The influence of preschool experiences on the transition to kindergarten

Trang Phoung Nguyen
THE INFLUENCE OF PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCES ON THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Psychology

by
Trang Phoung Nguyen
June 1998
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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

Several researchers have focused their attention on school transitions (e.g., the transition to first grade, Alexander, Entwisle, & Baker, 1988; transition to junior high, Simmons & Blyth, 1987). These researchers have suggested that accepted social behaviors from the past follow the child during school transitions. With the exception of Ladd and Price (1987), however, there is relatively little research regarding the transition from preschool to kindergarten. This current study emphasizes social development during the transition from preschool to kindergarten, specifically focusing on the peer relationships and ease of adjustment of children with preschool vs. non-preschool experience. It was hypothesized that children with preschool experience would adjust more readily to kindergarten, as indicated by higher levels of sociability and better adaptation to the demands of a classroom environment, compared with those who have no prior preschool experience. Fifty mothers of kindergartners completed questionnaires concerning the quality of their child's pre-kindergarten experiences, ease of kindergarten adjustment, and overall personality. Kindergarten teachers completed a questionnaire concerning the child's ease of
kindergarten adjustment, sociability, and quality of peer relationships in kindergarten. Overall, there were no significant differences between children who had attended preschool vs. those who had not on teachers' and mothers' reports of children's ease of kindergarten adjustment. However, there were significant differences between the two groups on the teachers' reports of adjustment to kindergarten, even after taking into account mothers' report of "the quality of the child's pre-kindergarten experience". Children who attended preschool showed significantly greater ease of kindergarten adjustment, suggesting that a good quality setting makes a difference. Furthermore, there were no significant differences between the two preschool-experience groups on the teachers' report of children's sociability during kindergarten. Discussion of the findings focuses on how the location of pre-kindergarten experiences may not be as critical to easing children's kindergarten adjustment as the quality of these pre-kindergarten experiences. This is consistent with the literature on the quality issues surrounding children's daycare as well. Moreover, teachers and mothers must come to an agreement about what the adjustment to kindergarten demands, so that parents will be able to better prepare their children for the transition.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Currently, over 50% of mothers with a child under the age of 5 are working outside the home, and this trend is expected to continue (Hayghe, 1994). This trend suggests that increasing numbers of children will spend numerous hours in preschool. Furthermore, past research indicates that children's school transitions are important to examine in understanding their development. For example, researchers have studied the effects of the transition to junior high (Simmons & Blyth, 1987) and the transition to first grade (Alexander, Entwisle, & Baker, 1988) on children's cognitive and social development. These researchers suggest that transitions can be times of adjustment and stress for some children (Simmons & Blyth, 1987). However, there is relatively little information on the transition to kindergarten and how preschool experiences may affect this transition, particularly with regard to the effects of the transition on children's social development. The transition from preschool to kindergarten should be a particular area of concern to developmental researchers and educators because the establishment of positive social behaviors through early peer interactions can lead to academic and social success in the primary grades and beyond.
(Alexander, Entwisle, & Baker, 1988). Therefore, this particular study will emphasize social development during the transition from preschool to kindergarten, specifically focusing on the peer relations and ease of adjustment of children with preschool versus non-preschool experience. In the literature review, the importance of the topic and the effects of the elementary school years on relationships with peers first will be discussed. Peer relations during the elementary school years first will be described because these years frequently have been examined in the literature as important for establishing children's social reputations. However, it will then be argued that researchers need to focus their attention on peer relations even earlier. Therefore, the remainder of the literature review will focus on the transition from preschool to kindergarten and how this transition is important for both the development of peer relations and the ease of adjustment to kindergarten. The transition from preschool to kindergarten, particularly with respect to social relationships, has been neglected in the literature, and this study is an attempt to bridge the gap in the research.

Importance of the Topic

It is important to study peer-related processes for young children because previous research has shown that
children's social reputations are established very early on and may follow them across their life-span (Hymel, Wagner, & Butler, 1990; Ladd, Price, & Hart, 1988; Parker & Asher, 1987). For instance, a child who is not socially accepted by peers may be negatively labeled, and this labeling could continue throughout their school years. On the other hand, a child who is well-liked could maintain his/her popular status (Black & Hazen, 1990; Hymel, Wagner, & Butler, 1990; Ladd & Price, 1987). It also is important to examine young children's peer interactions since there is a wealth of research verifying a link between problematic childhood peer relations and adjustment difficulties in adolescence and adulthood (Kupersmidt, Coie, & Dodge, 1990; Parker & Asher, 1987). For example, a study by Amrsden and Greenberg (1987) related poor childhood relations to poor psychological well-being during the adolescent years. Other studies also reveal that poor relationships with peers in early childhood are related to later emotional and mental health problems (Hoza, Molina, Bukowski, & Sippola, 1995) and delinquency (Pabon, Rodriguez, & Gurin, 1992). Although these studies assert that there is no direct causal link between childhood peer relations and later well-being, rejection by peers in childhood has been identified as a strong predictor of subsequent difficulties in relationships and behaviors.
(Kupersmidt, Coie, & Dodge, 1990).

Linkages Between Elementary School Transitions and Peer Relations

Most studies about peer interaction have focused on the elementary school years and social reputation during these years. Furthermore, when the linkages between school transitions and peer relations are studied, the research generally involves kindergarten to first grade or grades within the later elementary school years. For example, one study explored the role that kindergarten children's peer relationships may play in their adjustment to elementary school (Ladd, 1990). Children who were rejected by their peers after the first two months of the school year were found to develop less favorable perceptions of school, higher levels of school avoidance, and lower levels of school performance over the course of the kindergarten year. The converse, however, was not true: school perceptions, school avoidance, and school performance early in the year did not predict children's social acceptance by peers. This suggests that being disliked by peers negatively colors a child's view of school and interferes with his/her adjustment to school. This study gave insightful information regarding children's social reputations, yet the focus was on adjustment in and from
kindergarten, rather than the adjustment to kindergarten.

Linkages Between the Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten and Peer Relations

Although children's early transitions in school are crucial to examine, again, there is relatively little research regarding the transition from preschool to kindergarten. Children's social behavior in preschool may predict their eventual peer acceptance following the transition from preschool to kindergarten. The scant evidence for this idea comes from Ladd et al.'s research (Ladd & Price, 1987; Ladd, Price, & Hart, 1988). Ladd and Price (1987) established that accepted social behaviors from the past (i.e., preschool) follow the child into the transitional phase of their schooling (i.e., kindergarten). Specifically, Ladd and Price (1987) found that children who exhibited a wide variety of positive prosocial behaviors in preschool tended to be liked by their new classmates in kindergarten, while children who were aggressive in preschool were rejected in kindergarten.

This suggests that a child's personality may play a significant role in their social interaction with peers. In other words, a child who has an easy-going personality is more likely to get along with classmates as compared to a child who has an aggressive personality (Black & Hazen,
1990). Aggressive children typically display behaviors such as bullying, fighting, and uncooperativeness and in these types of negative interactions they are likely to be rejected by peers (Kupersmidt, Coie, & Dodge, 1990). Aggression is more likely to appear during preschool because it is essentially the first arena where children interact with same age peers. In a preschool setting, children’s temperamental traits are likely to be displayed in "full mode" because they are being given opportunities to interact with other children. In other words, during the preschool years, in an appropriate setting, a child’s personality traits can begin to fully translate into behaviors. Hence, classmates are more likely to interact and form friendships with a child who is easy-going (Black & Hazen, 1990). Therefore, the preschool setting may represent the first setting in which children’s personalities are put into “action” and in which their social reputations are developed through their peer interactions. Thus, children’s preschool behaviors may have consequences which carry over to a new social setting. Ladd et al.'s (1987,1988) research suggest that the reputation that children have established for themselves in preschool, based on their personality traits, affects how they may be perceived in kindergarten, and perhaps even during the rest of their school years.
A child who exhibits positive prosocial behaviors in preschool may gain the social skills in that setting that can be used in kindergarten. These social skills may be used to initiate new friendships and maintain old ones. Children having prior experiences with peer interaction are likely to utilize behaviors that promote sociability, and they also may more readily have the ability to adapt to a new environment (Kupersmidt, Coie, & Dodge, 1990; Ladd, 1990). Preschool is the first primary arena enabling children to acquire social skills to interact with those their own age. Hence, the important social experiences that preschool provides may be crucial for future success in relationships and social development.

Relative to preschoolers, non-preschoolers typically have less prior social experience with peers. In kindergarten, non-preschool children must simultaneously adapt to a new environment and learn the appropriate social skills needed to interact with others (Ladd & Price, 1987). The problem might be that without extensive prior experience, behaviors that promote sociability may be more difficult to acquire. Thus, these non-preschool children may be more likely to utilize behaviors that are typical to the home environment, and they may not be as socially competent as children having previous peer interactions.
If non-preschool children are more likely to lack the necessary social skills to interact among age-mates, they may not be as competent in maintaining peer group relations. For example, peers provide opportunities for socializing and developing relationships, as well as the development of a sense of belonging (Zarbatany et al., 1990). These functions increase in importance as the child develops and spends increasing amounts of time with a variety of different peers, relative to family (Larson & Richards, 1991). Children who attend preschool therefore, may have a "jump-start" on these social comparison skills because they have early opportunities for socializing and developing relationships with a variety of different peers. Although researchers such as Ladd and Price (1987) have conducted studies of the transition from preschool to kindergarten, they have not compared preschool vs. non-preschool children's transition. Therefore, the quality of kindergarten peer interactions of children who attend preschool in comparison to those who do not attend preschool would be particularly interesting to study.

Preschool vs. Non-Preschool Experiences and Kindergarten Adjustment

In addition to examining the kindergarten peer relations of children who do and do not attend preschool, it
also is important to study how easily preschool vs. non-preschool children adjust to the transition to kindergarten. In defining what adjustment means, two points must be considered. First, the definition of adjustment includes adapting to the demands of the new non-home environment. Children must learn that the new environment demands participation in things such as routines and social activities (Kemple, 1991). Second, adjustment involves social interaction with classmates. In this respect, the peer group is a prime factor in the adjustment of kindergartners. The goal of having relationships with peers is being accepted into the peer group (Ladd, 1988). In order to maintain this acceptance, youngsters must adapt to social attributes of the peer group such as sharing, caring, and helping (Ladd, 1990). In other words, youngsters must adopt the same standards as the peers with whom they socialize. Preschoolers may be more likely to have an easier adjustment to kindergarten in comparison to non-preschoolers because they (a) have already been in a non-home environment with new routines and activities and (b) have already had more peer contact in their preschool settings.
Quality of Pre-Kindergarten Experiences

Previous research has shown several types of associations between the quality of daycare and preschool settings and measures of social development (Baydar & Brooks-Gunn, 1991; Belsky & Eggebeen, 1991; Field, 1991). For example, a study in 1994 (Bates, Marvinney, Kelly, Dodge, Bennett, & Pettit, 1994) examined child-care history and quality and ease of kindergarten adjustment. In this study extensive daycare experience was analyzed in connection to the child's adjustment. Results indicated that daycare is important; however, it also must be considered in relation to the total daycare history of the child entering kindergarten. Specifically, more time spent in a high-quality infant daycare may contribute to more positive socialization, including greater assertiveness but less aggressivity (Haskins, 1985). Some important qualities of daycare to consider for social development are daycare history, staff-child ratio, stability, hours spent in daycare, and safety. Of course, the particular aspect of a quality being studied in the daycare environment makes a difference in children's adjustment and development.

Although daycare is not the same as preschool, the same kinds of quality issues apply to both settings. For instance, the preschool setting involves extensive
experience with other children, is typically considered a socializing experience, and is expected to contribute to the learning of social behaviors. More social experience at this young age also might contribute to greater self-esteem and better performance in elementary school. However, one must keep in mind that the quality of the preschool environment also could play an important role in the children's adjustment in kindergarten. Hence, preschool experiences may be good for socialization because of the opportunity to interact with peers. However, not all preschool experiences will be of good quality and conducive to good peer relations. In this respect, the quality of the children's preschool experiences is important and must be taken into account in any study comparing preschool and non-preschool children's transitions to kindergarten.

Before stating the hypothesis of this study, one more issue still needs to be addressed. It is not being suggested here that all children who stay at home with a parent will have negative peer experiences. The parent-child relationship can provide a sense of security and social well being (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). And, children who stay at home also may have experiences with peers. Granted the contact is in a different environment than that of a preschool setting, nonetheless, the parent
may set play dates for friends to visit or children may have playtime with peers during social gatherings. Therefore, a lack of preschool attendance does not mean that a child is devoid of all peer experiences. However, preschool experiences give children the opportunity to have a different type of socialization, specifically, extensive interaction with children who are the same age and who may come from diverse and varied backgrounds. In this respect, the peer relationship calls for skills in cooperation, sharing, and negotiating on a level equal to one's own age. Hence, parents and peers contribute differently to children's social development, and preschool children will be more likely to have different, more varied, and more extensive peer interactions than children who stay home with their parents prior to kindergarten.

Therefore, in this study it is being argued that preschool experiences "enhance" children's social development because the children have a variety of diverse peers with whom to communicate and play. However, the quality of the preschool experiences may play a role here and also will be examined. For example, it is possible that a non-preschooler may have better social experiences than a preschooler in a poor quality environment. The issue of quality in pre-kindergarten needs to be addressed.
Furthermore, children come to kindergarten with distinctive personalities. Therefore, the role that children’s positive and negative personality traits play in the transition from preschool to kindergarten also needs to be examined.

**Hypotheses**

This study will examine whether or not children with preschool experience have an easier transition to kindergarten than those who do not have preschool experience. It is predicted that children with preschool experience will adjust more easily to kindergarten (as indicated by higher levels of sociability with peers and better adaptation to the demands of a classroom environment) than those children who have no prior preschool experiences. Thus, children experiencing preschool will be more likely to use more socially acceptable behaviors with new peers in kindergarten. And, it is likely that children with preschool experience will make an easier adjustment in the transition to kindergarten because they already have obtained the social skills needed to initiate and maintain peer relationships.

Two variables are expected to play a role in the linkages between pre-kindergarten experiences and the transition to kindergarten. First, this study will include an assessment of the quality of the preschool versus non-
preschool socializing experience. Not all preschools are of high quality, and this difference in preschool quality may influence the type of peer interactions the preschoolers have. Second, the personality of the child may play a role in both their pre-kindergarten and kindergarten socializing experiences. As mentioned previously, Ladd et al. (1987, 1988) found that aggressive kids are more likely to be rejected. Therefore, easy-going children are more likely to display prosocial behaviors that are associated with being more highly accepted. Hence, this current study also will explore how preschool experiences (and the lack of these experiences) influence children's ease of kindergarten adjustment after taking into account the quality of pre-kindergarten experiences and the child's overall personality (measured using both positive and negative behaviors).

First, the quality of pre-kindergarten experiences was measured using mothers' reports of pre-kindergarten childcare satisfaction (regardless of type of childcare) in order to have a "quality" measure for both the preschool and non-preschool children. Second, both positive and negative personality traits were measured in order to examine how both aggression and prosocial behaviors in pre-kindergarten might affect the later transition to kindergarten for preschool vs. non-preschool children. Overall, it was
hypothesized that the differences in ease of adjustment to kindergarten for preschool vs. non-preschool children would disappear once the quality of their experiences and their personality traits are taken into account.
METHOD

Participants

A total of 50 mothers of children currently attending kindergarten voluntarily participated in the study. The sample was comprised of 24 mothers whose children had attended preschool and 26 mothers whose children had not attended preschool. There were 24 boys and 26 girls represented in the study (with an average age of 5.5 years). With permission from the participating mothers, the researcher also asked the child's kindergarten teacher to participate. A total of seven teachers and one teaching assistant participated in the study (representing all the 50 target children). The researcher recruited participants from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Forty-four percent of the mothers were Caucasian, 28% Latina, and 22% African-American. The mothers' marital status consisted of 71% married, 22% single, and 6% divorced. The majority of mothers (57%) were high school graduates, 29% had four-year college degrees and 8% had a postbaccalaureate degree. Six percent of the mothers had less than a high school degree.

The participants were recruited from a variety of locations in southern California, particularly San
Bernardino and Moreno Valley, including two private and three public schools and several recreational facilities (e.g., parks). The participants were treated in accordance with the ethical principles of the American Psychological Association. All children met the criteria of being enrolled in and attending kindergarten for the first time.

**Materials**

Mothers completed a demographic questionnaire with questions concerning their marital status, ethnicity, number of children, level of education, and current occupation (if employed). Measures of children's chronological age, gender, and prior preschool or daycare experience also were recorded.

Along with data on family demographics, information concerning the child's social experiences prior to kindergarten also was collected. Therefore, in the questionnaire, mothers retrospectively provided information about their child's preschool experiences, including the types of programs the children had attended. If their child had not attended preschool, mothers provided information on their child's daycare past history, and also were asked to describe each of the non-school settings (e.g., neighborhood, community) in which their child had regular contact with peers. The mothers also were asked whether the
amount of their child's peer contact had changed much in the past year (see Appendix A).

**Kindergarten Adjustment**

Kindergarten teachers rated each target child's ease of adjustment to kindergarten using 13 behavioral items from an instrument adapted from Wave 1 (1967-1977) of the National Survey of Children (Kohn & Rosman, 1972a, 1973, 1974). There are three sub-scales in the measure. Two of the three sub-scales, "Interest-Participation versus Apathy Withdrawal (I-P)" and "Cooperation-Compliance versus Anger-Defiance (C-C)"., assess dimensions of socio-emotional competence. The third scale, "Attention Span-Restlessness (A-R)"., involves restlessness and deportment behavior. In this study, the scale was used in its entirety (i.e., total scale score only). Teacher ratings were scored on a 4-point Likert scale, with high scores reflecting children having an easier adjustment to kindergarten. Response options range from 4= "very easily (adjusted)," to 1= "with much difficulty" (see Appendix B).

In past studies, the five-item I-P scale and the four-item C-C scale have been found to have moderate internal reliability (Kohn & Rosman, 1972a, 1973, 1974). Coefficient alpha for the five-item I-P scale averages .83 across the 4-year National Survey Study; the four-item C-C
scale alpha averages .80; and the four-item A-R scale alpha averages .74. The three scales are moderately stable over time, with within domain correlation generally in the .45-.55 range. Within the four years of the survey study, the C-C/I-P correlation ranged from .18 to .36; the C-C/A-R correlation ranged from .36 to .64; and the I-P/A-R correlation ranged from .29 to .54. In this current study, Cronbach's alpha for the total teacher-report of ease of kindergarten adjustment scale was .81.

It is essential to use multiple raters when trying to obtain a more valid and accurate picture of children's development and adjustment (Burhmester & Furman, 1985). Therefore, the researcher felt the children's ease of kindergarten adjustment also should be examined from the mothers' perspective, along with the teachers' perspective. Subsequently, mothers answered a questionnaire regarding how well they thought their child was adjusting to kindergarten. The 31-item questionnaire, developed by Lepore (1988), focuses on the child's ease of adjustment to kindergarten based on the child's current social and emotional functioning. Response options range from 1="very much unlike my child" to 6="very much like my child". Some example items from the scale include "was looking forward to making lots of new friends"; "didn't want to eat breakfast
because he/she was so excited"; and "wished the day would never end".

There is no known reliability information for this measure. The measure has not been used in previously published research; rather, it only has been used in a class assignment at the University of California, Irvine, in the School of Social Ecology. Therefore, its psychometric properties were explored in this study. Overall, in this study Cronbach's alpha for the mothers' version of the adjustment scale was .78 (see Appendix C).

Sociability and Quality of Kindergarten Peer Relations

Kindergarten teachers were asked to complete a Peer Rating Scale (PRS) questionnaire that focuses on the quality of children's peer relationships (Feldhusen, 1973). The PRS assesses the following three aspects of a child's social behavior in the classroom: (1) individual actions that involve leadership, independence, assertiveness, and competitiveness; (2) social interactions that involve cooperation, conformity, positive relations with authority, and control of aggression; and (3) affective relationships evidenced by liking others, social acceptance, being liked, and popularity. Sample items include: "does this child say nice things about other children?", "do children like to play with this child at recess?", and "does this child like
a lot of other children?" The fifteen item questionnaire contains items that are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1="very much like the child" to 5="not very much like the child". This scale was recoded so that a high score on the scale indicates positive individual and social actions and warm, affectionate relationships with others (i.e., 1="not very much like the child" to 5="very much like the child"). Internal consistency estimates on the PRS in past studies range from .65 to .83 for first and second graders, while inter-judge reliability has been found to be .36 for first graders and .40 for second graders (Feldhusen, 1973). In this study, Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .90. The PRS generally has been used as a self-report measure by children themselves; however, in this study the measure was used by kindergarten teachers (see Appendix D).

At the very end of the questionnaire, there was one question asking for an overall teacher evaluation of the child's peer relations. This item was used as a validity check on the Peer Rating Scale (PRS) measure. For this final question, there were seven rating categories describing the child's overall characteristics with peers. The range was from 1= "a child who is rejected entirely by peers" (e.g., actively disliked) to 7= "a child who is
extremely high-outstanding peer relations" (e.g., best-liked child in class). The Pearson correlation between the Peer Rating Scale (PRS) and the overall peer relations measure was $r = .53$, $p < .001$ (see Appendix E).

Quality of Pre-Kindergarten Experiences

Mothers of the target child provided information on the quality of their child's prior preschool or daycare experiences (Greenberger & Goldberg, 1989). The questionnaire was retrospective because of the fact that the target children are presently attending kindergarten. The questionnaire included one item on the main source of care for the child during the pre-kindergarten years; seven items tapping how satisfied the mother was with the child's pre-kindergarten care arrangements (e.g., location, supervision); and a final item concerning mothers' overall satisfaction with the after-school pre-kindergarten arrangements for their child. This final item (mothers' satisfaction with childcare) served as a measurement for quality because it is assumed that if mothers were satisfied, then the care was "high quality" to them. It was difficult to measure a "quality" variable for preschool vs. non-preschool children. Thus, the researcher used a summary score to assess "quality" for both preschool and non-preschool attendees (see Appendix F).
Children's Overall Personality

The researcher also assessed the children's personality, in terms of both positive aspects (cooperation, prosocial behavior, affection) and negative aspects (aggression, shyness, dependency). The child personality measure used a 65-item questionnaire which is scored on a 3-point Likert scale. The measure had two sub-scales. The Positive Child Behaviors sub-scale consists of 18-items that assess child behaviors such as cooperation and empathy, independence, and contentment (Greenberger & Goldberg, 1989). The positive behavior items are based largely on items from the "How my Child Usually Acts" scale (National Longitudinal Survey of Labor Force Behavior, 1986) and the California Child Q-Sort (Block & Block, 1980). A second sub-scale, the Problem Behavior Index (Peterson & Zill, 1986) consists of 28-items used to measure antisocial (aggressive), impulsive/hyperactive, and depressed/withdrawn child behaviors.

The personality measure was administered to mothers only. It should be noted that the personality measure asks for the child's personality traits in the past 3 months. Originally, the researcher intended this to be pre-kindergarten personality; however, due to recruitment
difficulties, "the past 3 months" turned out to be while the children were in kindergarten. Therefore, in this study the personality measure is assessing kindergarten personality. Because the researcher primarily was interested in pre-kindergarten personality, mothers' responses on an additional item also were examined. This item asks, "Do you think your child has changed in personality, since beginning kindergarten?" Mothers respond either "yes" or "no", then they were asked to describe these changes. Overall, 68% of mothers indicated that the child's personality changed since beginning kindergarten. However, the overwhelming majority of the mothers reported that the changes were minor and in a positive direction (to be discussed further later in the thesis).

Response options for the personality measure were 1="very much like my child", 2="somewhat like my child", and 3="not at all like my child." First, all items were recorded so that a 1="not at all like my child" and 3="very much like my child". Higher scores on the Positive Child Behaviors sub-scale indicate higher levels of a child's cooperation, prosocial behavior, and affection; whereas higher score on the Problem Behavior Index indicates higher levels of aggression, shyness, and dependency. In past studies, alpha coefficients for the Positive Child Behavior
sub-scale were .76 for men and .77 for women. In this study, Cronbach's alpha for the Positive Behavior sub-scale was .78 for the mothers. In past studies, alpha coefficients for the Behavior Problem Index for men and women were .89 and .93, respectively (Greenberger & Goldberg, 1989). In this study, Cronbach's alpha for the Problem Behavior sub-scale was .89 for the mothers (see Appendix G).

Procedure

This study involved both current and retrospective reports because the children are now in kindergarten and had already had their previous preschool experiences. To examine how preschool vs. non-preschool children was adjusting socially to kindergarten, measures were administered approximately five to nine months after the start of kindergarten. The researcher was present at each school site or recreational facility for approximately one hour every other day for two weeks to distribute and collect the surveys from both the mothers and teachers. Approximately, a total of 150 questionnaires were distributed to mothers of children in kindergarten. The researcher received back approximately 70 questionnaires, however, approximately 20 of the questionnaires could not be used due to incomplete responses. Thus, the researcher was left with approximately 50 usable surveys.
Each survey began with a cover letter briefly describing the study, providing an assurance of the participants' anonymity, and addressing the confidentiality of the information requested by the researcher. The mothers were asked to complete a survey including questionnaires on demographic information, the extent of their child's social experiences prior to kindergarten, the quality of their child's pre-kindergarten experiences, their child's personality, and an ease of kindergarten adjustment scale. The kindergarten teachers were asked to complete measures of the child's kindergarten peer relationships and sociability, and an ease of kindergarten adjustment scale. Forms for both teachers and mothers took approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

Scoring and Analysis

It was originally anticipated that the dependent variables, ease of kindergarten adjustment and sociability, would be highly correlated ($r$=.70 or above); however, they were not multicollinear. In other words, the correlation between ease of kindergarten adjustment and sociability was $r=.20$, $p<.05$ (for teachers) and $r=.41$, $p<.05$ (for mothers). Therefore, the researcher used each dependent variable (i.e., ease of kindergarten adjustment, sociability) in its own analysis in a series of ANCOVAs.
Ease of kindergarten adjustment and sociability served as the dependent variables, preschool vs. non-preschool experience as the two-level independent variable, and pre-kindergarten experiences (i.e., mother's child care satisfaction and child's positive and negative behaviors) served as the covariates in these analyses.
Results

Table 1

Display of the means, standard deviation, and ranges for all major study variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten Adjustment</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>3.00-5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mothers' report)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten Adjustment</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>2.00-4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Teachers' report)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Relations</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>2.67-5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Behaviors</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>1.58-3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Behaviors</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>1.03-3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was hypothesized that children with preschool experience would adjust more easily to kindergarten (as indicated by higher levels of sociability and better adaptation to the demands of a classroom environment) compared to those who had no prior preschool experiences. First, the hypothesis was tested by running a series of ANOVAs where the independent variable was preschool
experience (two levels) and the dependent variables included (a) ease of adjustment to kindergarten and (b) peer sociability in kindergarten. Then, the hypothesis was tested again by running a series of ANCOVAs. In these analyses, mothers' overall satisfaction with pre-kindergarten child care arrangements was taken into consideration as a covariate (i.e., it served as a proxy for the quality of the pre-kindergarten experience). And, in separate ANCOVAS, the children's positive behaviors (e.g., cooperation, consideration, sharing) and negative behaviors (e.g., bullying, fighting, disobedience) served as covariates since these behaviors also may play a role in the children's later socializing experience. Since, the children's positive and negative behaviors were not multi-collinear ($r=-.48$, $p<.01$), they were examined as separate covariates.

First, there were no significant differences between children who had attended preschool vs. those who had not on teachers' reports of the children's ease of kindergarten adjustment, $F(1, 49)=1.02$, $p=ns$. However, there were significant differences between children who had attended preschool vs. those who had not on the teachers' reports of ease of kindergarten adjustment, after taking into account mothers' report of the "quality of the pre-kindergarten
experience" (i.e., pre-kindergarten child care satisfaction), F(2, 34)=6.02, p<.05. The children who attended preschool showed significantly greater "ease of kindergarten adjustment", (M=3.39 for preschool attendees vs. M=2.96 for non-preschool attendees), after taking into account the quality of the children's pre-kindergarten child care experiences. In the ANCOVAs involving the children's personality as covariates there still were no significant differences for pre-schoolers vs. non-preschoolers after taking into account the child's positive behaviors, F(2, 49)=1.20, p=ns and negative behaviors, F(2, 49)=1.18, p=ns. Furthermore, there were no significant differences between children who had attended preschool vs. those who had not on mothers' report of their children's ease of kindergarten adjustment, F(1, 49)=1.90, p=ns. This was the case even after taking into account the mothers' report of the "quality of the pre-kindergarten experience" (i.e., child care satisfaction), F(2, 23)=1.55, p=ns. And, there were still no significant differences in ease of kindergarten adjustment for preschoolers vs. non-preschoolers after taking into account the child's pre-kindergarten positive behaviors, F(2, 29)=.56, p=ns and negative behaviors, F(2, 29)=2.92, p=ns. However, children's pre-kindergarten negative behaviors themselves
were significantly related to mothers' reports of ease of kindergarten adjustment, with those children who exhibited more negative behaviors being reported as having poorer ease of kindergarten adjustment, $F(1, 29)=4.67, p<.05$.

Finally, there were no significant differences between children who had attended preschool vs. those who had not on teachers' report of the child's sociability during kindergarten, $F(1, 49)=.33, p=ns$; and this was the case even after taking into account mothers' report of the "quality of the pre-kindergarten experience" (i.e., overall satisfaction with child care), $F(2, 34)=.38, p=ns$. And, there were still no significant differences on sociability during kindergarten once the child's positive personality traits, $F(2, 49)=.23, p=ns$ and negative personality traits, $F(2, 49)=.29, p=ns$, were controlled.
Discussion

Overall, an examination of the children's ease of adjustment to kindergarten revealed few significant differences between children who had attended preschool vs. those who had not attended. For example, there were no significant differences between preschoolers vs. non-preschoolers on teachers' reports of the child's ease of adjustment to the kindergarten experience. The results indicated that children in both groups did not differ in their ease of adjustment to kindergarten.

Because the researcher felt that it was important to have multiple perspectives on the child's ease of kindergarten adjustment, mothers' reports of ease of kindergarten adjustment also were examined in this study. The results indicated no significant differences between the two groups of children (preschool vs. no preschool) on the mothers' reports of ease of kindergarten adjustment. Peer relationships (i.e., "sociability") also were examined for the transition from preschool to kindergarten in this study. Teachers' ratings of the children's peer relationships did not differ significantly for the two "preschool" experience groups.
Effects of The Quality of Pre-Kindergarten Experiences and Children's Personality Traits on their Effects on the Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten

After examining differences in ease of adjustment to kindergarten and peer relationships for preschoolers vs. non-preschoolers, two variables that were thought to play a role in these potential differences were examined. Post hoc ANCOVAs were run using the quality of the child's pre-kindergarten experience (i.e., mother's child care satisfaction) and the child's positive and negative personality traits as the covariates. In these analyses, peer relations, for the two "preschool" groups still did not differ after taking into account the quality of the children's pre-kindergarten experiences and the positive and negative traits.

Interestingly, after taking into account the mothers' reports of pre-kindergarten child care satisfaction, there were significant differences between the preschool vs. no preschool groups on the teachers' reports of ease of kindergarten adjustment. The fact that children who had preschool experience showed an easier adjustment to kindergarten once the "quality" of pre-kindergarten child care experiences was accounted for could be due to the
interaction the children had in a preschool setting. That is, the experiences in a good-quality preschool setting could provide children with greater opportunities to interact with children their own age and to explore educational materials through hands-on and active play. Based on these opportunities, children attending high-quality preschools may have greater access to the types of skills they will need to help them adjust more easily to activities and routines in kindergarten classrooms. These types of experiences may be less likely if the child is in a poor-quality child care setting.

In this study, children's personality traits, both the positive and negative aspects, were examined as well. There were significant differences in children's ease of kindergarten adjustment based on their negative behaviors. That is, children who were more aggressive (bossiness, uncooperative, fighting) had a more difficult transition to kindergarten. According to mothers, it seems that regardless of pre-kindergarten location, children possessing negative behaviors are more likely to have adjustment problems. In addition, mothers may worry about the child's difficulties in adjusting to kindergarten because of their negative personality traits (e.g., aggression, withdrawal). In this sense, mothers of children
with these negative behaviors will need extra support from
teachers as their children adjust to kindergarten. Mothers
with children having more negative personality traits need
guidance from educators early on, and this guidance can be
used as a support system for parents during their aggressive
child's transition to kindergarten.

*Mothers vs. Teachers Reports of Ease of Kindergarten
Adjustment*

One interesting aspect to note in this study is that
mothers' and teachers' reports of the ease of kindergarten
adjustment were not significantly correlated at all ($r = -
.06, p=ns$). In a sense, mothers and teachers may have
different ideas about what the transition to kindergarten
entails for children. Studies by Knudsen-Lindauer and
Harris (1988, 1989) suggested that differences exist between
parents and teachers in terms of the skills and abilities
they believe children should acquire prior to kindergarten
entry. A study by Harris and Lindauer (1989) suggested that
parents ranked intellectual skills (e.g., counting, reading,
writing) significantly higher than teachers. As suggested
by other researchers (Harris and Lindauer, 1988; Kean,
1980), parents may be more concerned with the "academic"
aspects of the transition to kindergarten rather than social
preparation. Harris and Lindauer (1988) found indications
that parents are more likely than teachers to stress intellectual skills. They may worry about whether the child is ready for the academic demands of kindergarten and pay less attention to the social aspects. These findings could indicate that some parents may be lacking information on the importance of peers and social development during the transition to kindergarten and the kindergarten years.

How can mothers and teachers help ease children's adjustment to kindergarten if they may have different ideas concerning what this transition involves? It seems that parents and teachers must work together re-evaluate what kindergarten will demand from children and make this information concise and clear to all persons involved. Perhaps parents need to obtain better information by communicating with kindergarten teachers early on as to what the expectations should be prior to the child's actual entrance to kindergarten. Teachers also must communicate what they want and expect from the child during kindergarten and make these expectations more clear to parents. One approach is for both parties to come to an agreement to have a better definition of ease of kindergarten adjustment and the demands of the transition. This approach will hopefully allow both parties to enhance children's adjustment into kindergarten early in the transition phase, regardless of
the child's actual pre-kindergarten experiences.

A consensus concerning the skills essential for kindergarten will allow parents and teachers to take the appropriate actions to enhance the child's early school years, which may lead to the child's success early in kindergarten. This, in turn, gives the child a strong foundation for success in academic, social, and emotional functioning during future transitions. It is important for teachers to emphasize the expectations they have for children because this allows parents to prepare the child for the adjustment to kindergarten. This may ease the stress of adjusting to kindergarten for children who have had less experience in dealing with unfamiliar settings. This also will keep the "pressure" off of mothers who have concerns for their child's well-being and healthy adaptation to new environments, because more specific guidelines are provided by teachers as to how to prepare the children for the transition into kindergarten.

Summary of Findings

Overall, there were no significant differences between children who attended preschool vs. those who had not on ease of adjustment to kindergarten. The present data suggests that a child's actual location prior to kindergarten may not have the greatest impact on their ease
of transition. It may not be where the child is prior to kindergarten that's important, but whether or not s/he is getting high-quality social experiences essential for the transition. However, the picture gets slightly more complicated when other variables that may play a role in the transition are taken into account. For example, there were significant differences between children who attended preschool vs. those who did not on the teachers' reports of ease of kindergarten adjustment, after taking into account mothers' reports of the "quality of the pre-kindergarten experience" (i.e., mothers' pre-kindergarten child care satisfaction). Here, children who attended preschool had an easier adjustment to kindergarten as reported by their teachers. This result may mean that a pre-kindergarten experience which is high in quality (or at least one that satisfies the parents) does play a significant role in children's adjustment to kindergarten.

*How This Study's Findings Relate to the Past Literature?*

In contrast to Ladd and Price's (1987) study, the present data are unique in suggesting that children's' location prior to preschool is not significant in their adjustment to kindergarten; however, both Ladd and Price's (1987) study and the current study find that the quality of the pre-kindergarten experience is important for the
transition to kindergarten. Also, the present study follows that of previous data because it suggests that children can have a more difficult time adjusting to kindergarten regardless of the pre-kindergarten setting, if the quality of their pre-kindergarten social experiences is poor (Bates et. al., 1994; Ladd & Price, 1987).

Ladd and Price (1987) examined ease of kindergarten adjustment by measuring children's pre- and post-kindergarten experiences using variables such as children's reputations as rated by their classmates and teachers. They found that prior school experience prepares children for the stresses and demands of the kindergarten setting. However, they examined preschool children with an added dimension, by focusing on whether kindergarten classmates were familiar with each other (e.g., whether or not the child had prior peer contact with a kindergarten classmate). Their results indicated that children who were familiar with their kindergarten classmates prior to the transition did better during the transition to kindergarten. This suggests that one important factor in the ease of kindergarten adjustment phase would be allowing the child not only to have socialization with peers prior to kindergarten, but also attempting to make certain that the child has contact with peers that will be attending the same kindergarten
Limitations of the Study

Due to recruitment problems, this study had several limitations. First, the target children spent at least five to nine months in kindergarten before the researcher collected the necessary data. This may pose problems because children who spent nine months in kindergarten may have already adjusted to the kindergarten environment as compared to those who had only spent five months in kindergarten. The researcher conducted an ANOVA to examine differences between children who had been in kindergarten five vs. nine months. There were no significant differences in their ease of adjustment or peer relations. However, this doesn’t preclude the idea that all children had adjusted by the five months into kindergarten.

Furthermore, a total of seven teachers and one teaching assistant represented fifty target children. Thus, this sample may not be very representative of kindergarten teachers, especially since recruitment was so difficult overall, yet these particular eight teachers did volunteer to participate. The teachers may somehow be different or unique from other kindergarten teachers, who could not or did not participate. Moreover, the teachers and mothers may be unique because they may have been more likely to provide
high quality experiences - the range of "quality" in the study therefore, may be limited.

Future Research

One important issue future research could address is how to measure the "quality" of preschool vs. non-preschool children’s experiences. In other words, can a measure of quality that is consistent and will work for both "preschool" groups be devised? This is a difficult task because the quality at home may be different than the quality of care experiences in a preschool setting for children. For example, there are differences for home vs. preschool in the salience of certain care characteristics (i.e., child staff ratio, safety issues, costs, convenience of location).

Again, the question is how to measure the quality of the children’s experiences consistently across both groups. One possibility is to break quality down further into particular aspects (i.e., safety, cost, location, intellectual stimulation). With this approach, the researcher could have parents rate or independent coders observer and rate the home and preschool settings. Moreover, even within the preschool group there could be differences in the quality of the children’s experiences. In the future, researchers might want to look at quality
difference in particular types of preschools (i.e., structured vs. unstructured) and how differences in the type of preschool may play a role in the transition to kindergarten.

A second important issue future studies could address is the interaction of the child’s personality with the quality of the pre-kindergarten experiences. In other words, future research could look into aggressive children attending preschool vs. non-preschool. For example, early special attention needs to be paid to children with more negative personality traits, such as aggression, who are attending poor quality preschools, or who are having poor quality experiences at home. The literature indicate that aggression is one of the most stable personality traits (Patterson, 1992, 1995; Ramsey, Patterson, & Walker, 1990) Accordingly, another issue would be to look into whether an aggressive child would benefit from a high quality preschool experience or if this trait is consistent across settings, regardless of quality².

Significance/Implications

There have been several studies that suggest that as children begin school they must learn to adapt to the challenges of being in a new school environment (Ladd, 1987). The degree to which children cope with these new
demands is partially dependent upon the support they receive not only from parents and teachers, but also friends (Ladd, 1989). For example, in one study, Asher and his colleagues (Asher, Hymel, & Renshaw, 1984; Asher & Wheeler, 1985) reported that elementary school children rejected by classmates feel a sense of loneliness in school.

Asher et. al's findings relate to the present study because children exhibiting negative personality traits find themselves confronting the same situation, being lonely. Because these children tend to be withdrawn or aggressive, classmates may be less willing to approach them and they will typically be playing by themselves, rather than with peers. One related finding in this study is that regardless of "location" (preschool vs. non-preschool) children possessing negative personality traits probably had more difficult peer relations and a more difficult time adjusting to kindergarten.

Informing parents of the potential sources of support for their children's ease of kindergarten adjustment is important because this awareness enables them to provide an easier school transition for their children, particularly those children who have experienced poor-quality pre-kindergarten environments and/or have some negative personalities. Parents, educators, and society as a whole
should be aware of the skills needed to enhance children's opportunities for success in the academic and social kindergarten environment. If having an easy social adjustment in school means establishing and maintaining positive peer relations in the classroom, then giving children such peer experiences early on would be beneficial. However, in this particular study, findings revealed that what might be important, regardless of the pre-kindergarten "location", may be overall pre-kindergarten experiences (e.g., having playdates and the sheer amount of time and quality spent with peers) regardless of setting. In other words, where the child spent his/her pre-kindergarten years (i.e., with primary caregiver at home or preschool setting) is not as crucial as having exposure to peers as well as good quality pre-kindergarten socialization and educational experiences. Parents need to have information regarding the enhancement of pre-kindergarten experiences as early as possible. This information will allow parents and teachers to enhance children's opportunities for success in both the academic and social worlds of kindergarten and beyond.
APPENDIX A

Demographic Information

Marital Status (circle one)

- single
- married
- divorced
- widowed

Level of Education (circle one)

- less than high school
- high school graduation
- college graduate
- postbaccalarate degree

Current Occupation (if employed) _________________________

Ethnicity (circle one)

- Latino
- Caucasian
- African-American
- American-Indian
- Asian-American / Pacific Islander
- Other: _________________________

# of children _________________________

Target (kindergarten) child’s: age ___________ gender ___________
Pre-Kindergarten Experiences
Has your child had any prior preschool experience? Yes No
If “yes”, please describe the extent of this experience.

If “no” (child did not attend preschool), please describe your child’s relationships with peers in nonschool settings (i.e., community and neighborhoods).

Overall, how much regular contact has your child had with peers in the last year?

1 2 3 4 5
Much regular contact Some Contact Not much contact at all

How do you define regular “contact”:

1 2 3 4
Everyday More than 3 times a week Once a week Once a month or less

Have your child’s peer relationships changed much in the past year?

1 2 3
Yes, very changed Somewhat changed No, not at all changed

If your child’s relationships have changed, how have they changed?

Please list 4 adjectives that you believe describe your child’s personality prior to preschool:
1. 2. 3. 4.
Do you think your child has changed in personality, since beginning kindergarten?
   Yes ______ No ______

If "yes", please describe the changes.

Childcare History: Please place a check for each year of your child’s life.
(Ex: where was your child from birth to age 1?)

Child’s Age       0-1  1-2  2-3  3-4  4-5

At home with parent
At home with other adult
At child care center
At family daycare
Other (please describe)
APPENDIX B

Kindergarten Adjustment
(Copyright 1974, © Martin Kohn and Bernice Rosman)

Using the following response options, please rate the target child on the qualities described below.

Circle the number that best describes how the child handled the transition to kindergarten.

1. Becoming more enthusiastic, interested in a lot of different things 1 2 3 4
2. Participating in a happy mood, very cheerful 1 2 3 4
3. Being more creative or imaginative 1 2 3 4
4. Spending more time with others 1 2 3 4
5. Trying new situations 1 2 3 4
6. Feeling less teased, picked on or bullied by others 1 2 3 4
7. Not lying or fibbing 1 2 3 4
8. Controlling temper 1 2 3 4
9. Being polite, helpful, considerate of others 1 2 3 4
10. Concentrating and paying attention for a longtime 1 2 3 4
11. Being less high strung, tense, nervous 1 2 3 4
12. Having fewer or no tantrums; acting more mature 1 2 3 4
13. Learning to sit still, not to be too restless 1 2 3 4
APPENDIX C

Kindergarten Experiences  
(Copyright 1988, © Stephen Lepore)

Using the scale, please circle the response for each item that you believe best describes your child at the start of kindergarten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very much unlike the child</td>
<td>Unlike the child</td>
<td>A little unlike</td>
<td>A little like</td>
<td>Like this child</td>
<td>Very much like this child</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the start of kindergarten, my child:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>very much like</th>
<th></th>
<th>very much unlike</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. was looking forward to meeting his/her new teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. sat alone for lunch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. was looking forward to making lots of new friends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. was not sure that people would like him/her</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. was afraid of all the new people he/she would be seeing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. said the teacher notice him/her</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. was looking forward to seeing old friends again</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. didn’t want to eat breakfast because he/she was so nervous</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. came home and called his/her friends from school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. was very tired during class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. didn’t feel like he/she fit in</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. sat with old friends during lunch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. sat with new friends during lunch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. wished the day would never end</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. had trouble sleeping the night before, because he/she was so nervous</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. came home and told me about all the great things he/she did at school</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. thought the day would never end</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. had trouble sleeping the night before, he/she was so excited</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. said he/she wished he/she was never born</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. came home and told me about all the mean people at school</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. came home and didn’t seem to want to talk to anyone about the terrible day he/she had</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. seemed afraid to come back to school</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. didn’t want to eat breakfast because he/she was so excited</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. came home and couldn’t wait to go back to school the next day</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. joined other children in games at recess</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. got along well with me</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. felt sick to his/her stomach</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. said the teacher noticed him/her and was nice</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. said the teacher noticed him/her and disliked</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. didn’t join other children in games at recess</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. did not get invited to play in any games at recess</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

Peer Rating Scale (PRS)
(Copyright 1973, © John Feldhusen, Earnest McDaniel, Kevin Hynes, and Frederic Widlak)

Using the response options, please provide the information requested about the target child.

1  2  3  4  5
yes, very much like  somewhat like  neither like nor unlike  somewhat unlike  no very much unlike

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, very much like</th>
<th>No, very much unlike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. If this child wants to do something do other kids follow? 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does this child help other kids in the classroom? 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does this child say nice things to other kids? 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Does this child speak up and give ideas? 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Does this child follow the rules when playing games? 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Is it easy for this child to talk in front of class? 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Does this child go along if some kids want to do something else? 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Do kids like to play with this child at recess? 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Does this child get really excited when the team is winning in group activities? 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Does this child act nice even when some is mean? 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Does this child like to pick kids for group activities? 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Does this child get along with you? 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Does this child like a lot of other kids? 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Is this child quick at answering your questions? 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Does this child work will with other kids on group work? 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E

PRS Overall Evaluation
(Copyright 1973, © John Feldhusen, Earnest McDaniel, Kevin Hynes, and Frederic Widlak)

Please circle ONE of the number which best describes the target child.

1. **Extremely High - Outstanding Peer Relations**: one of the top boys/girls in class, an outstanding leader, best-liked child in class, by both girls and boys, best accepted by other children

2. **Extremely High - Superior Peer Relations**: one of the most popular members of class, a strong leader, highly accepted by other children, well-liked by both boys and girls

3. **High Acceptance Among Peers**: liked by most of the other children, one of the first to be chosen on the playground, has many friends, accepted by most of the children

4. **Moderate Acceptance Among Peers**: chosen about the middle by other children, a follower, but others like him/her, generally accepted; liked, but not to a high extent, not overly popular, but other children think he/she is O.K.

5. **Low Peer Relations**: merely tolerated, ignored by others, but not rejected, accepted by some, rejected by others, no close friends, not rejected but often overlooked, accepted by younger children, but not by own group

6. **Rejected Generally By Peers**: rejected by most other children, picked on, teased, blamed for everything, others don’t want him/her on their side, pushed out of group activities

7. **Rejected Entirely By Peers**: actively disliked, laughed at, made a fool of, scapegoat, rejected by all children, both boys and girls, never included in any group activities
APPENDIX F

Child Care Arrangements
(Copyright 1989, © Ellen Greengberger and Wendy Goldberg)

The following questions are about the target child in your family who is currently in kindergarten.

1. Which was the MAIN source of care for your child last year while you were at work and your child was not in class? Circle the number next to the one item that best describes your situation.
   a. Not applicable – I was home when my child got out of school last year
   b. My spouse
   c. A relative, friend or babysitter watched my child in my home
   d. A relative, friend or babysitter watched my child in his/her home
   e. After-school child care program (e.g., at school, at a “Y”, etc.)

2. From Monday to Friday (days and evenings), how many hours per week was your child cared for by someone other than you or your spouse?

   hours per week

   IF YOUR ANSWERED “SELF” OR “SPOUSE” TO QUESTION 1, SKIP TO QUESTION 3h NOW

3. How satisfied were you with last year’s child care arrangements? (Circle one)

   a. location
      1 2 3 4 5
      very convenient
      (e.g., close to home/school)
      a big hassle to get there

   b. costs
      1 2 3 4 5
      no problem
      a financial drain

   c. supervision
      1 2 3 4 5
      poor supervision
      very well supervised
d. social development
   1 2 3 4 5
   did not help my child
   was very good for my child

e. emotional needs
   1 2 3 4 5
   did not meet my child's needs
   met my child's needs extremely well

f. mental stimulation
   1 2 3 4 5
   was mentally challenging
   was not mentally challenging

g. your relationship with your child's care provider
   1 2 3 4 5
   the provider was very flexible-
   was willing to accommodate my needs
   the provider was rigid-
   I needed to stay within the prescribed rules

h. OVERALL, how satisfied were you with your after-school child-care arrangements last year?
   1 2 3 4 5
   very dissatisfied
   extremely satisfied
APPENDIX G

The Child Personality Measure
(Copyright 1986, © Block Peterson Zill)

Please indicate to what extent each of the following items describes your 5-6 year-old (kindergarten) child’s behavior **during the last 3 months**.

Response options are:

1. Very much like my child
2. Somewhat like my child
3. Not at all like my child

During the last three months, the child...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very much like my child</th>
<th>Not at all like my child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Is cheerful</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Is confident</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Tries to get what he/she wants by being coy or charming</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Is considerate and thoughtful of other children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Blames others for what he/she has done</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Tends to fight, hit children, take toys when playing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Is helpful and cooperative</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Copies what you do and how you act</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Seeks to be independent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Seeks reassurance about his/her worth or ability</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Tries to comfort other children when they are upset</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Reverts to more immature behavior when under stress (e.g., whines, sucks thumb, has tantrums, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Tries to take advantage of others</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Is protective of others</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Can recoup or recover after stressful experiences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Is demanding and impatient even when you are busy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Understands the feelings of other people, is empathic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Shows concerns for fairness</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Is alert and attentive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. Wants you to help with the things he/she is doing
21. Tries to help, or make you feel better, when you get upset about something
22. Willingly shares toys when playing with other children
23. Is energetic
24. Is easy-going
25. Thinks ahead, makes plans
26. Is shy with adults he/she does not know
27. Is shy with children he/she does not know
28. Enjoys playing by himself/herself
29. Tends to be a leader among children his/her own age
30. Likes to explore by himself/herself in new surroundings
31. Has sudden changes in mood or feeling
32. Feels or complains that no one loves him/her
33. Is rather high strung, tense, and nervous
34. Cheats or tells lies
35. Is determined to do things himself/herself (i.e., without help)
36. Is fearful or anxious
37. Argues too much
38. Has difficulty concentrating, cannot pay attention for long
39. Is easily confused, seems to be in a fog
40. Bullies or is cruel or mean to others
41. Is disobedient at school
42. Does not seem to feel sorry after he/she misbehaves
43. Has trouble getting along with other children
44. Is impulsive, or acts without thinking
45. Feels worthless or inferior
46. Is not liked by other children
47. Has a lot of difficulty getting his/her mind off certain thoughts (has obsessions)
48. Is restless or over active, cannot sit still
49. Is stubborn, sullen, or irritable
50. Has a very strong temper and loses it easily
<p>| | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51. Is unhappy, sad or depressed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Is withdrawn, does not get involved with others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. Breaks things on purpose or deliberately destroys his/her own or other's things</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. Clings to adults</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. Cries too much</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. Demands a lot of attention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. Is too dependent on others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. Is disobedient at school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. Has trouble getting along with teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. Gets headaches, stomach aches, etc. as a function of tension and conflict</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. Is physically cautious</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. Is unable to delay gratification; cannot wait for satisfaction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. Tries to get shy/withdrawn child to participate in activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. Is afraid of being deprived, is concerned about getting enough attention, food, toys, etc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. Seeks physical contact with others (hugging, touching, holding, or being held)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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ENDNOTES

1 The consistency of the quality variable for preschool vs. non-preschool groups (i.e., mothers' satisfaction with the pre-kindergarten child care arrangements) was investigated using ANCOVA. In the analyses, mothers' satisfaction with child care was the dependent variable and the preschool status of the children served as the independent variable. There were no significant differences in mothers' report of quality of children's pre-kindergarten experiences for preschool and non-preschool children, F(1, 35)=.95, p=ns. Note, there were only 35 participants for this analysis due to the incomplete questionnaires of 15 mothers.

2 In order to examine the interaction between children's negative behaviors (i.e., aggression) and the quality of their pre-kindergarten experiences, ANCOVAs were run looking at both the quality of pre-kindergarten experiences and the child's negative personality traits simultaneously. No significant interaction effects were found for ease of kindergarten adjustment and sociability for the two "preschool" groups. These analyses should be interpreted with caution, however, due to the small sample size in some cells. For example, there were only 35 cases available for these analyses.
REFERENCES


Harris, K. & Lindauer, K. S. (1988). Parental and
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