</td>
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<td>Observing children</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Following direction</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Showing emotion</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Taking initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
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</table>

3 times, and fans her towel about 12 times before placing it on the floor and lying down. So does Lisa. Lisa gets up, carries her towel 4 steps to the left and places it again. She lies down. So does Tara.

This process continued for 20 minutes. Other large motor activities occurred throughout the day when Lisa scooted, stretched, stooped, bent, rocked, pushed, pulled, twisted, walked, lifted, and tossed large objects during the course of otherwise still, quiet activities.

Many teacher-planned large motor activities also gave Lisa opportunities for movement. After hearing a story about a dog, she and her friends crawled like puppies. When invited to the multi-purpose room, she marched to the beat of recorded music, walked on a balance
beam constructed of blocks, stacked large blocks to form bridges from which to jump, and ran back and forth between rocking in the boat and climbing ladders. During outdoor play time, she rode tricycles, jumped on and off the tire swing, and ran at a rapid clip.

**Listening.** Lisa’s second most frequent experience was listening. She appeared to be listening for 85 minutes each day. She gave evidence of listening when she turned to face each child whose name was called by the teacher, whispered words to herself when she heard them spoken, pantomimed actions described by the teacher, responded with appropriate movements in a singing game, repeated and performed fingerplays with her classmates, followed verbal directions, touched corresponding colored objects when color words were spoken, and moved her body in response to music.

Lisa seemed especially responsive in terms of listening when her class gathered on the braided rug. The following incident illustrates:

The teacher said, “Let’s put on our thinking caps.” Lisa quickly turns to watch Haley don a cap. The teacher asks, “Is So-and-So here?” When the teacher says a fictitious name, Lisa shakes her head. **When the teacher says a classmate’s name, Lisa locates the person with her eyes and nods “yes.” She hears, “Is Lisa here?” She smiles. The questions continue until all names are read. Lisa locates each person. The teacher calls children by name to go to small groups. Lisa looks at them as names are called. She hears her name and goes to the art table as directed.**

**Observing children.** Lisa’s third most frequent activity was observing other children. She typically did this for 78 minutes during a school day. She stared at classmates who were scuffling for a prized toy
and mimicked their frowning faces. She turned her back to the picture her teacher was showing, preferring instead to gaze intently at each of her classmates seated on the carpet. With her eyes she followed children one by one from their cubbies to the lunch tables. She pivoted 180 degrees to peer at boys and girls walking into the multi-purpose room. She fixed her gaze on a child whose fingerplay she could mimic while singing a new song. Lisa watched children playing, resting, talking, listening, eating, building, cutting, pasting, drawing, taking turns, and departing for home.

Lisa even watched children watching videos. The following notes describe one such occurrence:

Lisa watches as Jan speaks to the girl on her left. She smiles. She looks at Andrea and pulls on her own shoelace. She glances at the video for 5 seconds. She manipulates her shoelaces, but looks at the children behind her instead of at the shoe. She watches the video for 6 seconds. She turns away from the video to face Rick and Clay. She stares at them without blinking. She gazes at Jennifer, then Adam, Paul, Nicholas, Danny, and Amy. She turns to face Georgette.

The scenario continued with her observation of children being 10 times more frequent than her video viewing.

Small motor activity. Use of small muscles constituted Lisa's fourth most frequent activity, and accounted for 59 minutes each day. Lisa used her fingers to rub her eyes, pull her ear, twist her shoelace, pick up and place miniature figures, cap felt-tipped markers, draw, eat crackers, pour juice, sift sand, work puzzles, build with blocks, and perform fingerplays.
Lisa's small motor activities tended to be predictable, in keeping with her bodily needs and the teacher's intended outcomes. However, these activities happened at unexpected times, too. For example, Lisa seemed to be listening in the listening center, but she also practiced her small motor skills there, in the following manner:

She closes the book and takes off the earphones. She puts on the earphones. She takes them off. The teacher puts on the earphones for her and pushes the play button on the tape player. Lisa adjusts the earphones, then takes them off and examines them. She plops them on the table and straddles her stool. She looks at art papers on the wall. She touches the pictures. Katy comes to the table. Lisa puts on the earphones and takes them off. She places them on the table and pushes buttons on the tape player. She rubs her ear.

Verbal communication. For 45 minutes each day, Lisa engaged in verbal communication. When the teacher or the student teacher spoke to her in Spanish, Lisa usually spoke Spanish. All other communication was in English. She and Haley whispered secrets to each other. She read aloud the letters on her classmates' nametags. She recited chants and sang songs such as "The Hokey Pokey" with other children. She called her playmate to join her in a running game. Saying "here" each time, she placed blocks, blocks, and more blocks in the assistant teacher's hands.

Lisa's most sustained attempt to speak English came just before Christmas when a local television station presented Springfield with some toys to be kid tested. On the morning that the bright green toy tractor appeared, nearly every child wanted to play with it and the
accompanying trailer full of animals. Lisa persisted 20 minutes before her desire for a turn was rewarded. Part of the event is described here:

Lisa enters the room alone. She walks slowly to the rug area where the teacher is seated in the rocker and chatting with a parent and 4 children. . . . She stands beside the teacher, points to the tractor, and says something in Spanish. The teacher explains that the tractor is in use and tries to interest her in playdough. Lisa says, *No.* . . . She repeats her previous request to the teacher. The teacher suggests another activity. Lisa says, *No.* . . . She asks a question about the tarantula in the nearby terrarium. The teacher answers. Lisa says she wants the tractor. Repeats this 3 times. The teacher suggests that Susan invite Lisa to play with the tractor also. Lisa points to the tractor and says she wants to play with it.

**Nonverbal communication.** The preceding vignette included nonverbal as well as verbal communication. For 43 minutes each day Lisa communicated by smiling or nodding agreement, shaking her head in disagreement, exchanging playful friendship touches and hugs with other children, pantomiming animal antics, waving goodbye, touching objects in response to teachers' questions, yawning to express fatigue, frowning at a child who displeased her, applauding classmates' accomplishments, grabbing for things she wanted, and jerking away a toy she did not want to share.

Her nonverbal communication tended to be fairly evenly distributed among the incidents named. However, the longest lasting episode was a 3-minute tug-of-war over a bin of plastic animals:

Lisa is putting away the plastic animals. She places them in a storage bin. Linda grabs one end of the bin. Lisa holds the other end. Each girl holding one end of the bin, they put animals in with their free hands for a few seconds. Linda pulls. Lisa grasps the bin with one hand and tries to free Linda's grip with the other
hand. Lisa squeals and flinches when Linda captures the bin. Then Lisa grabs one end of the bin and another tug ensues.

**Following directions.** For 31 minutes each day, Lisa followed directions. This was her seventh most frequent activity. Some of the directions involved classroom rules and routines. After washing her hands, she placed the paper towel in the trash can. After playing outdoors, she returned her coat to her cubbie and arranged her towel on the carpet for rest time. After eating snack, she threw away her napkin and gave her spoon to the assistant teacher. After assembling with the older class for music, she placed her carpet mat on the stack and returned to the classroom.

At other times Lisa carried out the verbal directions she heard. When requested or told to do so, she lay still for resting, gathered with classmates for stories, sang with her peers, came when called by a teacher, walked to designated locations, wore a helmet when riding a tricycle, rang a bell, and helped put away toys.

Cleanup seemed to be one of Lisa’s favorite activities. She usually worked at the task until every item was in its place. The following episode illustrates her interest:

Lisa hands blocks to the assistant teacher for storage one by one. He thanks her and she smiles. She walks to the other end of the block corner to get even the blocks she did not use. She goes to the rug briefly but soon returns to help pick up blocks.

**Showing emotion.** Grimaces, gestures, and other bodily movements could have expressed something other than emotion.
However, for purposes of this study, these actions were categorized as showing emotion.

Lisa typically showed emotion at school for 28 minutes each day. Her smiles implied pleasure upon hearing her name called for snack time, seeing pictures in a book, discovering a red marker for drawing, meeting a friend in the block center, hearing an amusing story, seeing her classmate's hand decorated with felt-tipped markers, tasting cool apple juice, sighting a squirrel in the big oak tree, racing a tricycle around the track, and receiving smiles and hugs from other children. Unhappy emotions were revealed less often. Lisa frowned when Amy knocked down her block tower, when Susan told on her for hiding a felt-tipped marker, when other children played with a toy she wanted, and when Linda tried to take away the bin for storing plastic animals.

Taking initiative. Lisa took initiative an average of 20 minutes daily. Making choices or decisions was her primary task in this area. She decided in which centers to work, which chair or stool would be hers, with which friends to work, and how to use space and materials in the multi-purpose room. When she became chilled outdoors, she went indoors to get her jacket. She showed initiative by asking questions about the class's tarantula, changing the building theme in the blocks center, pouring her own apple juice, and entering the classroom by herself each morning.
Lisa typically put away materials when she finished with them, rather than waiting for guidance at cleanup time. The following highlights from a 5-minute period illustrate this tendency:

Lisa begins picking up animals and putting them in the bin. She tries to dump them directly from the board but they fit snugly. She resumes plucking the animals one by one. She concentrates fully on the task. When the board is empty, she picks up animals from the floor and places them in the bin. . . . The teacher affirms her verbally. She continues the task. She examines the picture on the bin and continues picking up. She inspects the floor to be sure she found all of the animals. The job is complete, she thinks. She places 2 game boards in the bin, then notices that 6-8 animals were under the boards. She takes out the boards and puts in the remaining animals.

Responding to peer invitations. Another 20 minutes of each day was spent responding to invitations from peers. Amy met Lisa at the door and motioned for her to come. Lisa smiled and followed her. Amy pointed toward the family living center and whispered in Lisa’s ear. The girls went to the center together. Jennifer reached an outstretched arm toward Lisa’s rest mat. Lisa reached, too, and held Jennifer’s hand. Paul called Lisa, inviting her to climb the ramp he had built with blocks. Lisa abandoned her plans to accept his invitation. Amy motioned for Lisa to come to the science center where cricket chirps could be heard. Lisa did.

Lisa rarely declined invitations. The incident involving the new tractor described earlier was an exception, however. Friends tried inviting Lisa to play with other toys, but she declined, her heart apparently set on the coveted tractor. In another episode, Lana tried to initiate a clapping game, but Lisa ignored her for some reason.
Observing adults. For 18 minutes each day, Lisa observed adults. She seemed to study the teacher's face and gestures intently as a story was read to the class. She stared at the teacher and mouthed with her, "B-O-Y-S, boys," when another book was read aloud. She paused to study the assistant teacher's face for a reaction as she followed Lana out the classroom door to the off-limits porch. She scrutinized the teacher's gait and attempted to imitate her. She noted the assistant teacher's method of adjusting the tape player and started it herself shortly thereafter. She leaned forward for a closer look as the teacher slowly formed the manuscript letters on Susan's new nametag. She watched the student teacher's mouth and hands as the teacher taught a song and its accompanying actions. She fixed her eyes on the teacher's hands as they poured juice into children's cups. She adjusted her stance to the left, then to the right for a better look at the teacher's method of brushing hair. She stepped closer for a better view of the assistant teacher as he wrote L-i-s-a on her drawing. Lisa observed teachers and how they did things throughout the school day.

Personal care. Lisa devoted only 6 minutes per school day to personal care. Most of that time was spent eating and drinking snack foods. She typically sat at the table 9 minutes, but she spent most of that time observing rather than eating. Other personal care activities were toileting, wiping her nose, washing and drying her hands, putting on her shoes, and putting on or removing her coat in accordance with bodily comfort.
Just waiting. Lisa rarely waited for the next activity without occupying herself with movement, listening, or observation. Merely waiting usually occupied only 3 minutes per day. During those 3 minutes, Lisa may have been satisfying personal needs unknown to observers.

Maradel-Lisa Correspondence

Perceptions of Early Childhood Education

Maradel perceived early childhood education as *principios*, parents and teachers giving children a good start. The following sections describe the degree to which her understanding of what constitutes a good start and how to provide it matched her daughter's school experiences.

Expectations of Schools

The correspondence between Maradel's expectations of schools and Lisa's experiences at Springfield School are described in Table 9.

How children learn. The data suggest that Maradel valued seven avenues of learning for young children. First, she believed that children learn through stories that hold their attention. Lisa's teacher read to the class daily. Pictures in books helped Lisa maintain interest. These stories and Lisa's investment of 85 minutes per day in listening met Maradel's expectation for learning through stories that hold children's attention.
Table 9

**Correspondence Between Maradel's Expectations of Schools and Lisa's School Experiences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maradel's Expectations</th>
<th>Lisa's Experiences</th>
<th>Minutes Invested</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn through stories</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn doing</td>
<td>Motor activity</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn through talk</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn through play</td>
<td>Large motor activity</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small motor activity</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn with friends</td>
<td>Observing children</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer invitations</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn by questioning</td>
<td>No supportive data</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn through music</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small motor activity</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention to whole child</td>
<td>All activities</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-teacher partnership</td>
<td>Common commitment</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brief conversations</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School environment</td>
<td>Adequate space</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No cafeteria</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Art, not cartoons</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom toilets</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Second, Maradel believed that young children learn by doing, especially by doing things they initiate. Lisa was an active learner. She engaged in large motor activity the 90 minutes of each day and small motor activity for 59 minutes. Moreover, she invested 20 minutes in taking initiative. Her actions rather than actual words communicated the message "I want to do." Thus, Lisa's investment of at least 169 minutes fulfilled Maradel's expectation that her daughter would learn by doing.

Third, Maradel believed that children learn through talk. Lisa listened to conversation, stories, songs, and directions and repeated some of what she heard. She became especially adept at repeating songs, fingerplays, and color words. She listened 85 minutes per day and talked 45 minutes, thereby fulfilling her mother's expectation that she would learn by listening.

Fourth, she believed that children learn through play. Springfield's philosophy was grounded in play, and Lisa's activities reflected that. Lisa played at least 149 minutes each day as she engaged in large and small motor activities. Thus Maradel's expectation that Lisa would learn through play was fulfilled.

Fifth, Maradel believed that young children learn through relationships with other children. Because of the language barrier, Lisa adopted a unique way of connecting with peers. First, she observed children extensively and imitated their actions and words. Then she smiled at them and responded positively to their invitations. Next, she chose activities in close physical proximity to them, especially Amy,
Linda, Paul, and Jennifer. These actions are reflected in her daily investment of 78 minutes in observing children, 85 minutes in listening, 88 minutes in communication, 28 minutes in showing emotion, and 20 minutes in responding to peers. Thus, Maradel’s expectation that Lisa would learn through relationships with other children was met with a total time investment of 299 minutes daily.

Sixth, Lisa’s mother believed that children learn by asking questions. The language barrier proved prohibitive in this regard. Lisa did not ask the questions that she asked of her mother. Rather, she typically thrust a book toward her teacher and asked, “Book?” The teacher understood this as “Will you read this book to me?” Thus, Maradel’s expectation that Lisa would learn by asking questions at school was not met.

Seventh, Maradel believed that children learn through experiences with music. Lisa sang during each day’s 15-minute class assembly and heard recorded music during each morning’s 8:00 to 9:30 work time. Her investment in listening (90 minutes), small motor activity (78 minutes), and verbal communication reflect these experiences with music. Thus Maradel’s expectation that Lisa would learn through music was satisfied.

**Purpose of school.** Maradel saw the dual purpose of school as fostering child development and supporting parent-teacher collaboration. Her high hopes for language, social, and cognitive development found expression in Lisa’s high levels of listening (85
minutes), observing peers (78 minutes), and communication (88 minutes), and lower levels of emotional expression (28 minutes), initiative (20 minutes), and response to peer invitations (20 minutes). Her expectations for physical development were addressed by high levels of both large (90 minutes) and small (59 minutes) motor activity.

Maradel seemed to provide *principios* in the home, as did the teachers in the school. Evidence of a parent-teacher partnership had begun to build, as noted in the section entitled family-school interaction. Therefore, Maradel's expectation that school would encourage development of the whole child in the context of a supportive parent-teacher partnership was partially met, and foundations were laid for further fulfillment.

**School environment.** An ideal learning environment, in Maradel's view, would provide plenty of space, bathrooms, a cafeteria, many toys indoors and outdoors, walls made colorful with paintings of cartoon characters, and a convenient way to get children to class without undue exposure in inclement weather. Springfield's facilities met professional standards. However, toilets were not self-contained; rather, they were part of the classroom. Children ate snacks and lunch at the same classroom tables where they painted and pasted. Learning centers appeared orderly with some materials being permanent and others rotated to fit curriculum themes. Outdoor toys comfortably filled a storage shed, and playground equipment was under construction. Children's work and pictures of children usually covered the pastel
walls. Parents parked on the street and walked their children up the sidewalk into the building. Thus, Maradel's expectation for adequate space was met. Her expectations for a cafeteria, cartoon art, and children's enclosed bathrooms were not met. Therefore, the total environment met expectations minimally.

Sources of Information

The correspondence between Maradel's information about school in the context of its sources, and Lisa's school experiences is summarized in Table 10. The data fit into four categories.

Parent-child interaction. Lisa's school experiences matched the feedback she gave her mother. Her time investment in active learning through motor activity (149 minutes) and communication (88 minutes) suggest her desire to attend school. Her amount of communication and response to peer invitations (20 minutes) imply that she made friends. Her investment in listening (90 minutes), small motor activity (78 minutes), and verbal communication reflect her experience with music, fingerplays, and stories.

Cultural background. Unlike schools that focus on academic preparation for the next grade level, Springfield shared Maradel's principios approach in teaching, focusing on laying a sound foundation that gives children a good start in life. In that regard, a common philosophy constituted a match and facilitated home-school communication. Maradel's familiarity with child development and her
Table 10

**Correspondence Between Maradel's Information About School and Lisa's School Experiences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maradel's Information</th>
<th>Lisa's Experiences</th>
<th>Minutes Invested</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From Lisa:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eagerness</td>
<td>Active participation</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Observing children</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer invitations</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small motor activity</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From culture:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing <em>principios</em></td>
<td>Appropriate activities</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special events</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written notices</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Families honored</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No special invitations</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Mostly English</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From network:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Maradel knew no families</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Brief English conversations</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Minimal continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sources:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow pages</td>
<td>Enrollment resulted</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
commitment to parenting also advanced Lisa’s cultural continuity.
Conversely, Maradel’s Spanish as a first language and expectations based on knowledge of parenting involvement strategies in Mexican schools contributed to incongruity with Springfield.

School network. Contrasting pictures were presented from the data of Lisa and Maradel’s social networks in Mexican schools, in the Palmer area outside of school, and at Springfield School. The portraits suggest that the lack of family friends within the school contrasted sharply with the family’s usual active social life. Thus, discontinuity resulted in terms of social network.

Other sources. Lisa had no input into Maradel’s selection of schools from the yellow pages. However, she did visit the school before

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maradel’s Information</th>
<th>Lisa’s Experiences</th>
<th>Minutes Invested</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First visit</td>
<td>Mother was impressed</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novel notices</td>
<td>Events remembered</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional notices</td>
<td>Information was not easily remembered</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher queries</td>
<td>Queries communicated concern for child’s needs</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
enrolling and voiced her approval of Springfield, thus constituting a mother-child match. Lisa’s participation in events such as the annual trick-or-treat visit to campus offices was enhanced when Maradel received a brief, clear written notice of each event. The content of lengthier messages seemed to restrict Maradel’s retention. Congruity resulted when teachers discussed Lisa’s needs with Maradel and implemented informed decisions on Lisa’s behalf.

**Family-School Interaction**

The correspondence between Maradel’s views regarding family-school interaction and Springfield School’s practices is depicted in Table 11. The data fit into three categories.

**Parent involvement.** Springfield’s open door policy contrasted with Maradel’s parents-by-invitation-only orientation. Teachers assumed that she would participate in class activities if she wanted to, and Maradel assumed that teachers would ask for her help if they wanted it. Both parties agreed that parent involvement benefits children and that parents provide teachers with valuable information about their children.

**Parents as teachers.** Lisa experienced a high level of congruity in terms of similar rules and teaching strategies at home and at school. Both home and school affirmed her cultural uniqueness, encouraged her socialization, and supported her learning. However, her uniquely Mexican preference for tortillas with guacamole found no correspondence in the foods served for school snacks.
Table 11

**Correspondence Between Maradel's Views Regarding Family-School Interaction and the School's Practices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maradel's Views</th>
<th>School's Practices</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent involvement:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special invitations</td>
<td>None (open door policy)</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Faculty knew benefits</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informing teachers</td>
<td>Faculty was receptive</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents as teachers:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Teachers requested input</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa's uniqueness</td>
<td>Teachers offered Lisa verbal support</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher attempted Spanish</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Mexican snack foods</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization agent</td>
<td>Teachers requested input</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa's supporter</td>
<td>Parent conferences</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activities supporter Lisa's learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priorities:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Teachers focused on children</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Teachers gave verbal support</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher attempted Spanish</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Mexican snack foods</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Teachers requested input</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School and home had language differences</td>
<td>Limited continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers &amp; mother had different views of their roles</td>
<td>Limited continuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Priorities. Both Maradel and Springfield school were committed to children and collaboration in their behalf, thus establishing a match in
philosophy and priorities. However, cultural incongruity persisted, mainly in terms of language differences and differing views of the teacher's role. This discontinuity limited collaborative efforts.

**Teaching at Home**

The correspondence between Maradel's views regarding teaching at home and Springfield School's practices is presented in Table 12. The data fit into four categories.

**Philosophy of teaching.** Lisa experienced shared home and school emphasis on independence, the importance of family, and learning and teaching through language. Concepts characteristic only of Lisa's family were the intensity of their emphasis on familism, and gender-based expectations for boys and girls. The remaining elements of parental teaching philosophy were rewards of parenting—love, pride, and satisfaction. Lisa's teachers described the rewards of teaching in similar terms, but to a lesser degree. Thus, Lisa experienced a high level of continuity in terms of her mother's and teachers' philosophies of teaching.

**Language.** Rendering songs and fingerplays brought affirmation for Lisa at home and at school. So did listening and speaking Spanish and English. These harmonious findings contrast with Lisa's profitable use of questions for learning at home and her reluctance to question in the Anglo environment. Thus, language was associated with both continuity and discontinuity.
Table 12

Correspondence Between Maradel’s Views Regarding Teaching at Home and the School’s Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maradel’s Views</th>
<th>School’s Practices</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy:</td>
<td>Print-rich environment</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of language</td>
<td>Listening activities</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication activities</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Thematic study of family</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>Thematic study of family</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting satisfaction</td>
<td>Thematic study of family</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familism</td>
<td>Thematic study of family</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Environment offered choices</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers offered choices</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender role differences</td>
<td>No gender role differences</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>Child was expected to choose at home &amp; school</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language:</td>
<td>Lisa’s listening activities</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching tool</td>
<td>Lisa’s verbal communication</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means of knowing</td>
<td>Teachers listened</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers modeled questions</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lisa questioned at home only</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Lisa’s listening activities</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Teachers and peers modeled independence</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
Independence. Both Maradel and the teachers modeled the use of language as a tool for asserting independence. Thus, Lisa experienced continuity when the teacher delivered the model in Spanish. Lisa's degree of understanding was questionable, however, when the model was delivered in English. At home, Lisa's parents taught that family takes priority over personal interests. The data suggest that the teachers modeled respect and honored family time schedules. Therefore, the high level of congruity concerning independence have been limited slightly by language differences.

Teaching strategies. Lisa's mother and her teachers used language, modeling, and choices to guide her learning. Thus, Lisa experienced continuity in terms of teaching strategies.
Haesook, Paul's Mother

Introduction

Haesook, who was born in Korea and reared by Korean-speaking parents, was a 29-year-old college graduate. She and her 33-year-old husband, Kyu-woon, were the parents of one child, 3-year-old Paul. Haesook was a full-time homemaker, and Kyu-woon was a doctoral student. Five years earlier, Kyu-woon had interrupted his studies for a 3-month visit to Korea for the purpose of choosing a wife. He returned with Haesook, a beautiful bride who was ready to make a new life in America.

Kyu-woon met with Haesook and me for the first interview in their apartment. He and Haesook both voiced concern that I might not be able to understand Haesook's English. Throughout the interview, I repeated her comments, thereby demonstrating that language was not a problem. Thereafter Kyu-woon did not meet with us.

The apartment in which we met was part of a complex of approximately 50 apartments on two levels. Paint on the exterior trim was faded and peeling, but the complex was reasonably clean. Apartments on the south end enclosed a swimming pool, giving the building a motel-like appearance.

Haesook's apartment was tidy and attractive. We usually sat on the sofa in the living-dining room. From there we could see into the galley-style kitchen and across the hallway into one of the bedrooms where Kyu-woon studied. In the living room, a large-screen television
and video cassette recorder shared center stage with Paul's trains, cars, and Batman toys. These possessions illustrated the family's middle socioeconomic status. Financial support from Paul's grandparents in Korea ensured that Kyu-woon could concentrate on his studies.

Possessions also suggested Haesook, Kye-woon, and Paul's high level of acculturation. They wore Western clothing at all times. The day we met, Haesook wore a pastel pink sweater and knit pants in a red and white Mickey Mouse print. Her lipstick matched the sweater exactly. In December she had her hair permanently curled in a style popular among Anglo women. Paul's birth certificate, issued in America, bore a Korean given name, but people at Springfield knew him simply as Paul. In spite of their high level of acculturation, the family retained many Korean values.

Perceptions of Early Childhood Education

Something old, something new, something borrowed. Like the investiture of traditional Anglo brides, Haesook's perceptions of early childhood education were a select composite of significant experiences. Haesook drew upon Korean tradition, current experience, participation in a Montessori program, and parenting to form her views.

From Korea, she brought traditional respect for teachers. She explained, "In our country we think that even though the teacher has done something wrong, students usually think she's right. What teacher says is true."
From Springfield School, she garnered new appreciation for self-expression in young children. She said, "Paul's teacher sings, 'Paul, Paul, will you share with us?' It is important at this age to give the chance to express himself. In our country we don't encourage this, but I think it must be encouraged from very young."

From Montessori, she borrowed what she interpreted as a philosophy of early academics. She told me, "Montessori is very popular in Korea, but I understand it is not that popular in America. It is our first choice because it emphasizes academics."

From parenting, she gained a sense of responsibility for nurturing Paul and teaching him the things she believed important. In her words, "Sometimes he insists on his own way. That's hard, but he is usually a good boy. . . . While I prepare supper I teach him numbers, 1 to 30."

Thus, in terms of early education, Haesook valued (a) respect for teachers, (b) self-expression, (c) academics, and (d) maternal teaching to ensure that Paul knew the things she believed important. Most of the insights that she shared were associated with school experiences. In the four sections that follow, data regarding her perceptions are described as they relate to the four subdivisions of Research Question 1.

**Expectations of schools for young children.** Within this sub-question, the data fit into two categories--how children learn and purpose of school. These categories represent themes that either Haesook or I initiated. She generated the sub-categories depicted in Table 13.
Table 13
Haesook's Perceptions of Early Childhood Education

Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed and More: Respect for Teachers, Self-Expression, Academics, and Maternal Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations of Schools</th>
<th>Information Sources</th>
<th>Family-School Interaction</th>
<th>Teaching at Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How children learn</td>
<td>Parent-child interaction</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constancy</td>
<td>Desire to attend</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards</td>
<td>Questions &amp; answers</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking</td>
<td>Dramatic play</td>
<td>Familism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drill and practice</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking &amp; listening</td>
<td>Presence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Koran food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Purpose of school       | Cultural connections | Teaching strategies      |
| Academics               | Missionary school    | Talking & listening      |
| English                 | Korean friends       | Rewards                  |
| Self-expression         | Montessori           | Drill & practice         |
| Play                    |                      | Reading & playing        |

Current experiences
Teachers
Observation
Written notices

According to Haesook, children learn when adults provide (a) a constant or consistent learning environment, (b) rewards for appropriate behavior, (c) opportunities to look or observe, (d) drill and practice
exercises, (e) talking and listening experiences, and (f) opportunities for reading. Her behavior and her words supported these beliefs.

Paul's daily schedule at home gave testimony to the high level of constancy Haesook provided through routines. From waking at 7 a.m. until going to bed at 9:30 p.m., he knew what to expect. Haesook described the schedule constancy this way:

I wake him up at 7 o'clock. And I have him wash his face and come to the table. I give him breakfast, usually rice and seaweed soup. Then we all ride to school. Sometimes I stay on campus or go home and do housework. After school Paul says, "I'm hungry." So we have lunch first. Then he plays with toys. Then he wants to sleep about 2 hours. At 3 o'clock we watch Batman.

Haesook wanted constancy for Paul in terms of school, too. "If you had an opportunity to change Paul to another school, would you?" I asked. "No," she answered, "I think changing is not a good idea for babies because they have to begin everything again."

Her belief in the value of rewards at school seemed firm. To her, the issue was not, "Are rewards appropriate?" but rather, "Which rewards are appropriate?" Imagining herself in the teacher's role, she said, "Sometimes when the child behaves well, I would give reward. But older children would be different, so they would need different kind of reward."

Haesook seemed amazed at the things Paul learned through observation. She described a conversation about that wonder:

He learns by looking. We [parents] usually talk about that. Kyu-woon is not that kind of person, but I am better than him. Kyu-woon asks me, "How did he learn that? From school?" So we talk about that. Kyu-woon's grandmother is very clever. Maybe comes from her. If she ever goes to one place before, she
remembers a long time later how to go there. So we don't know exactly, but maybe Paul is like her.

In Haesook's view, some learning tasks require more than looking. Learning to read and write, she believed, demand drill and practice. Therefore, she provided a time of drill and practice for Paul at home each afternoon. "While I prepare supper, I teach Paul numbers, 1 to 30," she said. "So he is writing the numbers and alphabet in English. He works about 30 minutes."

Haesook believed that children also learn through talking and listening. These approaches were part of her approach to teaching Paul numbers, letters, and appropriate behavior. She expressed surprise that he could repeat so much of what he heard.

Closely related to talking and listening, reading had proven to be an effective learning approach for Haesook. Therefore, she and Kyu-woon provided books for Paul, and read to him frequently. She commented that Paul associated both Korean and English with books.

The purpose of school, in Haesook's opinion, was to provide (a) academics, (b) English skills, (c) encouragement for self-expression, and (d) opportunities for play in a desirable environment. Her opinions about these provisions remained resolute throughout the study, with one exception. Regarding academics, her thoughts shifted when she considered children's ages. That tendency is noticeable throughout the data, especially in the following account:

We wanted good quality in a teacher and academics. . . . But sometimes I think Paul is too young for academics. . . . I believe academics are not so necessary at his age [3 years], but if we are
here [in the United States] when he is 4, 5, 6, we will find a school that teaches academics. This school is good enough for his age. . . . I think Japanese education style is more similar [to Korea's] than any others. We usually want to teach the children as many [much] as possible. For example, alphabet or writing and numbers.

Haesook seemed emphatic about wanting Paul to learn English. In the context of learning English at school, he also had opportunities for self-expression, another skill that Haesook prized. As she stated:

I send Paul to school to learn English. . . . It is important at this age to give the chance to express himself. . . . If they get this from very young, they will not be shy. . . . Sometime I think he feels very shy. I want school to make him more brave--give him a chance to be more boy, more active.

Having witnessed the wide array of toys in Paul's living room, I was not surprised that his mother valued opportunities for play in a rich, pleasant school environment. She elaborated:

[I send Paul to school] to play with others, and for the good environment. . . . The room [classroom at Springfield] has bright colors and many toys. . . . I would put a slide outside in the middle of the playground. Paul remembers playing on the slide at Montessori. He likes to go up the ramp and down. Children need something to climb on. . . . He loves to ride the bikes. . . . I think children all ages need to play with other children. . . . At his age Paul needs play, not study.

**Characteristics of information sources.** Within this sub-question, the data fit into three categories: (a) parent-child interaction, (b) cultural connections, and (c) current experiences. These categories represent behavior or conversation themes that Haesook or I initiated. The sub-categories in Table 13 were introduced by Haesook.
Parent-child interaction included Paul's expressed desire to attend or not to attend school, questions presented to Paul by Haesook, and dramatic play in which mother and child participated.

Paul expressed his feelings about school this way:

Every day he says, "I want to go to school." He is very happy now. He says, "Have a nice day, Daddy." He didn't like Montessori as much. They were strict there . . . [At Springfield] he talks about his teachers, the bikes, his friends, the sand, and the swing. He compares that Montessori had a slide. Sometimes he says, "He didn't want to play with me."

Haesook did not wait for Paul's comments, however. She reported the questions she posed and Paul's responses as follows:

I ask him questions every day—How did you play? What did you eat? He answers all except What did you learn? or What was the story about? I think maybe he doesn't understand those things because of the language barrier at school.

Haesook seemed to especially enjoy Paul's way of revealing his impressions of school events through dramatic play. She giggled as she shared this vignette:

Paul sits over there [across the living room] with a book and gives me a book. He speaks a kind of English. It's not Korean. I don't understand what he says. He turns the pages and says, "See, look." I think he is practicing kind of like his teacher. A friend of mine also has child who plays like that. She likes to read some book to her mother.

Three distinct components provided the information Haesook needed to choose Palmer schools for Paul. I call these components culture connections because all three have direct links to Korean culture as described in the literature. First, Haesook's own early school
experiences in Korea equipped her with a measure of understanding of Western schooling practices. She detailed her memories in this way:

I was in private preschool so I usually did drawing pictures. And ... I made things with flour. It was a missionary school, so we had Thanksgiving Day and brought some kind of vegetable and we decorated the table. And we heard some Christian stories about Jesus, Bible stories. And we had rest time. At that time the blanket was thicker than here. We had to prepare it, so usually mommy made it for us. Sometimes when it was time for reading or storytime, we put our blankets down there. Some children would sleep. Sometimes I wanted to try to sleep, but I didn't.

The original decision to enroll Paul in a Montessori school in Palmer seemed natural because of the powerful Montessori presence in Korea. However, providing transportation to the Montessori facility became a problem. Haesook depicted the problem and its resolution thusly:

Most of all we needed easy transportation. Paul was attending Montessori, but getting him there was too hard because I do not drive. So we looked for another school. We can ride together to his school now. I stay on campus until 12 when my husband picks us up.

Palmer had no Korean residential community as such, but Haesook and other Koreans in the area provided mutual support in times of crisis and in circumstances requiring significant decisions. She mentioned the role of friends in her choice of Springfield School. "I did not visit the school before enrolling Paul," she said. "I believed my friends. My Korean neighbor was sending her daughter to nursery school. So we registered here."

Haesook's current experiences contributed to her perceptions of early childhood education. These experiences included encounters with
teachers, personal observation, and written communication from Springfield School.

I asked about her relationship with teachers outside of school. She answered, "We have seen the Montessori teachers three or four times outside of school, but not Springfield teachers. We had many Montessori conferences, too, but none at Springfield so far." I sensed a note of concern in those statements, but probing did not penetrate Haesook's nonjudgmental approach in this comparison. Perhaps politeness guarded her response. Acquaintance with the Korean assistant teacher through church attendance may also have tempered her judgment.

Haesook and Kyu-soo switched Paul from the morning class to the afternoon class just before data gathering for this study was completed. Given the fact that naturalistic studies investigate what is, I listened for Haesook's reasons for the change and her reactions to it. Her first reaction revealed that teachers played a significant role in her thoughts and feelings about schools for young children. She stated simply:

The first teacher [Cain] was very impressive in our lives. So I think Mrs. Mason and the other teacher must be a good teacher, but when I saw the difference between yesterday afternoon when I picked him up at school, I feel more friendly [with Cain] because I knew her first.

Much of what Haesook knew about school came through her personal observation at Springfield. I met her unexpectedly on the playground one afternoon. She stayed 20 minutes, watching Paul ride
bikes and maneuver a hula hoop. She also made frequent use of the observation booth. She described the benefits of her observation:

I have watched Paul from the observation booth many times. I have learned two rules, wash your hands and line up. I know they sing songs, hear stories, and play. . . . Also reading on the magic carpet. . . . I have noticed that Paul plays mostly with other Asian children. He doesn't notice that they are not Korean, but they have black hair and he chooses them to play with.

Haesook's regular attendance at special school events suggested that written notices of events were probably an effective information source for her. She even attended the Christmas sing-along, which was not easy to locate. Her familiarity with the campus was, no doubt, beneficial in this case. Written school policies and philosophy statements may have been less helpful. She demonstrated no knowledge of school policies, rules, suggestions, goals, or guidelines other than satisfying immunization, extra clothing, and tuition requirements.

**Family-school interaction.** Within this sub-question, the data fit into two categories—philosophy and activities. These categories represent themes demonstrated in behavior or introduced into conversation by Haesook or me. Haesook generated the sub-categories displayed in Table 13.

In terms of Haesook's philosophy of family-school interaction, the data suggest the following three considerations: (a) the degree of interaction, (b) cultural perspectives, and (c) familism's priority. In the context of a video message depicting home-school relationships in several
cultures, Haesook commented on the similarities between her philosophy and family-school interaction in Japan. She said,

The closer with parents, teachers, and children, the better. . . . I would probably be closer with the teachers if Paul went to school all day, but not just for one-half day. If my family had a personal problem, I would not tell the teacher.

"Remember the Montessori teacher who told you that Paul cried because he did not know how to do [school activities]?” I asked. “Do you think she should have shown Paul how?"

Haesook’s answer provided a surprising cultural perspective.

“No,” she said, “because I think sometimes we must endure because we are the international. Sometimes I have pity on him. This is not Korea.” Similarly, she referred to a classroom incident at Springfield that could have brought parents to the quick defense of the child. “I think the problem is I didn’t teach him very well,” Haesook lamented.

Family’s priority in the family-school relationship may have been Haesook’s strongest belief. She commented, “If we had a family trip, Paul would not go [to school].” She backed that conviction with action in the spring semester when she withdrew Paul from school for an extended visit with family in Korea.

Family needs also prompted the decision to switch Paul to the afternoon class. Haesook reported,

My husband usually wants to sleep. Late night he studies. He usually goes to bed at 4 or 5 in the morning. He is an owl person. So after he goes to bed at 5 or 6 o’clock in the morning, he had to wake up to take Paul to school. That makes him very tired. . . . He is studying very, very hard nowadays. He is very busy. So it’s better to take Paul in the afternoon.
Parental presence and communication were the activities that supported Haesook's philosophy. As previously mentioned, she frequented the observation booth and special events such as the Christmas sing-along. The whole family attended the fall picnic. They even maintained connection with the school during Paul's October bout with a virus. Haesook reported:

Paul has missed the bikes most during his illness. He loves to ride the bikes. He was feeling a little better today and the weather was very good, so his daddy took him to ride some after most of the children were gone.

Being physically present at the school meant that Haesook had opportunities for communicating with teachers. She listened and learned. She still remembered something a Montessori teacher told her months earlier. According to Haesook, the teacher said, "I don't understand why he cried. But sometimes international students cry because he doesn't know how to do it."

She wanted to know if Paul had problems so she could work with the teacher to find solutions. She hypothesized,

If he did something at school that he should not, I would want the teacher to ask him a few times not to do it. And I would want her to send a note to me so I could talk to him.

After hearing the following story, I noted in my journal that Haesook's restraint and diplomacy in communication with teachers amazed me. She seemed to almost bite her lip as she rendered this account of Paul's first day in the afternoon program.

Yesterday I watched Paul from the observation booth from 4:30 to 5 o'clock. At 10 to 5 he wanted to pee-pee. So he asked his new teacher or assistant teacher, not Mrs. Ma son. She let him go to
the bathroom. When he was in the morning class, they knew that he could not so well pull up his pants and do everything. So I think he was in a hurry and wanted some help from her, but she didn't. "Pull down your pants," she told him. So he worked very hard and pulled down his pants and briefs. When he pee-peed, he went very much. So I think he did very well. But after that he couldn't pull up very well at all. (Laughs and gestures underwear bunched and Paul's body contorted.) He was very uncomfortable. And the teacher was, "Oh, pull up your pants." She just told him, so he tried to do, but it was very hard for him.

I watched him from 1 o'clock to 2 o'clock. At that time some Korean little girl was in the bathroom and she did very well. She pulled up his pants, but it was very hard for her too. It was--1, 2, 3 [layers or steps]. It takes time and he was embarrassed. His face was very sad. At that time he farted some in his pants. And he was very embarrassed and disappointed about her because she didn't help anything. When he came out, he was very sad. The teacher was going to change his pants, but I said. "It's okay now. After we get home we can change him."

I wondered if the teacher saw Haesook biting her lip. Traditional Korean respect for the teacher was put to the test.

Teaching at home. Within this sub-question, data fit into three categories: (a) pride, (b) expectations, and (c) teaching strategies. These categories represent themes observed in behavior or launched by Haesook or me during interviews. Haesook generated the sub-categories depicted in Table 13.

Pride in Paul's intelligence and behavior seemed to produce motivation, suggest strategies, and deliver rewards for teaching at home. Haesook described Paul's abilities and potential as follows:

My parents worry about Paul in American nursery school. They are always worried that he is Korean and they are American kind of children. They say, 'He cannot speak English, so how can he play with other children?' They worry very much. But if they could see that he speaks some words and he plays with other
children, maybe they would like everything about him. He can follow teacher and understand.

He sees something, and then he sees it later, he usually remembers. When he was young, about 2 years old, we visited our country. We have our car exported from our country, so we have the same car from our country. So he saw a car like that car. Then he found out [about] grandfather's car when he saw only once. He distinguished early better than adults.

Sometimes he says to me, "When I grow up, I want to be Batman. Nowadays it's everything Batman, Robin, Joker. He knows everything about Batman, even better than me."

Maternal pride in Paul's behavior was evident when Haesook told me, "He is a very good boy. He listens. He doesn't cause trouble."

At least three parental expectations for such a fine son originated in Korean culture. First, Paul was expected to eat Korean food, as typified in his usual breakfast of rice and seaweed soup. Second, he was expected to show respect for his father and teachers. Haesook explained the traditional custom this way:

> In my country, we usually think that if my father's clothes are on the floor, we cannot pass them. We must go around them. And we don't touch our father's shoulder because he is the head of the family. I was taught like that when I was young. I like teaching like that. . . . Sometimes Paul is playing with his father and he hits his father's head. I said to him, "Don't. Don't do that. That's not a good boy. You can't touch your father's head." . . . Father is the head of the house. We usually think like that because in Korea it is very conservative. It is a traditional country.

Similarly, Haesook told how traditional respect extends to teachers:

> Even though I might not teach Paul to respect his teacher, in Korea he would learn this from the other students. Even though students may not follow parents' advice, they think the teacher is right, more important. Teacher is very respected.
Third, Paul was expected to behave in certain ways because of his gender and birth status. Haesook described Korean thought about this and how it related to Paul:

We usually like the first one better because he is the first grandson. . . . They [grandparents] live in a much bigger house, bigger apartment. And many people are there, so maybe I think he can be spoiled because they love him. If he wants something, they will do everything for him, so we [Kyu and I] are worried.

Paul's parents as well as his grandparents seemed to have differing expectations for boys and girls. Haesook spoke of her hopes in this regard:

I want school to make him more brave--give him a chance to be more boy, more active. . . . In Korea, if we have a girl we want to be careful. We have to protect her very much. We usually put a girl in a beautiful dress so she looks better. We have to take care of her appearance more if she goes out or something. If it's a girl we get some dolls and kitchen things, not cars. But I don't know if I understand girls because I never had one.

The fourth expectation sounds somewhat like the words of an Anglo mother who hopes to teach her child independence. Haesook gave the following explanation of how she handled Paul's soiling his briefs at school:

So I try to raise him to be very independent. Last night I talked to him. "You have to learn to pee-pee by yourself like your other friends. Even though they are younger than you, they can pee-pee themselves, so you must try by yourself." So last night he went to the bathroom by himself.

The following report suggests how Haesook encouraged Paul toward fulfilling expectations for his independence:

Recently when my mother sent clothes, he looked at them and said, "I don't like this color." (Smiles) That was the first time.
He likes bold colors. The color was soft purple and blue-grey. I know he likes bright color, so if I choose that, he wears it.

The absence of rebuke in the preceding example implies that Haesook usually based her teaching strategies on sensitivity to Paul's needs, as she perceived them. Her four primary strategies were (a) listening and talking, (b) providing rewards, (c) overseeing drill and practice sessions, and (d) reading and playing with Paul.

The following illustration shows Haesook's use of active listening. She told me,

At Montessori he was happy at first. Then in the summer he cried when I left him and he would tell me, "I cried today, too." He cried a lot, so I worried about why he cried. He would say, "There was no mommy." So I came here [to Springfield]. And when we came here, he didn't cry at all. At Montessori he couldn't express to me. I think he felt pressure or something.

Equipped with an understanding of Paul gained partially through listening and observing, Haesook sensitively talked to him about matters such as not touching his father's head and cooperating with his teachers.

Rewards supplemented listening and talking strategies. The system worked this way:

We discipline with punishment and rewards. When Paul was younger, we used the rod, but not now. He does not get in trouble very much. If he doesn't want to do something, we say, "You must if you want the toy from Toys R Us." Then we go to Toys R Us and buy something together. . . . If he doesn't do well, we say, "No toy this time because you did something wrong."

The remaining two strategies have already been described. Haesook conducted a drill and practice session daily during supper preparation. She usually participated in reading and dramatic play
activities whenever Paul requested that she do so. In these ways she taught him English letters and numbers, listening, and English and Korean language skills.

Summary. These data described Haesook's expectations of schools for young children. First, she believed that consideration should be given to how children learn. They learn when given constancy, rewards, opportunities to look, drill and practice exercises, talking and listening experiences, and reading experiences. Second, she viewed the purpose of school as learning academics, developing English skills, facilitating self-expression, and providing opportunities for play with other children.

The data further supported Haesook's school-related information in terms of parent-child interaction as a source, the cultural connections that promote it, and the current experiences that continue to supply it. Next, family-school interaction was presented from the standpoint of (a) maternal philosophy supporting it, (b) family activities contributing to it, and (c) parent-teacher communication. Finally, the data provided a picture of teaching at home in terms of maternal pride, expectations, and teaching strategies.

Haesook's perceptions of early childhood education are depicted in Table 13. The saying "Something old, something new, something borrowed" provided the frame of reference for answering the following sub-questions: (a) What are mothers' expectations of schools for young children? (b) What are the characteristics of the information and
sources mothers use to form their perceptions of school? (c) What are mothers' views regarding the interaction between family and school? and (d) What and how do mothers teach children at home?

Three themes seem noteworthy because of their absence in these data. Some of the other participants expressed concerns about time, safety, and structure in schools for young children. Although opportunities were presented for Haesook to address these matters, she never did. This suggests that none of them was an issue for her at the time of the study.

Paul's School Experiences

Introduction

Paul enrolled at Springfield for the first time in August before the study began in October. He was born in Palmer and spoke very little English. Up until the last week of videotaping, he attended the morning session only, typically arriving around 8:15 and departing with his mother at 12:00. Both parents came for him occasionally. During the brief period that his activities were documented in the afternoon session, he tended to play with three other Korean children. With those children, his language seemed to flow more freely than in the morning class, where he tended to direct short Korean phrases to Park and short English phrases to non-Korean peers.

School records showed that Paul enjoyed playing with toy cars and viewing Sesame Street at home. Play experiences outside his home had been with children of Korean family friends in the neighborhood. His
toilet habits were not well established, in that he needed assistance with his clothing.

**Characteristics of School Experiences**

Data in this section are related to Research Question 2, What are the characteristics of school experiences for the children? Paul's experiences are described in terms of what he did at school--how he used his time. A summary of his activities is provided in Table 14. Numbers in the rank column order the activities from most frequent to least frequent. The total of the numbers in the minutes-per-day column exceed 4 hours, the length of Paul's school day, because two or more experiences usually occurred simultaneously.

**Table 14**

**Frequency of Paul's School Experiences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Minutes Per Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Small motor activity</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Observing children</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nonverbal communication</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Showing emotion</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Large motor activity</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Following directions</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Taking initiative</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Pretending</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Personal care</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Just waiting</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Responding to peer invitations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Verbal communication.** Paul spent 73 minutes of each school day in verbal communication, his most frequent activity. He addressed Park alternately in Korean and English, typically (a) stating his needs; (b) counting; (c) responding to books; and (d) naming objects in the room, in pictures, and on the computer screen. He spoke to non-Korean children in English, using vocabulary such as (a) "This is our house"; (b) "two people"; (c) "Yeah"; (d) "Uh-oh, look"; (e) "no, a choo-choo train"; (f) "I'm a Ninja Turtle"; (g) "clean up"; (h) "over there"; (i) "right there"; (j) "okay"; (k) "You're Minnie [Mouse]"; (l) "yes"; (m) "stop"; and (n) "down." When speaking in English to teachers, he counted, named colors, and named objects such as birds and vegetables. He also stated his toilet needs and sang occasionally. In the afternoon class, he spoke longer Korean phrases and sentences to Korean peers.

**Listening.** Paul's second most frequent experience was listening. He appeared to be listening for 65 minutes each day. He gave evidence of listening when he (a) answered questions, (b) followed directions, (c) responded to childish insults, (d) mimicked storybook actions, (e) nodded agreement, (f) moved to the beat of music, and (g) attended to a video program. Computers and video messages captured his listening interest for the longest periods of time. One rainy day he demonstrated sustained listening in response to a Barney video for 39 minutes with total interruptions of only 3 minutes.

**Small motor activity.** Paul's third most frequent experience was small motor activity. He typically practiced small motor skills for 63
minutes during a school day. With his fingers he manipulated (a) blocks; (b) puzzles; (c) scissors; (d) crayons; (e) snacks, (f) his rest towel; (g) toy vehicles such as cars, a train, and a tractor; (h) train tracks; (i) water play items such as bottles, funnels, and pipes; and (j) a computer mouse. He sustained the computer activity for 22 minutes. He typically sustained play with blocks and their accessories for 20 minutes, as described in the following brief excerpt:

8:46 Paul and Amy are in the blocks center. Paul has his right hand on a train car. He pushes the car along the interlocking track. Amy pushes another car from the opposite end of the track. As the cars approach one another, Paul squeals and smiles. Amy removes her car. Paul proceeds to the end of the track.
8:47 There he assembles and takes apart a small station house. He reassembles it. Another child asks to play with the train. Paul says in his loudest voice yet, “two people” and tosses a yellow train car over the track. He looks at the third child, holds up two fingers, and repeats, “two people.”
8:48 He tells Park, “two people.” He pushes two interlocked cars the full length of the track. At the end he hooks on another car and pushes the train to the other end of the track.
8:49 He takes off one car and offers it to Amy. Both children giggle. He keeps the car. He drives the train onto the carpet at the end of the track. There he reassembles the three cars. The engine comes off. He reattaches it and continues to the end.

Observing children. This action constituted Paul’s fourth most frequent activity, accounting for 62 minutes daily. Paul ignored his mother who was saying goodbye, and preferred instead, to observe children playing with a new tractor. He watched Amy try unsuccessfully to put on her shoe, and observed a pretend birthday party for the opportune time to present a make-believe gift. He inspected Linda’s hurt finger and watched Justin play a coveted video game. He became
so engrossed in watching other children at the water table that he seemed to forget the bottles he was holding. He observed children from the older class watching workmen on playground. He studied classmates sitting on the braided rug for large group and at the tables for snack. He scrutinized Jennifer’s efforts to clean up spilled milk and peered over a book at friends in the art center. He lifted his head during rest time to methodically note the behavior of each classmate. He watched Lisa in the mirror over the sink while washing his hands, and he watched classmates arrive and depart. Paul’s observations were sometimes brief and sometimes sustained, but he observed children every day.

**Nonverbal communication.** For 57 minutes each day, Paul engaged in nonverbal communication. He typically pointed, nodded, touched, gave, poked, smiled, giggled and grabbed in an attempt to connect with non-Korean speaking children. The following episodes illustrate this type of behavior:

Paul sits on the floor and holds puzzle pieces between his legs. He pulls them toward him. Linda asks for a piece. He gives her one. She asks again. He carefully selects three pieces and gives them to her. He randomly selects three more and tosses them in her direction. He takes one back. They laugh. She tosses pieces to him. More laughter. . . . Linda has gone to the art table. Paul walks over to her and points to the building he constructed with blocks. She continues drawing. He takes a crayon and draws on her paper. He points to the blocks. She goes to the blocks center with him.

**Showing emotion.** Grimaces, gestures, and other bodily movements could have expressed something other than emotion. However, for
purposes of this study, these actions were categorized as showing emotion.

Paul smiled readily, most often as a gesture of friendship, but also as an expression of happiness or satisfaction. He giggled with delight when pleased with play, especially peer play. Play with Linda produced the most giggles. Each day when the class met on the braided rug, the teacher asked, “Is ______ here?” When she filled the blank with the name of a fictitious character such as Bugs Bunny, Paul laughed aloud. When she used his name, he smiled broadly. Haesook reported that Paul showed embarrassment and disappointment regarding toileting problems in the afternoon session, but the video camera was not present that day. Thus, the data suggest that for 38 minutes each day Paul smiled or laughed.

Large motor activity. For 32 minutes of every day, Paul engaged in large motor activity. This was his seventh most frequent activity. In the classroom, he crawled, stooped, pushed, stretched, walked, lifted, trotted, and hopped. In the multi-purpose room, he added running, climbing, rocking, and jumping to those movements. Indoor rainy-day activities resembled the following account:

10:02 Paul rocks in the boat with Lisa. He smiles and touches her hand. He climbs out of the boat. He stands, watching other children. Lisa climbs out. He smiles as he rocks the boat with his foot. Lisa rocks the opposite end with her hands.
10:03 He uses his hand to try to stop the boat. He says, “Stop, stop.” She slows enough for him to climb in. She gets in while he is still gently rocking.
10:05 Paul stands at one end of the boat and Lisa at the other. They rock the boat fast. Lisa climbs in. Paul smiles. He walks to
the ladder and climbs up. He stands on the platform and jumps into the ramp. He repeats the ladder climb and jump 11 times.

Outdoor activities were equally as vigorous but usually included swinging and riding bikes in addition to Paul's usual indoor repertoire.

**Following directions.** Paul typically followed directions at school for 30 minutes each day. Some of the directions were internalized as classroom procedures rather than spoken anew each day. These routines included folding and returning his towel to his cubbie after resting and disposing of his paper cup after snack. Paul tended to wait for directions before putting away toys or sitting for large group time. The following account typifies the playful nature of the directions to which he responded daily:

12:01 Paul sits on his mat until he hears teachers sing, "All the little boys in Ms. Cain's class, put your carpet mats away." Upon hearing the these words, he gets up.
12:02 He gives his mat to the teacher and walks back to the classroom and to the braided rug. He sits. The teacher asks who he wants to be. He says, "Ninja Turtle." She sings, "Ninja Turtle, Ninja Turtle, you may wash your hands."
12:03 Paul rings the triangle and walks into the toilet area. He washes his hands with soap while looking in the mirror. He turns off the water, dries his hands, and throws away the paper towel.

**Taking initiative.** Paul took initiative for 20 minutes each day. Making choices or decisions was his primary task in this area. He decided what to build with blocks and how to build it. He selected puzzles and determined how to solve them. He decided whether or not to work with play dough and how much snack to eat and drink. He chose books and friends with whom to read them. He selected colors
for making paper leaves and cut the leaves to his own specifications. He
determined in which center to work and how long to stay there.

Pretending. Paul spent 13 minutes of each day pretending. He
pretended that his block structure was a house, then a train station.
Seated with friends on the braided rug, he pretended to draw a pocket
on his overalls, take out an imaginary cap, and put it on. Every day he
pretended to be a make-believe character such as Ninja Turtle in the
class's taking-turns ritual. In the family living center, he pretended real
life events with the aid of home furnishings, dishes, dolls, and
telephones. The following segment describes Paul's typical use of
materials:

He takes the entire phone from the wall. He touches numbers,
puts the receiver to his ear, and says two or three words to
Jennifer. They leave the center together. He points and says,
"Over there." They walk slowly to the books center. Paul is still
holding the phone. Sitting on the bench across from the books, he
talks to Jennifer on the phone (I can't hear words) and offers her
a turn. She declines. He talks more and asks, "Okay?" as he
points to the books. Jennifer shakes her head and walks back to
family living center. Paul follows. He sits at the table dialing
numbers and talking in Korean.

Observing adults. For 12 minutes each day, Paul observed adults.
He tended to watch teachers and classroom visitors in time segments of
less than 60 seconds. He studied adults briefly as they led games, read
books, gave directions, assisted him with personal needs, interacted with
other children, and engaged in various classroom routines. He sustained
one observation for more than one minute. The activity of workmen
pumping water from the playground held his interest for nearly two minutes.

**Personal care.** Paul devoted another 12 minutes per school day to personal care. Some of Paul's classmates attended to their nutrition needs by eating and drinking snack foods, but Paul rarely liked what was served. He invested his time and energies in washing and drying his hands. His slow, calculated movements at the sink sometimes accounted for 6 minutes of his 4-hour day. Other personal care activities included toileting, adjusting clothing for comfort, and nose blowing.

**Just waiting.** Paul usually occupied his time with the activities previously described. However, for 2 minutes of each day he simply waited for the next thing to happen. He may have been thinking, imagining, or resting during this time, but further definition was beyond the scope of this study.

**Responding to peer invitation.** Paul spent 1 minute each day responding to classmates' invitations to social connection. Linda most frequently extended invitations to him in the morning class. Had Paul transferred to the afternoon class earlier in the study, this category may have been more extensive due to the presence of three Korean children in the afternoon session.
Perceptions of Early Childhood Education

Haesook's perceptions of early childhood education were a select composite of respect for teachers, self-expression, academics, and maternal teaching. The degree to which her understanding of that composite matched her son's school experiences is described in the following sections.

Expectations of Schools

The correspondence between Haesook's expectations of schools and Paul's experiences at Springfield School is described in Table 15. The data fit into two categories.

How children learn. Data suggest that Haesook valued six avenues of learning for young children. First, she believed they learn in the presence of constancy. Paul's environment remained constant until his parents transferred him to the afternoon class in the last week of videotaping. Thus, respect for the father's needs took precedence over constancy. The school introduced no significant changes. Therefore, Springfield satisfied Haesook's expectation that Paul would learn in an environment that provided constancy.

Second, Haesook believed that young children learn when they receive rewards for performance. At no time did Paul receive an extrinsic reward at school. Rather, Springfield's focus was on intrinsic motivation. Paul seemed to participate in activities that were rewarding
### Table 15
Correspondence Between Haesook’s Expectations of Schools and Paul’s School Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Haesook’s Expectations</th>
<th>Paul’s Experiences</th>
<th>Minutes Invested</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How children learn:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In presence of constancy</td>
<td>Springfield introduced no changes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When given extrinsic rewards</td>
<td>Springfield gave no extrinsic rewards</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through looking</td>
<td>Motor activities</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observing children</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observing adults</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through drill &amp; practice exercises</td>
<td>Springfield provided no drill &amp; practice exercises</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through talking &amp; listening</td>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through reading</td>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of school:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic skills</td>
<td>Springfield provided no practice in writing letters and numbers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English skills</td>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Following directions</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-expression</td>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Following directions</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Motor activities</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretending</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in terms of meeting his needs. Thus, Haesook’s expectation that Paul would learn when his efforts were externally rewarded was not fulfilled.

Third, she believed that children learn through observation or looking. Paul spent 74 minutes of each school day observing people. His listening, pretending, and motor activities involved observation also. Thus, Paul spent most of his school day observing people and things. In this way, Haesook’s expectation that he would learn by looking was fulfilled.

Her fourth belief was that children learn by participating in drill and practice exercises. The data reveal no evidence of drill and practice exercises at school. Thus, Haesook’s expectation that Paul would learn through drill and practice was not fulfilled.

Fifth, Haesook believed that children learn through talking and listening. Paul invested 65 minutes per day in listening. He listened to conversation, stories, songs, and directions. He invested 73 minutes per day in verbal communication. Therefore, the expectation that he would learn by talking and listening was fulfilled.

Sixth, she believed that children learn through reading. Springfield School’s environment reflected a commitment to emergent literacy. Every action Paul took contributed to his preparation for reading. Many of his verbal communication and listening activities involved books, stories, numbers, and, of course, words. Thus Haesook’s expectation that Paul would learn through reading was fulfilled.
Purpose of school. Haesook saw the purpose of school as fostering academic skills, English skills, self-expression, and play. Paul's most frequent activities, verbal communication and listening, suggest that he practiced language skills and self-expression extensively at school. His investment of 95 minutes in motor activity and 13 minutes in pretending reflects a large amount of play. Therefore, Haesook's expectation that school would encourage English skills, self-expression, and play was satisfied. However, Paul's activities included none of the number and alphabet writing that his mother described. Rather, he practiced those concepts playfully in the context of reading favorite books and performing fingerplays. Thus, the expectation that school would teach academics was only minimally met, if at all.

Sources of Information

The correspondence between Haesook's information about school in the context of its sources, and Paul's school experiences is summarized in Table 16. The data fit into three categories.

Parent-child interaction. Paul's smiles and active participation in school experiences matched the feedback he gave Haesook regarding his desire to attend. His reluctance to answer some of her questions probably reflected his level of cognitive development. His dramatization of a teacher reading in English accurately portrayed his understanding of school literacy events. Therefore, the information Paul provided was accurate in the context of his level of understanding.
Table 16

**Correspondence Between Haesook’s Information About School and Paul’s School Experiences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Haesook’s Information</th>
<th>Paul’s Experiences</th>
<th>Minutes Invested</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From Paul:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to attend</td>
<td>Active participation</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions &amp; answers</td>
<td>Accurate in terms of Paul’s understanding</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic play</td>
<td>Accurate in context of Paul’s understanding</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From culture:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionary school</td>
<td>Some similar activities at Springfield</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean friends</td>
<td>Haesook’s satisfaction with Springfield</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current experiences:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Limited contacts</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Frequency provided current information</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written notices</td>
<td>Brief notices about events communicated</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>effectively</td>
<td></td>
<td>Minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some policy statements communicated</td>
<td></td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>effectively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cultural connections. Storytime, rest time, and holiday celebrations as Haesook remembered them at the Korean missionary school seemed congruent with Springfield's practices. Input from Korean friends regarding parent satisfaction with Springfield also appeared congruent with reality. The stressful academic climate that Haesook said troubled Paul at the Montessori school did not represent his experiences at Springfield. Thus, his schooling at Springfield seemed more congruent with his needs.

Current experiences. Haesook reported seeing Montessori teachers in the community from time to time. She could not remember having seen Springfield teachers anywhere other than at the school. Limited contact with Paul's current teachers probably restricted the development of a more informative relationship with them. Conversely, observation from the booth and on the playground gave Haesook current, accurate data regarding Paul's activities. Written notices of special events seemed to accomplish their purpose, but written school policies appeared less beneficial. Thus, Haesook's current experiences with school both facilitated and diminished continuity in terms of providing information.

Family-School Interaction

The correspondence between Haesook's views regarding family-school interaction and Springfield School's practices is depicted in Table 17. The data fit into two categories.
Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Haesook's Views</th>
<th>School's Practices</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of</td>
<td>Shared commitment</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family bears</td>
<td>School shares</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficulties</td>
<td>responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for addressing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>difficulties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familism</td>
<td>School policies</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>designed to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>accommodate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence</td>
<td>School welcomed</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>parental presence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at all times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polite</td>
<td>Unresolved</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td>issues restricted</td>
<td>continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Philosophy.** Haesook voiced a philosophical commitment to close interaction among parents, teachers, and children, particularly if children attend school all day. Springfield's parent-teacher conferences and open-door policy seemed to coincide with that belief. The philosophy of Springfield differed from Haesook's in that she thought international students should endure hardship without complaint and that international parents should accept the blame for home-school incongruity. The school, however, sought to share the challenge of cultural differences. Springfield's faculty supported Haesook's
commitment to familism and encouraged all families to honor their schedules and interests.

**Activities.** Haesook acted upon her philosophy of family-school interaction by attending special events, making herself available to teachers, and observing class activities. The school encouraged these practices. Haesook was hesitant to express her parental concerns to teachers. Therefore, unresolved issues may have limited home-school continuity.

**Teaching at Home**

The correspondence between Haesook's views regarding teaching at home and Springfield's practices is presented in Table 18. The data fit into two categories.

**Pride.** Paul's intelligence and appropriate behavior were sources of pride for his family. His parents nurtured these qualities, as did his teachers. Both institutions considered listening and "not causing trouble" to be appropriate behaviors.

**Expectations.** At home, Paul's family ate only Korean foods. At school, he had no exposure to Korean cuisine. At home, he was taught to respect his father and teachers unconditionally. At school, he experienced no teaching about unconditional respect. At home, Paul played with toys usually associated with boys' play. At school, he chose from toys enjoyed by both boys and girls. Both his parents and his

Table 18

**Correspondence Between Haesook’s Views Regarding Teaching at Home and the School’s Practices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Haesook’s Views</th>
<th>School’s Practices</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pride:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>Valued and nurtured intelligence</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Valued and encouraged “not causing trouble” and listening</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean food</td>
<td>No Korean foods served</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Home’s expectations for respect exceeded school’s</td>
<td>Limited continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>School promoted anti-bias attitudes</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>School shared mother’s value; goals differed</td>
<td>Limited continuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers valued independence for Paul, but differences sometimes emerged regarding specific goals.

**Teaching strategies.** Paul experienced continuity in terms of two teaching strategies. His mother taught by talking and listening, and his most frequent activities at school were verbal communication and listening, thus suggesting continuity. Similarly, Haesook taught through
reading and playing, and teachers read stories and engaged Paul in playful activities. On the other hand, Haesook favored extrinsic rewards and drill and practice exercises, whereas the school offered intrinsic rewards and no drill and practice exercises.

Judy, Andrea's Mother

Introduction

Judy, born and reared in the United States by African-American parents, was a single 24-year-old college student. After her 5-year-old daughter Andrea's birth, Judy had lived with her family and delayed either furthering her education or seeking employment. When Andrea was 2 years old, Judy's father died due to agent orange exposure in Vietnam. Thus, veterans' benefits became available to Judy and her younger sister. With this financial resource, grants, and student loans, she returned to school.

Life as a communications major at the university was harder than Judy had anticipated. Maintaining her apartment, paying tuition, and providing for Andrea's needs produced a financial deficit each month. There was no money for entertainment or for buying a car. In the last month of the study, Judy found a less expensive apartment and invited her sister, also a college student, to share space and rent with her and Andrea. Judy's determination to make a better life for herself and Andrea was strong. She emphasized:

I think we'll make it on the money we have. I want to real bad. I messed up this time and got behind some, but I'll do better next
semester. I don't want to go back home. I guess I would work at
some kind of job, most anything, but I won't go back home. No
sir, I gotta make it.

Both the new apartment and the former one were close enough to
campus for walking or riding the shuttle. Their brick facades and
parking provisions for student residents seemed to be well maintained.
Judy refused to let me see inside the apartment, which she said was a
mess. Rather than seek another participant, I decided to meet with Judy
in places of her choice. She usually selected the student union building,
her site for breakfast after walking Andrea to school at 7:45 each
weekday morning.

Perceptions of Early Childhood Education

More often than not, Judy discussed her perceptions of early
childhood education in terms of the future as well as the present. Her
words wove the following equation: parents providing safety plus
teachers providing structure equals Andrea's successful future. Thus, in
terms of early education, Judy valued (a) her own role as parent,
(b) safe environments, (c) teachers supplementing parents' efforts, and
(d) structured learning experiences. Most of these insights were strongly
associated with school experiences. Therefore, the following sections
contain data regarding those perceptions as they relate to the four
subdivisions of Research Question 1.

Expectations of schools for young children. Within this
sub-question, the data fit into three categories--how children learn,
purpose of school, and priorities. These categories represent themes that either Judy or I initiated. She generated the sub-categories depicted in Table 19.

Table 19
Judy’s Perceptions of Early Childhood Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents Providing Safety</th>
<th>Teachers Providing Structure</th>
<th>The Child’s Successful Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expectations of Schools</strong></td>
<td><strong>Information Sources</strong></td>
<td><strong>Family-School Interaction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How children learn</td>
<td>First school</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative learning</td>
<td>Yellow pages</td>
<td>Parents’ schooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Parents’ insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drill &amp; practice</td>
<td>Written notices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of school</td>
<td>School network</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for school</td>
<td></td>
<td>Respect products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for life</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide drill,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priorities</td>
<td></td>
<td>memorization, &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td>discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Judy, children learn when adults provide opportunities for (a) cooperative learning, (b) play, and (c) drill and practice. She said that Andrea learned at Springfield when the class had "group time, cooperative learning or something." She was uncertain about how cooperative experiences promote learning, as well as about the nature of the learning they produce. Similarly, she expressed her knowledge of learning through play in one sentence, as follows: "they play, but they play things that help them learn and they don't realize they're learning because it's fun."

Judy's position on the benefits of drill and practice was more pronounced. After viewing the Childhood Telecourse message, which presented many kinds of parent-child relationships in different cultures, she selected the Moscow model as her favorite. She wrote, "I agree with this mother that drill and memorization and discipline will do the trick." The opposite of this, she said later, is not taking school seriously.

The purpose of school, in Judy's opinion, was to prepare Andrea for the next grade level and to prepare her for life in general. She described a metropolitan preschool and its preparatory philosophy:

[children] sit in desks and learn to raise their hand and this and that, just to get them ready for school next year. Just to get them ready so they won't be shocked at not being able to take a nap or other things.

When asked to clarify the importance of learning what to do at school, Judy again answered in terms of Andrea's future and her safety:

They all are basically teaching her what to do in life. If she don't learn to share, that might be fun for awhile, but that gets old when you're selfish all the time. It gets real, real old. If she's
not been around other people, she would tend to be a loner. Those people are unable to deal with people well, and something bad could happen. You don't want stuff like that happening.

Safety, structure, space, and electronic equipment seemed to be priorities in Judy's expectations of schools. Safety was a key factor in her choice of Springfield. She commented:

I wasn't planning to send Andrea to school here at first. A pre-K program was the original plan, but I didn't have a car. And the place was on Holt Street. And I said, "I don't even know where Holt Street is. And that wouldn't feel comfortable like here where I can have Andrea on campus with me if something happens. If they need me, I'm right here, so I don't worry about her."... It was either this school or some other place close because I didn't like the idea of sending her places too far from me. I can't get her to understand sometimes that some people are crazy, that things happen.

Judy's priority regarding structure seemed to stem from her history as a student. She described the relationship:

I'd really like to send her to a private school, but I don't know if I'll be able to afford it. ... I wish now that I'd of gone because it's one-on-one. Private schools are not any better really, other than the structure. I've noticed that some kids from private schools get better grades. I have real problems with study habits, and I can't just tell Andrea to do that when I don't do it.

Hoping to learn what Judy meant by structure, I asked, "If you had all the money you wanted to provide an ideal school for Andrea, what would the school be like?" I found the following answer surprising in terms of its attention to physical environment, especially space:

It would be a lot the same as this one, but bigger. Did you see Look Who's Talking Two? Like that school, big, because I think kids need room to play. They like to have big toys and move around. I'd have one big video room—a room for watching videos and tv. There'd be a room for eating and one for running. So I would pretty much keep this school the way it is but change the
size. Kids need a really big playground for going out in good weather and lots of room inside when they play in there.

Judy's reference to television and videos in an ideal school demonstrate the importance she placed on electronic equipment in schools for young children. She mentioned computers also in her description of Springfield: "I particularly enjoyed that they had the computers there because I want her to get involved with it. You know, to learn it while it's there."

Characteristics of information sources. Within this sub-question, the data fit into five categories: (a) first school, (b) yellow pages, (c) observation, (d) written notices, and (e) school network. These categories represent behavior or conversation themes that Judy or I initiated.

Andrea's first school was what Judy described as a day home run by a friend of her mother. The friend, called Big Mama by the children, was a certified teacher who emphasized readiness for public school. Judy compared Springfield to Big Mama's school:

It was more like a family-oriented. Although this [Springfield] is good too, you know, they're friends and they're almost family too. So it's about the same, the schools are a lot alike, although she didn't have a computer there. They watched Barney there, and they had a VCR and watched movies sometimes. It was a nice place.

Judy had found Andrea's second school, Springfield, in the yellow pages. She verified her selection with observation, as described here:

I saw this school in the yellow pages. I saw a pre-K program too, but it was nowhere near close to being around here. So I called Ms. Ginn, and once I got everything together, I went to see her
and she went ahead and took Andrea. I looked around at the school, but I didn't really know what I was looking for.

Judy never did observe Andrea from the observation booth because "Andrea would see me and sneak off to be right up there with me." However, she stayed, as she said, "a few minutes on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, because sometimes Andrea doesn't want me to go. I stay just a little because I read in one of those magazines that they need that sometimes." She also observed a few minutes before afternoon departure if the children were outdoors.

In addition to reading magazine articles, Judy read the notes Andrea brought home--if Andrea brought notes to Judy's attention, that is. I asked, "Did you get a note or something about that?" Judy replied:

No, I just heard that, maybe when I dropped her off one day. Andrea doesn't always give me her notes. Like last week, they had special days for wearing certain clothes, but I didn't know about it because Andrea didn't give me the note. She missed out on that because I didn't know. I told her, "You have to give me the note or I won't know things."

Therefore, Judy gained some information through her school network, or by listening during her brief visits to the school. She commented on her acquaintance with most parents and teachers in Andrea's class:

Andrea doesn't talk much about school, but I know Jeannie's mom, and I've met Robert's, Neal's, William's, and, I think, Adam's. I think I met James's. She seems strong. I don't know her, but she just seems like that to me. I see Mr. Park and say "hi" and Mandy's dad. I've met Mrs. Lerner's husband. He's around sometimes when I'm taping after the sports. He teaches communication. He asked me, "Does your child go to Springfield
School?" And he said, "I'm Richard Lerner, and my wife teaches there." I know Mrs. Vale, too. She comes with her little girl who looks just like her... I know Jeannie's mom. I fix snack for Andrea and Jeannie tomorrow. They're in the program I'm taping on Tuesday afternoons.

**Family-school interaction.** Within this sub-question, the data fit into two categories—motivation and support. These categories represent themes demonstrated in behavior or introduced into conversation by Judy or me. Judy generated the sub-categories displayed in Table 19.

Judy's motivation for involvement grew out of her earlier school experiences and an awareness that parental insights are unique, and thus valuable. She attributed her trouble in school to her mother's lack of involvement, and vowed to change that scenario for Andrea:

I was always in trouble in school when I wasn't in stuff. I want Andrea in sports, scouts, anything, everything. I don't want her to have one spare minute. I mean NO spare time to get in trouble. I wasn't able to do activities, and my mom didn't have time to volunteer for me because she had to work. So I always said I would find a way to volunteer for my child.

Judy did not volunteer at Andrea's school during the study. She did, however, express awareness of her unique maternal sensitivities:

Last Tuesday, I don't remember what it was Andrea was doing, but I said, "Stop that, Andrea." And a crew member said, "How did you know what she was doing?" I said, "I'm a mother. That's how I know."

Judy's understanding of family-school interaction tended more toward supporting the child outside the classroom than toward continual interaction with teachers. Her conversations with teachers were typically brief, polite greetings during Andrea's arrival and departure. She
described the parent's role beyond that as putting the child's needs first:

My mom always took the teacher's side, and that made me and my sister so mad. The teacher wasn't always right. So I won't do that. If a teacher calls and tells me Andrea's in trouble, I won't automatically take the teacher's side. And I won't tell off the teacher in Andrea's presence. I won't get on Andrea in front of her class unless it's a last resort.

Judy had already begun supporting Andrea's efforts at home. She described her method of showing respect for Andrea's school products:

I don't know if Andrea will remember or not, but I have a drawer where I keep stuff she does. If she brings stuff home, I keep it. When she's like 15 or 16, I'll pull the stuff out. You can believe I will. I'll keep everything, something from everything.

Judy took seriously her expectation that children should learn academics at home, yet she seemed to think her teaching skills were insufficient for the task. She lamented:

Teaching Andrea is really the hardest thing about being a pare . . . I'm a horrible teacher. I try to get Andrea to learn things like shapes and everything. She knows her colors, shapes. Right now we're gonna start working on spelling the colors. A friend of mine is gonna deal with all that because Andrea tells me "I don't want to." My patience is real short, and I don't like hearing all that.

Impatience seemed not to weaken Judy's resolve. As mentioned earlier, she planned to support teachers' efforts with drill, memorization, and discipline at home. She wrote, "I agree with the home-school factor, and I will be enforcing it. . . . The mother from Moscow goes over homework. I agree with this mother that drill and memorization and discipline will do the trick."
She further described her relationship to Andrea's education as future oriented. After viewing the Childhood Telecourse message, Judy selected a culture whose values resembled her own. She wrote, "Japanese take education very seriously discussing college with 5 and 6 year olds. The Japanese children know that their parents have high expectations of them, and they act on it."

**Teaching at home.** Within this sub-question, the data fit into two categories: pride and teaching strategies. These categories represent themes observed in behavior or launched by Judy or me during interviews. Judy generated the sub-categories depicted in Table 19.

Pride in Andrea's academic skills seemed to reward and inspire Judy's teaching at home. When Andrea learned to spell her middle name, Judy gave her permission to be known as Renee' at school. Judy recounted:

Andrea's always want to be Renee', her middle name. So I told her if she could learn to spell it, she could be Renee'. So now she can spell it. She only leaves out an "e" sometimes, like this morning. It took me a week to learn to spell my name in kindergarten, but she could spell hers A-N-D-R-E-A at 4½ . . . Andrea's one of those children you're gonna wind up giving busy work to. She's smart. All parents think like that about their kids, but she really is. I mean really smart.

In addition to Andrea's intelligence, her personality seemed to evoke maternal pride. Andrea smiled easily and seemed to enjoy the company of adults and children. Thus, Judy frequently described her daughter as "a little personality person" or as having "a perky little
personality." Even the colorful, stylish clothes that Andrea wore depicted maternal pride in the child who wore them. Judy explained:

I can't stand to see mothers, especially black mothers, all dressed up in fine clothes and their children looking all sloppy. I started really dressing--one of those kind of mothers--when I said, "Wait, what am I doing?" And I started buying nice clothes for Andrea instead. My sister tells me when they're on sale, and I go put them on layaway.

Teaching strategies. "They didn't give me a handbook with this child," Judy said, shaking her head. She went on to describe how she taught Andrea, what she taught, and why she taught it. She told of how difficult teaching can be for the single parent who has only talk, gruffness, and negative reinforcement for support. She explained:

She thinks because it's just her and me--I'm the one she plays with--she doesn't take me seriously sometimes. I say, "Stop. Playtime is over." Sometimes I have to get gruff with her. I don't like to hurt her feelings, but I have to let her know. Like some people don't believe in spanking. And I try not to, but there's times that--she's one of those children that likes to test--talking don't get it. . . . Once when she acted up I said, "You'll not be going anywhere." That works.

"Would you do anything different if Andrea had been a boy?" I asked. Judy responded, "Oh, yeah. First, I probably wouldn't have tried to raise him by myself, and I'd be a lot harder on him, a lot harder. You have to."

Some of Judy's teaching reflected her concern about the future. For example, she believed that exposing Andrea to many experiences would prepare her for the years ahead. Judy said:

She loves that computer [at school]. You know, playing video games. I might have to break down and get one. I need to learn
how to use one, and she's learning. By the time she's my age, who knows? I just want to expose her to a lot of things. She can get out of it. If she don't like it, oh well. But she's gonna at least try things for a year or so.

Judy wanted Andrea to develop not only a variety of skills but also the ability to defend herself, as demonstrated in the following report:

Andrea has a semi-hot temper. I want her to defend herself. I tell her, "I don't want you to be scared of anyone but me." Like the other day she had this tractor. Robert took it, and she let him. She complained to me, but I don't want her to be submissive. I told her to make him give it back. She did, but not the way I thought. She just said, "Will you please give me the tractor?" He did, but I was surprised that she was so nice about it.

The preceding incident illustrated the high value Judy placed on teaching independence. She also valued reading and provided a model and materials to encourage Andrea's literacy development. She recalled:

My family, we're a reading family. From the time I can remember, we were going to the library and getting books. To this day I think it's funny that my oldest sister would be in the den reading a book, my youngest sister would be in her room reading a book, and I would be reading a book, and my little girl thumbing through Dr. Seuss or something... Now I get Andrea this big thing of paper, and she writes.

Similarly, Judy taught literacy skills in context, as the following example illustrates:

Andrea: Mama, where are we going?
Data have been cited suggesting Judy's preference for drill and memorization in teaching. She probably taught writing through modeling also, as the following conversation shows:

Teacher: Wow, Andrea, how did you learn to write so many things?
Andrea: My mamma showed me how.

Evidence further indicates that Andrea learned verbal skills and probably attitudes through Judy's model. In addition, Judy used verbal reinforcement to encourage Andrea to share. The following comments illustrate both of those teaching strategies:

Judy: I want a van, a mini-van.
Andrea: I want a mini-van. I'll buy a mini-van. You can drive it sometimes, Momma. We'll share.
Judy: Aw, thank you, Andrea. That's so sweet.

Thus Judy taught sharing, verbalization skills, emerging literacy, writing, and independence. Her teaching tools were speech, gruffness, negative reinforcement, modeling, drill, memorization, and environmental provisions. She taught for the purpose of preparing Andrea for challenges of the future and equipping her with self-defense.

**Summary.** These data describe Judy's expectations of schools for young children. First, she expected school children to learn when given opportunities for cooperative learning, play, and drill and practice. Second, she viewed the purpose of school as preparation for the next grade in school and preparation for life. Third, she hoped that schools would give priority to safety, structure, space, and electronic equipment.
The data further supported Judy's school-related information in terms of Andrea's first school, the yellow pages, observation, written notices, and the school social network. Next, family-school interaction was presented from the standpoint of parental motivation and support for the child. Finally, the data provided a picture of teaching at home in terms of maternal pride and teaching strategies.

Judy's perceptions of early childhood education are depicted in Table 19. The equation parents providing safety plus teachers providing structure equals the child's successful future provided the frame of reference for answering the following sub-questions: (a) What are mothers' expectations of schools for young children? (b) What are the characteristics of the information and sources mothers use to form their perceptions of school? (c) What are mothers' views regarding the interaction between family and school? and (d) What and how do mothers teach children at home?

**Andrea's School Experiences**

**Introduction**

Andrea enrolled at Springfield for the first time in August before the study began in October. Born in the United States, she spoke fluent English. Her language and social skills had been reinforced by her mother, aunts, grandmother, and Big Mama, Andrea's teacher in a home-based child care program.

Moving to Palmer had separated Andrea and her mother from daily interaction with their supportive African-American family in the
city. They returned "home," as Andrea called her grandmother's house, any weekend that Andrea's aunt could supply transportation. In their new apartment, Andrea and her mother enjoyed watching cartoons together.

Characteristics of School Experiences

Research Question 2, What are the characteristics of school experiences for the children? is addressed in this section. Andrea's experiences are described in terms of what she did at school--how she used her time. A summary of her activities is provided in Table 20.

Table 20

Frequency of Andrea's School Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Minutes Per Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Large motor activity</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Small motor activity</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Observing children</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Taking initiative</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Observing adults</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Showing emotion</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Following directions</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nonverbal communication</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Pretending</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Personal care</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Just waiting</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Responding to peer invitations</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Numbers in the rank column indicate the order of the activities, from most frequent to least frequent. Numbers in the minutes-per-day column exceed 8 hours, the length of Andrea's school day, because two or more experiences usually occurred simultaneously.

**Verbal communication.** Andrea typically spent 266 minutes of each school day communicating verbally. She asked and answered questions, commented on classmates' activities, requested assistance, spelled her name, greeted friends, gave commands, voiced agreement and disagreement, discussed plans with other children, volunteered information, bragged, sang, played games requiring verbal responses, tutored classmates, asserted feelings, invited others to play, generated dramatic play dialogue, argued with peers, announced her successes, suggested solutions to problems, declared choices, gave directions, stated her needs and wishes, reprimanded classmates, corrected teachers, described her actions, and negotiated entry into play groups.

**Large motor activity.** For 179 minutes of every day, Andrea engaged in large motor activity. This was her second most frequent activity. She wiggled on the floor, jumped on and off the tire swing, pushed and spun the swing, trotted, hopped, wrestled with Seth, ran, jumped, kicked, rhymically clapped "Miss Mary Had a Baby," dug in the sandbox, walked in high heel shoes, straightened covers on the bed, crawled over and under the bed, dragged the beanbag chair, arranged and folded her rest towel, stretched, did somersaults, put on her coat.
and took it off, pulled the door open, and walked the balance beam around the sandpile.

**Small motor activity.** Andrea's third most frequent experience was small motor activity. She typically practiced small motor skills for 137 minutes during a school day. She wrote in her journal, did fingerplays, poured juice, opened a bag of potato chips, ate finger foods, packed her lunchbox, fastened dress-up clothes, tied shoes, hung nametags on pegs, worked puzzles, manipulated checkers, dumped and arranged crayon shavings on paper, stuck tape to surfaces, cut with scissors, drew with markers, squeezed play dough through the play dough press, removed seeds and pulp from a pumpkin, washed and dried her hands, tickled a friend, manipulated materials at the water table, washed paint brushes, and glued paper scraps.

**Listening.** Andrea's fourth most frequent experience was listening. She appeared to be listening for 113 minutes each day. She gave evidence of listening when she answered questions, followed directions, responded to comments, sang with classmates, clapped to a sounded rhythm, and satisfied requests. Listening to stories and casual conversation accounted for most of the 113 minutes spent listening each day.

**Observing children.** This action constituted Andrea's fifth most frequent activity, accounting for 88 minutes daily. She studied other children's faces as they sang and their hands as they did fingerplays.
She gazed at the ears and hair of an adjacent Anglo child during story time. She watched friends at her table as they unpacked lunchboxes and chewed their food. She observed playmates imitating family members and pets in dramatic play. She focused on players’ actions during a 20-minute game of checkers and parent-child interaction during early morning arrival. She peered at James as he played a video game and at Rebecca as she hung her name on the pegboard. She also studied children conversing with teachers, making crayon shavings, preparing for outdoor play, arranging towels for rest time, playing group games, kneading play dough, working at the water table, listening to stories, working puzzles, resting, swinging, and departing with parents.

**Taking initiative.** Andrea took initiative 87 minutes daily. Making choices or decisions was her primary task in this area. She decided in which centers to work, which books to read, which dress-up clothes to wear, how to design a crayon shavings picture, where to sit for snack, where to place her rest towel, and how to use play dough.

She took initiative in comparing her height with her friend’s, correcting Jennifer’s writing of A-N-D-R-E-A, inventing new ways to push the tire swing, inviting peers to play, saving a chair for Aubrie, starting a game, writing a teacher’s name, cleaning work areas without being told, talking to newcomers to the room, developing a play theme, negotiating entry into play groups, finding a refill for the juice pitcher, asking for a turn to be rocked, tying shoes, comforting a friend, and volunteering to help a classmate.
Observing adults. For 67 minutes each day, Andrea observed adults. She watched teachers tie shoes, open lunch packages, engage in dramatic play, play games with children, prepare materials, guide problem solution, talk with children, read books, write children's names, sing and do fingerplays, eat, and serve snacks. She watched parents during arrival, dismissal, and classroom visits.

Showing emotion. For 65 minutes of each day, Andrea's behavior seemed to reflect emotion. Grimaces, gestures, and other bodily movements could have expressed something other than emotion. However, for purposes of this study, these actions were categorized as showing emotion.

Andrea smiled after successfully writing her name. She laughed and squealed as she played on the swing with other children. She giggled during conversation in a huddle of girls. She frowned when Jennifer refused to stop the swing for her. She smiled when she dressed in a gown and high heels. She chuckled when she and Heidi pretended to sleep and the teacher asked classmates not to disturb them. She glared at Paul and turned down her bottom lip when he refused to share play dough. She snickered when she attached tape to the teacher's arm. She grinned upon seeing Casey arrive at school. Similarly, Andrea's frequent smiles and laughter accompanied other play activities throughout the day.

Following directions. Andrea generally followed directions at school for 48 minutes each day. Some of the directions were verbalized,
usually by teachers. Others were unspoken, internalized routines that Andrea had come to anticipate. She typically located her nametag and waited for her mother to pin it on each morning. Then she selected activities and watched her classmates arrive. After activities, she helped put away materials. She usually responded right away when invited to a small group, the large group, the tables, the multi-purpose room, and outdoors. She washed her hands, took responsibility for her lunchbox, and cleaned her placemat after lunch. She followed directions when playing games and when reminded to rest quietly or listen.

**Nonverbal communication.** For 39 minutes each day, Andrea engaged in nonverbal communication. Her actions included waving to indicate not holding onto the swing, pantomiming a fingerplay for classmates' amusement, tickling a friend to get her attention, raising her hand to indicate agreement, lifting her shirt to show a stomach full of lunch, pulling her mother toward the new gerbil cage, hugging and kissing her mother, waving goodbye, tugging on a teacher's hand to get her attention, showing her folded towel to an admiring friend, pointing Kevin toward his assigned activity, and grabbing a coveted toy.

**Pretending.** Andrea spent 38 minutes of each day pretending. She pretended to fly on the swing and make cake in the sandbox. She galloped her animal cracker across the table, pretending it was a real horse. She pretended to make cheese pizza with play dough and offered bites to friends. In her most frequent pretend activity, she played out the roles of various family members in the family living center.
Personal care. Andrea devoted 18 minutes per school day to personal care. She spent most of this time eating, toileting, and washing and drying her hands. She also paused briefly to tie her shoes, drink water, and put on her coat and take it off.

Just waiting. Andrea usually occupied herself with the activities previously described. However, for 9 minutes of each day she seemed to simply wait for the next thing to happen. She could have been thinking, imagining, or resting during this time, but further definition was beyond the scope of this study. She sometimes waited unoccupied for a turn with materials, for snack to be served, or for her name to be called. Her longest waits during the study were for pumpkin seeds to toast and for her art paper to dry.

Responding to peer invitations. Andrea spent 4 minutes of each day responding to classmates' invitations to social connection. At times she refused these offers with comments such as, "No, I want the other one." She usually accepted a child's request to sit or rest beside her.

Judy-Andrea Correspondence

Perceptions of Early Childhood Education

Central to Judy's perceptions of early childhood education was this expectation: parents provide safety and teachers provide structure in order to give the child a successful future. The following sections describe the degree to which Judy's views matched her daughter's school experiences.
Expectations of Schools

The correspondence between Judy’s expectations of schools and Andrea’s experiences at Springfield School is described in Table 21. The overlap among how children learn, the purposes of school, and priorities reflects Judy’s wholistic viewpoint.

How children learn. The data suggest that Judy valued three avenues of learning for young children. First, she believed they learn through cooperative relationships. Data regarding Andrea’s verbal communication (266 minutes daily), taking initiative (87 minutes), and pretending (38 minutes) provide evidence of active learning through cooperative relationships. Thus, Judy’s expectation that Andrea experience cooperative learning was satisfied.

Second, Judy believed that children learn through play. In addition to verbal communication, taking initiative, and pretending, mentioned previously, the large motor activity (179 minutes daily), small motor activity (137 minutes), and showing emotion (48 minutes) categories reflect her play throughout the day. Thus, Judy’s expectation that Andrea learn through play was satisfied.

Third, Judy believed that children learn through drill and practice. Andrea practiced cognitive, motor, and social skills repeatedly, and seemed to particularly enjoy familiar songs and fingerplays. However, she did not experience structured drill and practice exercises to promote memorization. Therefore, Judy’s expectation that Andrea learn through drill and practice was not satisfied.
Table 21

Correspondence Between Judy’s Expectations of Schools and Andrea’s School Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judy’s Expectations</th>
<th>Andrea’s Experiences</th>
<th>Minutes Invested</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn through cooperation</td>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large motor activity</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking initiative</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Showing emotion</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Following directions</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonverbal communication</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretending</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn through play</td>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large motor activity</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small motor activity</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking initiative</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Showing emotion</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Following directions</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonverbal communication</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretending</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn through drill &amp; practice</td>
<td>Springfield conducted no drill &amp; practice</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for the next grade and a safe life</td>
<td>Springfield’s activities, environment, schedule, &amp; philosophy addressed the whole child</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety as a priority</td>
<td>Hiring, observation, security checks</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
Judy's Expectations | Andrea's Experiences | Minutes Invested | Outcome
---|---|---|---
Structure as a priority | Casual, flexible, planned experiential learning | N/A | Limited continuity
Space as a priority | School met accreditation standards, not parents' | N/A | Discontinuity
Electronic equipment | Computers, audio tapes, video tapes in use | N/A | Continuity

Purpose of school. Judy saw the purpose of school as preparation for the next grade in school and for safety throughout life. Springfield's print-rich, positive environment and developmental philosophy centered on facilitating Andrea's total development—present and future. Although daily schedules and routines resembled those of many kindergartens, preparation for the next grade was considered a by-product of developmentally appropriate practice. Therefore, authentic learning experiences were preparing Andrea for kindergarten and adult life by meeting her current needs. Thus, Judy's purposes for sending Andrea to school were met.

Priorities. Judy valued safety, which the school provided through its hiring practices, observation provisions, and security checks. She valued electronic equipment, which Springfield provided in the form of computers, videotaping, audiotape players, and a videotape player. She
valued space, which in her opinion, was limited at Springfield. She valued structure in terms of student uniforms, a static schedule, disciplined study, and predictable drills. Springfield teachers, however, encouraged casual dress, flexible scheduling, experiential learning, and exploration. Thus, the match between Judy's priorities and the school's was limited.

Sources of Information

The correspondence between Judy's information about school in the context of its sources, and Andrea's school experiences is summarized in Table 22. The data fit into five categories.

First school. Judy valued the family approach to learning that Andrea had experienced at Big Mama's. Both Judy's observation and these data suggest a similar approach at Springfield. However, Big Mama's practice of requiring children to sit in desks as preparation for school had no parallel at Springfield. Thus, continuity between Andrea's first school as an information source and Springfield was limited.

Yellow pages. Judy learned from the yellow pages that Springfield School was located on the campus where she would attend classes. Thus, she was able to fulfill her need for proximity to Andrea at all times.

Observation. On their first visit to Springfield, Judy and Andrea saw a school they liked. Judy's testimony and Andrea's level of activity
suggest that they liked Springfield throughout the study. However, Judy's impression that the school's computers would be an asset faced limitations. Andrea became so involved in social interaction that she entered the computer center only once during the study. Even then, she turned on the monitor for another child and quickly returned to her puzzle. Therefore, Judy's expectations derived from observation met with limited continuity.
Written notices. Having placed responsibility on Andrea for delivering messages, Judy did not always receive written notices. Neither did she act upon the notices she did receive. Therefore, written notices appeared ineffective as a source of information for her and constituted an element of home-school discontinuity.

School network. Informal social relationships with other parents, teachers, and children gave Judy bits of information and opportunities to observe other adult-child relationships. Thus, her school network proved effective as a source of information and constituted an element of home-school continuity.

Family-School Interaction

The correspondence between Judy's views regarding family-school interaction and Springfield School's practices is depicted in Table 23. The data fit into two categories.

Motivation. Springfield teachers welcomed the parent involvement and parental insights that Judy described. Her involvement at Springfield included parent-teacher conference participation, providing refreshments for Andrea's birthday celebration, and observation and parent-teacher conversation at arrival and dismissal times. Thus, Judy's motivation matched involvement opportunities at Springfield.

Support. Judy supported Andrea by showing respect for her products. Likewise, the school displayed her products on classroom walls. Judy supported Andrea by providing disciplined drill and
Table 23

**Correspondence Between Judy's Views Regarding Family-School Interaction and the School's Practices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judy's Views</th>
<th>School's Practices</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent involvement valued</td>
<td>Parent involvement welcomed</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent insights</td>
<td>Parent insights welcomed</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products respected</td>
<td>Andrea's work displayed in classroom</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide drill, memorization, &amp; discipline</td>
<td>Emphasis on developmental activities</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan for future high achievement</td>
<td>School valued choices and praised achievement</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

memorization experiences. Conversely, the school provided emerging literacy experiences in the context of child-centered activities. Judy supported Andrea by verbalizing her high expectations for present and future achievement. Somewhat similarly, the school supported her by honoring her choices and praising her achievements. Thus, methods of support at home and at school demonstrated limited continuity.
Teaching at Home

The correspondence between Judy's views regarding teaching at home and Springfield's practices is presented in Table 24. The data fit into two categories.

**Pride.** Judy felt proud of Andrea's intelligence and personality. Andrea's high level of participation in cognitive and social experiences at school suggests that the school supported these sources of pride. Thus, continuity existed in this area.

**Teaching strategies.** Judy taught writing, reading, sharing, speaking, and independence. Teachers taught these things also, with reading and writing taking the form of emerging literacy in a print-rich environment. Judy taught through speaking, gruffness, negative reinforcement, modeling, drill, and environmental provisions. Teachers taught through speaking, modeling, and a prepared environment. However, teachers did not use gruffness, negative reinforcement, or drill. Judy taught to prepare Andrea for the future and to arm her for self-defense. Teachers facilitated present child development and encouraged autonomy, particularly through verbal communication and decision making. Therefore, both similar and different teaching strategies created limited continuity between home and school.
### Table 24

**Correspondence Between Judy's Views Regarding Teaching at Home and the School's Practices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judy's Views</th>
<th>School's Practices</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pride: Intelligence</td>
<td>Home &amp; school valued &amp; nurtured cognitive development</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Home &amp; school valued &amp; nurtured social-emotional development</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching strategies:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Journals, names, labels</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Names, labels, stories</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>Cooperative activities</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Many opportunities for making decisions</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>Children talked &amp; listened</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gruffness</td>
<td>None observed</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative reinforcement</td>
<td>None observed</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender's role</td>
<td>Teachers treated boys &amp; girls as equals</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Teachers modeled desired outcomes</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drill</td>
<td>None observed</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Teaching/learning materials accessible</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>Developmental activities to enhance present &amp; future</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-defense</td>
<td>Teachers facilitated autonomy with self-defense as probably by-product</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ruth, Adam's Mother

Introduction

Ruth, born and reared in Palmer by Anglo parents, was a 44-year-old executive director. She had two children, 5-year-old Adam and a 21-year-old son. She and her husband, William, both completed college. Her older son had already become independent, leaving Adam to receive the full attention of his parents. Adam's father, a business professional with an office near campus, had brought Adam to school and picked him up after school during the year prior to the study. At that time, Ruth worked more than an hour's drive away. When she found a position in Palmer, she assumed responsibility for getting Adam to and from school.

The family's brick home with its manicured lawn portrayed its upper middle-class socioeconomic standing. Both Ruth and William drove late model vehicles and dressed professionally for work. On weekends they taught a Sunday School class together and enjoyed family activities such as travel and camping. Weekdays were activity-filled also, particularly in the fall when Adam played soccer. Hence, Ruth preferred being interviewed in her office during her lunch hour instead of adding another after-school appointment.

Her office contained two desks, each bearing neat stacks of papers and books. The window in front of the desk where Ruth sat for interviews overlooked a parking lot. Separated from the reception area by a hallway and other offices, the interview site was quiet during the
lunch hour. However, Ruth's work role was a busy one with out-of-town business trips and on-going projects to organize and supervise. Her participation in the study, therefore, reflected a high level of commitment to Adam and his education.

Scheduling the first two interviews presented the greatest challenge in the study. Business trips, family illness, and Ruth's perceived threats to privacy delayed interviews. However, business was completed, illness was overcome, and Ruth decided to participate. From that point on she shared generously of herself and her stories, lending richness to the data regarding Anglo mothers' perspectives.

Perceptions of Early Childhood Education

Ruth believed that a positive, safe environment encourages creativity. That belief provided the foundation for all of her perceptions of early education. Many of the insights that she shared were associated with school experiences. In the four sections that follow, data regarding those perceptions are described as they relate to the four subdivisions of Research Question 1.

Expectations of schools for young children. Within this sub-question, the data fit into two categories--how children learn and purpose of school. These categories represent themes that either Ruth or I initiated. She generated the sub-categories depicted in Table 25.

Ruth believed that children learn best (a) when they are viewed as developing individuals; (b) when teachers honor children's readiness to learn; (c) when teaching is positive; (d) when the environment is safe;
Table 25

Ruth’s Perceptions of Early Childhood Education

A positive, safe environment encourages creativity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations of Schools</th>
<th>Information Sources</th>
<th>Family-School Interaction</th>
<th>Teaching at Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How children learn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>Childhood</td>
<td>Logistics</td>
<td>Feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness</td>
<td>Jeff’s school</td>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>Pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive teaching</td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated curriculum</td>
<td>Visits</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adam</td>
<td></td>
<td>Joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of school</td>
<td>School network</td>
<td></td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization</td>
<td>Written notices</td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Palmer schools</td>
<td></td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Needs based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Development based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and (e) when learning, work, and play are integrated. She explained that teachers who view children as individuals also address developmental needs:

The expectations need to be more individual rather than expecting everybody to know the same thing. [Springfield’s teachers] are more creative and more developmental in their approach. They seem to have more understanding of the child’s progress as an individual than probably the public schools.
In Ruth's view, teaching that is developmentally appropriate considers the child's readiness for new concepts. She explained, "I always say present it when the time is right, when they can accept it. Make information and experience available when he's ready."

The environment in which these experiences are presented should be positive and safe. Ruth hypothesized about Adam's classroom on any given day:

I would expect to hear encouragement, probably some discipline or separation of the kids at lunchtime. Probably some comforting words. And there's safety, the safety and security. You feel like you are in a safe place where people are not lashing out at your child. . . . I think the teachers and probably the [university] students that are involved are screened pretty well and are monitored pretty well as to what they do and what they say and how they treat the children. And it's a more positive than negative environment. I think the way they discipline the children is more positive.

Ruth's written reaction to the Childhood Telecourse video message also reflected her concern that the environment be safe. She wrote, "Yellow caps for first graders to show they may need extra help. Gives you the feeling that children are helped in Japan. Wouldn't that be nice here instead of fear of violence."

The video message also empowered Ruth to express her positive thoughts about integrated, authentic learning, and her negative impressions of school rules and drills. She wrote:

Learning, work, and play are one in the rain forest [in Brazil], and reward is immediate. Seems a perfect way to learn to me---if all knew everything about our modern-day world and culture and could teach our children all they need to know. . . . Honoring the teachers with flowers and congratulating the students [in Moscow] seems a great idea, very positive. However, I wonder if it isn't
cancelled out by the enforcement of rules and drills and 1 hour of boring homework.

The purpose of school, in Ruth's opinion, was to (a) provide opportunities for socialization, (b) facilitate creativity, and (c) orient the child to future school experiences. She expressed the benefits of school as a social agent:

By [age] 3, they need to be with other children, whether they're playing with them or not. . . . With my older son I worked too, and I could tell that with him he was better off for being around other children than our friends whose mothers stayed home with them. He was much more relaxed and out-going. He was more comfortable in different situations than other children.

Of all the things Adam might remember about Springfield, Ruth chose friends. She elaborated:

He will probably remember friends. He has made some close friends, and he doesn't seem to forget them. There's some that he doesn't see anymore, and he's constantly talking about them. And he's close to a couple of kids now, so he'll probably remember positive things.

Ruth described the importance of developing creativity, to her personally and for Adam:

I was an art minor and an English major so the creative aspect is important to me. I guess that is another appeal when you asked me why we chose this school. There just seems to be so much more opportunity for creativity. . . . My perception of the school is that there are all these [university] students trying out things on the kids. Now I don't know if that's true or not, but I know they have projects to try out. Even though he's been there a couple of years, I doubt if there's anything being done that they did last year. . . there's just exposure to many different kinds of things.

Ruth's history as a teacher of older children and teenagers seemed to intensify her concerns about Adam's future schooling. She hoped Springfield would equip him for what lay ahead. She said:
I used to teach junior high and high school, so I'm always horrified at the idea that my child has to go to school. I think they're pretty protected where they are now. They're protected in so far as people are kind to them, and I wouldn't necessarily think that would be happening to them in public school. . . . Now they appear to be able to do their own thing at their own pace. And when they get to public school, they're all going to be expected to be able to do the same thing at the same level of expectations. Part of that is just the system.

More immediately, she considered class size to be Springfield's way of preparing for the years ahead. "The classes are fairly large," she said, "but they have a great teacher-child ratio. This way they can pick friends from a larger group, and it's more like they'll see in the public school."

She thought of kindergarten's purpose as "socialization and getting them used to elementary school." Still, she wished she could postpone that transition:

On the one hand, I would like for Adam to stay [at Springfield] for kindergarten where he is, and I also think maybe he needs to get used to a different set of expectations. He doesn't understand. We try to get him to go ahead and still take naps. You know, we don't get to see him unless he stays up later. . . . Something came up and he said, "Well, in first grade or in kindergarten if I'm tired, I'll get to take a nap." And I said, "No, it won't work that way." It really will be a transition.

**Characteristics of information sources.** Within this sub-question, the data fit into nine categories: (a) childhood, (b) Jeff's school, (c) friends, (d) family, (e) visits, (f) Adam, (g) school network, (h) written notices, and (i) Palmer schools. These categories represent conversation themes that Ruth or I initiated.
Ruth's childhood in Palmer provided early memories of Springfield as it was long ago. She told how different her brother's Springfield experience had been from Adam's:

My brother went to Springfield, but it was under a different director then. I remember stories about how it was run back then. I remember they would call my mother and tell her not to come yet because my brother hadn't eaten all of his peas. He would be the only child there waiting to eat.

Growing up in Palmer also provided images of Springfield and Fulbright School as highly desirable places for children. Ruth told about that opinion:

We grew up in Palmer, so we knew the reputation as being good programs for children, and that being kind of the ideal, having my child in one of them. So we did some checking to see if that was still what was going on and found that things were definitely much better than they were.

Ruth rated her satisfaction with Springfield as a perfect 10.

Parenting two children gave Ruth the information advantage also. Her older son's school experiences taught her to discriminate among schools. She sighed:

The school Adam's in now I wish we had had for Jeff. Not that the schools he was in were terrible or anything but this one is so much more child-oriented. . . . The private kindergarten we were in was very straight and rigid.

When seeking out a daycare center in the city and when considering Springfield, Ruth's friends and family offered advice that she seemed to appreciate. She explained how that verbal information supplemented her site visits:

I just asked around. Neighbors, everyone. And I had gone to the church [daycare location] for a long time, so I knew its reputation,
what it was like ... I really didn't know very much about Springfield [but] ... Between the time we moved and then [when Springfield announced an opening], we learned a lot about it. We visited. And my aunt who's connected with Fulbright School [another well-known preschool program in Palmer] helped us know about Springfield in comparison to Fulbright, and we talked with Charlotte Ginn [Springfield's director] and learned a little bit from her. You know, things just happen. We were gathering information from our neighbors on the left and learned information as we waited.

She also mentioned that she visited Springfield less often as time passed. In the beginning, she observed from the booth and dropped by for a few minutes in the classroom.

Adam supplied information about school also. Ruth told how she learned about music from him:

In the summer Mrs. Lerner's daughter was the teacher in the other room, and she taught them a lot of songs. Adam was singing them all the time. He really enjoyed that. He does at other times too, but I asked him, "Where did you learn that?" because I could tell that someone with a real pretty voice had been teaching him because he was mimicking that voice.

He also indicated when school experiences pleased him and when they did not. The following conversation illustrates his pleasure:

When we were on vacation, he asked me, "When do I go back to school? When is a school day?" I said, "Well, it's really today but you're not there. Then we'll have Saturday and Sunday before you go back. Are you wanting to go back?" And he said, "Yeah, I really miss it." And he was upset with me Monday because I came early.

Ruth concluded, "There are certain children that he enjoys most. It's probably when they're playing all together, that's probably what he likes the best,"
Ruth and Adam's extensive school network included children, parents, and teachers. Ruth even mentioned talking with the mother of a former Springfield student who reportedly had become bored with kindergarten after his rich experiences at Springfield. Ruth's words describe the network best:

The teachers would generally tell me if there's a problem, I think. (Chuckles). Karen Mason [teacher] in the other class has a little boy, Brandon. He just left this fall and went to kindergarten. Back during the summer Adam and Brandon were in the same class together, and they have continued to be good friends because they play on the same soccer team. So I feel like if Adam was doing anything wrong, Karen would tell me, or Dana Vale [teacher]. Either one would probably tell me. I know Dana through Robert's mother, because we're real good friends. So I kinda feel like, well, sometimes Robert's momma will tell me, not Dana.

Events of one summer term dramatically illustrate the effects of having a limited network as opposed to the usual extensive one. Ruth explained the unhappiness Adam felt until he made new friends:

He moved up this last year in the summer and we really did have a few weeks that were rough in the mornings leaving. But the children that he had been with the most and the children that were in the other room, when they would have combined outdoor play, didn't go to summer school or went only a half day. . . . He didn't really have a pal when he first got there. Anyway, it worked out in a couple of weeks and we haven't had any problems since then.

Written notices also informed Ruth. She reported reading the newsletter regularly, and the ticket to the free picnic had caught her attention. The family-school interaction described in the next section provides evidence of the family's involvement as facilitated by written notice of events.
At the time of the study, Ruth had already taken action toward learning about Adam's kindergarten schedule for the following year. "I called the other day and found out that it [kindergarten] is really only 3 hours," she said. She had called both the district offices and the school.

"Do Palmer parents have the opportunity to observe in public kindergarten?" I asked, seeking to explore the breadth of Ruth's public school sources. She answered, "I don't know. I would assume that we don't. But I know that the parents are involved in P.T.A. and some are volunteers. The parents I know that all go to the same school are overall pretty pleased."

**Family-school interaction.** Within this sub-question, the data fit into four categories: (a) logistics, (b) visits, (c) teachers, and (d) events. These categories represent themes demonstrated in behavior or introduced into conversation by Ruth or me.

When exploring family-school interaction with Ruth, I attempted to elicit issues related to family support without hinting at preconceived answers. Ruth's responses first addressed logistics, an unexpected category. The mechanics of scheduling two careers and Adam's school day presented a challenge, especially in terms of the kindergarten year. Ruth stated:

You know, I told you that kindergarten is a half day. I called the other day and found out that it is really only 3 hours. You know, it's hardly worth it. And yet it is. I mean the socialization and getting them used to elementary school, but it's very awkward hours. . . . They start early and end at like 10:50 or something. Then they start at 12 and end at 2:50. So it's really kind of awkward. But it makes sense because the kindergarten teachers
take a break during that time and get ready for the next group. But it doesn't quite match up to anybody's schedule, and I do have some concern about that.

You know, elementary school is over at 3:30, and they [Springfield] are open until 5. I am surprised that so many people can get there quickly, but I see that most of them are on campus anyway... Even later than 5 would have helped me [when commuting], but I wasn't looking for them [Springfield] to provide a solution... I just hate it that Adam will have to go to kindergarten. He needs to do that. But that will be a world experience. It would be nice for that to continue on along these lines [Springfield's] for kindergarten and part of first grade.

"Is there a chance that Adam could go to kindergarten in the morning and to Springfield in the afternoon?" I asked. Ruth replied in the tone of a parent accustomed to stating her needs at school:

They don't do that anymore. That's one thing they were doing. Now that would be one thing they might revisit. I might have to say something. But I do understand why. I don't know if they're looking at options or not, but for us it would be great.

Visits to the school constituted Ruth's second means of parent-school interaction. She indicated that her visits were more frequent in the beginning, but "now I just do [visit] if I think there might be a problem. Or sometimes if I just think about it, but I just don't feel the need to check on him as much now that I'm nearby."

Ruth's extensive school network described earlier included parent-teacher communication. As indicated by data in the school network section, she reported that teachers talked with her candidly, especially if Adam had a problem. I witnessed an early morning conversation between Ruth and Mrs. Lerner during the first week of the study. Ruth seemed to know the teachers well enough to characterize their teaching styles:
We [Ruth and Adam's teachers] are probably more similar than different. I can't say that I'm that patient and can listen all the time because you get distracted. Many of them, I'm sure, have formal training in how to go about dealing with things.

Data show that Ruth involved herself with school by attending events regularly. Her account of these experiences emits an air of ownership.

We always have a picnic every semester, and we all bring our food to share. And we have costume week when the kids wear different clothes, and they ask that we need to make our child aware. And tomorrow they go trick or treating, so we need to bring costumes for that. The clothing week was the week before we were leaving and everything was happening. (Laughs) And I said, "Oh, it's clothing week, okay." So I went in and put it all out so that we wouldn't forget because at this conference I end up working all the time.

Teaching at home. Within this sub-question, data fit into three categories: (a) feelings, (b) philosophy, and (c) teaching strategies. These categories represent themes observed in behavior or launched by Ruth or me during interviews. Ruth generated the sub-categories depicted in Table 25.

Ruth's teaching seemed to be supported by deep feelings of pride in Adam's intelligence, sweet disposition, and creativity; concern for his safety; sensitivity to his gender; and joy in the parenting role. The following vignettes illustrate these feelings.

First, Ruth reveled in Adam's intelligence, sweetness, and creativity:

It's just wonderful to see their brains working and how they put things together. Things they might not have understood a couple of days before they can tell you all about. Adam's a pretty
intelligent little kid, and I enjoy that. He’s kind of a general nice little kid. He’s a sweet little kid. Now he’s not always sweet, but he’s basically sweet and I think basically intelligent. So there are things that he wants to do just because the other kids are doing it. But he comes up with original kinds of ideas, thinking on his own.

Second, she expressed concern for Adam’s safety. This idea appeared in learning at school as well as in teaching at home. When asked, “What’s the challenging part of parenting for you?” she answered:

All the scary things out there in the world to protect them from. We were certainly aware of that before, but now I told Jeff, “You got to do things that Adam will never get to do.” And I don’t think it’s just because Adam’s the second child. And of course I’m older. I approach things differently. We moved into a pretty safe neighborhood, and yet I don’t know that I always feel the same about what he wants to do.

Third, Ruth had distinctly different ideas about rearing boys and girls. These views, she believed, affected her parenting style. She addressed gender differences:

Boys to me are easier. They’re, you know, easier to understand when they’re upset. Little girls, I don’t know, they don’t forget. I taught junior high and high school, and it was always harder to know what the girls had on their minds, and they take longer to forget. Guys just lay it out there. So I’m definitely sure I would do things differently if he was a girl. But I was looking through a catalog last night of all the cute little clothes that we’ll never buy. I’m sure we’d have cute, cute stuff, but Adam probably wears typical boy’s things. I would probably put too much money in clothes, but it would be fun.

Fifth, Ruth described her great joy in parenting. Adam was a much wanted child, and she enjoyed celebrating his presence as follows:

I like my children. I’ve found out that not everyone does. And we had tried for a long time to have Adam. Some people talk
about how hard it is, but I really like my kids, so I don't get really angry. Oh, I do but not very often.

Thoughts as well as feelings undergirded Ruth's parenting. These thoughts comprise the five-part category, philosophy of teaching. First, Ruth indicated that she and William parent positively:

We're not into spanking. We try to be more positive. We did a lot of distraction early on. We just knew a little more about children and what they are capable of understanding and knowing at an early age than I did with Jeff.

Second, she taught independence gently, as Adam seemed ready to accept it. I saw that technique demonstrated at school one morning. Adam went into the toileting area while Ruth talked with Mrs. Lerner. When he exited, he came to Ruth and stood in front of her. His hands held the waistband of his unfastened jeans. In response to his nonverbal request for help, Ruth fastened the pants. Then she kissed Adam goodbye. He clung to her arm and walked several steps with her. She kissed him again and departed.

That episode and the following one illustrate Ruth's needs-based approach to discipline. She came for Adam one crisp fall afternoon and found him engrossed in bike riding. Rather than rushing him to depart, she first encouraged readiness by taking off his nametag. Then she observed Adam at play and waited for him to signal readiness to leave school with her. They departed 10 minutes later.

Fifth, Ruth attended to Adam's level of development when determining teaching strategies. Her testimony regarding family activities depicts that awareness:
We do a lot. We go, a lot of times, on the weekends and do different things. You know, I do errands and stuff. So in a way he is hurried in that we want him to hurry up and get in the car so we can get all our stuff in the car and do this and do that. But a lot of that is age, so I don't really pressure him about it.

Ruth acted upon her feelings and philosophy through three teaching strategies: (a) choices, (b) modeling, and (c) interaction. Through offering choices, she taught Adam to be independent. She asked:

Is he still saying that, "Call me Christopher"? That developed right before break before fall started. He ask me and I said, "Well, you can try it and see if you like it." And so he did. . . . But I told him one day, "I may call you Adam. Is that okay?" And he said, "Okay." So I do. . . . But he gets to choose a lot of different things, so clothing really hasn't become a problem. Now selecting things--he's quite a shopper. His shoes have to be the ones he wants. And lately it's gotten into--we had to try on 20 pair the last time we went shopping. But there were several pairs he liked and couldn't decide which ones he liked the best. It really became quite a shopping experience. But now that we've bought them, he likes them so he wears them.

Ruth seemed less conscious of teaching through modeling than through offering choices. Nevertheless, data support modeling as a teaching strategy. For example, when Ruth came for Adam after school one day, she observed him at play outdoors for about 5 minutes. Then Adam removed the helmet he was wearing and gave it to a friend. Ruth told him to say, "I'll see you tomorrow." He repeated, "I'll see you tomorrow," and they departed.

Ruth's description of Adam's activities at home portrays both modeling and family interaction as teaching strategies:

He usually is pretty close to us. He helps us do things, like cooking. . . . I've noticed that lately he's more independent.
He'll go in his room and play with small things he hasn't played with in a while . . . but one of us is usually involved with him in some way. . . . Adam really enjoys doing things with his dad. They wrestle, and we both read to him. . . . The kitchen and our table, it's all right there together, so we all sit down about the same time but I'm still getting milk and William's still getting a drink or something. And Adam's usually really hungry, so he's usually the first one to sit down. We all start to eat at about the same time, but we don't necessarily wait on each other. We say the blessing, but we say it after a few bites have been eaten a lot of times.

**Summary.** These data described Ruth's expectations of schools for young children. First, she explained how children learn. They learn best (a) when they are viewed as developing individuals; (b) when teachers honor children's readiness to learn; (c) when teaching is positive; (d) when the environment is safe; and (e) when learning, work, and play are integrated. Second, she viewed the purpose of school as (a) providing opportunities for socialization, (b) facilitating creativity, and (c) orienting the child to future school experiences.

The data further described Ruth's school-related information drawn from (a) her childhood, (b) Jeff's school, (c) friends, (d) family, (e) school visits, (f) Adam, (g) school network, (h) written notices, and (i) Palmer schools. Next, family-school interaction was presented from the standpoint of (a) logistics, (b) school visits, (c) teachers, and (d) school events. Finally, the data provided a picture of teaching at home in terms of Ruth's (a) feelings, (b) philosophy, and (c) teaching strategies.

Ruth's perceptions of early childhood education are depicted in Table 25. Her belief that a positive, safe environment encourages
creativity provided the frame of reference for answering the following sub-questions: (a) What are mothers' expectations of schools for young children? (b) What are the characteristics of the information and sources mothers use to form their perceptions of school? (c) What are mothers' views regarding the interaction between family and school? and (d) What and how do mothers teach children at home?

Adam's School Experiences

Introduction

Adam was enrolled at Springfield for his 2nd year when the study began. He knew most of his classmates and had become close friends with at least two other boys. His mother described him as "sometimes shy, but once comfortable, he likes to get others to join in his games or pretend activity." He was born in the United States and spoke fluent English.

School records showed that Adam enjoyed working with play dough, singing, pretending, building with blocks, sandbox play, and playing with cars and trucks. He also liked television programs about dinosaurs. Reading at home had created an interest in books such as Goodnight Moon and The Jungle Book. Play experiences outside his home had occurred in the company of his grandparents.

Characteristics of School Experiences

The data in this section are related to Research Question 2, What are the characteristics of school experiences for the children? Adam's
experiences are described in terms of what he did at school-how he used his time. A summary of his activities is provided in Table 26. Numbers in the rank column indicate the order of the activities from most frequent to least frequent. Numbers in the minutes-per-day column exceed 8 hours, the length of Adam's school day, because two or more experiences usually occurred simultaneously.

Table 26

Frequency of Adam's School Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Minutes Per Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Large motor activity</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Small motor activity</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Observing children</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Showing emotion</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Taking initiative</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pretending</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Following directions</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Observing adults</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nonverbal communication</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Just waiting</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Responding to peer invitations</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Personal care</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Large motor activity. For 195 minutes of every day, Adam engaged in large motor activity, his most frequent experience. When outdoors, he moved constantly while playing soccer, chasing or being chased, bouncing
balls, playing on the tire swing, playing catch, hauling sand in buckets, digging in the sandbox, pushing toy trucks, riding a scooter, and riding tricycles. Indoors he walked from one activity to another, arranged chairs at the tables, stooped and bent to put away materials, pretended to skate on wooden blocks, crawled under the bed, stretched and rolled on the floor, put on his coat and took it off, pulled the door open, spread his rest towel on the floor and folded it, walked to and from his cubbie, moved in response to music, cleaned tables, danced, clapped, marched, wrestled, and jumped.

**Verbal communication.** Adam spent 158 minutes of each school day communicating verbally, his second most frequent activity. He issued invitations, requested permission, described his actions, negotiated entry into play groups, asked about other children's activities, responded to questions, stated his opinion, improvised dialogue in pretend play, chanted fingerplays, sang, made accusations, stated problems, proposed solutions, whispered secrets, coached fellow soccer players, cheered soccer victories, issued commands, voiced agreement and disagreement, spelled names, gave directions, cracked jokes, counted, tattled, and complained.

**Small motor activity.** Adam's third most frequent experience was small motor activity. He typically used small motor skills for 115 minutes during a school day. He hung nametags on pegs; connected and disconnected interlocking vehicles and building pieces; folded, cut, and pasted paper; prepared snack foods; filled and emptied vessels at the
water table; worked puzzles; wrote in his journal; drew with markers; rolled, pounded, pinched, and squeezed play dough; twisted ribbon; ate and drank snack and lunch foods; fastened the chin strap on his helmet; performed fingerplays; unpacked and packed his lunchbox; screwed the top on his thermos; and fastened and unfastened his jacket.

**Listening.** Adam's fourth most frequent experience was listening. He appeared to be listening for 94 minutes each day. He gave evidence of listening when he indicated agreement or disagreement with verbal information, followed verbal directions, asked questions in conversation, asked questions to clarify verbal messages, argued, echoed chants and songs, extended conversation with comments, made fitting comments after hearing a story, wrote teacher-dictated letters, implemented actions suggested by songs, laughed when jokes were told, answered questions, moved to the beat of music, and responded appropriately in verbal games.

**Observing children.** The observation of other children constituted the fifth most frequent activity, accounting for 77 minutes daily. Adam observed other children conversing among themselves and with teachers. He studied his friends' ways of drawing and writing. He waited and watched to see which activities his best friends would select. He observed classmates' every move as they played a new game. He watched to see if Robert had stopped crying, and then how Robert would use water play materials. He studied the moves of other soccer players to determine his own. His eyes followed children to the tables as
the teacher called their names. During times of transition between activities, Adam typically lay across a table or propped against a cabinet to observe each child in the room, one by one.

**Showing emotion.** During 59 minutes of each school day, Adam expressed emotion. His grimaces, gestures, and other bodily movements could have expressed something other than emotion. However, for purposes of this study, these actions were categorized as showing emotion. Upon discovering that he was last in a line of boys pretending to be frontier scouts, Adam stopped abruptly, folded his arms, and stood still with his bottom lip protruding. When a teacher directed a soccer game in ways unpleasing to him, he stomped away and kicked the right rear wheel of a nearby tricycle. When Robert cried, Adam buried his head in his elbows and sat beside him. When Benjamin grabbed Adam's nametag, Adam yelled to the teacher, “That's no fair! He got mine. I asked him how he did it, and he got mine.” When he accomplished a successful kick in the playground soccer game, he raised his arms and screamed excitedly, “Yes, yes, yes!” At rest time, Adam whispered something to the teacher, smiled, and gave her a hug. Throughout the day, Adam grinned or giggled spontaneously when play pleased him.

**Taking initiative.** Adam took initiative during 43 minutes daily. Making choices or decisions was his primary task in this area. He chose learning centers, soccer rules and plays, other outdoor games, how to use materials, when to attend to personal needs, how much to eat, where to
rest, ways to solve problems, friends, and pretend play scenarios. He frequently anticipated teachers' directions, invited friends to play, and initiated play themes.

**Pretending.** Adam spent 28 minutes of each day pretending. He pretended to be a cookie monster, a police officer, a puppy, a prisoner, Superman, a brother, and a frontier scout. He pretended to catch imaginary bugs, rock an imaginary baby, and talk on walkie-talkies made of Legos. He also showed imagination in drawing Superman, creating a face with pretzels and a pear half, and making lips from sections of orange peeling.

**Following directions.** Adam typically followed directions at school for 26 minutes each day. Some of the directions were verbalized, usually by teachers. Others were unspoken, internalized routines that Adam had come to anticipate. He lined up when the class prepared to exit or enter the classroom together; came when the teacher called; put away materials; wore a helmet for bike riding; rode only on the sidewalk; cleaned his placemat after lunch; threw away napkins and paper cups; returned his jacket, rest towel, and lunchbox to their places after use; enacted motions suggested by song lyrics; and played games appropriately; placed completed papers in his cubbie.

**Observing adults.** For 21 minutes each day, Adam observed adults. He peered through planks in the privacy fence to see which university student would return the stray soccer ball. He watched parents who
came to take some children home at noon. He watched teachers as they wrote, tied shoes, talked with children, read stories, and guided group activities.

**Nonverbal communication.** For 14 minutes each day, Adam engaged in nonverbal communication. He typically pointed to signal soccer plays, placed his arm around a child's shoulders to suggest playmate choices, tapped his index finger on his chest to indicate that he wanted to take a turn, raised his hand to vote, nodded agreement, and stood very close to the teacher when he wanted to be rocked.

**Just waiting.** Adam usually occupied his time with the activities previously described. However, for 11 minutes of each day he seemed to simply wait for the next thing to happen. He could have been thinking, imagining, or resting during this time, but further definition was beyond the scope of this study.

**Responding to peer invitations.** Adam spent 10 minutes of each day responding to classmates' invitations to social connection. He answered affirmatively to invitations to chase, play soccer, pretend, dig in the sand, walk to the cubbies, accept a bite of snack, and work with friends in learning centers.

**Personal care.** Adam devoted 9 minutes per school day to personal care. This time was devoted to eating, toileting, and dressing appropriately.
Ruth-Adam Correspondence

Perceptions of Early Childhood Education

In the following sections, the degree to which Ruth's belief that a positive, safe environment encourages creativity matched her son's school experiences is described. High levels of continuity are noted.

Expectations of Schools

The correspondence between Ruth's expectations of schools and Adam's experiences at Springfield School is described in Table 27. The data fit into two categories.

How children learn. The data suggest that Ruth recognized five ways that young children learn. First, she believed they learn when they are viewed as individuals. Adam seemed to develop at his own pace at Springfield School. He chose most of his activities, and the teachers honored his choices. In these ways his experiences were consistent with his mother's expectations.

Second, Ruth believed children learn when teachers honor children's readiness to learn. Adam had the opportunity to determine his own interest level after concepts were presented. At the time of the study, he seemed intent on refining motor, verbal, and listening skills. His teachers provided intrinsically rewarding activities related to these skills. Thus, the teachers honored readiness in ways compatible with Ruth's thinking.
Table 27

Correspondence Between Ruth’s Expectations of Schools and Adam’s School Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ruth’s Expectations</th>
<th>Adam’s Experiences</th>
<th>Minutes Invested</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How children learn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn as individuals</td>
<td>All activities self-chosen &amp; self-paced</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn when ready</td>
<td>Activity choices reflect readiness</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn through positive teaching</td>
<td>Teachers encouraged desirable, redirected undesirable</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn in safety</td>
<td>Materials, facilities, &amp; personnel selectively chosen</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn through integrated curriculum</td>
<td>Firsthand learning &amp; no artificial curriculum boundaries</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization</td>
<td>All activities</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>All activities</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>All activities</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Third, Ruth stated that children learn when teaching is positive. The teachers generally encouraged Adam’s desirable behavior and redirected undesirable behavior. Thus Adam’s experiences seemed consistent with Ruth’s expectations for positive teaching.
Fourth, Adam's mother asserted that children learn best when their environment is safe. This expectation was met in terms of safe materials, secure physical facilities, observation accommodations, and monitored personnel policies.

Fifth, Ruth thought that a utopian environment for children would offer learning, work, and play experiences in the context of everyday life. Springfield could not provide a perfect environment, but the faculty did make available firsthand, integrated learning experiences in an environment similar to family life. No boundaries separated curriculum areas. In these ways, Adam's school experiences resembled Ruth's vision of the ideal.

Purpose of school. Ruth saw the purposes of school as (a) providing opportunities for socialization, (b) facilitating creativity, and (c) orienting the child to future school experiences. Adam's investment in large motor activity (195), verbal communication (158 minutes daily), listening (94 minutes), observing children (77 minutes), response to peer invitations (10 minutes) and overall high involvement level in a cooperative learning environment suggest that Springfield met Ruth expectations for socialization.

Adam seemed to have brought his own creativity to school. Springfield's wide offering of choices appeared to nurture that gift. Adam's investment in small motor activity (115 minutes), taking initiative (43 minutes), and pretending (28 minutes) illustrate creativity
most vividly. Therefore, Adam's creative experiences matched Ruth's expectations.

All of Adam's experiences at Springfield prepared him for future realities in public school. This preparation was focused on the enhancement of total development rather than cognition alone. Thus, Ruth's perceptions and Adam's experiences were consistent in terms of preparation for the future.

Sources of Information

The correspondence between Ruth's information about school in the context of its sources and Adam's school experiences is summarized in Table 28. The data fit into eight categories.

**Childhood.** Ruth remembered Springfield as a place where children were made to eat all of their peas. She knew that was no longer the case. However, she grew up believing that Springfield was an ideal place for children. Adam's experiences validated that reality. Ruth herself rated the school a perfect 10.

**Jeff's school.** Ruth remembered Jeff's kindergarten as very straight and rigid. She did not want that for Adam. Her wishes for flexibility were reflected in all of Adam's school experiences.

**Friends.** Palmer friends gave Ruth their positive impressions of Springfield. Adam's high degree of involvement suggested experiences consistent with that information.
Table 28

Correspondence Between Ruth’s Information About School and Adam’s School Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ruth’s Information</th>
<th>Adam’s Experiences</th>
<th>Minutes Invested</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childhood memories</td>
<td>All experiences even better</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff’s school</td>
<td>All experiences better, no rigidity</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>All experiences supported friends’ reports</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>All experiences supported positive visits</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>All experiences supported Adam’s reports</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School network</td>
<td>All experiences supported &amp; supported by network</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written notices</td>
<td>All experiences supported &amp; supported by notices</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmer schools</td>
<td>Springfield policies support family</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public school policies inconvenienced family</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family. Similarly, Ruth’s aunt indicated that Springfield compared favorably with the Fulbright School, which was her place of work and a well-known preschool program in Palmer. Adam’s high degree of involvement suggested experiences consistent with that information.
School visits. Ruth found pleasure in what she observed early in Adam's schooling at Springfield. She indicated that continued satisfaction reduced her need to visit during Adam's second year.

Adam. Adam's active participation in school experiences matched the feedback he gave Ruth regarding his desire to attend. The unhappiness he reported during 2 weeks in summer school could also be explained by school events. Therefore, the information he provided was accurate in the context of his level of understanding.

School network. Ruth's network of teachers and parents had led her to believe that Adam was experiencing no problems at school. The data support that report. Similarly, the data support the presence of Adam's network of playmates in the classroom. Evidence of friendships with children promoted to public school was beyond the scope of this study.

Written notices. All written notices seemed to be compatible with Ruth's way of thinking. She read them and responded with attendance at events, written concerns regarding Adam, and supportive efforts such as appropriate clothing for Adam's contribution for clothing week.

Palmer schools. This source alerted Ruth to the advantages Adam enjoyed at Springfield and possibilities for coordinating public and private policies in support of families. Thus, Springfield appeared to be more consistent with Ruth's perceptions than did public schools.
Family-School Interaction

The correspondence between Ruth’s views regarding family-school interaction and Springfield School’s practices is depicted in Table 29. The data fit into four categories.

Table 29

Correspondence Between Ruth’s Views Regarding Family-School Interaction and School Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ruth’s Views</th>
<th>School’s Practices</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logistics</td>
<td>Springfield accepted no kindergarten children</td>
<td>Limited continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Springfield’s hours supported families</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public kindergarten did not support families</td>
<td>Discontinuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School visits</td>
<td>Springfield’s open door policy empowered parents</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Conversation with them as needed at school &amp; at social functions</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Regular attendance gave families sense of ownership &amp; belonging</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Logistics. Ruth applauded Springfield as being supportive of her family’s needs, except perhaps in limiting enrollment to
pre-kindergarten. She voiced concern about ways kindergarten would complicate their busy lives.

**School visits.** Springfield's open door policy served Ruth well. She took advantage of opportunities to observe Adam’s activities and talk with his teachers.

**Teachers.** Ruth talked with teachers at school and in the community. Her extensive social network strengthened the support she received from teachers and resulted in her parent satisfaction.

**School events.** Social connections, 2 years in the program, and attendance at events seemed to enhance Ruth’s feeling of ownership in the school. She used terms such as “our” and “we have” in reference to the school. Thus, events at the school appeared to facilitate a sense of belonging and to support home-school relationships.

**Teaching at Home**

The correspondence between Ruth’s views regarding teaching at home and Springfield’s practices is presented in Table 30. The data fit into three categories.

**Feelings.** The teachers supported Adam’s activities with materials and guidance indicative of their pride in his accomplishments, concern for his safety, interest in his developing anti-bias attitudes, and pleasure in his development. Ruth suggested similar feelings. However, her maternal joy in Adam’s existence is probably unparalleled in anyone. In
Table 30

**Correspondence Between Ruth’s Views Regarding Teaching at Home and the School’s Practices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ruth’s Views</th>
<th>School’s Practices</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feelings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>Teachers shared feelings but were limited by parent’s unique role</td>
<td>Limited continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns</td>
<td>Teachers addressed individual differences</td>
<td>Minimal continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers shared feelings but were limited by parent’s unique role</td>
<td>Limited continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers addressed individual differences</td>
<td>Minimal continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Philosophy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive teaching</td>
<td>Activities &amp; guidance reflected positive teaching</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>School encourage independence</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs-based teaching</td>
<td>Activities &amp; guidance reflected needs-based teaching</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development-based teaching</td>
<td>Activities &amp; guidance reflected developmentally appropriate teaching</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choices</td>
<td>Activities &amp; guidance reflected many choices daily</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling</td>
<td>Activities &amp; guidance reflected modeling by teachers</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Cooperative activities, materials, &amp; guidance encouraged interaction</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, she described differences in parenting boys and girls. Teachers attempted to blur those distinctions in terms of opportunities offered at
school. In these ways, Adam's learning at home and at school were consistent, with minor limitations.

**Philosophy.** The teachers supported Adam's activities with materials and guidance indicative of their positive approach, desire to promote independence, concern for meeting children's needs, and high regard for developmentally appropriate practice. Ruth's teaching was also guided by this philosophy. In these ways, Adam's learning at home and at school were highly consistent.

**Teaching Strategies**

**Choices.** Adam's participation in 14 kinds of experiences indicates that he took advantage of the many choices offered at school. Ruth reported that she and William offered many choices also. Thus, Adam's learning at home and at school were consistent.

**Modeling.** The teachers supported Adam's activities with models of desirable behavior, respect for people, written and spoken language, mathematics as a skill for life, cooperative learning, and singing for pleasure. Ruth and William modeled language, creativity, respect for people, polite behavior, an active lifestyle, and close relationships. Thus, Adam's learning at home and at school were consistent.

**Interaction.** The teachers supported all of Adam's activities with materials and models that promoted interaction with classmates and teachers. Ruth reported that Adam worked and played with or near
other family members at home. In these ways, Adam's school experiences and home experiences were consistent.

Summary

In this chapter, a description of physical properties, administrative structure, and faculty of Springfield School has been provided. The analysis of data and findings according to the three research questions as they pertain to each mother-child dyad are also provided in this chapter.

The first research question asked: What are mothers' perceptions of early childhood education and, in the context of those perceptions, (a) What are mothers' expectations of schools for young children? (b) What are mothers' views regarding the interaction between family and school? (c) What are the characteristics of the information and sources mothers use to form their perceptions of early childhood education? and (d) What and how do mothers say they teach children at home? The second research question asked: What are the characteristics of school experiences for the children? The third research question asked: What is the correspondence between mothers' perceptions of early childhood education and children's school experiences?

Mothers, children and correspondence between mothers' perceptions and children's experiences were presented in the following order: Maradel, Lisa's mother; Lisa's school experiences; Maradel-Lisa correspondence (Mexican American); Haesook, Paul's mother; Paul's school experiences; Haesook-Paul correspondence (Korean American);
Judy, Andrea's mother; Andrea's school experiences; Judy-Andrea correspondence (African American); Ruth, Adam's mother; Adam's school experiences; and Ruth-Adam correspondence (Anglo). Tabular summaries of these findings were also provided.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purposes of this study were to (a) describe the perceptions of four mothers regarding early childhood education as a function of their ideas on child rearing, education, and their children's current experiences in a preschool program; (b) determine the nature of the correspondence between the parents' perceptions and their children's actual school experiences; and (c) recommend changes to increase continuity between parents' perceptions and children's actual school experiences.

The sample for the study was selected from a population of 60 children enrolled in a university-based school for young children, and their mothers. The sample included four purposively-selected mother-child dyads representing Mexican-American, Korean-American, African-American, and Anglo cultures. The African-American and Mexican-American dyads were included because most young children in these two groups tend to be cared for at home by family members, thus making school-related data about these children especially valuable. The Asian-American and Anglo dyads were chosen to represent the largest ethnic groups in many schools for young children.
In the interest of sound qualitative methodology and the uniqueness of this investigation, a tentative interview schedule was adapted from instruments routinely used by child development and early childhood education researchers to measure home and school beliefs and practices. Means of triangulation included interviews with participants and informants; observation in homes, the school, and worksites; audiotaping; videotaping; field notes; school records; demographic forms; and the video message Life's Lessons (Wozniak, 1991) accompanied by a viewing guide requesting written responses.

Time in the field spanned 12 weeks, from the first week in October through December. During that time, 24 hours of videotaping documented the school activities of each of the 2 full-day 5-year-olds. Twelve hours of videotaping documented the activities of each of the 2 half-day 3-year-olds. Thus, total taping time for each child equalled 3 school days. Observation and taping were spaced as evenly as possible throughout the 12-week period, with the goals of recording 3 typical days, minimizing interference in the classroom, and maintaining observer alertness. An additional day for each child was videotaped using time-interval techniques. The first 5 minutes out of every 15 were documented as a check on outlier behavior during lengthier taping sessions.

Each mother's schedule determined the length and time of the interviews. At times, a 5-minute chat on the school porch yielded rich data. At other times, 90 minutes over a meal spawned family stories rich in cultural values. Each mother was interviewed seven times, and the
total interview time for each mother ranged from about 3 hours for Ruth, the Anglo mother, to 7 hours for Judy, the African-American mother.

Findings

The focus of this study was on (a) describing the perceptions of four ethnically diverse mothers regarding early childhood education as a function of their ideas on child rearing, education, and their children's current experiences in a preschool program; (b) determining the nature of the correspondence between the parents' perceptions and their children's actual school experiences; and (c) recommending changes to increase the continuity between parents' perceptions and children's actual school experiences.

Three research questions were investigated. The following findings resulted from the study:

1. The Mexican-American mother's perceptions and her daughter's school experiences combined to produce an outcome of continuity 71 times, limited continuity 2 times, minimal continuity 1 time, and discontinuity 13 times. Their perceptions and experiences regarding parent-teacher collaboration had limited continuity outcomes. Cognitions and experiences regarding teachers as information sources showed minimal continuity. Values and experiences regarding children's learning by asking questions, cafeteria provisions, room decor, toilet facilities, special requests for specific parent participation, language differences, friendships with other school families, traditional written
notices, gender-based treatment, and ethnic foods gave evidence of discontinuity. All other perceptions combined with experiences to produce continuity as depicted in Tables 9 through 12.

2. The Korean-American mother's perceptions and her son's school experiences combined to produce an outcome of continuity 33 times, limited continuity 3 times, minimal continuity 1 time, and discontinuity 9 times. Their perceptions and experiences regarding social styles in communication, expectations for respect, and goals for independence had limited continuity outcomes. Their views and experiences regarding traditional written notices showed minimal continuity. Their values and experiences regarding extrinsic rewards, drill and practice exercises, academic skills, contact with teachers, responsibility for cultural differences, Korean foods, and gender role expectations gave evidence of discontinuity. All other perceptions combined with experiences to produce continuity as depicted in Tables 15 through 18.

3. The African-American mother's perceptions and her daughter's school experiences combined to produce an outcome of continuity 40 times, limited continuity 2 times, and discontinuity 10 times. There was no evidence of minimal continuity. Their perceptions and experiences regarding structure as a priority for learning and computer use by children had limited continuity outcomes. Values and experiences regarding drill and practice exercises, classroom and playground space, desks, written notices, drill and memorization taught through discipline, gruffness and negative reinforcement to manage behavior, and gender
role expectations gave evidence of discontinuity. All other perceptions combined with experiences to produce continuity as depicted in Tables 21 through 24.

4. The Anglo mother's perceptions and her son's school experiences combined to produce an outcome of continuity 28 times, limited continuity 2 times, minimal continuity 1 time, and discontinuity 2 times. Their perceptions and potential future experiences regarding public kindergarten and its implications had a limited continuity outcome. Feelings related to parenting also combined with school experiences to generate a limited continuity outcome. Views and experiences regarding gender-based treatment showed minimal continuity. Values and potential future experiences regarding public kindergarten and its implications gave evidence of discontinuity. All other perceptions combined with experiences to produce continuity as depicted in Tables 27 through 30.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based upon the findings of this study:

1. The Anglo mother and her son experienced the least discontinuity between the mother's perceptions and the child's school experiences. The Mexican-American mother and her daughter experienced the greatest discontinuity. The Korean-American and African-American mothers and their children experienced similar degrees
of discontinuity, with both dyads showing slightly less discontinuity than the Mexican-American dyad.

2. All four mothers' preferences for treating boys and girls differently were at least slightly incongruent with their children's experiences at school, where teachers seemed to make no gender-based distinctions.

3. Traditional written notices were completely congruent with only the Anglo mother's information needs.

4. Mexican-American and Korean-American mothers appeared to share discontinuity in terms of their belief in the benefits of parent-teacher collaboration and their limited relationships with teachers.

5. The Korean-American and African-American dyads seemed to share discontinuity in terms of their thoughts about drill and practice and the school's lack of emphasis on drill and practice.

6. The results of this study support the work of Hess, Price, Dickson, and Conroy (1981); Knudsen-Kindauer and Harris (1989); and Rescorla (1991). The findings suggest that some parents place more value on early academic skills, as evidenced in drill and practice exercises than do teachers.

7. Evidence of continuity between mothers' perceptions and their children's school experiences outweighed evidence of discontinuity, suggesting that a school administered by the majority population can provide families with significant continuity.

8. The results of this study support the use of Piaget's (1926) theory as a tool for understanding parents' perceptions in five ways.
First, the mothers frequently explained their views of education in terms of concrete experiences, such as classroom observation. Second, each mother's unique combination of maturation, experience, and social interaction (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) produced four different ways of conceptualizing early childhood education. Third, the mothers demonstrated the ability to carry out actions mentally (Piaget, 1952) and thus think as logical adults. Fourth, the mothers sometimes answered questions in terms of things learned by association; through action and observation of effects; and by creating and inventing relationships between symbols and objects, such as signs of respect and objects of respect (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Fifth, the mothers appeared to construct knowledge through assimilation and accommodation (Piaget, 1954). At times they reported simply taking in new information. At other times, they seemed to change their thinking patterns to be consistent with that new information. Because each mother actively engaged in a construction of reality that, according to Piaget (1954), could not be imposed from without, four unique views of early childhood education emerged.

9. All four mothers showed evidence of having constructed personal beliefs from their collective cultures (Lightfoot & Valsiner, 1992). Personal experiences seemed to produce inductive knowledge. Values and beliefs rooted in the collective culture appeared to generate deductive knowledge.

10. The Mexican-American and Korean-American mothers’ views reflected a reverence for tradition and cooperative relationships such as
those usually found in Eastern culture. The African-American and Anglo mothers seemed to value both cooperative relationships and the individualism that characterizes Western culture (Weber, 1889-1924/1983).

Recommendations

The following recommendations for schools are based on the results of this study:

1. Some minority parents serve only ethnic foods at home. Ethnic foods served at school could provide continuity for the minority child and educate the other children.

2. Although all parents in this study reported conversations with teachers, none reported personal, specific teacher requests for particular goods or services which were useful in the classroom. Minority families may benefit from being asked to provide inexpensive items such as ethnic food samples for tasting, simple artifacts, or other objects of pride.

3. In the interest of promoting a social network for minority children and their parents, volunteer majority families could be paired with minority families. Care should be taken to communicate goals of mutual sharing and respect for each culture.

4. A child and parent who speak English as a second language could benefit from relationships with teachers who speak the family's native language fluently. Teachers who are not bilingual can support families by learning greetings and the correct pronunciation of names.
5. Evidence from this study suggests that novel ways of communicating with parents tend to be more effective than traditional written notices. The Springfield example, formatting information to resemble tickets for a free picnic, seemed to provide an effective memory clue.

6. Adults who work with minority families can educate themselves with regard to cultural customs, such as those noted in the literature reviewed in this study.

7. Schools that do not support the use of drill and practice in early childhood education can communicate to parents what their children are learning in other ways. For example, a teacher could attach to the young child's clothing a message such as, "I heard a story about 5 green frogs today: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5." Adding a verbal comment such as "Josh is wearing that pretty picture because he counted to 5 today" could further strengthen parent-teacher communication.

The following recommendations for further research are based on the results of this study:

1. Future longitudinal studies should be conducted to describe changes in mothers' perceptions and young children's school experiences through the primary grades.

2. Further research is recommended to study the relationship between minority children's observation of other children in the classroom.
3. Further qualitative investigation is recommended in terms of evaluating parents' perceptions and children's experiences before and after efforts to address discontinuity issues in early childhood classrooms.

4. Replication of the current study is recommended to include fathers' perceptions and their correspondence to young children's school experiences, and to measure the correspondence of perceptions and experiences in schools that are not university based.

5. Further investigation should be undertaken with families of cultures not addressed in this study to determine the match between parents' perceptions and young children's school experiences.

6. Studies should be undertaken to identify ways of facilitating home-school interaction in the presence of language differences. Which tools communicate the school's intentions most effectively to which parents, and why?
APPENDIX A

PERMISSION LETTER AND CONSENT FORM
Dear Mothers,

I am conducting a study in association with the College of Education that will try to describe mothers' opinions about their children's early education. From October, 1993, through January, 1994, I will be visiting with mothers, primarily in their homes. These conversations will be informal and audio taped. The tapes will be my way of being sure that I hear what is said. They will never be shared with anyone.

I will also be observing in the child development school and visiting with teachers and preschoolers. During this time I would like to make video tapes and keep written notes of observations and conversations that occur naturally in the classroom and on the playground. I would also like to collect samples of children's work and other classroom papers.

To preserve confidentiality, video taping will not include close-up shots and will be retained by me. Your name, your child's name, or the name of the school will never be associated with any of the information collected. The only purpose of video taping is to establish my study's validity and reliability.

The goal of this study is to help teachers find better ways to meet the needs of young learners and their families. Your participation will help teachers better understand the goals you have for your child. If you decide to participate in the study, you will be free to withdraw from the study at any time. If you have questions or want further information, please call me collect at (123) 456-7890. If you agree to participate and have your child participate, please sign and return the enclosed form to your child's teacher. Thank you for considering participation.

Sincerely,

Martha West

This project has been reviewed by University Committee for the protection of human subjects (Phone: 565-3946).
I give my consent to take part in this study. I have read the description of the study and I understand it. I understand my part and my child's part in it. I understand that **video taping will not include close-up shots and will be retained by the researcher. I understand that my name, my child's name, and the name of the school will never be associated with any of the information collected. It is clear to me that all information will be confidential.** I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and end both my participation and my child's participation in this study at any time.

Date_____________ Child's Name______________________________

Parent's Signature________________________________________
APPENDIX B

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DURATION</th>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>TECHNIQUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE ONE</strong></td>
<td>Establishing entry</td>
<td>Informal interview with director, teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1-15, 1993</td>
<td>Community and school demographic data</td>
<td>Letter to mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Become familiar with mothers</td>
<td>Interview with mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Observation, videotape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Field notes in setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collect public documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE TWO</strong></td>
<td>Map physical data</td>
<td>Observation, videotape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 16-29, 1993</td>
<td>Become familiar with family interaction</td>
<td>Interview mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>patterns</td>
<td>Field notes in setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demographic data</td>
<td>Collect school documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE THREE</strong></td>
<td>Search for emerging perceptions</td>
<td>Observation, videotape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 30 through</td>
<td>patterns</td>
<td>Interview mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 12, 1993</td>
<td>Search for similarities and differences</td>
<td>Collect school samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop hypotheses</td>
<td>Interview teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE FOUR</strong></td>
<td>Continue to identify perceptions</td>
<td>Observation, videotape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 13 through</td>
<td>patterns</td>
<td>Collect teacher forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 31, 1993</td>
<td>Continue to search for similarities and</td>
<td>Collect school samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>differences</td>
<td>Final interview with mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refine hypotheses</td>
<td>Final interview with informants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exit field</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
1. How does your child seem to learn new things, such as words or how to do something?

2. Has there been something at school that your child has enjoyed from the very beginning? If so, what?

3. Is there anything that has been hard for your child to adjust to at school? If so, what?

4. What is a legitimate reason for absence from school?

5. If you were a preschool teacher, how would you encourage appropriate classroom behavior?

6. What kinds of things do you think young children should gain from going to school?

7. What do you think of when I say (phrases the participant has used previously in response to questions, perhaps phrases such as caring teacher, child care center, big school, preschool)?

8. How did you choose this school for your child?

9. What or who was your main source of information about this school?

10. What kinds of things did you know about this school before enrolling your child?
11. How did you choose other schools the child may have attended?

12. How do you find out about the school's teaching practices?

13. What kinds of things does your child tell you about school?

14. How do you know what's going on at school?

15. Some schools have rules like "No kids at school with fever." What are some of your child's school rules?

16. Some classrooms have rules like "Walk inside." Does your child's class have any rules?

17. How does this school compare with other schools you might know about?

18. Has your child been in other preschools? If so, what were those schools like?

19. Describe some of the children in your child's class.

20. Describe your child's teachers.

21. If you spent the day in your child's class, what kinds of things would you expect to see and hear?

22. How would your child be different if he or she did not go to preschool?
23. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the quality of your child's school?

24. If you could change anything about the school, what would you change?

25. What is there about this school that you think should not be changed?

26. Suppose a family had a problem. Would you recommend that parents talk about the problem with their child's teacher?

27. Do you see any of the teachers outside the school?

28. Do you see other school parents in the community?

29. What are some of the things the school asks parents to do?

30. Is there anything you wish the school would do for your child that it does not?

31. Is there something you wish the school would do for all of its families that it does not?

32. Do you think the school staff understands families' needs?

33. If a school claims to provide high quality, what would you expect of it?

34. Why did you originally want your child to be in this school?
35. Would you change to another school if you could do so easily?

36. Are there things your child does at home but is not encouraged to do at school, and vice versa?

37. When did you enroll your child?

38. Why did you enroll at that time rather than earlier or later?

39. Did your child have friends at the school at the time of enrollment?

40. What happens during the first half-hour you spend with your child after a day at school?

41. What kinds of things does your family like to do together?

42. What have been the greatest joys and challenges in parenting?

43. Describe the birth of your child.

44. What is mealtime like at your house?

45. Describe your family's schedule on a school day.

46. What are weekends like for your child?

47. Describe your favorite parent-child activity.

48. What are your child’s preferences and interests?

49. What does your child do in spare time at home?
50. What is life like for your family when your child is in school in comparison to when he or she is not?

51. What are your earliest memories of school?

52. What do you think your child's early school memories will be?

53. Of all the things your child can do, which ones make you feel the happiest or the proudest?

54. How is it decided what your child will wear to school each day?

55. Why do you send your child to preschool?
APPENDIX

VIDEO VIEWING GUIDE
The videotape is set for you to view a section beginning with a Moscow mother waking her child for the first day of school. The section ends when you see childhood observer Jerome Kagan asking children to perform Piagetian tasks. In other words, Kagan is not part of this exercise. You may view all of the tape if you want to, of course, but please give your written reaction to the specified section only.

In this video you will see interactions among parents, teachers and children in several cultures. Watch for three ideas, techniques, or customs that you think are appropriate for your child's early education. Jot down these thoughts along with an explanation for each choice. If you see something you think is especially inappropriate, add that reaction to your response.

Paper is attached for your convenience, but you may add paper of your own if you want to. The first response page contains an important message. Please be sure to complete that part. Call me collect at 123-456-7890 if you have questions about what I am asking you to do. When you finish, place the tape and your responses in the envelope provided. Seal the envelope and give it to your child's teacher, Ms. Ginn, or the school secretary. Any one of these people will pass it on to me.

Thank you for taking the time to do this. I hope you enjoy the video message as much as I did.

Check one:

_____ These responses represent my opinion. I consulted no one else.

_____ These responses represent my opinion. However, my husband worked with me because the English video was hard to understand.
APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FORM
Family Demographic Data

Family members' names, ages, grade completed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Name  
Age  
Education

3. Name  
Age  
Education

4. Name  
Age  
Education

5. Name  
Age  
Education

Age of mother when she began attending school ____________________________

Ethnicity: ____________________________________________________________

Occupations of family members:

________________________________________________________

Marital status: _______________________________________________________
Length of time in community: ____________________________

Membership in organizations:

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Languages spoken in home:

____________________________________________________

Places lived:

____________________________________________________

Income Range: __________________________________________
APPENDIX F

TEACHER PROFILE FORM
Teacher Profile

Name

How long have you been teaching at Springfield?

What is your previous teaching experience?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>What</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What part of your formal education relates to early childhood education or elementary education?

What is your first language?

What is your second language?

Why have you chosen Springfield as your workplace?

On the back of this paper briefly state why you have chosen teaching as a career.
APPENDIX G

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DURATION</th>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>TECHNIQUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHASE ONE</td>
<td>Recognize perceptions patterns</td>
<td>Code field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Transcribe and code tapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Triangulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHASE TWO</td>
<td>Search for perceptions patterns</td>
<td>Code field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three weeks</td>
<td>Develop tentative focus</td>
<td>Transcribe and code tapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Triangulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHASE THREE</td>
<td>Refine and extend perceptions patterns</td>
<td>Code field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four weeks</td>
<td>Narrow focus</td>
<td>Transcribe and code tapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Check for credibility of patterns</td>
<td>Analyze and extend hypotheses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consider metaphors</td>
<td>Develop matrices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHASE FOUR</td>
<td>Refine and extend perceptions patterns</td>
<td>Re-code field notes and transcribed tapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six weeks</td>
<td>Check for credibility of patterns</td>
<td>Conduce code conference with other researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Check hypotheses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop final matrices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX H

DIAGRAM OF SPRINGFIELD SCHOOL
APPENDIX I

DIAGRAM OF ROOM FOR OLDER CHILDREN
APPENDIX J

DIAGRAM OF ROOM FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN
APPENDIX K

DIAGRAM OF SPRINGFIELD PLAYGROUND
APPENDIX L

SPRINGFIELD'S DAILY SCHEDULES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>ROOM 1, Morning</th>
<th>ROOM 2, Morning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 - 9:25</td>
<td>Work Time, Cleanup</td>
<td>8:00 - 9:30 Work Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:35 - 9:55</td>
<td>Outside Play</td>
<td>9:45 - 10:00 Large Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 - 10:15</td>
<td>Circle Time, Story</td>
<td>10:00 - 10:15 Snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 - 10:45</td>
<td>Snack, Rest</td>
<td>10:15 - 10:30 Rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 - 11:05</td>
<td>Small Groups</td>
<td>10:30 - 11:00 Outside Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:05 - 11:45</td>
<td>Outside Play</td>
<td>11:00 - 11:45 Small Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 - 12:00</td>
<td>Assembly</td>
<td>11:45 - 12:00 Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 - 12:30</td>
<td>Lunch, Story</td>
<td>12:00 - 12:30 Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ROOM 1, Afternoon</td>
<td>ROOM 2, Afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 - 12:55</td>
<td>Outside Play</td>
<td>12:30 - 12:50 Outside Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45 - 3:00</td>
<td>Cleanup</td>
<td>2:45 - 2:55 Cleanup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 - 3:15</td>
<td>Circle Time</td>
<td>2:55 - 3:10 Circle Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 - 3:30</td>
<td>Snack</td>
<td>3:10 - 3:25 Snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 - 3:45</td>
<td>Rest Time</td>
<td>3:25 - 3:35 Rest Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:45 - 4:05</td>
<td>Small Groups</td>
<td>3:35 - 4:15 Outside Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:05 - 4:55</td>
<td>Outside Play</td>
<td>4:15 - 4:55 Small Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:55 - 5:05</td>
<td>Story, Dismiss</td>
<td>4:55 - 5:05 Story, Dismiss</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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