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ASSESSMENT OF INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN HEAD START PRESCHOOL CLASSROOMS: ACCESS, PARTICIPATION, AND SUPPORTS

Ifthika "Shine" Nissar

ASSESSMENT OF INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN HEAD START PRESCHOOL CLASSROOMS: *ACCESS, PARTICIPATION, AND SUPPORTS*

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A Dissertation

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

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by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms. In 1972, Public Law PL 94-242 mandated Head Start enrollment to include 10% of students with disabilities (Allen & Cowdery, 2009). Research on assessment of inclusive practices within Head Start preschool classrooms is limited (Gallagher & Lambert, 2006; Muccio, 2012).

This study implemented a quantitative, descriptive design approach. Correlational analysis was conducted to explore answers to the research questions according to *access*, *participation,* and *supports* constructs (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). An Inclusion Crosswalk model was introduced. Data revealed that the underlying factor structure of the ICP, SSPI, and CA-QRIS are made up of *access, participation,* and *supports*: Items of the ICP correlated with *access* and *participation*, items of the SSPI correlated with *access, participation,* and *supports*, and items of the CA-QRIS correlated only with *supports*. There were moderate to strong correlations between the ICP and the SSPI for *access, participation,* and *supports.* The results supported the Inclusion Crosswalk model.

The findings of the study recommend the assessment of inclusive practices according to *access, participation,* and *supports*, professional development for teachers to provide inclusive practices, and the CA-QRIS is revised to include an assessment of inclusive practices.

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DEDICATION

Thank you, God, for your mercy! You helped me to overcome many obstacles in my educational journey as you did in my personal and professional journey.

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to mama and dada. Their loving memories live in every aspect of my life. They taught me the power of God. They loved me unconditionally and helped me to believe that I can accomplish anything that I put my mind to. Integrity, honesty, hard work, and passion are the pillars they instilled in me. My life journey continues on to live their legacy and advocate for children with and without disabilities, families, and all stakeholders. It is all about relationships.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Head Start Preschool Education Act of 1965 was an outcome result of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of the Johnson Administration. The goal of this law was to provide a 'Head Start' in education by providing preschool for children between the ages of three to five from low socioeconomic backgrounds to close achievement gaps across ethnic and social demographics in America (Zigler & Styfco,1995). Head Start provides early education and related services for children from birth to five years through Early Start and Head Start. Head Start preschool program is a two-year program for three and four-year-old students. (Allen & Cowdery, 2009; Cook, Klein, & Chen, 2012). "Nearly 25% of children in Riverside County live in poverty, and childhood poverty is a consistent predictor for school success" (Quality Start Riverside County Strategic Plan, 2019, p. 3). The Federal Head Start grant provided preschool education and services for 3,248 preschoolers in Riverside County during the 2016-17 school year (Riverside County Office of Education, 2019).

In 1972, Public Law PL 94-242 mandated Head Start to include 10% of the enrollment with students with disabilities (Allen & Cowdery, 2009). Currently, the Federal Government does not require an

assessment of inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms. Research on assessment of inclusive practices within Head Start preschool classrooms is extremely scarce in the current literature (Gallagher & Lambert, 2006; Muccio, 2012).

The purpose of this quantitative study was to assess inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms as this is a problem of practice the Federal Government has not addressed. Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) (2016) requires assessments of instructional methods and classroom environment. Given that preschool students with disabilities are the most vulnerable population, inclusive practices must be assessed with a valid and reliable research tool.

According to the joint position statement by the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council of Exceptional Children and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, *access, participation, and supports* are the three constructs that define the framework for preschool inclusion (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services highlighted *access, participation* and *supports* in the Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs, commemorating the 25th Anniversary of American Disabilities Act (ADA), 40th Anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education

Act (IDEA) and the 50th Anniversary of Head Start (U.S. Department of Education) in 2015 (U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

Preschool education, also commonly referred to as Early Childhood Education (ECE) provided by Head Start, is governed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Preschool education is not mandated in the United States. The U.S. Department of Education governs Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) for preschoolers with disabilities.

In 1975, PL-94-142 mandated public schools in the United States to provide ECSE for preschoolers with disabilities. Recognizing the importance of high-quality inclusive preschool education by these two agencies validates the need to assess inclusive preschool practices with a valid and reliable assessment tool. According to Cook et al. (2012) and Allen & Cowdery (2009), Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and the right for preschool students with disabilities to play and learn alongside typically developing peers is the result of the Education of the Handicapped Children Act (Public Law PL 94-142) of 1975. This law is now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Assessing preschool classrooms with quality rating systems that include inclusive measures and supporting teachers with ongoing professional development are proven methods to improve student outcomes for students with and without disabilities (Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009;

Buysse, Skinner & Grant, 2001; DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Gallagher & Lambert, 2006; Muccio, 2012; Odom, 2000; Soukakou, 2012; Quality Start Riverside County, 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

Quality Start Riverside County (2019) has implemented the California Quality Rating and Improvement System (CA-QRIS). This is currently referred to as the Quality Counts California Rating Matrix. CA-QRIS identifies high-quality preschool programs with exceptional early learning experiences and supports educators with professional development opportunities and resources to improve teaching practices. Head Start Program Performance Standards (2016) require that teaching staff complete 15 hours of professional development training per year. Even though supporting children with disabilities is listed as one of the topics of required training along with instructional practices and classroom environment, the Federal Government does not require an assessment of inclusive practices as it does for instructional practices and classroom environment.

Supporting Inclusive Practices (SIP) project, led by the Special Education Division of the California Department of Education and collaborative partners, supports Lead Education Agencies (LEAs), also referred to as school districts, to increase the inclusion of students with disabilities with non-disabled peers by providing technical assistance. The focus of SIP is to support students with disabilities enrolled in PreK

through 12th grade to improve academic achievement. The approach to inclusion is viewed as three elements: Policy and Practice that holds the Culture of Inclusion (RCOE, 2019; sipinclusion, 2019).

According to the United States Census Bureau (2018), the total population in the U.S. in 2016 was 324,650,630. Out of this, 20 million were children below the age of five. Considering 6.16% of the total population were children below five years, early childhood administrators must focus on the quality of early education and preschool inclusion for children with and without disabilities to accomplish their educational potential. Terrell (2017) reported that children below five years are susceptible to living in poverty due to their family dynamics. Parents of these children come from low socioeconomic backgrounds as defined by the federal poverty guidelines and low education levels. As a result, these children begin preschool at a disadvantage when compared to children that come from a higher socioeconomic background and higher education levels. "Poverty is defined as the state of not having enough money to take care of one's basic needs such as food, housing, clothes" (Terrell, 2017, p. 9). Poverty affects these children negatively in many aspects. Discrepancies in language development are evident when children of poverty are compared to affluent children due to these children hearing fewer words. Terrell (2017) shared the most important study conducted by Hart and Risley in 2003 on vocabulary. A 30-million-word

gap was found among poor children as compared to a 13-million-word gap among children from affluent families.

Children in poverty are more likely to be identified with a disability (Peterson et al., 2011). As children from poverty are more susceptible to disabilities, on a National level, Head Start provides a foundation for the most vulnerable children to get a Head Start in life. On a global level, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) provides a foundation for children worldwide that live in poverty and crisis around the world. According to the executive summary, "children who live in poverty and have a disability are even less likely to attend the local school or a clinic" (UNICEF, 2013, p. 1). Other challenges faced by children with disabilities globally are: being institutionalized, exclusion from schools, lack of medical support, and being victims of violence.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2019), the Office of Special Education Programs provides grants under Part B Section 619 for states to provide Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for preschoolers with disabilities through the Local Education Agencies. These students are between 3-5 years and must have a disability to

receive special education services with an Individualized Education Plan.

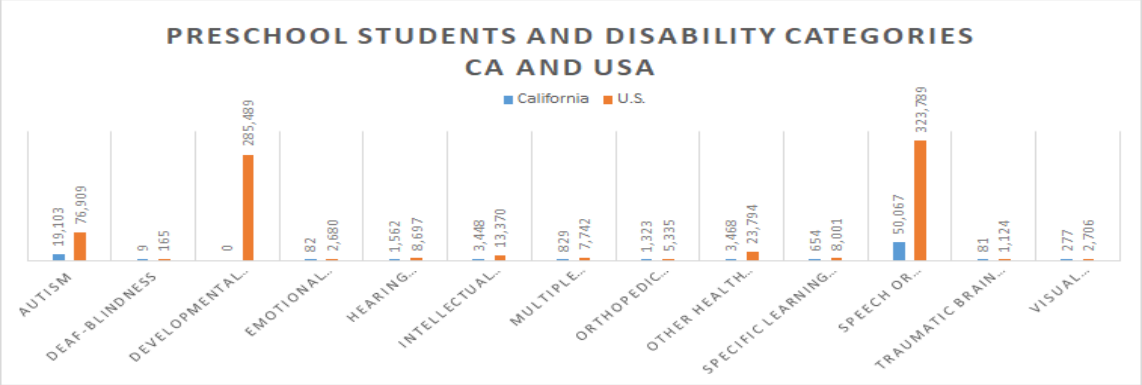


Figure 1 – IDEA Part B Child Count and Educational Environments Collection 2016-17 Retrieved from U.S. Department of Education (2019) EDFacts Data Warehouse (EDW) https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/static-tables/index.html

There are 13 categories of disabilities under which students may receive special education services, as indicated in Figure 1. During 2016-17, Nationwide, a total of 759,801 preschool students received special education services in a variety of Early Childhood Education settings. California served the highest number (N=80,903) of preschoolers with disabilities. The highest number of students received services for Speech or Language Impairment (N= 323, 789 (U.S.), and N=50,067 (CA)).

National, State, and County Data of Preschoolers with Disabilities

Nationwide over 35 million children and families have been since the inception of Head Start in 1965, 54 years ago (ECLKC, 2019).

Table 1. Head Start Enrollment 2016 - 2017

Enrollment of Students in Head Start Preschool Classrooms	Nationwide (2016)	California (2016)	Riverside County (2016/17)
All Students	771,449	88,704	3,278
Students with Special Needs	108,489 (14%)	15,447 (17%)	487 (15%)

As indicated in Table 1, according to the National Head Start Association (2019), Head Start served 771, 479 children and pregnant women during 2016 throughout the nation. Out of this, 14% of students enrolled had a disability. California had the highest number of students (n=88,704) with a disability in 2016. Of the Head Start students (n=3,248) served by the Riverside County Office of Education, during the 2016-7 school year, 487 (15%) were students with disabilities. Even though Head Start is mandated to serve 10% of the total enrollment with students with disabilities, national, state, and county data indicated higher percentages of students with disabilities being served by Head Start.

Problem Statement

Assessment of inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms is a problem of practice the Federal Government has not addressed. According to Gallagher and Lambert (2006) and Muccio (2012), the Head Start preschool program is the largest provider of inclusive services for children with disabilities in the United States. In 1972, Public Law PL 92-424 mandated that 10% of students enrolled in

Head Start are reserved for serving students with disabilities (Allen & Cowdery, 2009). Fourteen percent of the students enrolled in Head Start during 2016 had a disability (National Head Start Association, 2019). Even though Head Start is mandated to include 10% of students with disabilities, currently, the Federal Government does not require an assessment to measure inclusive practices. Head Start Program Performance Standards (2016) requires assessments of instructional methods and classroom environment. Given that preschool students with disabilities are the most vulnerable population, it is imperative that inclusive practices are assessed with a valid and reliable research tool. Research on the assessment of inclusive practices in Head Start classrooms is extremely scarce in the current literature (Gallagher & Lambert, 2006; Muccio, 2012; Muccio et al., 2014).

Assessment of preschool quality, inclusive practices and supporting teachers with ongoing professional development training, are proven methods to improve student outcomes for all students (Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009; DEC/NAEYC; 2009, Gallagher & Lambert, 2006; Muccio et al., 2014; Odom, 2000; Soukakou et al., 2018; Quality Start Riverside County, 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2019). With the release of Federal funds disbursed to States for the implementation of a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), the U.S. Department of

Education (2019) recommends states ensure that quality rating frameworks are inclusive of supporting preschool students with disabilities.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative study is to assess inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms as this is a problem of practice the Federal Government has not addressed. Head Start Program Performance Standards (2016) requires assessments of instructional practices and classroom environment. Given that preschool students with disabilities are the most vulnerable population, inclusive practices must be assessed with a valid and reliable research tool. Research on the assessment of inclusive practices in Head Start classrooms is extremely scarce in the current literature (Gallagher & Lambert, 2006; Muccio, 2012; Muccio et al., 2014)

Measures used in this study were: 1) the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) (Soukakou, 2016) to observe classroom inclusive practices. 2) the Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) (Küçüker, Acarlar, & Kapci, 2006) survey to gather teacher input, 3) Head Start classroom tier ratings according to the (California Quality Improvement Rating System (CA-QRIS), currently known as the Quality Counts California Rating Matrix, (Quality Start Riverside County, 2019). 4) Demographic Data Survey developed by the researcher to gather demographic information of

participants. 5) Inclusion Crosswalk developed by the researcher to organize items of the ICP, SSPI, and the CA-QRIS according to the operational definition of *access, participation, and supports* (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). By analyzing these measures individually and simultaneously, data is reported on the assessment of inclusive practices in Head Start preschools. Answers to the five research questions were sought out with the three constructs *access, participation, and supports* that epitomize preschool inclusion.

Findings will contribute to the extremely scarce literature. Recommendations will be made to administrators of Early Childhood Education programs for policy changes on inclusive practices and professional development for teachers. These changes will positively impact preschool students with and without disabilities to acquire a high-quality preschool education.

Research Questions

Research questions were developed to guide this study based on literature review on Head Start, high-quality preschool education, inclusive practices, and supporting preschool teachers to improve student outcomes (Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009; DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Gallagher & Lambert, 2006; Muccio et al. 2014; Odom, 2000; Odom, Buysse &

Soukakou 2011, Soukakou, 2016; Quality Start Riverside County, 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

1. Is the underlying factor structure of the ICP the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) made up of *access, participation, and supports* in assessing inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms?

2. Is the underlying factor structure of the Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) made up of *access, participation, and supports* in assessing inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms?

3. Is the underlying factor structure of the California Quality Rating and Improvement System (CA-QRIS) made up of *access, participation, and supports* in Head Start preschool classrooms?

4. What are the similarities between the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP), Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI), and the California Quality Rating Improvement System (CA-QRIS) in looking at *access, participation, and supports* in Head Start preschool classrooms?

5. What are the relationships between professional development training and inclusive practices in providing *access, participation, and supports* in Head Start preschool classrooms?

Significance of the Study

This study has the potential to transform inclusive practices of Head Start preschool classrooms and other early childhood education preschool classrooms. The goal of this study was to create transformative change by informing future policies and practices of preschool inclusion, make recommendations on targeted professional development training to support teachers to improve student outcomes for all students. According to Gallagher and Lambert (2006), Muccio (2012) and (Muccio et al., (2014) research on the assessment of inclusive practices within Head Start preschool classrooms is extremely limited in the current literature.

Research findings will contribute to the current literature. Research findings will be shared with pertinent administrators of Head Start funding grantors stipulated by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Recommendations will be made to use the Inclusive Classroom Profile (Soukakou, 2016) as a best practice even though the assessment tool is not mandated by the Office of Head Start (HSPPS, 2016). Research findings will also be shared with the administrators of the Quality Start Riverside County (2019) to add inclusive practices as an 8th element to the Quality Counts California Rating Matrix, previously known as the California Quality Rating and Improvement System (CA-QRIS). Currently, the Quality Counts California Rating Matrix used by Quality Start Riverside County (2019) to assess preschool quality does not contain inclusive

practices/inclusion as one of the seven elements: 1. Child Observation, 2. Health and Child Development, 3. Teacher Training and Education 4. Positive Teacher-Child Interaction, 5. Number of Children per Teacher 6. Environment, 7. Director Training, and Education. Targeted professional development training will be recommended to support teachers to improve student outcomes for all students (Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009). The U.S. Department of Education (2019) recommends that states ensure quality rating frameworks are inclusive of supporting all students as funds are being disbursed to states for the implementation of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).

Theoretical Framework on Preschool Inclusion

According to the Division of Exceptional Children (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), position statement (DEC/NAEYC, 2009) *access, participation, and supports* are the three constructs of the framework for early childhood inclusion. The Division of Exceptional Children (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) are the two most potent professional advocacy organizations that support preschool students with and without disabilities. These two organizations value the

rights of all children while providing *access* to learning opportunities in natural settings, encouraging *participation* and providing *support* to everyone for the success of inclusive practices while broadening opportunities for collaboration between state and local entities (DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Odom, Buysse & Soukakou 2011). *Access, participation, and supports* constructs are the overarching concepts within this study.

Access, participation, and supports of the preschool inclusion framework (DEC/NAEYC, 2009) were highlighted by the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs, commemorating the 25th Anniversary of American Disabilities Act (ADA), 40th Anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the 50th Anniversary of Head Start (U.S. Department of Education) in 2015 (U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

According to Odom, Buysse, and Soukakou (2011), the definition of inclusive practices has been evolving for decades. A*ccess, participation, and supports* are features that define quality inclusive practices. Odom (2000) and Osgood (2005) define inclusion as a philosophy and the practice of supporting all children in their communities regardless of their ability level. Preschool Inclusion and Inclusive practices are when

preschool students with and without disabilities interact, learn, and play together in a general education setting (Allen & Cowdery, 2009; Buysse et al. 2001; ECLKC, 2019)

Cook et al., 2012; DEC/NAEYC, 1990; Gallagher & Lambert, 2006, Muccio 2012, Odom, 2000; Odom & Diamond, 1998; Osgood 2005; Sandall et al., 2006)

Terms such as “inclusion” and “inclusive practices” manifested in the vocabulary of special education in the United States only in the recent history of the 1960s. Before this time, segregating children with disabilities was considered a ‘normal practice’ in public education. “Inclusion is a right and not a privilege for a selected few” (Orbeti v. Board of Education in Clementon School District, 1993 as cited by Allen & Cowdery, 2009) “The call for inclusion is coming from families, professional organizations and advocacy groups” (Allen & Cowdery, 2009, p. 6).

On the other hand, according to the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) executive summary (UNICEF, 2013), many young children from around the world that live in poverty and with disabilities are institutionalized, abandoned and or neglected. Rather than inclusion, these children face exclusion and are affected based on their disability. One of the major obstacles for children to be included is the underestimation of their abilities. Attitudes of members of society that

include: professionals, politicians, and parents, have a lifetime of impact on children with disabilities. The right to education and full rights of citizenship are undermined when children are not given a chance for education and inclusion. The power of early education is vitally emphasized by UNICEF (2013) as 80% of the brain is developed by the age of three. **"**A child whose disability or developmental delay is identified at an early age has a much better chance of reaching his or her full potential (UNICEF, 2013, p.9). Hence this report validates that *access, participation,* and *supports* are constructs that embody inclusive education practices worldwide.

Odom & Diamond (1998) viewed preschool inclusion in the context of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Framework of 1979. In which Bronfenbrenner theorized the importance of studying the overall growth and development of a child based on his connection to his environment. The environment impacts a child through multiple layers. According to Odom & Diamond (1998), the nucleus is the classroom environment, curriculum, along with teaching practices that are subject to influence inclusive practice. This is referred to as the Microsystem. The next layer is referred to as the Mesosystem. This includes family, home, and professionals serving children with disabilities. The organizational structure of the inclusive classroom along with policies and practices of inclusion belongs to the Exosystem, the next outer layer. The community

at large that involves social policies, values, and beliefs on inclusion is the next layer**,** which is referred to as the Macrosystem.

Assumptions

The focus of this study is the current need for assessing inclusive practices and believe the following assumptions are truths:

- There is a need to evaluate inclusive practices in Head Start classrooms with a valid and reliable assessment tool.
- There is a need to support teachers with inclusive practices as teachers may not have taken any college courses relating to children with disabilities as Head Start does not require any education or certifications on inclusion, special education, and or early childhood special education.
- There is a need to support teachers with inclusive practices as teachers may not have a background (knowledge, skills, or experience) of including students with disabilities in their classrooms as Head Start does not require experience working with children with disabilities.
- Teachers will appreciate targeted professional development training to support students with disabilities.
- Data from the study will have an impact on policy changes on inclusive practices at district, county, state, and national levels.

- Teachers will feel comfortable to support the researcher with the study as the study does not evaluate their teaching practices.
- Teachers will provide honest feedback on the teacher survey.

Delimitations

This research study is delimited researching inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms (full day and part day). This study will not evaluate teachers, examine student outcomes, classroom environments, or teacher-child interactions measured by other Head Start assessments.

Limitations

This study is limited to the ten Head Start participants and their classrooms offered by one school district and not other preschool programs (California State Preschool Program (CSPP) or Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) offered by the district.

Definitions of Key Terms

- Access: Preschoolers with disabilities gaining access to learn and play with typical peers (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).
- California Quality Rating and Improvement System (CA-QRIS): Quality ratings according to the rating matrix with elements and

points. Currently known as the Quality Counts California Rating Matrix (Quality Start Riverside County, 2019).

- Early Childhood Education (ECE)/Preschool: Formal education and learning experiences that occur from ages 3-5 years in preschool (Cook et al., 2012).
- Division of Exceptional Children (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children: Professional organization and advocacy group for preschoolers with and without special needs.
- Early Childhood Education Special Education (ECSE): Formal education and learning experiences that occur from ages 3-5 years in preschool for children with disabilities (Cook et al. 2012).
- Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): The right of children with disabilities to obtain public education as mandated by the passage of PL 94-145 in 1975 (Allen & Cowdery, 2009).
- Head Start: A comprehensive Federally funded preschool program for income-qualified students between three-five years that promotes school readiness skills and overall health and well-being (ECLKC, 2019).
- Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS): Requirements set forth by the Head Start Act (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016).

- Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF): Early learning domains outlined to reflect the continuum of learning for 0-5-year-old children.

  (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015).
- Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework: Guidelines for implementing parent, family, and community engagement (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018).
- Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP): Research-based classroom observational tool (Soukakou, 2016).
- Inclusion Crosswalk (IC): For this study, a document developed by the researcher by categorizing items of the ICP, CA-QRIS, and SSPI to organize inclusive practices according to *access, participation, and supports* constructs according to the operational definitions by the DEC and NAEYC (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).
- Inclusion Framework: Constructs A*ccess, participation, and supports* that define preschool inclusion according to the position statement (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).
- Inclusive Practices & Inclusion: Preschool students with and without disabilities learn and play together in a general education setting (Muccio, 2012).

- Inclusive Preschool Classroom: For this study, at least one preschool student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) learn and play together in a Head Start preschool class.
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP): Education plan as mandated by IDEA, federal law for students with an identified disability to receive special education services
  (Allen & Cowdery, 2009).
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): Educating students with disabilities alongside students without disabilities (Allen & Cowdery, 2009).
- Lead Education Agency (LEA): The agency responsible for providing public education, also known as a school district.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC): Professional organization and advocacy group for preschoolers with and without special needs.
- Participation: Education and recreational settings that accommodate preschoolers with disabilities to learn and play with typical peers (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).
- Professional development: For this study, training attended by Head Start teachers in early childhood special education and or special education.

- Quality Counts California Rating Matrix (QCCRM): Quality ratings according to the rating matrix with elements and points. Previously known as the California Quality Rating and Improvement System (CA-QRIS) (Quality Start Riverside County, 2019).
- Special Education: Education for teachers to teach students with disabilities.
- Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA): Geographically defined regions with boundaries to serve students with disabilities.
- Students with Disabilities: Students between three-five years with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in a Head Start preschool class for this study.
- Supports: Multi-level of supports (training, family engagement, policies, infrastructure, etc.) to educate preschoolers with disabilities to learn and play with typical peers (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).
- Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI): Research-based teacher survey on preschool inclusion ((Küçüker, Acarlar, & Kapci, 2006).

Summary

Chapter one sets the stage of this investigation by providing the reader with an overview of the research study in Head Start preschool classrooms. The Federal Government mandates to include 10% of students with disabilities according to the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act (IDEA) in Head Start. First, the problem statement, purpose statement, research questions, and the conceptual framework was discussed. Next, assumptions, delimitations, along with the definitions of key terms, were discussed. National, State, and County data indicated that Head Start served more than 10% of students with disabilities. Head Start does not require an assessment of inclusive practices even though education and classroom environment are assessed according to the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

The joint position statement by the DEC of the Council of Exceptional Children and the NAEYC guides the theoretical framework on preschool inclusion. *Access, participation, and supports* are the three constructs of the framework for early childhood inclusion (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).

Chapter two will review the literature of scholarly works and regulations of Head Start and other Early Childhood Education programs using constructs *access, participation, and supports* (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). These three constructs are the overarching concepts within this study. Historical Overview of Head Start and preschool inclusion, Head Start preschool educational experiences, and professional development support for teachers will be discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction: Overview of *Access, Participation,* and *Supports*

Inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms are the foundation of the following review of literature. It is organized using the three constructs *access, participation, and supports* of the conceptual framework on inclusion derived from the joint position statement by the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council of Exceptional Children and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). *Access, participation, and supports* were overarching concepts within this study.

Head Start preschool program is the largest provider of inclusive services for children with disabilities in the United States (Gallagher & Lambert, 2006; Muccio et al., 2014). In 1972, Public Law PL 92-424 mandated that 10% of students enrolled in Head Start reserved for students with disabilities (Allen & Cowdery, 2009). Even though Head Start is mandated to include 10% of students with disabilities, currently, the Federal Government does not require an assessment of inclusive practices. In 2016, 14% of the students enrolled in Head Start had a disability (National Head Start Association, 2019). Head Start Program Performance Standards (2016) require assessments of education and

classroom environment. Given that preschool students with disabilities are the most vulnerable population, inclusive practices in Head Start classrooms must be assessed with a valid and reliable research tool. According to Gallagher & Lambert (2006), Muccio (2012), and Muccio et al. (2014), research on the assessment of inclusive practices in Head Start classrooms is extremely scarce in the current literature.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to assess inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms as this is a problem of practice the Federal Government has not addressed. Measures used in this study were: 1) the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) (Soukakou, 2016) to observe classroom inclusive practices 2) the Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) (Küçüker, Acarlar, and Kapci, 2006) survey to gather teacher input 3) Head Start classroom tier ratings according to the California Quality Improvement Rating System (CA-QRIS), currently known as the Quality Counts California Rating Matrix, (Quality Start Riverside County, 2019) 4) Demographic Data Survey developed by the researcher to gather demographic information of participants. 5) Inclusion Crosswalk developed by the researcher to organize items of the ICP, SSPI, and the CA-QRIS according to the operational definition of *access, participation, and supports* (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). By analyzing these measures individually and simultaneously, data is reported on inclusive

practices in Head Start preschools: *access, participation, and supports* in answering research questions.

This literature review adds to the existing literature on classroom practices of Head Start. The need for research on the assessment of inclusive practices with a valid and reliable tool in Head Start preschool classrooms is substantiated by the very few studies (Muccio, 2012; Muccio et al. 2014) found in the literature. This literature review contributes to research on the assessment of inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms.

Assessment of preschool quality, inclusive practices and supporting teachers with ongoing professional development are proven methods to improve student outcomes for all students (Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009; Buysse, Skinner & Grant, 200; DEC/NAEYC 2009; Gallagher & Lambert, 2006; Muccio 2012; Muccio et al., 2014, Odom, 2000, Odom, Buysse & Soukakou 2011, Soukakou et al., 2018; Quality Start Riverside County, 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2019). Federal funds were disbursed to states for the implementation of a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). The U.S. Department of Education (2019) recommends that States ensure quality rating frameworks are inclusive of supporting preschool students with disabilities.

Access, participation, and supports are pillars that embody high-quality inclusive practices (DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Odom, Buysse, &

Soukakou, 2011). Also, the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services highlighted *access, participation, and supports* in the Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs, commemorating the 25th Anniversary of American Disabilities Act (ADA), 40th Anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the 50th Anniversary of Head Start (U.S. Department of Education) in 2015 (U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

The conceptual inclusion framework guided the organization of the review of literature according to these three primary constructs: *Access, Participation, and Supports* (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). Therefore, each of these constructs was reviewed separately and supported with the current literature.

Access: Historical Overview of Preschool Inclusion

History of Head Start.

Head Start is governed by the Head Start Preschool Education Act of 1965 (Zigler & Styfco, 1995). Head Start is a federally funded, comprehensive early childhood education program that began in May of 1965 (Allen & Cowdery, 2009; Cook et al., 2012). According to Sinclair (1993), the focus of Head Start was to provide a one-year comprehensive education for children living in poverty before they enter kindergarten. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Zigler

et al, 1995) was created and signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson as a result of the growing awareness of severe inequities and achievement gaps in the American public educational system. The inception of the Head Start program was intended to assist children in overcoming setbacks or obstacles caused by poverty. The Johnson Administration was responsible for the passage of Title I federal funding (Schmit & Ewen, 2012; Terrell, 2017), which enabled the Head Start program to begin. Head Start was initially formed as an eight-week summer program staffed with volunteers dedicated to fighting the war on poverty. Since the inception of this early childhood education program, millions of children and their families were helped to get a 'Head Start' (Hodskins, 1975). Since the beginning of Head Start in 1965, over 35 million children and families have been served (Office of Head Start, 2019). Head Start celebrated 54 years of service this year, 2019.

The Head Start Act was reauthorized as "Public Law 110-34 – Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act" during the Bush Administration on December 12, 2007, to improve program quality and expand access for preschoolers (Congress. Gov, 2019; Terrell, 2017). The Head Start program was established and targeted to focus on children who have been defined as "left behind" for numerous reasons, but primarily due to socioeconomic factors, and as a result living in poverty (Zigler et al., 1995). Initial funding came from the Lyndon Baines Johnson

administration's "war on poverty." Terrell (2017) reported that according to the U.S. Census Bureau report of 2015, children under five made up 10,000,000 of the U.S. population living in poverty. "Childhood poverty is a consistent predictor for school success. Nearly 25% of children in Riverside County live in poverty (Quality Start Riverside County Strategic Plan, 2019, p. 4). Poverty and disability go hand in hand. According to Peterson et al. (2011), children in poverty are more likely to be identified with a disability. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2013) reported the global perspectives and effects of this phenomenon.

Total family income needs to be below the Federal Poverty Guideline as stipulated in the Head Start Program Performance Standards (2016) to qualify for Head Start preschool. The Federal poverty guidelines for 2019 by the Department of Health and Human Services are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Federal Poverty Guidelines 2019.

Family Size	Gross Annual Income	Gross Monthly Income	Approximate Hourly Wage
1	$12,490.00	$1,041.00	$6.00
2	$16,910.00	$1,049.00	$8.13
3	$21,330.00	$1,778.00	$10.25

A child from a family of three with a total income of $21,330 will qualify to enroll in Head Start as indicated in Table 2. This amount

calculates to less than $450.00 for a week for expenses on basic necessities such as housing, food, clothing, transportation, and medical expenses.

It is the responsibility of our nation to support the youngest members of our society to enjoy a high-quality inclusive preschool education. Head Start continuously makes improvements in educating children with and without disabilities, supporting families, and providing professional development for teachers. The Head Start preschool can and will play an essential role in the lives of all preschool students and their families.

Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) (2016) were updated after 41 years since its original release in 1975 (Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, 2019). The new HSPPS (2016) is organized in a user-friendly manner for the implementation and the operation of the Head Start preschool program with the layout and explanations of the minute details in one document. Improving program quality and increasing student outcomes are the expected goals of this 21st Century Head Start Program Performance Standards. “Findings from monitoring reviews and research confirm that there are variations in quality among Head Start programs and stronger outcomes are achievable.” (ECLKC, HSPPS Fact Sheet, 2019, p. 1). Head Start takes pride in monitoring the program in an ongoing manner for quality

improvement. The program goes through a rigorous Self-Assessment, monitoring by the grantor and or State and Federal representatives to ensure program compliance All Head Start agencies submit an Annual Program Information Report (PIR) to the Federal Government (ECLKC, 2019). The PIR is submitted through the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES). Annual progress and continuous program improvement efforts are shared through the PIR to secure Federal funds annually. Access for students with disabilities to the Head Start program is outlined in Subpart A of the HSPPS (2016) in the Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, Admission (ERSEA) section.

Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Head Start. According to Allen and Cowdery (2009), after the passage of the Head Start Act of 1965, Public Law PL 92-424 of 1972 mandated that 10% of students enrolled are reserved for students with disabilities and their families. This mandate intended to offer inclusive opportunities for children with mild to severe disabilities who were otherwise excluded from preschool settings (Hodskins, 1975). Preschool students that qualify to receive special education services are protected with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) according to federal law.

Currently, the majority of students with disabilities included in Head Start preschool classrooms are children with speech or language impairments. The Head Start preschool program is the largest provider of

inclusive services for students with disabilities in the United States. Research on the assessment of inclusive practices within Head Start preschool classrooms is exceptionally scarce in the current literature (Gallagher & Lambert, 2006; Muccio, 2012; Muccio et al., 2014).

Access for students with disabilities is outlined in Section 1302.14 of Subpart A of the HSPPS (2016) in the Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, Admission (ERSEA) section. Of the total enrollment, 10% is filled by children under the Individualized Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). If this requirement has been met, and additional children meet the IDEA guidelines, these children should be prioritized according to the selection guidelines of a program (HSPPS, 2016, p.15). Children who qualify under IDEA do not need to meet the eligibility criteria under the Federal poverty line as these children have a diagnosed disability to receive services with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

According to Perkins-Gough (2007), in an interview conducted with Edward Zigler, Director of the Office of Child Development mentioned serving children with special needs has strengthened the ability for Head Start to individualize instruction for all children. Edward Zigler, often called "the father of Head Start," served on the planning committee of the Head Start program in 1965. Cook et al. (2012) discussed the importance of establishing a universal preschool program in the United States.

Quantitative research study conducted in 1995 by Cavallaro, Ballard-Rosa, and Lynchet (1998) of administrators representing 140 school districts (125 preschool programs such as co-located programs, dual enrollment programs, Head Start, State Preschool, Special Day Classes, and 15 Infant Toddler Programs) from various geographic areas in California were surveyed to assess early childhood inclusive service delivery options, access, and level of inclusive practices. The survey focused on 24 items related to structural organizational components of inclusion, professional disciplines, level of inclusion, and allocation of resources. The research team was guided by an advisory panel comprised of staff from the Department of Education, teachers, parents, and administrators. Their professional background of working with young children included degrees and credentials in education, special education, school psychology, and speech pathology with titles ranging from Director/Coordinator of Child Development, Program Specialist, Director of Special Education, and Director of Pupil Services. Early Childhood Education (ECE) preschool data was gathered from the California Department of Education. Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) data for preschool and infant-toddler program programs were gathered from Special Education Local Planning Areas (SELPAs). The conclusion of the research was more than one-quarter of Lead Education Agencies (LEAs) in California did not provide an inclusive option for families in their

community (Cavallaro et al., 1998). This study confirms that access needs to be widened for preschool students with disabilities. Guralnick (2001) discussed this study and confirmed the shortage of inclusive options for families in California.

Preschool Inclusion and Law. Preschool inclusion and or inclusive practices are when preschool students with and without disabilities learn and play together in a general education setting (ECLKC,2019; Gallagher & Lambert, 2006; Muccio, 2012; Odom & Diamond, 1998). The trajectory of inclusive practices of the modern era is the result of landmark legislation. Historical perspectives of individuals with disabilities in the United States, according to Bailey & Cowdery, 2009, p. 4:

i. Forget and hide – until the middle of the twentieth century, individuals with special needs were kept out of sight.
ii. Screen and segregate – special education was provided in a segregated manner for students with disabilities in public schools during the 1950s.
iii. Identify and help – students with disabilities received support and services as a result of social and political activism during the 1960s. A program called Child Find was established in the 1960s to identify children with developmental delays.

iv. Include and support – case laws had a significant impact to include and support students with special needs in natural school settings.

Support for integration and inclusion of students with special needs came from many sources. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), established in 1922, the power of private citizens, and the historic Supreme Court decision of Brown vs. Board of Education of 1954 are to be credited. The inception of inclusive practices was the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which addressed the rights of minority groups, prohibited discrimination in public places, and encouraged inclusion in public schools (Cook et al., 2012).

Inclusive practices have been on an upward bound for the last fifty-four years as a result of many laws and regulations in the United States. In 1972, Public Law PL 92-424 mandated that 10% of children enrolled in Head Start reserved to serve children with disabilities (Allen & Cowdery, 2009). In addition to including preschool students with special needs in Head Start, it is mandated by law to include preschool students with special needs in all types of early childhood educational programs (Odom & Diamond, 1998). According to the National Head Start Association (2108) and Riverside County Office of Education (2018), more than 10% of students with disabilities have been served by Head Start according to national, state, and county data as represented in Table 1.

The Education of the Handicapped Children Act (Public Law PL 94-142) of 1975 is considered the “Bill of Rights for Handicapped Children” (Allen & Cowdery, 2009, p.36). According to Cook et al. (2012), “This law legitimized the field of early childhood special education (p.14).” At the heart of continued improvement in our nation’s history is making educational resources more equitable and attainable. The marriage between Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), which is the beginning of inclusive practices in preschool was sealed in 1975 with the passage of the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142). This law guarantees children with disabilities to obtain a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) alongside typically developing peers. This law was amended and reauthorized as the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990. Again, as Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) with amendments in 1990, 1997, and 2004 with modifications that extend protections for children from birth through adulthood (Guranick, 2001; Odom & Diamond, 1998; Ong, 2009). This public law is to be reauthorized every ten years. Because of this law, young children with special needs and or at-risk and their families can access special education services. The name of this law was changed to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997. This law resulted in addressing individuals with disabilities using the people first terminology. It also addressed the

importance of parental involvement and educating students in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The main focus of this law was to guarantee access for individuals with disabilities civil rights protection in all private and public entities. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 allows early intervention services until kindergarten. In 2004 this law divided the services between preschoolers (Part B) and Infants & Toddlers (Part C) (Allen & Cowdery, 2009; Cook et al., 2012; Muccio, 2012). According to Guranick (2001), "Universal access to inclusive programs of any type for young children with disabilities is far from reality (p.13)." According to Hodskins (1975), during the early years, the number of students with special needs enrolled in early childhood education classrooms was low. Since then, there has been a shift in preschool inclusion. Allen and Cowdery (2009) reported that the number of children with special needs in mainstream educational settings has tremendously increased in the last 30 years. The increase is due to the implementation of laws that support the rights of students and individuals with disabilities.

Head Start is governed by the Head Start Preschool Education Act of 1965 (Zigler et al., 1995). This law was reauthorized as "Public Law PL 110-34 Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act" during the Bush Administration on December 12, 2007, to improve program quality and expand access for preschoolers (Congress. Gov, 2019; Terrell, 2017).

According to ECLKC (2019), the Federal Government awarded Head Start $9,838,693,013 to serve 881,125 children between 0-5 and pregnant women in the U.S. and its territories in 2018. 13% of the total enrollment was students identified with a disability with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). California received the highest portion of $1,173,973,635 as it serves the highest number of children and pregnant women, totaling 91,231 (ECLKC, 2019).

Head Start preschool program is the largest provider of inclusive services for children with special needs in the United States (Gallagher & Lambert, 2006; Muccio et al., 2014). Preschool students between the ages of 3-5 with an identified disability are supported with their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) according to Part B of IDEA. Even though preschool services are provided through Head Start, disability services are provided by the Special Education Department (SPED) of the Lead Education Agency (LEA). Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA) tracks the progress of these children according to state and federal regulations (Ong, 2009). Preschool students with disabilities in Head Start are supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Head Start for Early Childhood Education (ECE) and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE).

Benefits of Preschool Inclusion. Students with and without disabilities, parents, and the school community benefit from preschool inclusion as described in this section. In the review of literature outlining the research on preschool inclusion, Odom & Diamond (1998) viewed preschool inclusion in the context of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory and Framework (1979). Bronfenbrenner theorized the importance of studying the overall growth and development of a child based on his connection to his environment. Multiple layers of the environment have an impact on the child. Odom & Diamond (1998) discussed the importance of studying inclusive practices in this context due to multiple layers of influence. The center is referred to as the Microsystem, which is the nucleus, consisting of the classroom environment, curriculum, along with teaching practices that are being subject to influencing inclusive practices. The first layer is the Mesosystem, including the family, home, and professionals serving children with disabilities. The organizational structure of the inclusive classroom, along with policies and practices of inclusion, belongs to the Exosystem, the second layer. The community at large that involves social policies, values, and beliefs on inclusion is the Macrosystem, the third layer.

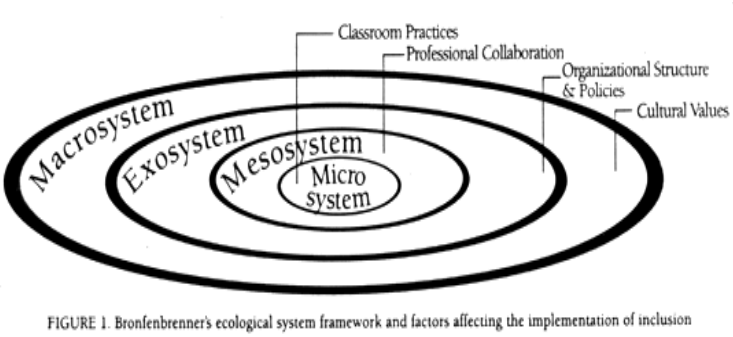


FIGURE 1. Bronfenbrenner's ecological system framework and factors affecting the implementation of inclusion

Figure 2. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory and Framework and Factors Affecting the Implementation of Inclusion. Graphic retrieved from https://www.google.com/search?q=bronfenbrenner%E2%80%99s+Ecological+S

A portrait of preschool inclusion was conducted by Brown & Odom (1999). This study consisted of 112 preschool children with and without disabilities. It was found that both children with and without disabilities exhibited similar behaviors and engaged in play activities. Children with disabilities received more adult support than children without disabilities when involved in social play. This study emphasized the importance of inclusive practices so that children with disabilities can learn skills from their peers without disabilities. Brown & Odom (1999) stated that inclusion as a placement strategy for children with special needs had been widely discussed in the last two decades. Comprehensive research has revealed the effectiveness of inclusive practices in early childhood education programs.

Inclusive practices result in social-emotional benefits for students without disabilities: A sense of maturity, feeling empowered, and an ego boost of being in charge. Odom & Diamond (1998) shared findings of the

study conducted by Hanline in 1993 with three preschoolers with profound disabilities during a summer program. It was reported that children without disabilities were persistent in supporting their peers with disabilities in eliciting responses from them, rather than interacting with typically developing peers. Inclusion benefits parents of children with disabilities in ways such as placement and acceptance of their children with typical children, supports, and services offered by society and their children learning skills from typical peers. "A rich history of research on family members' perspectives on early childhood inclusion exists" (Odom & Diamond, 1998, p. 15).

Participation – Head Start Educational Experience

Subpart C of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (2016) outlines the Education and Child Development Program Services: "Teaching and the learning environment, Curricula, Child Screenings and assessments, and Parent and family engagement" (HSPPS, 2016, p. 5). Promotion of the healthy development of children is laid out in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF): Ages Birth to Five (2015). Developmentally appropriate teaching practices through play activities for children zero to five focusing on five areas of development (Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Language and Literacy, Cognition, Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development)

which is also suited for Dual Language Learners are spelled out in the outcomes framework (HSELOF, 2015, p. 7).

Participation in high-quality preschools and inclusive practices are beneficial for students with and without disabilities. Inclusive programs tend to have a positive effect on the knowledge and attitude about disabilities on typically developing students (Odom, Buysse & Soukakou, 2011). Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is a right mandated by law for children with special needs (Allen & Cowdery, 2009; Cook et al., 2012).

According to the Head Start Program Performance Standards (2016), “All programs must provide high-quality early education and child development services, including for children with disabilities, that promote children’s cognitive, social, and emotional growth for later success in school” (p.26). Head Start has been referred to as the nation’s premier Federally sponsored early childhood education program. The Head Start curriculum is child-centered and focuses on the whole child: cognitive, social-emotional, motor skills, along with mental and physical health. Providing a high-quality preschool education for all children while preparing them with school readiness skills with academic and social-emotional skills, is of utmost importance to the Head Start program (Hodskins, 1975; Schmit & Ewen, 2012). Inclusive practices are strongly emphasized in the Head Start curriculum.

Inclusive Practices in Head Start. In providing a comprehensive educational plan for children and families, Head Start takes pride in promoting family involvement, providing education, nutrition, mental health services, and including children with special needs. Perkins-Gough (2007), captured Dr. Zigler's views on inclusive practices. First, serving children with special needs has strengthened Head Start's ability to individualize instruction for all children. Second, many children have benefitted from the Head Start preschool program because of the comprehensive services Head Start offers to children and families. Dr. Zigler had authored more than 800 research articles focusing on Head Start (Perkins-Gough, 2007). According to (ECLKC, 2019) for children with disabilities to thrive in their learning settings, they need to have access and be active participants.

Regulations for serving students with disabilities are referred throughout the Head Start Program Performance Standards (2016) for recruitment, education, and supporting families. Subpart F of the performance standards is designated for services and support for students with disabilities. Also, Subpart I (Human Resources) outlines that, "A program must ensure staff that is responsible for the management and oversight of services to children with disabilities hired after November 7, 2016, have, at a minimum, baccalaureate degree…" (HSPPS, 2016, p.54).

Even with these specifications, currently, the Head Start program does not require an assessment of inclusive practices.

Gallagher and Lambert (2006) conducted a mixed-method longitudinal study over five years to learn about the relationship between child outcomes and classroom quality in Head Start with a sample 960 children in 96 classrooms to understand the circumstances under which inclusion works. Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) method was used to test the association between classroom quality indicators and scores student outcome measures of pre-academics and social skills. The goal of this study was to understand the circumstances in which inclusion works best. The Adaptive Social Behavior Inventory (ASBI; Hogan, Scott, & Bauer, 1992), a teacher rating scale, was used as a measure of children's social functioning in the classroom. The Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) parent interview was used as the principal data source for collecting family variables. The Assessment Profile for Early Childhood Programs: Research Edition II (Assessment Profile; Abbott-Shim & Sibley, 1998) was used to assess quality in Head Start classrooms. The study revealed that children with special needs tend to be rated lower than their peers on positive social functioning measures by both their teachers and their parents. In classrooms identified as high-quality, teachers had ranked high on the disruptive behaviors of the children with special needs than other variables. The study emphasized the importance of the

distribution of children with disabilities across the program because greater than 20% of parents indicated children displayed challenging behaviors even though these classes were considered high-quality. Inclusion was mentioned as a positive strategy. Providing training and support for teachers was recommended.

Gallagher and Lambert (2006) reported another study conducted in 1998 by McCarty et al., which also had a direct correlation between classroom quality and classroom activities of preschool students in Head Start classrooms. Teachers in moderate to high-quality classes had activities high in quality as compared to the teachers in low-quality classrooms. “Research has shown the quality of early childhood education is associated with children’s developmental outcomes” (p.32). According to Gallagher and Lambert (2006), there were no efforts made to examine the connection between classroom quality and preschool students with disabilities in Head Start. This statement has not significantly changed in the last 13 years, as supported by the limited literature on the assessment of inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms.

According to Odom and Diamond (1998), “In inclusive early childhood programs, the curriculum followed will affect children’s participation and outcome” (p. 8). In the Head Start Impact Study (HSIS) conducted by Puma et al. (2010), data were collected from 2002 to 2006 to learn about school readiness outcomes. This longitudinal experimental

study gathered data from over 5,000 three and four-year-old students and followed them until 1st grade. The sample of student population represented nationwide Head Start grantees and delegate agencies. School readiness outcomes were measured by using standardized cognitive assessments of language and literacy, pre-writing, and math skills administered at the end of each year through first grade. It was found, when children enrolled in Head Start at the age of four, they had higher scores on six out of eight measures on language and literacy than children not enrolled at the age of four (Puma et al. 2010).

Odom, Buysse, and Soukakou (2011) reported a study conducted in 2001 (Odom, Buysse and Skinner, 2001) about the direct relationship between the quality practices of preschool programs and student outcomes for 142 students with mild to severe disabilities. According to the researchers, “individualization is a key measure of quality inclusion” (p.351). This study was conducted in Head Start and other preschool programs.

Inclusive preschools practices need to be evaluated with an assessment tool geared to the unique needs of preschoolers with disabilities in addition to the indicators of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) that assesses the general preschool practices (Odom et al., 2011). Peterson et al. (2011) confirmed that better

student outcomes are associated with high-quality preschools, especially for students with disabilities.

Preschool inclusive assessment tools were reviewed by Odom et al., 2011). Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) and Quality Inclusive Experiences Measure (QIEM) were discussed as practical tools to assess inclusive practices. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has funded the Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion (ECRII; 1994-2000) and the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI; 2006-2012) to address preschool inclusion. Researchers reviewed quantitative and qualitative research perspectives for children with disabilities in inclusive settings in the last quarter-century since the passage of PL 99-457 of 1975. It was concluded that the assessment of the quality of inclusion and Response to Intervention (RTI) might affect the implementation of preschool of inclusive practices in the future.

According to Soukakou (2012), traditional measures used by early childhood education programs to capture inclusive practices is not sufficient to obtain a true essence of inclusive practices that take place in preschool settings. The validation study of the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) conducted in the United Kingdom included 45 classes in three counties. Out of the 45 classrooms, 67% were maintained by the government, 31% privately funded, and 2% were combined. There was a

total of 112 (N=112) children with identified disabilities. This study was validated against the judgments of researchers in the profession of early childhood education and early childhood special education. Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R), Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS), and ICP were used to assess the construct validity. Descriptive statistics of the 11 items of the ICP were analyzed. The total composite score of the ICP resulted in a mean of 3.24 (m=3.24), which was in the middle of the 7-point Likert-scale and SD = 0.67. The internal consistency was Cronbach's alpha =0.79, which indicated that items were internally consistent. Even though the ICP was developed in the United Kingdom, it is designed to be used in other countries as it is approved by the International Research and Professional Recommended Practices. The Inclusive Classroom Profile is research-based, has good internal consistency, and provides evidence for validity (Soukakou, 2012).

The validation study of the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) conducted by Soukakou, Winton, West, Sideris, and Rucker (2014) in the United States included Head Start classrooms. This study confirmed the validity and reliability of the study conducted in the United Kingdom along with extending interrater reliability. The sample size was 51 preschool classrooms (20, Child Care programs, 13 Head Start programs, 13 Development Day programs, and five public preschools) from North Carolina. Data of the ICP and ECERS-R were collected over four months.

Descriptive statistics of the 12 items of the ICP were analyzed. The total composite score of the ICP resulted in a mean of 3.37 (m=3.37). The internal consistency was Cronbach's alpha 0.88, which indicated that items were internally consistent. Data of the ECERS-R and ICP was analyzed to assess correlational relationships between the constructs of the ECERS-R and ICP to obtain construct validity. Nine paired observations were conducted in obtaining Interrater reliability of 87% (within a 1-point deviation of the 7-point Likert- Scale). This study concluded the ICP is a valid and reliable assessment tool. The ICP also can be utilized for research purposes of evaluating program practices to develop policies and to inform professional development.

In a longitudinal study conducted between 1989 and 1992 by Sinclair (1993) on the early identification of preschoolers with special needs in Head Start, it was found that Head Start successfully mainstreamed children with moderate to severe disabilities. The early identification and services were provided by the Head Start Diagnostic Team to support 159 children with special needs out of the 900 students enrolled through random sampling. Even though the Head Start program provides comprehensive services and early identification services, currently, Head Start does not assess the inclusive practices of these children.

Peterson et al. (2013) conducted a longitudinal study on the identification of disabilities in Early Head Start and Head Start. It was concluded that preschool children who received services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in Head Start were the children who received services under Part C of IDEA in Early Head Start. This experimental study evaluated the impacts of the Early Head Start (EHS) program with n=1,513 families of EHS and n=1,488 families in the control group between 1996 to 1998. These families were followed up in 2001 when the children were enrolled in Head Start at the age of three. Data on the diagnosis of disabilities, child assessment, along with demographic information, were collected and analyzed. 62% of these children were identified as having a disability or at high risk of a potential disability. Children received services consisting of 47.7% for communication skills, 20.9% behavioral challenges, 24% motor skills, and the remaining 7.4% for other disabilities.

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Educational legislation has been the cornerstone of innumerable debates and concerns regarding the critical importance of education. From 2009 to 2016, the Obama administration focused on the “Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative. Providing high-quality early childhood education to close the achievement gap was the focus of this initiative. The Federal government expected for States to implement a

Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) to measure the quality of preschool services according to a tiered system (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019).

High-quality early learning with effective teachers can improve student outcomes that will impact long-term benefits such as school completion and lifetime earnings. Buysse and Hollingsworth (2009) discuss the importance of having dimensions of high-quality preschool inclusion and professional development embedded in the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) that states have developed. In the position statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities by the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services commemorating the 25th Anniversary of American Disabilities Act (ADA) and the 50th Anniversary of Head Start in 2015, recommend that quality rating frameworks are inclusive (U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

States are finding ways to improve the quality of preschool education. California is one of the nine states to win the RTT-ELC Federal grant and was awarded $52.6 million between 2012 and 2015. California Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee (California Department of Education, 2010) supported the development of a QRIS in California because high quality early learning has a direct impact on school success. California Department of Education

collaborated with First 5 California in the implementation of this grant and to introduce the CA-QRIS (EdSource, 2019). First 5 California is comprised of the First 5 Commissions of the 58 counties in California. Currently, 25 states have a statewide QRIS.

Quality Start Riverside County (QSRC) (2019) is the answer to the call to improve the quality of early care and education for children zero to five in Riverside County. QCRC measures the quality of preschool programs and all early care and educational settings of Riverside County with the Quality Counts California Rating Matrix, previously known as the California Quality Rating Improvement System (CA-QRIS) as the local consortia of the state-level Quality Counts California (2019) state-level quality improvement system. QSRC supports early childhood educators with professional development training and families to identify high-quality early education settings. QSRC is a collaboration between First 5 Riverside, Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE), and Consortium for Early Learning Services (CELS) to leverage Federal and State funds. “Quality Start brings together educators, families, and community partners around the common goal of making sure that all children ages zero through five are happy, healthy, and ready for success in kindergarten and beyond” (Quality Start Riverside County. 2019).

Quality Counts California Rating Matrix, previously known as the California Quality Rating Improvement System (CA-QRIS), is a tiered

rating matrix consisting of seven elements with five points assigned for each element. A total of 35 points can be earned among seven elements: 1) Child Observation, 2) Health and Child Development, 3) Teacher Training and Education, 4) Positive Teacher-Child Interaction, 5) Number of Children per Teacher, 6) Environment, and 7) Director Training and Education. Classroom tier ratings assigned by Quality Start Riverside County (2019) are Tier 5 (Highest Quality) = 32 to 35 points, Tier 4 (Exceeding Quality) 26 to 31 points, Tier 3 (Achieving Quality) = 20 to 25 points, Tier 2 (Rising Quality) = 8 to 19 points, and Tier 1 (Committed to Quality Improvement) = 7 points.

Even though many bodies of research (Buysse et al., 2001; Buysse & Grant 2001; Buysse & Hollingsworth 2009; Cannon & Karoly, 2007; Cook et al., 2012; Muccio et al., 2014, Odom et al., 2011; Schweinhart et al., 2005; Soukakou et al., 2014; Reynold, 2001) support the importance and benefits of high-quality preschool and inclusive practices, preschool, is not mandated in the United States. The Federal Government provides Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) in public schools for children three to five years with a disability identified with an IEP. This is the result of the Education of the Handicapped Children Act (Public Law PL 94-142) of 1975 which legitimized ECSE (Allen & Cowdery, 2009 & Cook et al., 2012). "Education is both a useful instrument and a right. It promotes the development of a child's

personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential" (UNICEF, 2013, p.10).

According to Cannon and Karoly (2007), "The concept of using the early childhood years to boost school readiness and ideally set students on a positive trajectory is not new" (p. 1). School readiness is a critically important factor in a child's ability to move fluidly through the PK-12 educational system and beyond. The myriad of school readiness activities that a child-centered preschool program provides can impact overall educational achievement, adult earnings, and income potential throughout an individual's lifetime (Cannon & Karoly, 2007).

Early childhood education programs that provide preschool education with an emphasis on developmentally and culturally appropriate practices along with a play-based learning approach to teaching academics in their curriculum can have a positive generational effect to move families out of poverty. Economists have found that high-quality early childhood education offers one of the highest returns of any public investment, more than $7 for every dollar spent in revenues which, overall results in the development of the economy (Reynolds et al., 2002). The following studies validate these benefits in Head Start preschool classrooms.

Classroom Quality and Student Outcomes. The effectiveness of high-quality Head Start education has been proven by extensive research

to be very successful (Schweinhart et al., 2005). In an experimental longitudinal study conducted in 1964, three and four-year-old children who attended Head Start preschool were followed for 40 years to learn the impact that the Head Start preschool program had on these individuals. It was found that children who attended Head Start preschool program completed high school, had higher earnings, and committed fewer crimes when compared to their counterparts who did not have the experience of a Head Start preschool program. This study highlights the Head Start program as the most critical social and educational investment in children, families, and communities that our nation has undertaken (Schweinhart et al., 2005).

Performance Standards and the Child Outcome Framework of the Head Start program sets expectations that children leave the program ready to enter school (Sandall, Hemmeter, Smith, & McLean, 2006). Research-based high-quality inclusive practices will provide access to preschool curriculum for children with disabilities to improve performance, obtain school readiness goals, and result in positive student outcomes (Barton & Smith 2015, Buysse et al., 2001; Buysse & Hollingworth, 2009; Odom 2000; Odom et al., 2011; Odom & Diamond 1998). It is crucial to provide high-quality early childhood education programs so that children will be ready socially, emotionally and academically to become lifelong

learners and to contribute to the society (Cannon & Karoly, 2007; Sandall et al., 2006; Schweinhart et al., 2005; Reynolds et al., 2002).

In today's competitive global society, with ever-increasing technology and literacy demands, it is crucial that children develop powerful academic and social skills to be successful in attaining high levels of academic achievement. Research (Buysse et al., 2001; California Department of Education, 2010; Cannon & Karoly, 2007; Schweinhart et al., 2005; Reynolds et al., 2001) strongly supports that children who attend high-quality preschool programs have an overall advantage on social, emotional, cognitive, and school readiness skills when compared to students who did not participate in a preschool program.

Parent and Family Engagement. Head Start curriculum emphasizes family engagement to enrich the child's educational experience. It highlights the shared responsibility of family members and professionals working to support the family. Head Start was the pioneer in influencing legislators of the importance of parent involvement in the classroom and at the policy development level (Bailey et al., 2006; Cook et al., 2012).

It is an expectation of the Head Start program to involve parents and add their volunteer hours as the Non-Federal Share (NFS) to the Head Start contract (HSPPS, 2016). The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework (2018) identifies family engagement

as an interactive way for program staff and parents to build and maintain positive relationships. “Family engagement promotes equity, inclusiveness, and cultural and linguistic responsiveness” (PFCEF, 2018, p. 2).

According to Cook et al. (2012), Head Start set a precedent in parent involvement in the classroom and on policy committees. Parent involvement and obtaining parent input in making decisions for children with special needs are mandated by PL 94-142, which is also referred to as the “Bill of Rights for Handicapped Children, (Allen & Cowdery, 2009, p.36). Inclusion works best when collaborative practices are implemented between parents and educators (Cook et al., 2012; Zigler et al., 1995).

A qualitative study conducted by Bailey et al. (2006) for the Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECOC) to develop a framework with child and family outcome measures to obtain effective services for families of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities. The Research method included reviewing ten current family engagement frameworks, reviewing current literature, interviewing families and professionals in the profession of Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE). The Family and Child Experience Survey (FACES) of the Head Start program was one of the frameworks reviewed in-depth. According to the researchers, the family outcome is a direct result of the success of the early intervention program. There were three main findings: “1) There is a link between children and

families especially during the early years, 2) Federal legislative requirements and 3) Parents help with the intervention (Bailey et al., 2006, p. 247). Also, the study concluded that families should be both beneficiaries and consumers of services.

Classroom Environment and Assessments. Head Start classroom environments are assessed with Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales-Revised (ECERS-R) (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998). According to Warash, Markstrom, and Lucci (2005), classroom quality has been determined with this assessment tool nationwide in many research studies. ECERS-R (Harms et al., 1998) is a valid and reliable tool widely utilized to assess preschool learning environments. A high score in ECERS-R in a preschool classroom is an indication of high-quality preschool practices. In-depth observation of seven areas (space & furnishing, personal care, language reasoning, activities, interaction, program structure, and parent & staff) (p. 9) that consist of 43 items to observe and rate. Ratings are based on a Likert-scale one (1) = Inadequate and seven (7) = Excellent.

Warash et al. (2005) conducted an experimental design study in eight preschool classrooms to learn about the quality of preschool classrooms utilizing the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales-Revised (ECERS-R) (Harms et al., 1998). Results of each assessment were shared with administrators along with a list of recommended

practices and a training plan for each classroom as part of the pretest. The second round of assessments, the post-test, was conducted after nine months. Seven areas (space & furnishing, personal care, language reasoning, activities, interaction, program structure, and parent and staff) that consist of 43 items were observed and rated. In the comparison of the pre and posttest, “an alpha level of 0.05 was used for the statistical analysis” (p.245). The significance of the pre and post-tests were obtained by running two-tailed t-tests. There was an increase in the Mean (M) of all areas, seven areas in the post-test. The Standard Deviation (SD) increased in five areas and decreased in personal care & routine (1.16 to 0.68) and interaction (1.98 to 1.13). Overall the ECERS-R is a useful assessment tool to measure classroom quality and to be used as a training tool for preschool administrators and staff (Warash et al., 2005).

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Classroom Assessment Scoring System (Piñata, La Paro and Hamre, 2008) is a valid and reliable assessment to measure classroom quality in preschools. The assessment that measures teacher-child interactions is organized with three domains and ten dimensions within these domains (Piñata et al., 2008, p.16): 1) Emotional Support domain consists of four dimensions: Positive Climate, Negative Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, and Regard to Student Perspectives. 2) Classroom Organization domain consists of three dimensions: Behavior Management, Productivity, and Instructional

Learning Formats. 3) Instructional Support domain consists of three dimensions: Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, and Language Modeling. Ratings of the CLASS assessment tool are based on a Likert-Scale (1, 2 = Low), (3, 4, 5 = Mid) and (6, 7 = High).

Head Start Program Performance Standards (2016) outlines the requirement of the following minimum average threshold to be maintained in Head Start programs for continuous funding: Emotional Support 4, Classroom Organization 3, and Instructional Support 2. "For all three domains, the standard of excellence is a 6" (HSPPS, 2016, p. 95) Teacher preparedness, intentional teaching, eliciting high-quality language and encouraging language development by teachers being role models are highlighted in this assessment.

Supporting preschool students with early literacy instruction and language development is crucial for success in school. It is especially critical for students who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Since Head Start serves children with and without disabilities who qualify under the federal poverty guidelines, it is crucial for these preschoolers to be exposed to language-rich high-quality preschool classrooms so that the foundation is laid for school success (Terrell, 2017). These children begin preschool at a disadvantage when compared with children who come from a higher socioeconomic background and higher education levels. Especially in the area of language development, these children hear fewer

words. As a result, they have a low vocabulary. This has been proven in many studies. Terrell (2017) shared the most important research conducted by Hart and Risley in 2003 on vocabulary. A 30-million-word gap was found among poor children as compared to a 13-million-word gap among children from affluent families.

Supports – Professional Development Support for Teachers

"Teachers generally have a positive attitude about including children with disabilities in their classrooms, but concerns also exist" (Odom, 2000, P. 21). According to UNICEF (2013), teachers view inclusion positively if they have been provided training and given the tools to work with students with disabilities. Experience of working with children with disabilities tops the list for teachers to have a positive attitude on inclusive practices. Teacher support is viewed at a macro level by Odom et al. (2011) as inclusive classrooms are located in large ecological systems. For inclusive classroom practices to be successful, resources, commitment, and continued support from administrative level along with ongoing professional development training geared to the unique needs of students with disabilities are crucial.

According to the program facts reported by the National Head Start Association, during 2016, the Head Start workforce comprised 259,000 employees or contracted staff nationwide. Out of this number, 23% of the

staff were parents of current or former Head Start students. 73% of teachers have a B.A. degree or higher in ECE or related field (ECLKC, 2019). Head Start does not require any college courses in special education, training, or experience working with students with disabilities when hired as a teacher. According to the Head Start Program Performance Standards (2016), teachers are required to complete 15 hours of professional development training per year that includes supporting children with disabilities. Even though the Federal Government views the importance of teachers acquiring knowledge to support children with disabilities, an assessment of inclusive practices to support children with disabilities is not mandated currently.

Buysse and Hollingsworth (2009) report professional development training for teachers is crucial in improving the quality of inclusive practices for students with disabilities. Programs need to come up with dimensions that define high-quality preschool inclusion and provide ongoing professional development support to staff members. The number of preschool programs that provide preschool inclusion is on the rise. It is reported that the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI) came up with a conceptual framework developed by Buysse et al., (in press) for professional development due to the absence of a common definition of professional development in early childhood education. The three elements: 1) Who (the characteristics of the learner,

2) What (the content of the professional development, and 3) How (the organization/presenter, methods and approaches need to coincide in order for professional development to be effective in the workforce. “The NPDCI framework can be used to plan and organize professional development on a broad range of topics, including quality of inclusive programs and practices” (Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009, p.120). Professional development that incorporates inclusive and global program quality provides opportunities to serve the diverse student population.

To keep up with the numerous Head Start mandates in addition to inclusive practices, the need for professional development training for Head Start teachers is critical. According to ECLKC (2019), individualized teaching practices are instrumental for effective teaching to support students with disabilities and their educational outcomes.

The Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) and the Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) research instruments were used as measures by Muccio et. al., (2014) in a mixed-method study. Nine classrooms were observed with the ICP, and 19 instructional professionals completed the SSPI. The findings revealed that the available professional development supports were less than the need for inclusive practices. The study revealed that the quality of the inclusive practices varied among different classrooms, and the success of inclusive practices was mainly due to the

instructional professionals. Lack of professional development to support students with disabilities was indicated as the most significant challenge.

Muccio (2012) conducted a mixed study for five months to learn about Facilitators and Barriers of Including Young Children with Disabilities in Head Start. Forty classrooms were observed with the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP), and 71 instructional professionals completed the Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) teacher survey to gather quantitative data along with descriptive field notes and interviews to gather qualitative data. According to the results, participants identified a very high need for inclusion facilitators. Teachers were not able to facilitate inclusion due to the lack of knowledge, skills, and practices to support children with disabilities. The study revealed that instructional professionals played the most crucial part of the success of inclusion and supporting students with disabilities. Therefore, assisting staff with professional development training results in effective inclusion for student success.

In addition to the use of the Inclusive Classroom Profile to measure inclusive practices in preschools, Soukakou, Evangelou, and Holbrooke (2018) conducted a research study to learn its use as a professional development tool. This research was carried out in the United Kingdom with four early years advisors who are experienced in providing professional development training for staff that serves children with

Special Education Needs (SEN). After completion of training to use the ICP, these four early advisors administered the ICP in twenty-one preschool inclusion classrooms (n=21). Advisors visited these classrooms twice and collected data during pre-and-post visits and earned 85% inter-rater reliability among them with a mean reliability of 91.5% across the four of them. Also, the researchers sought the social validity of the ICP by having these four early years advisors complete a Social Validity Survey consisting of twenty-two items and a structured questionnaire that described their experience in the classes (n=21) they visited. Results revealed that the ICP could be used as a professional development tool to support inclusive practices and target the training to specific areas of the twelve measures of the assessment tool.

Küçüker Acarlar, and Kapci (2006) developed the Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) specifically to understand the necessities and the available supports for preschool teachers in the implementation of inclusion. This assessment has two columns identified as two dimensions (necessity and support) for teachers to complete. Column a) is “How necessary for a successful inclusion?” and column b) “In What degree do you have this support/resource?” (Küçüker et al., 2006, p. 647). Ratings are based on a four (4) point Likert-scale one (1) = not at all, (2) = very little, (3) = somewhat, (4) = to a great extent. In the research study (n=183) conducted in Turkey to validate the psychometric properties, the

SSPI was found to be reliable with Cronbach alpha coefficient .94 for necessity and .91 for support. Data analysis confirmed Item validity as all the items were significant (P less than.001). Criterion validity was obtained by studying the (supports of the SSPI) correlation between the SSPI and another scale Opinions Relative to Mainstreaming Scale (ORTM) completed by teachers and principals. This resulted in a significant correlation (r=-44, n=183, P less than.0001) between the two assessments. The findings of this study revealed that teachers reported more barriers to implement preschool inclusion than the administrators as they perceived that supports were higher and barriers were less to implement inclusion. These studies confirm the importance to understand the teachers' need for support based on their perceptions in order to implement inclusive practices. This provides opportunities to provide ongoing targeted professional development training.

Summary

This literature review was organized according to *Access, participation, and supports* (DEC/NAEYC, 2009) in relation to the Head Start preschool and early childhood education programs and practices. Implementation of Head Start was an answer to a prayer to support children living in poverty with access to a quality preschool education so

that they can get a ‘Head Start’ in life. Even though the Federal Government mandates to include 10% of students with disabilities in Head Start preschools, it does not require an assessment of inclusive practices. This is a problem of a practice that Head Start has not addressed. Head Start Program Performance Standards (2016) requires assessments of education and classroom environment. Given that preschool students with disabilities are the most vulnerable population, it is imperative that inclusive practices are assessed with a valid and reliable research tool.

Head Start preschool programs provide equitable access to educational resources and help to close the achievement gap for millions of children across the United States and territories. The literature review strongly supported the conviction that children who attended high-quality preschool programs have an overall advantage on social, emotional, cognitive, and school readiness skills when compared to students who did not attend a preschool program. Assessing preschool programs with inclusive measures and supporting teachers with ongoing professional development are proven methods to improve student outcomes for students with and without disabilities. (Allen & Cowdery, 2009; Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009; Buysse et al., 2001; California Department of Education, 2010; Cook et al., 2012; DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Gallagher et al., 2006; Guralnick, 2001; Muccio, 2012; Odom, 2000; Soukakou, 2012;

Quality Start Riverside County, 2019, U.S. Department of Education, 2019; Zigler et al., 1995).

Findings of the research studies revealed commonalities such as the importance of high-quality preschool education, benefits of preschool inclusion, the need to assess inclusive practices as a quality measure are a few examples. Only two studies were found on the assessment of inclusive practices of Head Start preschool classrooms in the literature review.

The comprehensive literature review supported the need to conduct research on inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms and find answers to the research questions. According to Gallagher and Lambert (2006), and Muccio (2012), research on the assessment of inclusive practices within Head Start preschool classrooms is extremely scarce in the current literature. No research studies were found on inclusive practices in Head Start preschools that focused on *access, participation, and supports* of the inclusion framework (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter reviews the design of the study, research questions, along with nine aspects of the study: 1) research setting 2) sample population 3) data collection 4) research instruments 5) validity and trustworthiness 6) data analysis 7) confidentiality 8) dissemination 9) positionality and the bias of the researcher.

Research Design

This research study implemented a quantitative, descriptive design approach. Data was collected objectively using a single subject group at one point in time to explore the five research questions (Creswell, 2003, p.155).

Three surveys were utilized in this study based on the research questions. According to Krathwohl (2009), researchers that gather data from surveys are targeting a particular population. The use of surveys requires preplanning and specific steps. These steps are: “the sample, the instrument, the method for gathering data, and initial plans for analysis (Krathwohl, 2009, p. 568) Cross-sectional studies can study a sample of a population and apply the findings to the entire population. Howell (2008) and Krathwohl (2009) describe descriptive statistics as the representation of numeric values in a user-friendly manner in recognizing usual and

unusual patterns in the data distribution. Two main aspects of descriptive data are 1) Measures of central tendency, which identifies the location of the bulk of data. The mode, median, and the mean are indicators of central tendency. 2) Measures of variability, which identifies the spread of data. Range and Standard Deviation are measures of variability. The spread of data is an indication of how dissimilar the scores are.

Measures of relationships were conducted to describe the relationships between two variables. Correlational analysis was conducted to learn about the underlying factor structure of the survey items. If these items overlapped and made up of access, participation, and supports in assessing inclusive practices and professional development Head Start preschool classrooms.

Research Questions

1. Is the underlying factor structure of the ICP the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) made up of *access, participation, and supports* in assessing inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms?
2. Is the underlying factor structure of the Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) made up of *access, participation, and supports* in assessing inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms?

3. Is the underlying factor structure of the California Quality Rating and Improvement System (CA-QRIS) made up of *access, participation, and supports* in Head Start preschool classrooms?

4. What are the similarities between the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP), Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI), and the California Quality Rating Improvement System (CA-QRIS) in looking at *access, participation, and supports* in Head Start preschool classrooms?

5. What are the relationships between professional development and inclusive practices in providing *access, participation, and supports* in Head Start preschool classrooms?

Research Setting

Head Start preschool classrooms located on elementary school campuses and community centers within the boundaries of one school district located in the fourth largest County in Southern California. This county is one of the 58 counties of California. According to the United States Census Bureau (2018), Report of the Top 10 Largest Gaining Counties, this county was ranked #6 in 2016 and elevated to rank #3 in 2017.

The study was conducted in ten Head Start preschool classrooms during the 2019-2020 school year. The Early Childhood Education (ECE)

program of this school district provides preschool education for students enrolled in Head Start (HS) preschool, Early Head Start, and California State Preschool Program (CSPP) for over 1000 students between the ages of zero to five. The ECE program had four designated inclusion Head Start preschool classes until the 2017-2018 school year. This was a collaboration between the Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Special Education (SPED) programs of the district. There were 4-6 students with mild to moderate disabilities enrolled in the designated Head Start classes. Students received support from an Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) teacher two days a week and Special Education para educators four days a week along, with the Head Start teacher and the paraeducator. The diagnosis of these students varied from Autism, Down Syndrome, Developmental Delay, Hearing Impairment, Speech or Language Impairment, Vision Impairment, etc. During the 2018-19 school year, these designated inclusion preschool classes are being implemented in the California State Preschool Program. As a result, all 10 Head Start classes had included only students with a Speech or Language Impairment diagnosis.

This school district is one of the eleven districts that receive funding as a delegate agency through a County Office of Education to provide early education, health, and related services for over 500 children three to five years through the Head Start preschool program and over 45

pregnant mothers through the Early Head Start program. Region 9, Office of Regional Operations of the Administration of Children & Families of the Federal Government oversee the operations and the fiscal responsibilities. According to The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (2019), the Office of Head Start (OHS) provides policy direction and funding oversight to 1,600 agencies that provide comprehensive early education, health, and related services through Head Start contract. Operations and fiscal reporting of the Head Start program of the school district are reported to the County Office of Education, Region 9 Office, and the Office of Head Start at the Federal Government through the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES, 2019).

Research Sample and Recruitment

Participants of this study were ten Head Start preschool teachers who met the recruitment guidelines of a school district located in a large county in Southern California. The researcher obtained approval from the school district to conduct research. Research participants were identified by purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2003) method who met the following criteria:

i. Head Start preschool teachers who are currently serving at least one student with an IEP.

ii. Head Start preschool teachers who have served in Head Start at least one year.

Recruitment took place within one week. The Director of Early Childhood Education programs helped to distribute hard copies and emailed digital copies of the Recruitment Flyer (Appendix A) inviting prospective participants.

The researcher followed up with prospective participants via phone and met individually. There was a total of 15 Head Start teachers, and 11 met the recruitment guidelines. One teacher did not want to participate. During the meeting, the researcher shared information about the study, research process and described the Teacher Informed Consent (Appendix B). The researcher also explained about confidentiality, potential risks, and benefits. Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants had the right to leave the study at any time (even after the Teacher Informed Consent was signed and during any part of the study) if they chose not to participate. The researcher also described and explained the three research survey measures, the purpose of each survey, what it measures, and the rationale to collect data. The researcher shared with participants that each of them will receive a children's book on inclusive practices for their classroom as a token of appreciation for their participation in the study. The book was theirs to keep even if they decide not to participate during any part of the study.

Participants signed the Teacher Informed Consent after they were fully informed and volunteered to participate before beginning the study. Numbers were assigned to protect the identity of the participants and the institution of the study. The researcher scheduled one-time classroom observations using the ICP and follow up interviews related to the ICP measures according to the teacher's convenience. The researcher gave copies of the SSPI and Demographic Data Survey to each participant. These were collected on the day of the classroom observation.

Quantitative data was collected for three weeks. During classroom observations, follow up teacher interviews based on the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP), Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI), Demographic Data Survey and tier ratings, and scores of the California Quality Rating and Improvement System (CA-QRIS) from the Quality Start Riverside County website.

Participants represented diverse ethnic backgrounds (Native American, White, Mexican, and Chicana). Classrooms consisted of students with and without disabilities between the ages of three to five years. There were 16-17 students in each classroom. The researcher observed classroom teaching practices and did not interact with students. Participants completed the Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) Survey (Küçüker et al., 2006) and the Demographic Data Survey created by the researcher.

Data Collection

The researcher completed the on-line CITI training mandated by the Institutional Review Board. Research began with the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of California State University San Bernardino (Appendix C).

Data were collected between September 16, 2019, to October 02, 2019, from participants who met the recruitment guidelines. This section will describe the data collection process and the duration and frequency of data collection.

Data Collection Process: There were three steps involved in the data collection process, as described below:

Step 1:

a) The SSPI teacher surveys were distributed during the recruitment meeting. Completed surveys were collected during classroom observations.
b) The Demographic Data Surveys were distributed during the recruitment meeting. Completed surveys were collected during classroom observations.

Step 2:

a) ICP classroom observations and follow up teacher interviews were conducted between September 16, 2019, to October 2, 2019.

Step 3:

a) CA-QRIS Classroom ratings and scores of participant classrooms were accessed between September 16, 2019, to October 2, 2019, from the Quality Start Riverside County website http://www.qualitystartrc.org/ available to the public.

Duration and Frequency of Data Collection:

- ICP – Three hours per classroom for one observation and teacher interview.

- SSPI – 30 minutes (reported by participants). Demographic Data Survey – Five to ten minutes (reported by participants).

- CA-QRIS ratings and scores – Ten to fifteen minutes for each classroom.

ICP and CA-QRIS data were collected by the researcher. SSPI and Demographic Data Surveys were completed by participants.

Research Instruments

The following three surveys, Demographic Data Survey and the Inclusion Crosswalk, were utilized in this study.

1) The Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) (Soukakou, 2016).

The ICP is a classroom observational survey with 12 items. The researcher gathered ICP data from observations of Head Start preschool classrooms and teacher interviews for answers to 5 out of the 12 items. Interviews were conducted 1:1 during teacher prep time, within regular work hours. The researcher took notes during the interview responses. Each classroom observation took approximately two hours and thirty minutes, and each interview took between 20-30 minutes. The researcher purchased the ICP Manual Research Edition and scoring sheets for this research study. The total time to complete the ICP was approximately three hours. A total score of 6-7 represents excellent, 4-5 represents good, 2-3 represents minimal, and a score of 1 represents inadequate. The ICP was completed for all of the 10 research participants.

The ICP observational survey measure has 12 items comprised of quality indicators based on classroom practices. These items are (Soukakou, 2016, p. 9):

1. Adaptations of space and materials/equipment
2. Adult involvement in peer interactions
3. Adults' guidance of children's play
4. Conflict resolution
5. Membership (I)
6. Relationships between adults and children

7. Support for communication (I)

8. Adaptation of group activities

9. Transitions between activities (I)

10. Feedback

11. Family-professional partnerships (I)

12. Monitoring children's learning (I)

* (I) Interview

Five out of these 12 items (5, 7, 8, 11, and 12) are based on the ratings on interview responses in addition to observations. ICP observations and interview ratings are focused on teacher classroom practices of the intentionality of the adaptations of the learning environment and instructional support to encourage *access* and *participation* for students with disabilities (Soukakou, 2016).

According to Soukakou (2016), psychometric properties such as reliability, validity, and internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.79) of the ICP have been obtained in two research studies. These studies were conducted in the United States and the United Kingdom (with a total of n=96) in inclusive preschool classrooms. This assessment tool is similar to the layout of ECERS-R (Harms et al 1998) with ratings on a seven (7) point Likert-scale, one (1) = Inadequate, and seven (7) = Excellent.

The total global score for the ICP was calculated in the following manner: First, summing the scores of individual item ratings. Second,

dividing this score by the number of items rated. Third, adding each item with 2 decimals. (i.e. score of individual items = 56. Items rated = 11. ICP global score = 5.36). The Range of the score of the ICP is 0-84.

2) Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) (Küçüker, Acarlar, & Kapci, 2006) (Appendix D).

The SSPI is a teacher survey on inclusion with 34 items that asked to rate each item on necessary resources (column a) and available resources (column b). According to Kucker et al. (2006), psychometric properties such validity, reliability, and internal consistency (Cronbach alpha = .94 for necessity and .91 for support) were validated in the research study (n=183) conducted in Turkey. Criterion validity was obtained by comparing the scores of the SSPI completed by teachers and principals along with another scale Opinions Relative to Mainstreaming Scale (ORTM), which resulted in a significant correlation (r=-44, n=183, P less than.0001) (Küçüker, Acarlar, & Kapci, 2006). The SSPI is a 4-point Likert-scale rating scale, one (1) = not at all and seven (7) = to a great extent. Example item: Item #21 – To have in-service training in needed areas of inclusion. Nine out of the ten participants completed the SSPI survey. The researcher obtained permission to use the SSPI survey from the authors. The total amount of time to complete the SSPI was approximately 30 minutes, as reported by teachers.

The total global score for the SSPI was calculated in the following manner: First, summing the scores of each item of column a and column b for all 34 items. Second, dividing these scores by two to obtain the average score for all 34 items. Third, adding each item to obtain the total global score. (i.e. Item # 3, sum of columns a (3) + (4) = 7, Divide this number by 2 (7/2 = 3.5), add this number with the other 33 items (92) + 3.5 = 95.5. The Range of the SSPI is 0-36.

3) California Quality Rating and Improvement System (CA-QRIS), currently referred to as the Quality Counts California Rating Matrix, Head Start Classroom Tier Rating (Quality Start Riverside County, 2019) (Appendix E).

There are seven elements in the CA-QRIS to measure the quality of education and care according to the following three core areas:

Core I – Development and School Readiness

Core II – Teachers and Teaching

Core III – Program and Environment: Administration and Leadership

The CA-QRIS is a 5-point Likert-scale rating scale, one (1) = I point and. five (5) = 5 points. The seven elements of the CA-QRIS are:

1. Child Observation
2. Developmental and Health Screenings
3. Minimum Qualifications for Lead Teacher

4. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: CLASS

5. Ratios and Group Size

6. Program Environment Rating Scale: ECERS

7. Director Qualifications

Classroom tier ratings assigned by Quality Start Riverside County (2019) are Tier 5 (Highest Quality) = 32 to 35 points, Tier 4 (Exceeding Quality) 26 to 31 points, Tier 3 (Achieving Quality) = 20 to 25 points and Tier 2 (Rising Quality) = 8 to 19 points.

Quality Start Riverside County (2019) conducts assessments to measure the quality of preschool classrooms every two years using the CA-QRIS, currently referred to as the Quality Counts California Rating Matrix. The researcher accessed tier ratings and item ratings of research participant classrooms gathered during the 2018-2019 school year from the Quality Start Riverside County website available to the public. The CA-QRIS data is identifiable by the research participant classroom.

The total global scores for the CA-QRIS was calculated by summing the score of all 7 elements. The total global score is reported as a tier rating by QSRC. Total global scores and tier ratings for the participant Head Start classrooms were obtained from the Quality Start Riverside County website. The range of the CA-QRIS is 0-35. The tier ratings are recognized as I - V.

4) Demographics Data Survey. (Appendix F).

The researcher developed the Demographic Data Survey to collect demographic data of participants. This survey has 10 items. Example item: Item # 8 – How many hours of professional development training do you have in early childhood special education/special education/working with children with disabilities/inclusion? All 11 participants completed this survey. Participants reported it took between five to ten minutes to complete this survey.

5) Inclusion Crosswalk of the ICP, SSPI, and CA-QRIS (Appendix G).

The researcher developed a crosswalk of the ICP, SSPI, and CA-QRIS surveys. Items of these surveys were identified and categorized according to *access, participation, and supports* according to the operational definitions by the Division of Early Childhood of the Council of Exceptional Children and National Association for the Education of Young Children (DEC/NAEYC, 2009):

> *Access:* Giving children a range of learning environments and settings that provides opportunities and activities for learning.
>
> *Participation:* Individualizing instruction and making accommodations for children. Adults providing a sense of

belonging, participation, and engagement of children with and without disabilities.

Supports: An infrastructure of systems-level supports must be in place to maximize the efforts of teachers and families are providing on inclusive practices.

Access, participation, and *supports* are indicators of preschool inclusion according to the conceptual framework (DEC/NAEYC, 2006). For the purpose of this study, this document was identified as the Inclusion Crosswalk. *Access, participation, and supports* were the theme of this study.

Total global scores of each survey measure (ICP, SSPI, and CA-QRIS) were calculated. Next, the total global score for each construct (a*ccess, participation, and supports*) was calculated. The researcher followed the same pattern in calculating scores for all the items of the Inclusion Crosswalk.

The following rules were applied to calculate the *access* construct: The total score for ICP *access* was calculated by summing the 3 items. The total score for SSPI *access* was calculated by summing the 4 items. The total score for CA-QRIS *access* was calculated by summing the 1 item. The total global score for access was calculated by summing the 8 items of *access* from the ICP (3), SSPI (4), and CA-QRIS (1).

The following rules were applied to calculate the *participation* construct: The total score for ICP *participation* was calculated by summing the 7 items. The total score for SSPI *participation* was calculated by summing the 2 items. The total score for CA-QRIS *participation* was calculated by summing the 4 items. The total global score for participation was calculated by summing the 9 items of participation from the ICP (7) and SSPI (2).

The following rules were applied to calculate the supports construct. The total score for ICP *supports* was calculated by summing the 2 items. The total score for SSPI *supports* was calculated by summing the 28 items. The total score for CA-QRIS *supports* was calculated by summing the 2 items. The total global score for supports was calculated by summing the 32 items of supports from the ICP (2), SSPI (28), and CA-QRIS (2).

Validity and Trustworthiness

To establish validity and trustworthiness for the utilization of survey instruments of this research study, the researcher completed a combination of tasks: completion of the interrater reliability training for the ICP organized by the research team of the Frank Porter Child Development Center UNC-Chapel Hill, participation in the Quality Start Riverside County consortia as a Principal of ECE programs of a school

district and the utilization of the California Quality Rating and Improvement System (CA-QRIS) for quality improvement, obtaining permission to use the SSPI teacher survey, and purchasing the research edition of the ICP manual and ICP scoring booklets.

Data Analysis

1. Preliminary Data Analysis

Data from the ICP, SSPI, CA-QRIS, and Demographic Survey responses were entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Data were examined for missing values, outliers, and assumptions of normality.

2. Data Analysis for Research Questions

Total scores of each survey measure (ICP, SSPI, and CA-QRIS) were calculated. In addition, the total global score of each construct (a*ccess, participation, and supports*) was calculated according to the Inclusion Crosswalk. Data collected to answer research questions 1-5 were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean, mode, median, standard deviation, and frequencies. Measures of relationships were conducted to describe the relationships between two variables. Correlational analysis was conducted to learn about the underlying factor structure of the survey items and professional development in Head Start preschool classrooms according to *access, participation,* and *supports.*

According to Pearson r Correlation, the effect size 0.8 signifies a large relationship, the effect size 0.5 signifies a moderate relationship, and the effect size 0.5 signifies a small relationship (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2012).

Confidentiality

Participants of the study were identified with a number to protect their identity. Data was presented in aggregates. Paper surveys completed will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office. Digital data is protected with a password in on the researcher's laptop.

Dissemination

The objective of this study was to assess inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms. Upon completion of the dissertation, results will be submitted for publication in scholarly journals to add to the very limited studies on assessment of inclusive practices in Head Start. The researcher plans to present this information at conferences nationally and internationally. Findings will support administrators and teachers in the professions of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Early Childhood Special Education.

Positionality and the Bias of the Researcher

The researcher has served in the profession of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) for nearly 30 years. The researcher began her journey as a childcare provider, climbed the career ladder by serving in all positions of the Child Development Matrix stipulated by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. She served as an assistant and worked her way up to the program director and principal of ECE programs. She continues to serve as an administrator, adjunct faculty member, and an advocate to impact the lives of preschoolers with and without disabilities, teachers, parents, aspiring teachers, and all stakeholders.

The researcher combined her education and expertise in ECE and ECSE to assess inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms. The researcher's passion for advocating for all preschoolers was the driving force to pursue her doctoral degree.

The researcher is aware of her own biases and minimized them during and after data collection. The researcher was objective in gathering, analyzing, and reporting facts by quantifying data of the three survey measures. Qualitative data gathered during the follow-up interviews of the ICP observation helped to answer the five of the twelve survey items.

Summary

The research design and methodology were described in detail in this chapter. The quantitative research design was determined to be best for survey instruments used in this study.

There are no known studies that assess inclusive practices in Head Start classrooms according to access, participation, and supports constructs (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). Three surveys were utilized in this study. The research study took place at a single point in time studying numerous characteristics (Creswell, 2003). Research participants were recruited to participate in this study after the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Data collection began with approval from the district and consent by teachers. Data from three survey measures were analyzed to find answers to the five research questions: SPSS Software was used for statistical analysis. Chapter four will reveal the results of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The goal of this chapter is to analyze the quantitative data and answer the research questions. Three survey measures, along with the Demographic Data Survey and the Inclusion Crosswalk, were utilized in this study: 1) the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) (Soukakou, 2016) to observe inclusive classroom practices. 2) the Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) (Küçüker, Acarlar, & Kapci, 2006) survey to gather teacher input, 3) Head Start classroom tier ratings according to the California Quality Improvement Rating System (CA-QRIS), (Quality Start Riverside County, 2019). 4) Demographic Data Survey developed by the researcher to gather demographic information of participants. 5) Inclusion Crosswalk developed by the researcher to organize items of the ICP, SSPI, and the CA-QRIS according to the operational definition of *access, participation, and supports* (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). *Access*, *participation, and supports* constructs that define the framework for preschool inclusion (DEC/NAEYC, 2009) served as the theme of this study.

By analyzing these measures individually and simultaneously, data is reported on inclusive practices in Head Start preschools in answering the five research questions.

Statistical Analysis

Data from the ICP, SSPI, CA-QRIS, Demographic Data Survey, and the Inclusion Crosswalk were entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Data was examined for missing values, outliers and assumptions of normality.

Descriptive Data of Sample Demographics

The total number of Head Start teachers at the participating school district of the study was 15. Four teachers did not meet the participant inclusion criteria. Ten teachers volunteered to participate.

All ten participants were female (100%). The most frequently observed category of ethnicity was Mexican/Chicano (n=6, 60%) as presented in Table 3. The mean age of the participants was 48.90 years (SD = 7.88).

Table 3. *Gender and Ethnicity of Participants*

Variables		n	%
Gender			
	Female	10	100%
Ethnicity			
	Mexican/Chicano	6	60%
	Pacific Islander	1	10%
	White (non-Hispanic/Latino	1	10%
	Hispanic/Latino (non-Mexican)	2	20%

Note: Total N = 10.

Seventy percent of the participants held a bachelor's degree, and 30% held a master's degree. Seventy percent of the participants majored in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and 30% in Special Education (SE) or Social Science (SS).

The teaching experience of participants in Head Start ranged from three to 35 years, with a mean of 13.5 (SD = 11.7). Professional Development hours in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)/Special Education (SE) ranged from zero to 200 hours, with mean of 24.7 (SD=61.8). Participant # 5 reported over 200 hours of Professional Development in ECSE/SE, while four participants reported no professional development training in ECSE/SE.

Participants reported 26 students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) received services for Speech or Language Impairment during the 2019-20 school year. One participant served five students with IEPs this year. Participant #6 reported she will be referring 8 students for a combination of Speech or Language Impairment and Social-Emotional concerns (Table 4).

Table 4. Current Students with IEPs and Referrals for Special Education Services

Variables	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max
Current Students with IEPs	2.6	1.43	2	1	5
Referrals for Special Education Services	2.3	2.45	1.5	0	8

Note: Total N = 10. IEP = Individualized Education Plan

Descriptive data of all three survey measures are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive Data of the ICP, SSPI and CA-QRIS Surveys

Variable	Number of Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range	Minimum	Maximum
ICP	12	5.72	0.97	-1.38	1.19	0-84	3.42	6.67
SSPI	34	97.1	36.0	-2.18	-2.18	0-136	0.0	124.5
QRIS	7	29.5	1.27	0.69	-0.69	0-35	27.0	31.0

Note: Total N = 10. ICP = Inclusive Classroom Profile. SSPI = Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion. CA-QRIS = California Quality and Improvement System,

Research Question #1: Is the underlying factor structure of the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) made up of *access, participation,* and *supports* in assessing inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms?

The 12 items of the ICP survey was organized in the Inclusion Crosswalk (IC) according to constructs: *Access* 3 items, *Participation* 7 items, and *Supports* 2 items. The descriptive variables of the ICP survey items are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Descriptive Table of the ICP Survey Items.

Total Individual Item	Construct	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
ICP Item 1 Adaptations of Space and Material	Access	6.20	1.03	-1.24	0.95
ICP Item 2 Adult Involvement in Peer Interactions	Participation	5.20	1.81	-0.51	-0.86
ICP Item 3 Adult Involvement in Play	Participation	5.60	1.90	-1.11	-0.31
ICP Item 4 Conflict Resolution	Participation	3.20	3.01	0.04	-1.93
ICP Item 5 Membership	Participation	5.70	1.49	-1.86	4.26
ICP Item 6 Relationship of Adult and Children	Participation	3.70	0.48	-1.04	-1.22
ICP Item 7 Support for Communication	Access	4.50	1.35	0.84	-0.47

ICP Item 8 Group Activities	Access	6.20	1.48	-1.72	1.70
ICP Item 9 Transitions	Participation	6.60	1.27	-3.16	10.00
ICP Item 10 Feedback	Participation	5.30	1.16	-0.73	0.51
ICP Item 11 Partnerships with Families and Professionals	Supports	7.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
ICP Item 12 Monitoring Children's Learning	Supports	6.90	0.32	-3.16	10.00

Note: N = 10. ICP = Inclusive Classroom Profile. Items are rating 1-7.

Correlations of the ICP survey items are organized and presented according to *Access, Participation,* and *Supports* constructs. According to Pearson r Correlation, the effect size 0.8 signifies a large relationship, the effect size 0.5 signifies a moderate relationship, and the effect size 0.2 signifies a small relationship (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2012).

1.1) *Access:* Item 1 (Adaptations of Space and Material) was moderately correlated with Item 8 (Adaptations of Group Activities) (r = .70, p = ≤ .001) and Item 7 (Support for Communication) (r = .56, p = ≤ .001).

1.2) *Participation:* Correlations are presented in Table 7. There were three items indicating large effect size. Item 3 (Adult Involvement in Play) with correlated Item 6 (Relationship of Adult and Children) (r=.95, p = ≤ .001), Item 5 (Membership) correlated with Item 4 (Transitions) (r=.87, p = ≤ .001), and Item 2 (Adult Involvement in Peer Interaction) correlated with Item 4 (Membership) (r=.80, p = ≤ .001). Other strong correlations were: Item 3 (Adult Involvement in Play) with Item 5 (Membership) (r=.78, p = ≤ .001), Item 2 (Adult Involvement in Peer Interaction) with Item 3 (Adult

Involvement in Play) (r=.70, $p = \leq .001$), Item 9 (Transitions) with Item 10 (Feedback) (r=.70, $p = \leq .001$), Item 3 (Adult Involvement in Play) with Item 2 (Transitions) (r=.67, $p = \leq .001$), Item 3 (Adult Involvement in Play) with Item 10 (Feedback) (r=.67, $p = \leq .001$), Item 5 (Membership) with Item 6 (Relationship of Adult and Children) (r=.63, $p = \leq .001$), and Item 2 (Adult Involvement in Peer Interaction) with Item 9 (Transitions (r=.62, $p = \leq .001$).

Table 7. Correlation Table of the ICP for Participation.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. ICP Item 2 Adult Involvement in Peer Interaction		.70*	.01	.80**	.58	.62	.55
2. ICP Item 3 Adult Involvement in Play			.13	.78**	.95**	.67*	.67*
3. ICP Item 4 Conflict Resolution				-.06	.20	.02	.05
4. ICP Item 5 Membership					.63	.87**	.57
5. ICP Item 6 Relationship of Adult and Children						.51	.58
6. ICP Item 9 Transitions							.70*
7. ICP Item 10 Feedback							

Note: Total N = 10. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). ICP = Inclusive Classroom Profile

1.3) *Supports:* All Participants answered a seven on the Likert scale for Item 11 (Partnerships with Families and Professionals) and Item 12 (Monitoring Children's Learning), and there was no variance.

The underlying factor structure of the ICP is made up of *access* and *participation* in assessing inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms.

Research Question #2: Is the underlying factor structure of the Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) made up of *access, participation, and*

supports in assessing inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms?

The 34 items of the SSPI survey was organized in the Inclusion Crosswalk (IC) according to constructs: *Access* 4 items, *Participation* 2 items, and *Supports* 28 items.

Descriptive variables of the SSPI survey items are presented in Table 8 (Appendix H).

Correlations of the SSPI survey items are organized and presented according *to Access, Participation*, and *Supports* constructs.

2.1) *Access:* Correlations are presented in Table 9. Strong correlations were noted with the following items: Item 3 (To have appropriate classrooms) with Item 4 (To have materials and toys for children) (r = .86, $p = \leq .001$), Item 4 (To have materials and toys for children correlated with Item 3 (To have appropriate classrooms) (r = .85, $p = \leq .001$), and Item 3 (To have appropriate classrooms) with Item 4 (To have materials and toys for children (r = .66, $p = \leq .001$).

Table 9. Correlation Table of the SSPI for Access.

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. SSPI Item 3 To have appropriate classrooms		.66*	.85**	.16
2. SSPI Item 4 To have materials and toys for children			.86**	.44
3. SSPI Item 7 To have technological equipment to support				.40
4. SSPI Item 26 To have a small class size				

Note: Total N = 9. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). SSPI = Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion

2.2) *Participation:* There were two items in this construct. A correlation between both of these items, Item 6 (To have the knowledge to assess the development of children) and Item 30 (To have the knowledge to promote positive interactions) was ($r = .91$, $p \leq .001$) indicating a large effect size.

2.3) *Supports:* Correlations are presented in Tables 10 (Appendix I). All of the correlations except for two items Item 1 - To have the opportunity to observe teachers and Item 2 - To have the knowledge about the child's disability/illness) were strongly and moderately correlated.

The underlying factor structure of the SSPI is made up of *access, participation,* and *supports* in assessing inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms.

Research Question #3: Is the underlying factor structure of the California Quality Rating and Improvement System (CA-QRIS) made up of *access, participation, and supports* in assessing Head Start preschool classrooms?

All seven items (Elements) of the CA-QRIS survey were analyzed initially. One item (Element 2), which was organized in the *participation* construct, was omitted as it resulted in zero correlation. The remaining six items of the CA-QRIS survey were organized in the Inclusion Crosswalk (IC) according to the constructs; Access 1 item, Participation 3 items, and

Supports 2 items. Descriptive variables of the CA-QRIS survey items are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Descriptive Table of the CA-QRIS Survey Items.

Total Individual Item	Construct	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
CA-QRIS Element 1 Child Observations	Participation	4.50	0.53	0.00	-2.57
CA-QRIS Element 2 Dev. and Health Screenings	Participation	4.80	0.42	-1.78	1.41
CA-QRIS Element 3 Teacher Qualifications	Supports	4.40	0.52	0.48	-2.28
CA-QRIS Element 4 Teacher Child Interactions	Participation	3.50	0.71	1.18	0.57
CA-QRIS Element 5 Ratio and Group Size	Participation	4.50	0.53	0.00	-2.57
CA-QRIS Element 6 Environment Rating Scales	Access	3.20	0.42	1.78	1.41
CA-QRIS Element 7 Director Qualifications	Supports	4.50	0.53	0.00	-2.57

Note: N = 10. CA-QRIS = California Quality and Improvement System. Items are rating 1-7.

Correlations of the CA-QRIS survey items are organized and presented according *to Access, Participation,* and *Supports* constructs.

3.1) *Access:* According to the organization of the Inclusion Crosswalk, there was only one item (Element 6 – Environmental Rating Scales) in for the access construct. This item measures *access* as participants reported a mean score of 3.20 (Table 11).

3.2) *Participation:* Correlations are presented in Table 12. An unexpected negative correlation was observed between CA-QRIS Element1 (Child

Observations) with Element 5 (Ratio and Group Size) (r = -.60, p = < .001) and CA-QRIS Element 4 (Teacher Child Interactions) (r = -.45, p = < .001).

Table 12. Correlation Table of the CA-QRIS for Participation.

Variables	1	2	3
1.CA-QRIS Element 1 Child Observations		-.45	-.60
2.CA-QRIS Element 4 Teacher Child Interactions			.15
3. CA-QRIS Element 5 Ratio and Group Size			

Note: Total N = 10. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). CA-QRIS = California Quality and Improvement System

3.3) *Supports:* A correlation between Elements 3 (Teacher Qualifications) and Element 7 (Director Qualifications) was (r = .82, p = < .001) indicating a large effect size.

The underlying factor structure of the CA-QRIS is made up of only *supports* in assessing inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms.

Research Question 4: What are the similarities between the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP), Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI), and the California Quality Rating Improvement System (CA-QRIS) in looking at *access, participation, and supports* in Head Start preschool classrooms?

Items of the ICP, SSPI, and the CA-QRIS surveys were organized according to the operational definition of *access, participation, and*

supports (DEC/NAEYC, 2009) in creating the Inclusion Crosswalk (IC) for the purpose of this study. *Access*, *participation, and supports* constructs that define the framework for preschool inclusion (DEC/NAEYC, 2009) served as the theme of this study. Total global scores of *Access* 8 items, *Participation* 9 items, and *Supports* 32 items were calculated.

The following rules were applied to calculate the *access* construct: The total score for ICP *access* was calculated by summing the 3 items. The total score for SSPI *access* was calculated by summing the 4 items. The total score for CA-QRIS *access* was calculated by summing the 1 item.

The following rules were applied to calculate the *participation* construct: The total score for ICP *participation* was calculated by summing the 7 items. The total score for SSPI *participation* was calculated by summing the 2 items.

The following rules were applied to calculate the *supports* construct. The total score for ICP *supports* was calculated by summing the 2 items. The total score for SSPI *supports* was calculated by summing the 28 items. The total score for CA-QRIS *supports* was calculated by summing the 2 items.

Descriptive variables of the Inclusion Crosswalk (IC) for *Access, Participation,* and *Supports* are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Descriptive Table of the ICP, SSPI, and CA-QRIS

Total Global Scores of the Inclusion Crosswalk	Items	Mean	Lowest Value	Highest Value	SD	Sk.	Kut.
Access:							
ICP	3	16.90	3	21	3.25	-1.01	1.06
SSPI	4	10.60	4	16	4.47	-1.62	2.99
CA-QRIS	1	3.20	1	7	0.42	-1.78	1.40
Participation:							
ICP	7	35.30	7	49	7.79	-1.22	1.86
SSPI	2	6.60	2	8	2.41	-2.74	7.97
Supports:							
ICP	2	13.90	2	14	0.32	-3.16	10.00
SSPI	28	79.90	28	112	29.60	-2.60	7.40
CA-QRIS	2	8.90	2	14	0.99	0.24	-2.30

Note: Total N = 10. Inclusive Classroom Profile =ICP. Supports Scale for Preschool Inclusion = SSPI. California Quality Rating and Improvement System = CA-QRIS).
Sk. = Skewness. Kut. = Kurtosis.

Correlations of the Inclusion Crosswalk items are organized and presented according *to Access, Participation*, and *Supports* constructs.

4.1) *Access:* Correlations are presented in Table 14.

ICP Access correlated with SSPI Access (r = .49, p = $\leq$ .001). ICP Access correlated with QRIS Access (r = .34, p = $\leq$ .001).

Table 14. Correlation Table for Access of the ICP, SSPI, and CA-QRIS.

Variables	1	2	3
1. ICP Access		.49	.34
2. SSPI Access			-.01
3. CA-QRIS Access			

Note: Total N = 10. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). ICP = Inclusive Classroom Profile. SSPI = Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion. CA-QRIS = California Quality and Improvement System

4.2) *Participation:* Correlations are presented in Table 15. A strong correlation between the ICP Participation with SSPI Participation (r = .70, p = < .001) indicating a large effect size.

Table 15. Correlation Table for Participation of the ICP and SSPI

Variables	1	2
1. ICP Participation		.70*
2. SSPI Participation		

Note: Total N = 10. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). ICP = Inclusive Classroom Profile. SSPI = Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion.

4.3) *Supports:* Correlations are presented in Table 16. A strong correlation between ICP Supports and SSPI Supports was (r = .95, p = < .001) indicating a large effect size.

Table 16. Correlation Table for Supports of the ICP, SSPI, and CA-QRIS.

Variables	1	2	3
1. ICP Supports		.95**	.31
2. SSPI Supports			.12
3. CA-QRIS Supports			

Note: Total N = 10. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). ICP = Inclusive Classroom Profile. SSPI = Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion. CA-QRIS = California Quality and Improvement System

The similarities between the ICP, SSPI, and CA-QRIS in looking at *access, participation,* and *supports* are the correlations between: 1) ICP access with SSPI access, 2) ICP Participation with SSPI participation, and 3) ICP supports with SSPI supports.

Research Question #5

What are the relationships between professional development and inclusive practices in providing *access, participation, and supports* in Head Start preschool classrooms?

Items of the ICP, SSPI, and the CA-QRIS surveys were organized according to the operational definition of *access, participation, and supports* (DEC/NAEYC, 2009) in creating the Inclusion Crosswalk for this study. *Access*, *participation, and supports* constructs that define the framework for preschool inclusion (DEC/NAEYC, 2009) served as the theme of this study. Total global scores of *Access* 10 items, *Participation* 12 items, and *Supports* 32 items were calculated.

Descriptive data for Professional Development hours, Access, Participation, and Supports of the Inclusion Crosswalk are presented in Table 17.

Table 17. Descriptive Table for Professional Development and the Inclusion Crosswalk for Access, Participation, and Supports

Total Global Scores of the Inclusion Crosswalk	Items	Mean	SD	Sk.	Kut.
Total Professional Development Hours	10	24.7	61.83	3.12	9.79
Total Global Scores of the IC for *Access*	8	30.7	6.77	-2.25	6.16
Total Global Scores of the IC for *Participatio*n	12	41.9	9.64	-1.91	4.32
Total Global Scores of the IC for *Supports*	32	103	30.03	-2.67	7.74

Note: Total N = 10. Sk. = Skewness. Kut. = Kurtosis. IC = Inclusion Crosswalk.

Correlations of the Professional Development hours with access, participation, and supports did not occur because of the variance and reliability across a small sample (Table 18). The range was between zero to two hundred hours of professional development completed by participants on topics related to Early Childhood Special Education (ESCE) and or Special Education (SE). Four of the ten participants responded that they had not completed any professional development on ECSE and or SE. Professional development for teachers to provide inclusive practices is needed.

Table 18. Correlation Table of Professional Development and Constructs of the Inclusion Crosswalk: Access, Participation, and Supports

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Total Professional Development Hours		.08	-.04	.17
2. Total Global Scores of the IC for Access			92**	94**
3. Total Global Scores of the IC for Participation				.83**
4. Total Global Scores of the IC for Supports				

Note: Total N = 10. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). ICP = Inclusive Classroom Profile. SSPI = Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion. CA-QRIS = California Quality and Improvement System

Summary

The results of this study provide critical information of assessing inclusive practices of Head Start classrooms according to access, participation, and supports constructs. Answers to the research questions were explored based on the literature review and limited studies on inclusive practices in Head Start.

The underlying factor structure of the ICP is made up of access and participation. The underlying factor structure of the SSPI is made up of access, participation, and supports. The underlying factor structure of the CA-QRIS is made up of supports. In exploring similarities between the ICP, SSPI, and CA-QRIS, data revealed that the ICP and SSPI correlated with access, participation, and supports. Professional Development could not be analyzed according to access, participation, and supports due to the low range. Even though correlational analysis could not be conducted due to the low range, there is data to support the discrepancy in professional development for teachers to implement preschool inclusion.

Chapter 5 will discuss the findings of this chapter, recommendations for leaders and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In Chapter five, an overview, discussions of the research findings, recommendations, and next steps for educational reform of inclusive practices in Head Start will be discussed. This chapter will also discuss recommendations for future research and conclude with the limitations of the study.

Overview

This research study implemented a quantitative, descriptive design approach. The purpose of the study was to assess inclusive practices in Head Start preschool Classrooms. Data was collected objectively using a single subject group at one point in time to explore the five research questions (Creswell, 2003, p.155). Three surveys were utilized in this study based on the research questions. As discussed in the literature review, research on inclusive practices in Head Start is scarce (Gallagher & Lambert, 2006). Access, Participation, and Supports (DEC/NAEYC, 2009) guided as the theme of this study. Findings of the underlying factor structure of the ICP, SSPI, and CA-QRIS is that the items of the ICP overlapped with access and participation, Items of the SSPI overlapped with access, participation, and supports and Items of the CA-QRIS overlapped with supports. There were correlations between the ICP and

SSPI for access, participation, and supports. There is a gap in professional development for teachers to provide inclusive practices per data reported by participants.

Discussions of Findings

Sample Demographics: All of the ten participants (n=10) were females (100%). My sample is representative of teachers in Head Start classrooms (Buysse et. al. 2001; Terrell, 2017).

Research Question #1: This research question was partially supported.

The underlying factor structure of the ICP is made up of access and participation as there were moderate to large correlations of these items according to the organization in the Inclusion Crosswalk. i.e. The correlation between Item 3 (Adult Involvement in Play) with Item 6 (Relationship of Adult and Children) ($r=.95$, $p \leq .001$) resulted in a 90% overlap according to the coefficient of determination ($^{(.95}$, =0.90, = 90%). This is an indication that students with disabilities are accessing their environment. These findings support the study conducted by Soukakou et. al. (2014). In this study, items of the ICP resulted in moderate correlations. "It was expected that that developmental day programs and Head Start will have higher ICP scores because of their histories in serving children with disabilities" (Soukakou et. al., p.235).

Research Question #2: This research question was fully supported.

The underlying factor structure of the SSPI is made up of access, participation, and supports. All except two items had a moderate to high correlations of these items according to the organization in the Inclusion Crosswalk. i.e. Item 6 (To have knowledge to assess development of children) and Item 30 (To have knowledge to promote positive interactions) ($r = .91$, $p \leq .001$), resulted in an 82% overlap according to the coefficient of determination $^{(.91}$, =0.82 = 82%). This is an indication that teachers needed the knowledge to assess the development of children with disabilities and the knowledge to promote interactions among children with and without disabilities. Another example, Item 9 (To have family involvement and support of children with special needs and item 14 (To have a positive attitude of school personnel towards inclusion) ($r=.98$ $p \leq .001$), resulted in a coefficient determination of 96% $^{(.98}$, =0.96 = 96%). The involvement of the family is an integral part of Head Start, according to the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HPPS, 2016). Both these examples are indications of teachers needing professional development of targeted topics to support students with disabilities.

Participant # 6 did not complete the SSPI. She shared that she did not have time to complete the survey as she was too busy trying to help her students with challenging behaviors. This participant reported that she had eight students with concerns related to speech and social-emotional

development. She reported that she will be following policies and procedures of the ECE programs and making referrals for special education services, as indicated in Table 4. She also reported that she needed support with specific strategies to support these students. Findings support the study conducted by Muccio et al. (2014) that lack of professional development was a hindrance to implementing preschool inclusion.

The Inclusion Crosswalk consisted of 28 items placed in the supports construct. Since the SSPI survey is intended to elicit responses from teachers on available resources and needed resources on inclusion, it can be concluded that the items of the survey were organized according to the operational definition of the constructs (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).

Research Question #3: This research question was partially supported.

The underlying factor structure of the CA-QRIS is made up of supports as there were moderate correlations of these items according to the items organized in the Inclusion Crosswalk. i.e. The correlation between Elements 3 (Teacher Qualifications) and Element 7 (Director Qualifications) was ($r = .82$, $p = < .001$) resulted in a 67% overlap according to the coefficient of determination $^{(.82}$, =0.67 = 67%).
This data aligns with the literature on Head Start teacher qualifications (ECKLC, 2019).

The absence of access and participation constructs in the underlying structure of the CA-QRIS needs to be addressed. The purpose of the CA-QRIS is to identify high-quality preschool classrooms by assessing the classroom according to the seven elements. According to Odom, Buysse, and Soukakou (2011), access, participation, and supports are indicators of high-quality classrooms. The CA-QRIS does not assess inclusive practices. This argument is supported by the literature of Buysse & Hollingsworth (2009) and expectations of the U.S. Department of Education (2019) that Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) of early childhood classrooms needs to be inclusive.

Research Question 4: This research question was partially supported.

The correlation of items of the ICP, SSPI, and CA-QRIS in looking at access, participation, and supports is the outcome of similarities. Total global scores of each construct, according to the Inclusion Crosswalk, were calculated in order to find the overlap of these constructs. The ICP and SSPI resulted in moderate to high overlaps. i.e. The correlation between ICP Supports and SSPI Supports was ($r = .95$, $p = < .001$), resulting a coefficient determination of 90% ($.95^{.} = 0.90$, =90%). Overall there were correlations for access and supports in all three measure measures (ICP, SSPI, and CA-QRIS) and correlations for access and supports in two measures (ICP and SSPI). It can be concluded that the

absence of an element to assess inclusive practices on the CA-QRIS resulted in these findings. In can be inferred that CA-QRIS (Quality Start Riverside County, 2019) is not a comprehensive quality rating system. An assessment of inclusive practices as the element placed in the participation construct (on the organization of the Inclusion Crosswalk) may result in correlations of CA-QRIS participation with the ICP participation and SSPI participation. This construct with ICP on the CA-QRIS lacks participation.

Research Question #5: There was limited support for this research question. Professional development hours in Early Childhood Special Education (ESCE) or Special Education completed by participants varied from 200 hours to zero. The Mean score was 24.7 (SD=61.83) Table 17. Four participants reported they had not taken any professional development training in ECSE or SE. In order to provide inclusive practices, teachers need professional development.

Head Start Program Performance Standards (2016) require that teaching staff complete 15 hours of professional development training per year. Supporting children with disabilities is listed as one of the topics of required training along with instructional practices and classroom environment. Studies conducted by Muccio (2012) and Muccio et al. (2014) revealed that the available professional development supports

were less than the need for professional development to implement for inclusive practices.

Quality Start Riverside County (2019) supports teachers with professional development training by offering professional development training and incentives for participation. The literature on professional development clearly states supporting teachers with ongoing professional development is linked with student outcomes for students with and without disabilities (Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009; ECLKC, 2009; Muccio 2012; QSRC, 2009).

Recommendations for Educational Leaders PreK-16

Based on the results of the study, there are three recommendations proposed to educational leaders, specifically administrators of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) programs at Local Education Agencies, County Office of Education, and Quality Start Riverside County.

1. Assess inclusive practices of Head Start and other early childhood education classrooms with the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) focusing on the access, participation, and supports constructs.

2. Assess the needs of teachers with the Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) and provide on-going targeted professional development training.

3. Add inclusive practices as an 8th element to the Quality Counts California rating matrix, previously known as the California Quality Rating Improvement System (CA-QRIS) rating matrix.

Next Steps for Educational Reform

As an Early Childhood Administrator, having provided leadership as a Principal of an Early Childhood Education program with nearly 500 students, supporting all students to accomplish their potential is of utmost importance. The implementation of inclusive practices with *Access, participation,* and *supports* will benefit students, teachers, parents, and all stakeholders. Assessing inclusive practices and providing targeted professional development for teachers will result in providing high-quality preschool education for all students.

As the Inclusion Crosswalk supported the study, it can be utilized in for the implementation and assessment of inclusive practices in addition to organizing items of assessments on inclusive practices. As a result, a new conceptual framework on the assessment and implementation of inclusive preschool practices can be derived applying Odom & Diamond

(1998) and the constructs of the preschool inclusion framework (DEC/NAEYC, 2009):

Access

Nucleus – The Preschool Classroom. Assessment of the preschool classroom using the Inclusive Classroom Profile and provide access to students with disabilities as full members of the classroom community.

Participation

Microsystem – Curriculum and Teaching Practices. Assessment of all elements of the preschool classroom with an inclusive Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Supports

Exosystem – Professional Development. Obtain teacher input with the Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) and Provide targeted professional development training to teachers and improve student outcomes.

Macrosystem – Implement policy changes on inclusive practices in preschool classrooms (i.e., policy statement on inclusive practices),

school (i.e., changes in the school infrastructure, and the community at large (i.e., propose changes to the current the Title 22 regulations so that preschool students with disabilities will be full members of the school community).

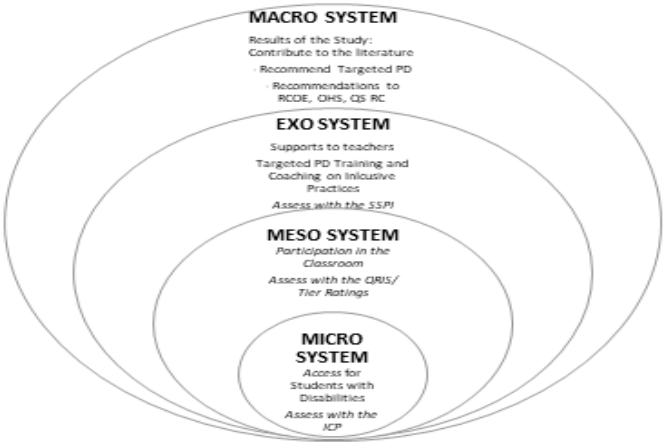


Figure 3. The Conceptual Framework on the Assessment of Inclusive Practices

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations include addressing the limitations of the current study. The small sample size was the most significant limitation. The best way to increase the sample size will be to include other types of preschool classrooms offered by the school district and include preschool classrooms of all the school districts of a county. The second recommendation is to conduct a mixed study so that qualitative data, such as teacher voices can be captured for the implementation of inclusive practices.

Limitations

The first limitation of the study was the small sample size. Including teachers of Head Start (HS) and the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) will provide a bigger sample size. The second limitation was that there were no male participants. The third limitation was that the study was limited to only one school district of the County. Including HS and CSPP classes of all school districts of an entire county will provide rich data as it will represent a wider population of students with and without disabilities.

Conclusion

This study addressed the lack of assessment of inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms. This is a problem of practice which the Federal Government has not addressed. This study provided an understanding of inclusive practices within constructs *access, participation,* and *supports* (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).

The results of this study revealed the underlying factor structure of the items of the ICP are made of access and participation constructs according to the Inclusion Crosswalk: Items of the SSPI are made of access, participation, and supports. Items of the CA-QRIS are made up of only supports. In exploring similarities among the three research instruments, there were correlations between the ICP and SSPI for

access, participation and supports. The CA-QRIS did not overlap with the ICP or SSPI. There is a gap in professional development for teachers to provide inclusive practices per data reported by participants.

Access, participation, and *supports* are supported by the research studies discussed in the literature review. Providing *access* and a Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for preschoolers with disabilities is stipulated by Part B of the IDEA (Cook et al., 2012; HSPPS, 2016). *Participation* of students as full members in high-quality preschool programs with an enriched curriculum is crucial for school success for students with and without disabilities (Gallagher & Lambert, 2006; Hodskins, 1975; HSPPS, 2016; Schmit & Ewen, 2012). Providing s*upports* to teachers for the implementation of inclusive practices is crucial. According to research studies conducted by Buysse and Hollingsworth (2009) and Muccio et al. (2014), children benefit when teachers are supported with professional development training.

The findings of the study will be added to the limited research on inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms. The results of this study can be utilized for policy changes on inclusive practices in Head Start and other early childhood education programs. These changes may impact preschool students with and without disabilities to acquire a high-quality preschool education. Recommendations are made to administrators of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Early Childhood

Special Education (ECSE) of Lead Education Agencies, Riverside County Office of Education and the Quality Start Riverside County.

APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT FLYER

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN BERNARDINO
College of Education

Volunteers Wanted for a Research Study
Head Start Teachers

Assessment of Inclusive Practices in Head Start Preschool Classrooms:
Access, Participation, and Supports

An opportunity to participate in a research study is available to Head Start teachers.

- Volunteers must be a Head Start Teacher with at least one student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

- Volunteers must be a Head Start Teacher for at least one year.

The purpose of this study is to assess inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms and to inform *on access, participation and supports*. This study has the potential to make transformative change on policies and practices of preschool inclusion.

Classroom observations will be scheduled according to teacher preference between 9/16/19 and 10/16/19. Preschool classrooms will be assessed using the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) (Soukakou, 2016) for two hours and thirty minutes with a follow up teacher interview on measures of the ICP for about fifteen to twenty minutes during prep time. Participants are welcome to provide feedback on inclusive practices by completing the Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) (Küçüker, Acarlar, & Kapci 2006) teacher survey.

This research is conducted under the direction of Dr. Angela Louque, Department Chair, Educational Leadership & Technology, California State University San Bernardino, 5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino, CA 92407, alouque@csusb.edu 909-537-3722.

This research has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of CSUSB - protocol number IRB-FY2019-274.

To learn more about this research, please call Ifthika "Shine" Nissar at 760-408-4321 or email at nissari@coyote.csusb.edu

APPENDIX B

TEACHER INFORMED CONSENT

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN BERNARDINO
College of Education

The research study that you are invited to participate in to assess inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms. This study is conducted by Ifthika "Shine" Nissar, doctoral candidate under the supervision of Dr. Angela Louque, Department Chair, Educational Leadership & Technology, California State University San Bernardino. The Institutional Board at California State University San Bernardino approved this study.

PURPOSE:
The purpose of my research study is to assess inclusive practices in Head Start preschool classrooms and inform on *access, participation, and supports.* According to research, assessment of preschool quality, inclusive practices and supporting staff members with ongoing professional development training are proven methods to improve student outcomes for students with and without disabilities.

PARTICIPATION:
Your participation in my research study is completely voluntary. You can change your mind anytime not to participate in my study. You can withdraw participation in any part of this study even if you have signed this consent.

DURATION:
One-time classroom observations will be scheduled according to teacher preference between 9/16/19 to 10/16/19. Observations will be conducted using the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) (Soukakou, 2016) survey instrument with 12 items on inclusive practices. It will take two hours and thirty minutes. A follow-up teacher interview is needed on five of these 12 items for about fifteen to twenty minutes during prep time. I will not interrupt instruction and or interact with any students. You are invited to provide feedback by completing the Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) (Küçüker, Acarlar, & Kapci, 2006) teacher survey. The survey has 34 survey items/statements about preschool inclusion (about current practices/resources available to you and practices/resources that you would need). It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete this. You are also invited to provide demographic data by completing the Demographic Data Survey which has 10 survey items and it will take five to ten minutes to complete. As part of my study, I will be accessing your classroom tier rating of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) from the Quality Start Riverside County website.

CONFIDENTIALITY:
Information gathered (during the observation, interview, and demographic data) of surveys will be identified with a number and reported in aggregates to protect your identity and confidentiality. All written information gathered of surveys initially and transferred electronically for data analysis will be stored in locked cabinets in my home office until fall 2025. Information will be shredded and deleted after this time.

RISKS AND BENEFITS:
There may be potential minimum risks. I will share these risks and address to resolve these risks. There are many benefits of this study for you as participants, students, your program and the district. The first potential risk is that you may assume that participating in my research study is tied with your annual performance review. The second potential risk is that you may feel uncomfortable being observed. The third risk may be that you may feel uncomfortable about your classroom information being shared with others. The goal of my study is to gather data on inclusive practices to support you not to evaluate you. All data will be reported in aggregates and each classroom will be identified by a number. The benefits of participating in my study is the opportunity for you to share your inclusive practices through the ICP and to provide feedback via SSPI survey. Also, I will be happy to share feedback on my observation of inclusive practices upon request.

CONTACT:
If you have any questions or concerns please contact me or my advisor
Ifthika "Shine" Nissar, 760-408-4321, nissari@coyote.csusb.edu
Dr. Angela Louque, Ed.D. 909-537-3722, alouque@csusb.edu

RESULTS:
Results of my research will be available through ScholarWorks at scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu. Research findings will also be disseminated at conference presentations in the United States and internationally as this study has the potential to create transformative change by informing future policies on the importance of assessing inclusive practices of Head Start preschool classrooms to improve *access, participation, and supports* and provide high-quality inclusive practices.

CONSENT STATEMENT:
I have read the information and agree to participate in this research study.
Yes, I want to participate ___ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN BERNARDINO

August 14, 2019

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Expedited Review
IRB-FY2019-274
Status: Approved

Ms. Ifthika Nissar and Prof. Angela Louque
COE - Doctoral Studies, COE - Educ Leadership&Tech ELT
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Ms. Nissar and Prof. Louque:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Assessment of Inclusive Practices in Head Start Preschool Classrooms: Access, Participation, and Supports" has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The informed consent document you submitted is the official version for your study and cannot be changed without prior IRB approval. A change in your informed consent (no matter how minor the change) requires resubmission of your protocol as amended using the IRB Cayuse system protocol change form.

Your application is approved for one year from August 13, 2019 through August 13, 2020.

Please note the Cayuse IRB system will notify you when your protocol is up for renewal and ensure you file it before your protocol study end date.

Your responsibilities as the researcher/investigator reporting to the IRB Committee include the following four requirements as mandated by the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 listed below. Please note that the protocol change form and renewal form are located on the IRB website under the forms menu. Failure to notify the IRB of the above may result in disciplinary action. You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following by submitting the appropriate form (modification, unanticipated/adverse event, renewal, study closure) through the online Cayuse IRB Submission System.

1. If you need to make any changes/modifications to your protocol submit a modification form as the IRB must review all changes before implementing in your study to ensure the degree of risk has not changed.
2. If any unanticipated adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research study or project.
3. If your study has not been completed submit a renewal to the IRB.

4. If you are no longer conducting the study or project submit a study closure.

Please ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.

The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional approvals which may be required. If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the IRB Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval identification number (listed at the top) in all correspondence.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Donna Garcia

Donna Garcia, Ph.D., IRB Chair
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

DG/MG

APPENDIX D

SUPPORT SCALE FOR PRESCHOOL INCLUSION (SSPI)

Supports Scale for Preschool Inclusion

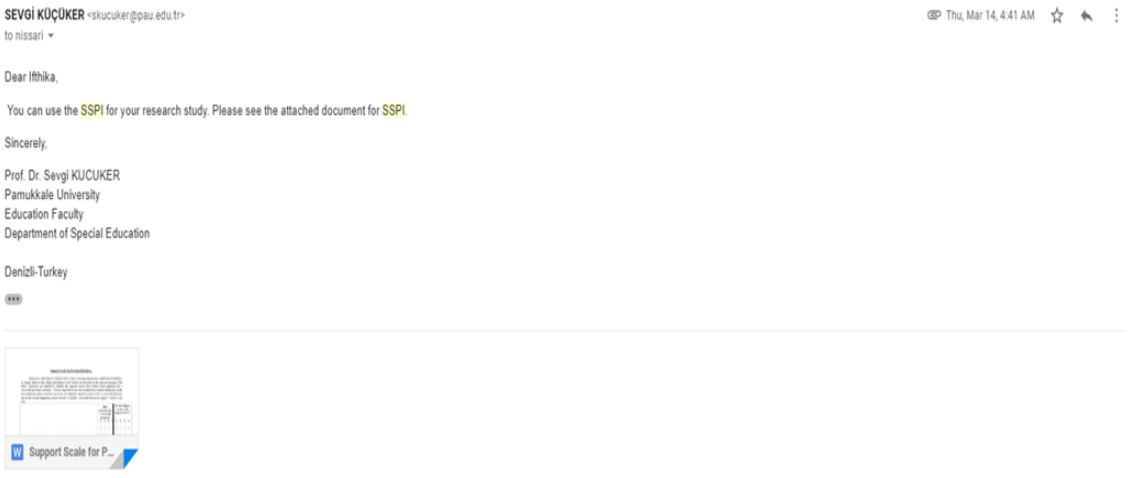
Inclusion is education of children with (visual or hearing impairments, intellectual disabilities, or chronic illnesses like asthma and epilepsy) and without special needs in the same environment. The below statements are intended to identify the supports/sources that teachers think important for a successful preschool inclusion. You are expected to rate each statement in a binary dimension: In the first dimension, please rate how necessary you think the supports/sources is for a successful inclusion and in the second dimension, please rate how available / accessible the given support / source is for you.

	How necessary for a successful inclusion?				In what degree you have this support/source?			
	1- not at all	2- little	3- somewhat	4- to a great extent	1- not at all	2- little	3- somewhat	4- to a great extent
1. To have the opportunity to observe teachers with knowledge, skill, and experience in working with children with special needs	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
2. To have knowledge about child's disability/illness	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
3. Classroom/school's physical environment is to be appropriate for children with special needs (e.g. size of classroom, appropriate place for individual education, health, and security)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
4. To have appropriate materials and toys for children with special needs (i.e., appropriate for her developmental needs and her individuality)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
5. To have knowledge and skill to assess development of children with special needs	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
6. To have peer social acceptance of children with special needs (e.g. to be liked, approved, helped, included into the games by other children)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
7. To have technological equipment to support education of children with special needs (e.g. computer programs, video-tapes, and DVDs)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
8. To have knowledge and skill to identify appropriate educational goals for children with special needs	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
9. To have family involvement and support of children with special needs	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
10. To have volunteers in classroom/school for children with special needs (e.g. family members, students)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
11. To have knowledge and skill about communicating and collaborating with families	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
12. To have the appreciation from others (families, colleagues, and administrators) in the work place for her/his efforts of children with special needs	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

	How necessary for a successful inclusion?				In what degree you have this support/source?			
	1- not at all	2- very little	3- somewhat	4- to a great extent	1- not at all	2- very little	3- somewhat	4- to a great extent
13. To have opportunities to attend meetings, conferences etc about the education of children with special needs	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
14. To have positive attitudes of school personnel towards inclusion	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
15. To have knowledge about laws and regulations concerning inclusion	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
16. To be in contact with professionals for corporation and -if needed supervision- for children with special needs at your school (e.g. special education teacher, psychologist, experienced teacher)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
17. To have positive attitudes of families of typically developing children	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
18. To have knowledge and skill about appropriate teaching methods and how to put them into practice for children with special needs	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
19. To have collaboration with professionals serving outside the school (e.g. special education teacher, doctor, physiotherapist, psychologist, etc.)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
20. To have knowledge and skill about curriculum adaptation and implementation	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
21. To have in-service training in needed areas of inclusion	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
22. To have training for the school personnel fostering positive attitudes for children with special needs	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
23. To have knowledge and skill about adaptation of classroom environment according to the needs of the children with special needs	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
24. To have regular meetings with families and specialists to evaluate and discuss development of children with special needs	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
25. To have knowledge and skill about behavior management	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
26. To have small class size for the class in which child with special needs attends	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
27. To have written information on needed areas of inclusion	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
28. To have knowledge and skill about how to adapt and use materials / toys for children with special needs	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
29. To have additional personnel in classroom or school for child with special needs	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

	How necessary for a successful inclusion?				In what degree you have this support/source?			
	1- not at all	2- little	3- somewhat	4- to a great extent	1- not at all	2- little	3- somewhat	4- to a great extent
30. To have knowledge and skill to promote positive interactions between children with special needs and other children	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
31. To have school principals' support for a teacher about children with special needs	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
32. To have knowledge and skill about usage of special equipments of children with special needs (e.g. how to put on a hearing aid)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
33. To have appreciation of others from outside of the work place (e.g. from her /his own family, friends, and acquaintances)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
34. To have extra time for collaboration with professionals/personnel/families	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Apart from the ones stated above, please write down any other situation that facilitates or complicates a successful implementation of inclusion.



APPENDIX E

CALIFORNIA QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM (CA-QRIS) RATING MATRIX/QUALITY COUNTS CA RATING MATRIX

CALIFORNIA QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM (CA-QRIS)
QUALITY CONTINUUM FRAMEWORK –RATING MATRIX WITH ELEMENTS AND POINTS FOR CONSORTIA COMMON TIERS 1, 3, AND 4

ELEMENT	1 POINT	2 POINTS	3 POINTS	4 POINTS	5 POINTS
CORE I: CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL READINESS					
1. Child Observation	☐ Not required	☐ Program uses evidence-based child assessment/observation tool annually that covers all five domains of development	☐ Program uses valid and reliable child assessment/ observation tool aligned with CA *Foundations & Frameworks*[1] twice a year	☐ DRDP (minimum twice a year) and results used to inform curriculum planning	☐ Program uses DRDP twice a year and uploads into DRDP Tech and results used to inform curriculum planning
2. Developmental and Health Screenings	☐ Meets Title 22 Regulations	☐ Health Screening Form (Community Care *Licensing form LIC 701 "Physician's Report - Child Care Centers" or equivalent)* used at entry, then: **1.** Annually **OR** **2.** Ensures vision and hearing screenings are conducted annually	☐ Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using a **valid and reliable developmental screening tool** at entry and as indicated by results thereafter **AND** ☐ Meets Criteria from point level 2	☐ Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the **ASQ** at entry and as indicated by results thereafter **AND** ☐ Meets Criteria from point level 2	☐ Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the **ASQ & ASQ-SE**, if indicated, at entry, then as indicated by results thereafter **AND** ☐ Program staff uses children's screening results to make referrals and implement intervention strategies and adaptations as appropriate **AND** ☐ Meets Criteria from point level 2
CORE II: TEACHERS AND TEACHING					
3. Minimum Qualifications for Lead Teacher/ Family Child Care Home (FCCH)	☐ Meets Title 22 Regulations [**Center:** 12 units of Early Childhood Education (ECE)/Child Development (CD) **FCCH:** 15 hours of training on preventive health practices]	☐ **Center:** 24 units of ECE/CD[2] **OR** Associate Teacher Permit ☐ **FCCH:** 12 units of ECE/CD **OR** Associate Teacher Permit	☐ 24 units of ECE/CD + 16 units of General Education **OR** Teacher Permit **AND** ☐ 21 hours professional development (PD) annually	☐ Associate's degree (AA/AS) in ECE/CD (or closely related field) **OR** AA/AS in any field plus 24 units of ECE/CD **OR** Site Supervisor Permit **AND** ☐ 21 hours PD annually	☐ Bachelor's degree in ECE/CD (or closely related field) **OR** BA/BS in any field plus/with 24 units of ECE/CD (or master's degree in ECE/CD) **OR** Program Director Permit **AND** ☐ 21 hours PD annually
4. Effective Teacher–Child Interactions: CLASS Assessments (*Use tool for appropriate age group as available)	☐ Not Required	☐ Familiarity with CLASS for appropriate age group as available by one representative from the site	☐ Independent CLASS assessment by reliable observer to inform the program's professional development/improvement plan	☐ Independent CLASS assessment by reliable observer with minimum CLASS scores: **Pre-K** ▪ Emotional Support – 5 ▪ Instructional Support –3 ▪ Classroom Organization – 5 **Toddler** ▪ Emotional & Behavioral Support – 5	☐ Independent assessment with CLASS with minimum CLASS scores: **Pre-K** ▪ Emotional Support – 5.5 ▪ Instructional Support – 3.5 ▪ Classroom Organization – 5.5 **Toddler** ▪ Emotional & Behavioral Support – 5.5 ▪ Engaged Support for Learning – 4 **Infant** ▪ Responsive Caregiving (RC) – 5.5

1. Approved assessments are: Creative Curriculum GOLD, Early Learning Scale by National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER), and Brigance Inventory of Early Development III.
2. For all ECE/CD units, the core eight are desired but not required.
Note: Point values are not indicative of Tiers 1–5 but reflect a range of points that can be earned toward assigning a tier rating (see Total Point Range).

ELEMENT	1 POINT	2 POINTS	3 POINTS	4 POINTS	5 POINTS
				▪ Engaged Support for Learning – 3.5 **Infant** ▪ Responsive Caregiving (RC) – 5.0	
CORE III: PROGRAM AND ENVIRONMENT - Administration and Leadership					
5. Ratios and Group Size (Centers Only beyond licensing regulations)	☐ **Center:** Title 22 Regulations **Infant** Ratio of 1:4 **Toddler Option** Ratio of 1:6 **Preschool** Ratio of 1:12 ☐ **FCCH:** Title 22 Regulations *(excluded from point values in ratio and group size)*	☐ **Center - Ratio: Group Size** **Infant/Toddler** – 4:16 **Toddler** – 3:18 **Preschool** – 3:36	☐ **Center - Ratio: Group Size** **Infant/Toddler**– 3:12 **Toddler** – 2:12 **Preschool**– 2:24	☐ **Center - Ratio: Group Size** **Infant/Toddler** – 3:12 or 2:8 **Toddler** – 2:10 **Preschool** – 3:24 or 2:20	☐ **Center - Ratio: Group Size** **Infant/Toddler** – 3:9 or better **Toddler** – 3:12 or better **Preschool** – 1:8 ratio and group size of no more than 20
6. Program Environment Rating Scale(s) (Use tool for appropriate setting: ECERS-R, ITERS-R, FCCERS-R)	☐ Not Required	☐ Familiarity with ERS and every classroom uses ERS as a part of a Quality Improvement Plan	☐ Assessment on the whole tool. Results used to inform the program's Quality Improvement Plan	☐ Independent ERS assessment. All subscales completed and averaged to meet overall score level of 5.0	☐ Independent ERS assessment. All subscales completed and averaged to meet overall score level of 5.5 OR Current National Accreditation approved by the California Department of Education
7. Director Qualifications (Centers Only)	☐ 12 units ECE/CD+ 3 units management/ administration	☐ 24 units ECE/CD + 16 units General Education +/with 3 units management/ administration **OR** Master Teacher Permit	☐ Associate's degree with 24 units ECE/CD +/with 6 units management/ administration and 2 units supervision **OR** Site Supervisor Permit **AND** ☐ 21 hours PD annually	☐ Bachelor's degree with 24 units ECE/CD +/with 8 units management/ administration **OR** Program Director Permit **AND** ☐ 21 hours PD annually	☐ Master's degree with 30 units ECE/CD including specialized courses +/with 8 units management/ administration, **OR** Administrative Credential **AND** ☐ 21 hours PD annually
TOTAL POINT RANGES					
Program Type	**Common-Tier 1**	**Local-Tier 2**[3]	**Common-Tier 3**	**Common-Tier 4**	**Local-Tier 5**[4]
Centers 7 Elements for 35 points	**Blocked** (7 points) – Must Meet All Elements	**Point Range** 8 to 19	**Point Range** 20 to 25	**Point Range** 26 to 31	**Point Range** 32 and above
FCCHs 5 Elements for 25 points	**Blocked** (5 points) – Must Meet All Elements	**Point Range** 6 to 13	**Point Range** 14 to 17	**Point Range** 18 to 21	**Point Range** 22 and above

3. Local-Tier 2: Local decision if Blocked or Points and if there are additional elements.
4. Local-Tier 5: Local decision if there are additional elements included California Department of Education, February 2014 updated on May 28, 2015; effective July 1, 2015.

APPENDIX F

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SURVEY

1. What is your age? ____

2. What is your gender? (Choose one)

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other:_____

3. What is your ethnicity? (Choose one)

☐ Asian
☐ Pacific Islander
☐ Native American
☐ White (non-Hispanic/Latino)
☐ Mexican/Chicano
☐ Hispanic/Latino (non-Mexican)
☐ Black (non-Hispanic, including African American)
☐ Other (please specify) _____

4. What is your highest level of education completed? (Choose one)

☐ A.A/A.S.
☐ B.A/B.Sc.
☐ M.A/M.S/M.Ed.

5. Was your major Early Childhood Education/Child Development/Human Development?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If No, please specify your major _____

6. How many years of experience do you have working as a Head Start preschool teacher? _____

7. How many college classes have you taken in Early Childhood Special Education/Special Education? _____

8. How many hours of Professional Development hours do you have in early childhood special education/special education/working with children with disabilities/inclusion? _____

9. How many students with an IEP are in your current Head Start preschool class? _____

10. How many of your current students may need a referral for special education services? _____

Your concerns are regarding: Speech and Language____ **Social-Emotional** ____

Pre-Academics _____ **Other**_____ **(specify)**

APPENDIX G

INCLUSION CROSSWALK

Inclusion Crosswalk

Inclusion Crosswalk of the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) (Soukakou, 2016), Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (SSPI) Küçüker, Acarlar, & Kapci, 2006) (SSPI), and California Quality Rating Improvement System (CA-QRIS) (Quality Start Riverside County, 2019) with the Inclusion Conceptual Framework: *Access, Participation and Supports* (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).

Items the ICP, SSPI, and CA-QRIS were identified and categorized according to *access, participation, and supports* based on the operational definitions by the Division of Early Childhood of the Council of Exceptional Children and National Association for the Education of Young Children (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). The Inclusion Crosswalk was developed by the researcher for the purpose of this study.

Access, participation, and *supports* are indicators of preschool inclusion according to the conceptual framework. *Access, participation, and supports* were the overarching constructs that guided the study.

Inclusive Classroom Profile (Soukakou, 2016) and Conceptual Framework (DEC/NAEYC, 2009):

Access	Participation	Supports
Adaptations of Space, Material and Equipment (Item. 1)	Adult Involvement in Peer Interactions (Item. 2)	Family-Professional Partnerships (Item. 11)
Support for Communication (Item. 7)	Adults' Guidance of Children's Free Choice Activities and Play (Item. 3)	Monitoring Children's Learning (Item. 12)
Adaptations of group activities (Item. 8)	Conflict Resolution (Item. 4)	
	Membership (Item. 5)	
	Relationships Between Adults and Children (Item. 6)	
	Transitions Between Activities (Item. 9)	
	Feedback (Item. 10)	
Range of Total Score for ICP-Access = 3-21	**Range of Total Score for ICP-Participation = 7-49**	**Range of Total Score for ICP-Support = 2-14**

Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion (Küçüker, Acarlar, & Kapci, 2006) and Inclusion Conceptual Framework (DEC/NAEYC, 2009):

Access	Participation	Supports
Classroom/school's physical environment is to be appropriate for children with special needs (e.g. size of the classroom, appropriate place for individual education, health, and security) (Item. 3A, 3B)	To have peer social acceptance of children with special needs (e.g. to be liked, approved, helped, included in games by other children) (Item. 6A, 6B)	To have the opportunity to observe teachers with knowledge, skill, and experience in working with children with special needs (Item. 1A, IB)
To have appropriate materials and toys for children with special needs (i.e., appropriate for her developmental needs and her individuality) (Item. 4A, 4B)	To have knowledge and skill to promote positive interactions between children with special needs and other children (Item. 30A, 30B)	To have knowledge about the child's disability/illness (Item. 2A, 2B)
To have technological equipment to support the education of children with special needs (e.g. computer programs, video-tapes, and DVDs) (Item. 7A, 7B)		To have knowledge and skill to assess the development of children with special needs (Item. 5A, 5B)
To have a small class size for the class in which child with special needs attends (Item. 26A, 26B)		To have knowledge and skill to identify appropriate educational goals for children with special needs (Item. 8A, 8B)
		To have family involvement and support of children with special needs (Item. 9A, 9B)
		To have volunteers in the classroom/school for children with special needs (e.g. family members, students) (Item. 10A, 10B)
		To have knowledge and skill about communicating and collaborating with families (Item. 11A, 11B)
		To have the appreciation from others (families, colleagues, and administrators) in the workplace for her/his efforts of children with special needs (Item. 12A, 12B)

Access	Participation	Supports
		To have opportunities to attend meetings, conferences, etc. about the education of children with special needs (Item. 13A, 13B)
		To have positive attitudes of school personnel towards inclusion (Item. 14A, 14B)
		To have knowledge about laws and regulations concerning inclusion (Item.15A, 15B)
		To be in contact with professionals for the corporation and, if needed supervision- for children with special needs at your school (e.g. special education teacher, psychologist, experienced teacher) (Item. 16A, 16B)
		To have positive attitudes of families of typically developing children (Item.17A, 17B)
		To have knowledge and skill about appropriate teaching methods and how to put them into practice for children with special needs (Item. 18A, 18B)
		To have collaboration with professionals serving outside the school (e.g. special education teacher, doctor, physiotherapist, psychologist, etc.) (Item. 19A, 19B)
		To have knowledge and skill about curriculum adaptation and implementation (Item. 20A, 20B)
		To have in-service training in needed areas of inclusion (Item. 21A, 21B)
		To have training for the school personnel fostering positive attitudes for children with special needs (Item. 22A, 22B)
		To have knowledge and skill about adaptation of classroom environment according to the needs of children with special needs (Item. 23A, 23B)
		To have regular meetings with families and specialists to evaluate and discuss the development of children with special needs (Item. 24A, 24B)

Access	Participation	Supports
		To have knowledge and skill about behavior management (Item. 25A, 25B)
		To have written information on needed areas of inclusion (Item. 27A, 27B)
		To have knowledge and skill about how to adapt and use materials/toys for children with special needs (Item. 28A, 28B)
		To have additional personnel in the classroom or school for a child with special needs (Item. 29A, 29B)
		To have school principals' support for a teacher about children with special needs (Item. 31A, 31B)
		To have knowledge and skill about usage of special equipment of children with special needs (e.g. how to put on a hearing aid) (Item. 32A, 32B)
		To have appreciation of others from outside of the work place (e.g. from her /his own family, friends, and acquaintances) (Item. 33A, 33B)
		To have extra time for collaboration with professionals/personnel/families (Item. 34A, 34B)
Total Score for SSPI-Access = 4-32	**Total Score for SSPI-Participation = 2-16**	**Total Score for SSPI-Support = 28-224**

Note: For the purpose of this study, support is identified in column a and necessity is identified in column b. Columns a and b will be merged.

California Quality Rating and Improvement System (CA-QRIS) (Quality Start Riverside County, 2019) and Inclusion Conceptual Framework (DEC/NAEYC, 2009):

Access	Participation	Supports
Program Environmental Scales (Item. 6)	Child Observation (Item. 1)	Minimum Qualifications for Lead Teacher (Item. 3)
	Development and Health Screenings (Item. 2)	Director Qualifications (Item. 7)
	Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: CLASS (Item. 4)	
	Ratios and Group Size (Item. 5)	
Range of Total Score for CA-QRIS-Access = 1-5	**Range of Total Score for CA-QRIS-Participation = 4-20**	**Range of Total Score for CA-QRIS-Support = 2-10**

APPENDIX H

TABLE 8 DISCRIPTIVE TABLE OF THE SSPI SURVEY ITEMS

Table 8. Descriptive Table of the SSPI Survey Items.

Total Individual Item	Construct	Mean	SD	Sk.	Kut.	e	Min.	Max.
SSPI Item 1 To have opportunity to observe teachers	Supports	2.35	1.33	-1.13	0.52	4	0	4
SSPI Item 2 To have knowledge about child's disability/ illness	Supports	2.90	1.58	-1.52	0.86	4	0	4
SSPI Item 3 To have appropriate classrooms	Access	3.00	1.60	-1.68	1.22	4	0	4
SSPI Item 4 To have materials and toys for children	Access	3.20	1.16	-2.82	8.43	4	0	4
SSPI Item 5 To have knowledge to assess development of children	Supports	3.10	1.13	-2.79	8.33	4	0	4
SSPI Item 6 To have peer social acceptance of children	Participation	3.50	1.25	-3.01	9.24	4	0	4
SSPI Item 7 To have technological equipment to support	Access	2.60	1.15	-1.40	2.14	4	0	4
SSPI Item 8 To have knowledge to identify appropriate educational goals	Supports	3.25	1.16	-2.96	9.16	4	0	4
SSPI Item 9 To have family involvement and support	Supports	3.15	1.20	-2.30	6.14	4	0	4
SSPI Item 10 To have volunteers in classroom	Supports	2.50	1.05	-1.33	3.66	4	0	4
SSPI Item 11 To have knowledge to communicate with families	Supports	3.05	1.21	-2.02	4.69	4	0	4
SSPI Item 12 To have appreciation from others (families and administrators)	Supports	2.70	1.21	-1.18	1.86	4	0	4
SSPI Item 13 To have opportunities to attend meetings	Supports	2.90	1.13	-2.18	5.56	4	0	4
SSPI Item 14 To have positive attitudes of school personnel	Supports	3.15	1.18	-2.48	6.94	4	0	4
SSPI Item 15 To have knowledge about laws and regulations	Supports	2.20	1.58	-0.72	-1.32	4	0	4
SSPI Item 16 To have contact with professionals for corporation	Supports	3.05	1.19	-2.13	5.39	4	0	4
SSPI Item 17 To have positive attitudes of families typical children	Supports	3.05	1.21	-2.02	4.69	4	0	4
SSPI Item 18 To have knowledge of teaching methods	Supports	2.80	1.14	-1.73	4.32	4	0	4
SSPI Item 19 To have collaboration with professionals	Supports	2.90	1.17	-1.83	4.18	4	0	4
SSPI Item 20 To have knowledge of curriculum adaptation	Supports	2.90	1.10	-2.34	6.46	4	0	4
SSPI Item 21 To have inn-service training in needed areas of inclusion	Supports	2.60	1.05	-1.86	4.29	4	0	4
SSPI Item 22 To have training for the school personnel	Supports	2.65	1.03	-2.13	5.58	4	0	4
SSPI Item 23 To have knowledge about adaptation of classroom environment	Supports	2.90	1.17	-1.83	4.18	4	0	4
SSPI Item 24 To have meetings with families and specialists	Supports	2.70	1.16	-1.34	2.85	4	0	4
SSPI Item 25 To have knowledge of behavior management	Supports	3.05	1.14	-2.53	6.94	4	0	4
SSPI Item 26 To have small class size	Access	1.80	1.69	-0.02	-2.06	4	0	4
SSPI Item 27 To have written information on needed areas of inclusion	Supports	2.70	1.03	-2.28	6.10	4	0	4
SSPI Item 28 To have knowledge to adapt and use materials	Supports	2.80	1.09	-2.13	5.74	4	0	4
SSPI Item 29 To have additional personnel in classroom	Supports	2.85	1.16	-1.77	4.20	4	0	4
SSPI Item 30 To have knowledge to promote positive interactions	Participation	3.10	1.22	-2.12	4.98	4	0	4
SSPI Item 31 To have school principal's support	Supports	2.95	1.21	-1.73	3.72	4	0	4
SSPI Item 32 To have knowledge of usage of special equipments	Supports	2.80	1.14	-1.73	4.32	4	0	4
SSPI Item 33 To have appreciation of others from outside of the work place	Supports	3.20	1.21	-2.43	6.63	4	0	4
SSPI Item 34 To have extra time for collaboration	Supports	2.75	1.03	-2.45	6.76	4	0	4

Note: N = 9. SSPI = Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion. Sk. = Skewness. Kut. = Kurtosis

APPENDIX I

TABLE 10. CORRELATION TABLE OF THE SSPI FOR SUPPORTS

Table 10. Correlation Table of the SSPI for Participation.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
SSPI Item 1 To have opportunity to observe teachers	-	.94**	.64*	.53	.55	.47	.52	.47	.60	.67*	.27	.57	.50	.62	.50	.58	.67*	.69*	.50	.42	.72*	.63	.42	.47	.65*	.60	.61	.63*
SSPI Item 2 To have knowledge about child's disability/illness		-	.66*	.55	.49	.43	.42	.37	.51	.61	.24	.51	.41	.56	.41	.57	.59	.61	.41	.33	.74*	.58	.36	.39	.54	.56	.67*	.58
SSPI Item 5 To have knowledge to assess development of children			-	.96**	.91**	.91**	.82**	.86**	.91**	.93**	.44	.95**	.87**	.87**	.91**	.97**	.93**	.95**	.91**	.81**	.97**	.91**	.91**	.89**	.90**	.89**	.93**	.91**
SSPI Item 8 To have knowledge to identify appropriate educational goals				-	.91**	.84**	.92**	.83**	.91**	.92**	.53	.92**	.90**	.86**	.90**	.94**	.89**	.92**	.90**	.87**	.91**	.93**	.95**	.90**	.86**	.86**	.91**	.94**
SSPI Item 9 To have family involvement and support					-	.92**	.93**	.84**	.96**	.98**	.51	.95**	.97**	.92**	.94**	.87**	.85**	.90**	.94**	.79**	.90**	.94**	.92**	.92**	.88**	.84**	.82**	.93**
SSPI Item 10 To have volunteers in classroom						-	.89**	.90**	.91**	.89**	.33	.95**	.89**	.86**	.94**	.91**	.88**	.90**	.94**	.75*	.88**	.87**	.90**	.94**	.87**	.81**	.74*	.84**
SSPI Item 11 To have knowledge to communicate with families							-	.89**	.98**	.95**	.47	.94**	.98**	.94**	.98**	.92**	.91**	.95**	.98**	.84**	.86**	.97**	.98**	.96**	.93**	.91**	.75*	.96**
SSPI Item 12 To have appreciation from others (families and administrators)								-	.85**	.84**	.54	.96**	.83**	.74*	.94**	.88**	.95**	.94**	.94**	.92**	.80**	.81**	.88**	.90**	.92**	.74*	.79**	.78**
SSPI Item 13 To have opportunities to attend meetings									-	.98**	.42	.94**	.98**	.96**	.96**	.91**	.90**	.95**	.96**	.81**	.89**	.98**	.96**	.97**	.91**	.90**	.75*	.98**
SSPI Item 14 To have positive attitudes of school personnel										-	.53	.95**	.97**	.96**	.94**	.89**	.89**	.94**	.94**	.79**	.94**	.98**	.92**	.92**	.90**	.88**	.84**	.97**
SSPI Item 15 To have knowledge about laws and regulations											-	.54	.47	.44	.48	.33	.44	.49	.48	.57	.52	.52	.43	.37	.41	.29	.63	.44
SSPI Item 16 To have contact with professionals for corporation												-	.92**	.87**	.98**	.94**	.95**	.97**	.98**	.88**	.92**	.92**	.93**	.94**	.95**	.85**	.86**	.89**
SSPI Item 17 To have positive attitudes of families typical children													-	.96**	.96**	.88**	.85**	.91**	.96**	.78**	.86**	.98**	.96**	.94**	.89**	.90**	.73*	.96**
SSPI Item 18 To have knowledge of teaching methods														-	.90**	.85**	.81**	.89**	.90**	.65*	.91**	.99**	.89**	.89**	.82**	.89**	.70*	.97**
SSPI Item 19 To have collaboration with professionals															-	.94**	.93**	.96**	1.00**	.85**	.88**	.94**	.96**	.95**	.95**	.90**	.78**	.92**
SSPI Item 20 To have knowledge of curriculum adaptation																-	.95**	.95**	.94**	.82**	.91**	.90**	.94**	.90**	.93**	.94**	.85**	.90**
SSPI Item 21 To have inn-service training in needed areas of inclusion																	-	.99**	.94**	.90**	.88**	.88**	.90**	.91**	.97**	.86**	.84**	.87**
SSPI Item 22 To have training for the school personnel																		-	.96**	.88**	.92**	.94**	.93**	.93**	.96**	.89**	.85**	.93**
SSPI Item 23 To have knowledge about adaptation of classroom environment																			-	.85**	.88**	.94**	.96**	.95**	.95**	.90**	.78**	.92**
SSPI Item 24 To have meetings with families and specialists																				-	.71*	.75*	.87**	.85**	.88**	.69*	.82**	.76*
SSPI Item 25 To have knowledge of behavior management																					-	.93**	.84**	.83**	.84**	.87**	.90**	.91**
SSPI Item 27 To have written information on needed areas of inclusion																						-	.93**	.91**	.87**	.91**	.79**	.99**
SSPI Item 28 To have knowledge to adapt and use materials																							-	.97**	.90**	.89**	.78**	.94**
SSPI Item 29 To have additional personnel in classroom																								-	.89**	.82**	.72*	.92**
SSPI Item 31 To have school principals support																									-	.90**	.81**	.88**
SSPI Item 32 To have knowledge of usage of special equipments																										-	.74*	.92**
SSPI Item 33 To have appreciation of others from outside of the work place																											-	.78**
SSPI Item 34 To have extra time for collaboration																												-

Note: Total N = 9. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). SSPI = Support Scale for Preschool Inclusion.

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