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ABSTRACT

The study, involving 31 mothers of handicapped children enrolled in North Carolina preschools, addressed the parents' perspectives on preschool services for themselves and their children. A two-phase interview strategy was used in which the parents were treated as "experts" who would provide answers to the previously identified broad research questions. In Phase I, open ended interviews were conducted to identify the themes, patterns, and the range of responses which characterize how parents define and describe preschool services. The information gathered in the open ended interviews was used to develop a quantitative rating scale which was administered in Phase II of the study. All of the interviews were audiotaped and transcribed on unisort cards. Results were drawn from three sources of data -- the open-ended interviews, the frequency counts and percentages from the Phase II quantitative rating measure, and direct quotes of parents. Data were categorized in terms of parent perceptions of child needs prior to placement, benefits and drawbacks for parents in regard to their child's potential, opportunities to engage in parent activities, attitudes toward parent activities, and parents' perceptions of an ideal preschool. Among findings were that the most salient issue for parents is the importance of having a warm, sensitive, and well trained teacher who is able and willing to communicate frequently with the parents; that parents have definite needs which influence their choice of preschool, including services for themselves and logistical arrangements; and that almost all of the parents preferred having some sort of role in their child's education. (SW)

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PARENT PERSPECTIVES ON INVOLVEMENT IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

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1980

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Introduction

The provisions in Public Law 94-142, which has formed the framework of contemporary special education, represent a significant change toward parent involvement at the preschool level. This law stipulates that parents be involved in their child's educational program as a decision-maker, through participation in the writing and approval of their child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). This decision-making role for parents represents a gradual departure from early efforts at parent involvement which operated on a family deficit model with professionals teaching parents the "correct" way to teach and care for their children (Gordon, 1970). This new approach honors the parent's right to decide what are appropriate services for themselves and their children and changes the balance of power among educators and parents. As professionals identify the need to approach "parents as partners" in various decision-making situations, whether at a program or state level or in an IEP conference, it is clear that the values, needs, and goals which parents bring to an intervention situation must be identified. Identification of parent perspectives is an important first step in attempting to direct the expansion of services to parents dictated by P.L. 94-142 and helping parents assume their new decision-making role.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to address this broad issue of parent's perspectives on preschool services for themselves and their child. A review of the existing literature in this area indicated that numerous models for preschool parent involvement have been described. This review

also indicated that survey studies have shown parents to be highly satisfied with the parent services they have received (Midco, 1972; Batelle, 1976). The body of knowledge missing in the literature is specific, indepth information about parents' perspectives on services. We recognized that the first stage in addressing this question was to design an exploratory study which would identify the relevent concepts and hypotheses in this regard. We wanted to look beyond our professional notions as to what constitutes a successful parent involvement program at the preschool level and to determine how parents, as consumers of services, describe their experiences. What do parents describe as being the benefits and drawbacks to services they receive? How do they perceive their role in the intervention process? What are their likes and dislikes in terms of activities offered to them? We felt it was important to look at these questions regarding parent involvement within the context of the total preschool experience. For instance, how important are activities for parents relative to other types of services offered to the child?

Method

Subjects

Thirty-one mothers whose handicapped children are enrolled in preschools in North Carolina agreed to participate in this study. Fourteen of the 31 families had placed their handicapped child in a specialized preschool program serving only handicapped children; 17 families had chosen a mainstreamed preschool program. All families met the criteria of having a 3-6 year old child who had been enrolled in the preschool for at least 6 months and who is handicapped in the mild to moderate

range. Handicaps represented include mental retardation, physical handicaps, visual impairments, and hearing impairments.

Research Design

The research design which we selected for the study is a two-phase interview strategy. This methodology is drawn from the phenomenological tradition in which the subjects under study, in this case parents as consumers of services, were treated as the "experts" who would provide us with answers to the previously identified broad research questions. We felt these answers would help us lay the groundwork for conducting further studies in an ecologically valid fashion.

The primary purpose of the first interview, which will be referred to as the Phase I open-ended interview, was to identify the themes, patterns and the range of responses which characterize how parents define and describe preschool services and their choices in this regard. Specified topics, drawn from our research questions, formed the framework of a preliminary guide. However, in keeping with the stated purposes of the study, we wanted to remain open to unanticipated issues and concerns which emerged from the parents. Therefore, the qualitative information from these Phase I interviews was analyzed in an ongoing fashion and used to develop an operationally defined analysis outline based upon issues identified by the parents with whom I was talking. The information gathered in these open-ended interviews was used to develop a quantitative rating scale which was administered in Phase II of our study. This quantitative scale provided a measure of priority within the range of items identified by parents in Phase I.

This then is a brief overview of the research design. This two-phase interview strategy is one way of dealing with the need to let the relevant information emerge from the data. At the same time it yields a standard set of information from each subject as well as a priority ranking of information. Both the qualitative and the quantitative information can be used for describing the group's responses, as well as for making comparisons between the mainstreamed and specialized groups.

Procedures

At this point I would like to go into some detail on the procedures we developed for carrying out this interview strategy. These procedures, as far as we could determine have not been described in the literature by others using open-ended interviews as an assessment measure.

There are 2 major problems inherent in using open-ended interviews as an assessment measure: 1) data management - how to manage the vast amounts of information; and 2) data analysis - how to transform this wealth of qualitative information into discrete units for analysis in a systematic and reliable fashion. This is particularly difficult when there is little preliminary data to guide the generation of hypotheses. If one accepts the premise that the respondents are the "experts" who will define for you the relevant hypotheses, then one hesitates to impose one's own a priori categories onto the data. At the same time there is need for a standard set of information from each respondent and the need for some sort of analysis outline to use in describing information and contrasting groups.

The way we chose to deal with the problem of data management and analysis was by using unisort cards. All of the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed onto these cards. After the transcriptions were made I read over each interview three times, underlining, numbering, and coding all comments which I judged to be relevant to the research questions. In the early stages of interviewing, there were many comments which I judged to be relevant but which did not fit into our existing categories. These comments were placed into an "Uncoded category" and evaluated as to what newly defined category they might represent. These uncoded comments formed the basis for the emerging categories not originally anticipated by the investigators, but identified by parents.

An independent coder who is an expert in the field read the transcripts and coded the comments which I had numbered in the same fashion. At this stage disagreements on coded comments and the designation of new categories for uncoded comments were discussed and resolved as a means of operationally defining categories. Based upon sources such as Glaser & Strauss, researchers who have used qualitative data to generate categories, we expected to reach a "saturation point". That is, a point when no new categories seemed to emerge and the categories which had been developed were clearly defined. We arbitrarily set a criterion of 5 interviews elapsing without relevant but unclassifiable information emerging as being this "saturation point." When "saturation" was reached we calculated reliability on the following 4 interviews coding into the now operationally defined analysis outline. Reliability ranged from .94 to .93.

At this point it was necessary to go back and recode all the previous interviews into the finalized analysis outline. After this had been done, the designated codes for each comment could be punched into the unisort cards. By using a long knitting needle all comments pertaining to each broad category could be easily retrieved and examined. The next step was to do this in order to develop a coding scheme to use for final analysis of the open-ended interviews. This coding scheme then represents a final distillation of the wealth of open-ended interview information. The other product resulting from the examination of specific comments within the broad categories was the development of the rating scale which we used in Phase II of our study.

Results

The results that I would like to share with you today represent data derived from 3 sources. One source is data from the categorical analysis of the Phase I open-ended interviews; another source is the frequency counts and percentages from the Phase II quantitative rating measure, and the 3rd source is direct quotes from parents.

Factors Influencing Parent's Choice of a Preschool Placement

In our open-ended interviews with parents, one of the areas we explored with them was how they reached a decision in regard to selecting a preschool for their child--e.g., exactly what factors influenced parents in their choice. For example, we were interested in the importance of parent activities in their selection, relative to other factors. Two major categories emerged within this broad area as influencing parents' choice of a preschool: they are parents' perceptions of their children's needs prior to

placement, and parents' perceptions of their own needs prior to placement.

Parent Perceptions of Child Needs Prior to Placement. We identified 5 sub-categories within the category of Parent Perceptions of Child Needs Prior to Placement. Characteristics of the staff were a big factor in

Insert Table 1

this regard (Sub-Category A). Parents specifically mentioned the teacher's warmth and sensitivity, the teacher's acceptance of their handicapped child, and the training teachers had received as being of great importance. Other factors consistently mentioned within this category were the availability of individualized instruction (Sub-category B), the availability of special services and adaptive physical facilities (Sub-category C), the program's ability to enhance their child's developmental progress (Sub-category D), and the program's ability to provide their child with exposure to the "real world" (Sub-category E).

Parent Perceptions of their own Needs at Choice Point. Parents also described many needs of their own which affected their choice of preschools. Using our analysis procedures, we identified 4 sub-categories within the area of parent needs. Some parents described or implied the need for services

Insert Table 2

for themselves (Sub-category A). For instance, some parents described a period of confusion and emotional upset which they were experiencing at the time that they were seeking a preschool for their child. Some described the need for specific training in helping them work with their child. Some stated that they felt the need for opportunities to share experiences with other parents with common concerns.

Parents also described the need to not be involved at times (Sub-category B). Several mothers talked about the pressure they felt to work constantly with their handicapped child when he was at home. One mother stated to me:

"You can't just sit him down and say, 'Here, lie here for a whole day.' You feel like you have to help them do things."

Another mother stated it this way:

"I think you always are going to feel more pressure if your little one is handicapped, there's no way around it. When you get a little one that doesn't do anything until you're the catalyst...it almost becomes an obsession...because you feel like he'd be sitting there, and you know that you're either going to sew...or you could get him to learn his 'k' sounds..."

These comments from a third mother indicate the extent to which some mothers are ready for a break from the responsibilities of child care during school hours. She stated:

"A lot of times I get tired of having a role - god, I don't want to solve that - I'm paying you to take him for 3 hours and lady make it work. Maybe that's a nasty attitude toward teachers but I kind of feel that way sometimes. It's not worth it to me if I have to figure it out - I might as well have him with me at those times."

This last quote reflects a theme which is repeated again and again throughout these interviews: parent concern over teacher characteristics. The

competencies of teachers are seen as being important not only in facilitating their child's developmental progress, but also as affecting the parent's ability to relax and enjoy a break from their child. One parent stated:

"You've got to have a staff that is smarter than you...
I'm no genius, I mean, my background is giving enemas...
but you've got to know that the people that are teaching
your child know their stuff."

Another sub-category within "parent needs" which influenced their choice of type of placement relates to concerns parents have in regard to their child's peer group (Sub-category C). Some parents talked about their reluctance to have their child attend a special preschool, especially if the word "mental retardation" was associated with the school's name or reputation. This quote from the mother of a hearing-impaired preschooler illustrates this concern:

"We didn't feel that he was retarded. One of our
choices was the _____ Center for Retarded
Children. We were having enough pain as it was;
we didn't feel that we could handle saying that
he was going there."

This feeling was shared by other mothers whose children were not mentally retarded.

The option of choosing a traditional mainstreamed preschool program presented a different set of concerns to some parents. In regard to that choice, some parents described how hurt they would feel to see their child teased or rejected by his nonhandicapped peers. Even if the child was oblivious to the rejection, parents stated that they would feel personally

hurt. These concerns have implications for placement decisions.

Other factors which influenced parents' choices of programs illustrated practical down to earth needs (Sub-category D). Cost of program, convenience for parents and the need for daycare were commonly expressed parent needs.

It is interesting to note that in certain cases parents are faced with situations in which their needs and their children's needs are incompatible. One mother described to me how her needs for a parent support group were sacrificed because she felt it more important that her daughter's need for language models be met by choosing a mainstreamed preschool situation. She said:

"I'm satisfied with Katherine's needs being met, but
as far as mine, I'm not. I do not get to share
experiences with other mothers about our children,
and when I say our children, I'm thinking more
in the vein of handicapped children, the special
things that come up."

How parents resolve these dilemmas is an area worthy of further research. Our interviews suggest that parents often do as this mother did; that is, choose a preschool which offered what her daughter needed. When asked about her own needs this mother stated she just had to adjust to what the school had to offer. These kinds of comments were frequent enough so that we created a category which we called "Adjustment Period to Current Preschool." Within that category the following 6 types of adjustment situations were identified: difficulty getting to know other

parents, problems associated with having a teacher who was not used to dealing with handicapped children, difficulty of having other children in the school be frightened of or teasing the handicapped child, and adjusting to the absence of or a different sort of parent involvement. Parents were asked to indicate in the Phase II rating scale if they had experienced these situations at their child's preschool as a way for us to examine the frequency of these events. The problem which was most frequently experienced by these parents was the difficulty connected with having a teacher who was not used to dealing with handicapped children. This emphasizes again the impact which the preschool teacher has on the parents' satisfaction. It is also interesting to note that parents whose children are in mainstreamed placements more frequently reported experiencing adjustment problems related to the teacher and other children in the class than did those whose children are in specialized placements.

Benefits and Drawbacks for Parents in regard to their Child's Preschool.

Another area which we explored with parents in the open-ended interviews was what they perceived as being the benefits and drawbacks to their child's preschool for themselves. Looking at the sub-categories we

Insert Table 3

identified within the Benefits and Drawbacks, one can see that these are similar to the sub-categories identified in the category of Parent Needs. Category A - parent-professional relationship - is one which was not specifically described by parents as a need they had, although a good staff was definitely emphasized as being an important factor in their choice. The importance of a good parent-professional relationship was

emphasized again and again by parents; we will see more clearly its importance when we look at the data from the Phase II Rating Scale.

Parent Activities. In talking with parents about their child's preschool, often they mentioned and if they didn't, I asked them about specific parent activities that were part of the school program. The different activities which parents described in the Phase I open-ended interview were grouped into 8 categories. On the Phase II rating scale parents were asked 2 questions in regard to these 8 types of activities: 1) does the opportunity to engage in the activity exist at their child's school, 2) and how much they liked or disliked participating in this activity generally.

Insert Figure 1

Opportunities to Engage in Parent Activities. Figure 1 indicates the percentage of preschools in our sample which provide opportunities for parents to engage in each type of activity. You will note that the opportunity to engage in all of the identified activities existed in the majority of preschools. In fact Activity #8 is the only one which was not present in all preschools and #8 is the opportunity to have no role at all if one so desires.

We anticipated that the activities available to parents would differ in the specialized and mainstreamed preschools. Our data indicates that in this sample that is generally not the case. Some differences do occur;

Insert Figure 2

a greater number of mainstreamed preschools offer parents opportunities to engage in volunteer activities outside the classroom, such as driving in field trips, than do specialized preschools. A greater number of specialized preschools offer parents the opportunity to have no role if they

so desire than do mainstreamed preschools. However, on the other 6 activities the frequencies are very similar.

Attitudes toward Parents Activities

We collected information on parents' attitudes towards these 8 types of activities by asking them to rate each one on a scale from 1-5, indicating the extent to which they liked or disliked the activities, whether or not the opportunity to engage in them currently existed.

Insert Figure 3

Figure 3 indicates the percentage of parents rating each type of activity positively. That is, those who stated they either "liked" or "liked very much" the activity, as opposed to either "disliking", "disliking very much" or "not being sure" how they felt about it. The majority of parents felt positive about all of the activities, except #8, which is having no role at all. You will note that activities #4, 5, 6, & 7 got the highest ratings from parents. If you will remember numbers 4, 5, & 6 - parent training, parent support groups, and information contacts with teachers - were those which were spontaneously identified by parents in the open-ended interviews as being benefits to their child's program, when they existed and drawbacks when they did not exist. This high rating is not that surprising. Activity # 7 does not follow this pattern and represents an interesting piece of information. Not one parent mentioned the responsibility of helping the teacher and other children understand her child's handicap as a benefit in the open-ended interview. In fact one parent specifically stated that in her child's mainstreamed program she was expected to perform this activity and she didn't like it. Other parents implied a dislike for the role by

describing how glad they were that their child's teacher could cope without their help. Therefore, it was not anticipated that as many parents would rate this activity as highly as they did. It may be that parents enjoy the opportunity to perform this function but do not like situations in which the teacher cannot manage without the parent's help. The information on Activity #7 also illustrates another point which is important - that is, there is tremendous variability in parents' attitudes toward involvement opportunities. On all the activities except #6, which is informal contact with teachers, the range of responses was from dislike to like. In other words, #6 was the only one which received a positive rating by all 31 mothers. To illustrate this variability toward the more structured parent activities I would like to share some quotes with you from 2 highly educated middle class mothers with similar backgrounds and experiences. Both mothers were moving from programs with parent support groups to programs which did not have these groups. One mother's response to the switch was this:

"I cried for 2 months last spring - I knew what was going to happen. I didn't know it would be as drastic. I was hoping that there would be some type of parental support but it just didn't happen."

In contrast, this mother's response to my question of what was it like not having a parent group was: "It is definitely refreshing." She went on to say:

"You really feel bad for the professionals that want to help you but don't know how. You know - the psychologists and the social workers have this concept

that every parent with a handicapped child wants to talk about it all the time - that's garbage!"

She goes on to describe what several other mothers indicated - an evolving set of needs which in turn are reflected in different attitudes toward parent activities at different points in time:

"When he was first born we really got involved, and it was tremendously beneficial. But now I just want to draw back and make sure that this little guy gets it at home. When you're putting in so much time that your family is no longer benefitting from it then it's time to quit and let somebody else do it...that's where we got."

Another mother expressed these changing sentiments towards mother groups:

"It was good at that time, and I think I'll always have a feeling for those mothers because we got so close, but I don't miss it now. I don't feel the need for it. I may when he gets older and there are more problems."

As a way of gaining more information in regard to the evolving attitudes described by some parents, we ran a correlation on the age of child, the number of previous services the family had received and their positive ratings of the 8 parent activities. The results showed that having been involved in a previous intervention or preschool program was negatively correlated with a positive rating on activity #4 (parent training) and activity #5 (parent counseling). This correlation supports what parents have described anecdotally. It suggests that past experience rather than age of child determine current attitudes towards parent training activities and support groups. This hypothesis is one which should be explored in further research studies.

In addition to rating each role, parents were asked to identify the role which they most preferred and the role which they least preferred.

Insert Figures 4 & 5

Most parents seemed to agree on their intense likes and dislikes. Role #6, informal contact with teachers, once again proved to be the favorite role for the majority of mothers. Sixty-five percent of the mothers chose this as their favorite role. Having no role at all was the least favorable role.

Parents' Perceptions of an Ideal Preschool

As I mentioned earlier one of the purposes of our study was to identify how important are parent activities to parents in relation to the other characteristics of their child's preschool. In order to address this question I asked parents to describe to me what they thought would be an ideal preschool for their child based upon the needs of their family.

The 6 categories from A-F in Table 4 represent the characteristics which

Insert Table 4

parents in the open-ended interviews described as being important. In order to get a priority rating on these items we included this question on the Phase II ranking measure. We asked parents to rate each characteristic on a scale from 1-4 to indicate importance and then to choose which characteristic they felt to be most important and which was least important.

Insert Figure 6

Sixty-five percent of the mothers chose teacher characteristics as being the most important feature of an ideal preschool; 0% chose services for parents as being the most important feature. This information seems to indicate that within the context of other characteristics, parent involvement activities per se are not a top priority for parents. Once again, teacher

characteristics predominate parents' concerns.

Summary

In summing up the information that I have shared with you I want to emphasize that the parents I interviewed varied tremendously as far as their needs, preferences and perspectives in terms of their children's preschools. However, within that broad range of responses, certain themes and patterns were evident. Parents have very definite needs which influence their choice of preschool - some relate to special services for themselves such as counseling, parent training support and parent support groups. Other concerns are unrelated to any kind of specific parent activities and have more to do with logistical arrangements, such as cost, convenience, and daycare arrangements. In fact, many parents state an overwhelming need to let professionals take over their child's educational program for a portion of the day so they can relax and have time for themselves. This doesn't indicate that parents are abdicating their responsibility. Almost all of the parents in our sample prefer having some sort of role in their child's education. The most popular format for that role seems to be frequent informal exchanges with their child's teacher during which information can be shared in a give and take fashion. As far as specific parents activities are concerned the data suggests that parents have an evolving set of needs and preferences in this regard, based upon past experiences with such services.

The most salient issue for parents - the theme which is repeated again and again throughout the interviews - is the importance of having a warm, sensitive and well-trained teacher who is able and willing to communicate frequently with the parents. From the parents' point of view, this form of parent involvement takes precedence over all others.

I want to emphasize again that the purpose of this study was not to test hypotheses, but was to generate themes to guide further study. Because of the sensitivity of this methodology to the research problem as it is defined by those who have the most experience with it, parents of preschoolers, I feel that the themes, patterns and perspectives which have emerged from the data are relevant and meaningful. In addition, the procedures which were developed for dealing with the problems of data management and analysis provide a measure of scientific rigor to the process. This type of research is difficult and time consuming...certainly not as easy as designing a questionnaire; but it represents a necessary first step at this initial stage of the research process.

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Categories Based on Phase One Interviews

- I. Child's Needs Prior to Placement
 - A. Characteristics of staff
 1. Attitudes toward handicapped child (e.g., warm, loving, supporting, sensitive)
 2. Training (e.g., specially trained to work with handicapped child)
 - B. Individualized instruction
 1. Specialized materials
 2. Individual or small group attention
 - C. Specialized services (e.g., PT, OT, speech)
 1. Availability of services
 2. Adaptive physical facilities
 - D. Developmental progress
 1. General (e.g., child needs help in many areas)
 2. Communication (if non-specific, code in language development).
 - a. Articulation
 - b. Language development
 3. Motor
 4. Self-help (e.g., feeding, toileting)
 5. Socialization
 - a. Interaction with others
 1. Need for contact with normal peers
 2. Need for contact with handicapped peers
 3. Contact with others in general
 - b. Discipline (e.g., structure, routine, consistency)
 6. Self-concept and motivation
 - E. Adaptive behavior (e.g., independence from mother and home; adaptation to the "real world"; preparation for mainstreaming in the future).

Table 2

Categories Based on Phase One Interviews

IV. Parent Needs Prior to Placement

- A. Parent Involvement
 - 1. Parent is experiencing personal problems (emotional upset, guilt, nerves)
 - 2. Parent needs parent training (help in understanding, teaching, and disciplining and coping with child)
 - 3. Parent would like opportunity to share experiences with other parents
- B. Parent needs professional involvement so parent can relax and have time for self
- C. Parent concerns in regard to child's peer group
 - 1. Handicapped peers (parent expresses concern about the stigma for self of child associating with handicapped children)
 - 2. Nonhandicapped peers (expresses hurt she would feel to see her child rejected)
- D. Logistical needs
 - 1. Cost of program (free lunches, sliding scales)
 - 2. Convenience (proximity to home, is transportation available, will parent need to coordinate special services)
 - 3. Need for day care (are the school hours flexible, are summer programs included)

Table 3

Categories Based on Phase One Interviews

V. Benefits for Parents at Current Placement

- A. Parent-professional relationship-good communication between parent and staff (parents are kept informed, staff is open to parents' suggestions)
- B. Parent involvement
 - 1. Staff offers counseling and emotional support to parent (e.g., help in making future placement decisions)
 - 2. Parent training and skill development (help in understanding, teaching and coping with child)
 - 3. Parent support groups and relationships with other parents (opportunity to meet different folks)
- C. Parent can relax and have time for self
- D. Positive effect of peer group
 - 1. Handicapped peers (parent can better accept child's handicap after exposure to group to handicapped children)
 - 2. Nonhandicapped peers (parent has broadened perspective and more understanding of other parents after exposure to non-handicapped children)
- E. Logistical benefits
 - 1. Cost of program (free lunches, sliding scales)
 - 2. Convenience (proximity to home, is transportation available, will parent need to coordinate special services)
 - 3. Day care provided (are school hours flexible, are summer programs included)

VI. Drawbacks for parents at Current Placement

- A. Parent-professional relationship-poor communication between parent and staff
- B. Parent involvement
 - 1. Inadequate opportunities for parent to develop skills in working with child
 - 2. Absence of parent support groups
- C. Negative effect of peer group
 - 1. handicapped peers
 - 2. nonhandicapped peers
- D. Logistical problems
 - 1. cost of program
 - 2. inconvenience (transportation is inadequate or not available, parent must coordinate services, program is not close to home)
 - 3. Absence of day care (no afterschool or summer programs)

Table 4
 Categories Based on Phase One Interviews

VII. Ideal Preschool Described by Parents

- A. Characteristic of staff
 - 1. Attitudes toward handicapped child
 (e.g., warm, loving, supporting)
 - 2. Training (e.g., specially trained to work
 with handicapped child)
- B. Individualized instruction
 - 1. Specialized materials
 - 2. Individual or small group attention
- C. Specialized services
 - 1. availability of services
 - 2. coordination of services
 - 3. adaptive physical facilities
- D. Integration of handicapped and nonhandicapped children
- E. Parent involvement
- F. Wants same as presently receiving

Parent Involvement Roles
 in Preschools

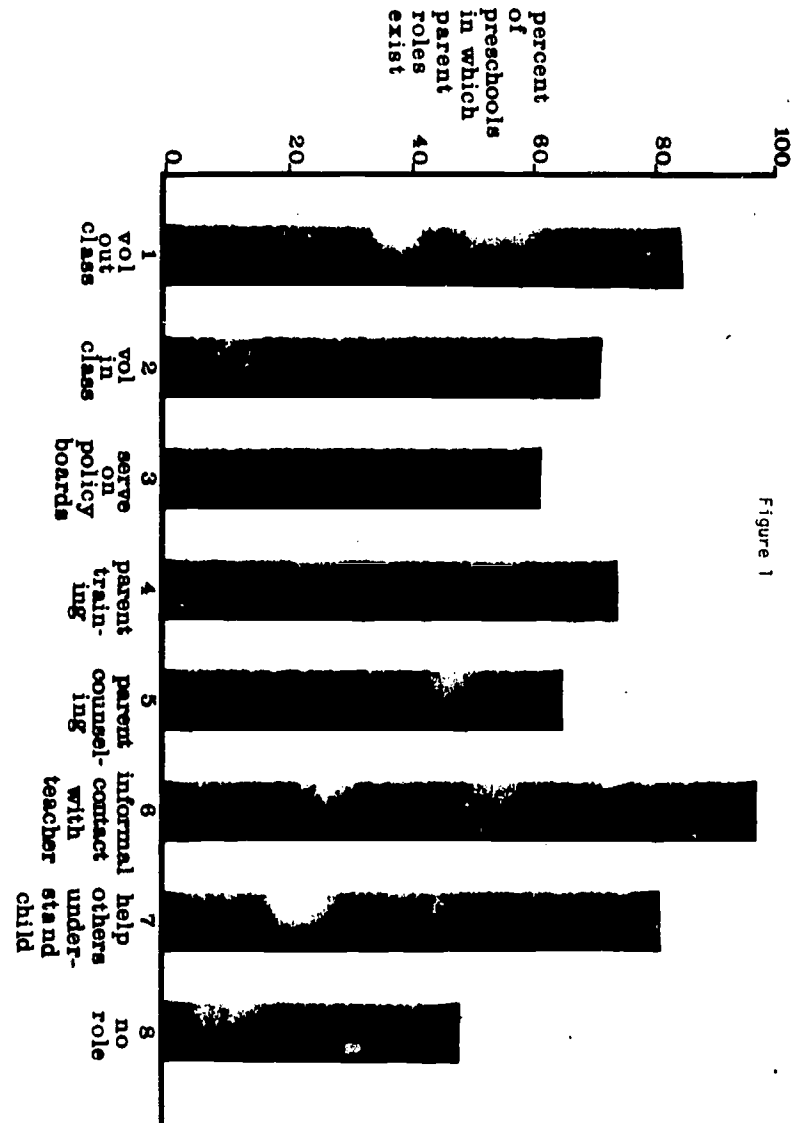
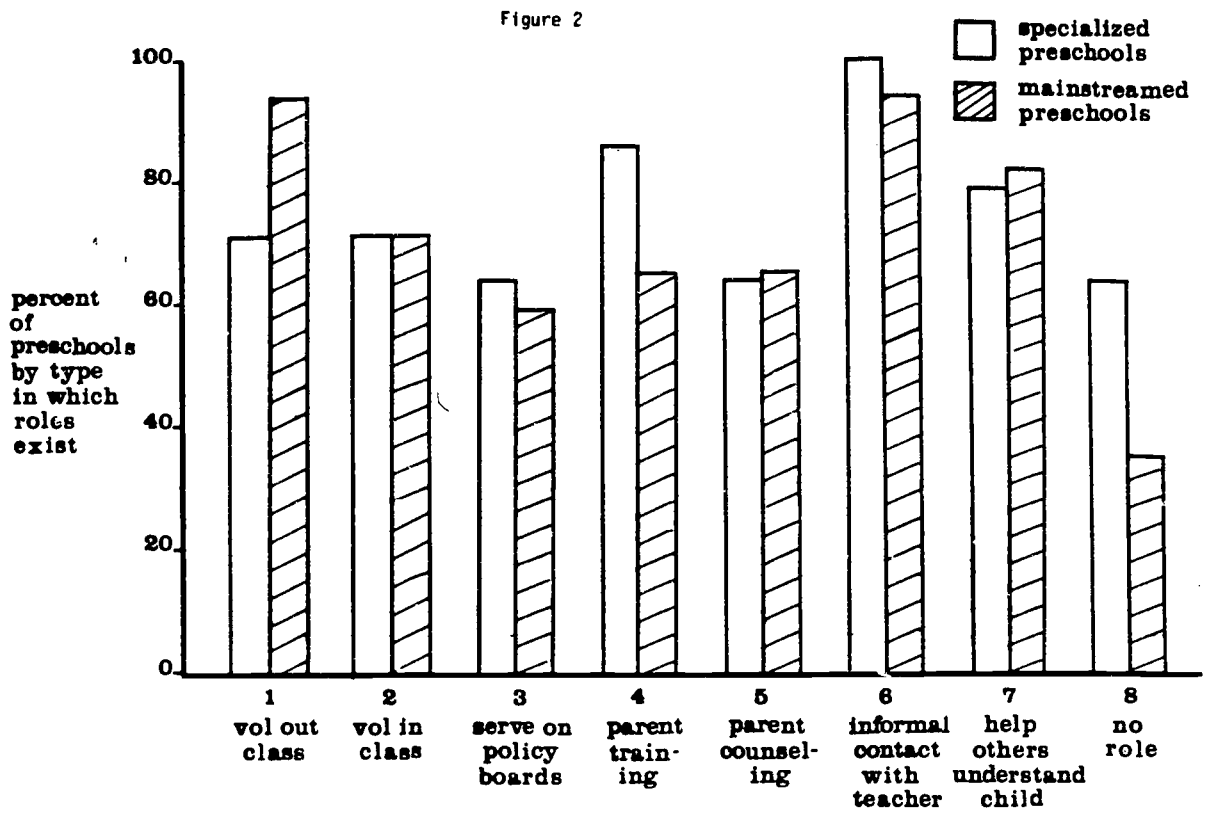
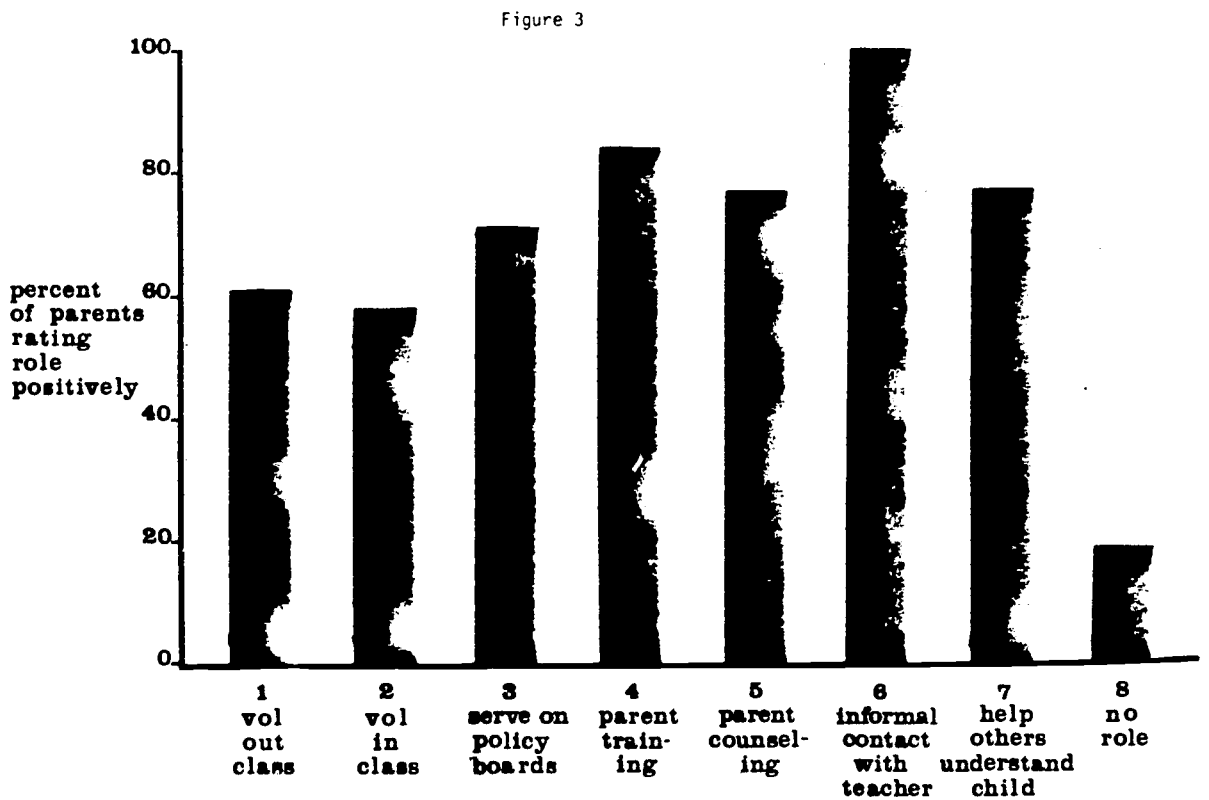


Figure 1

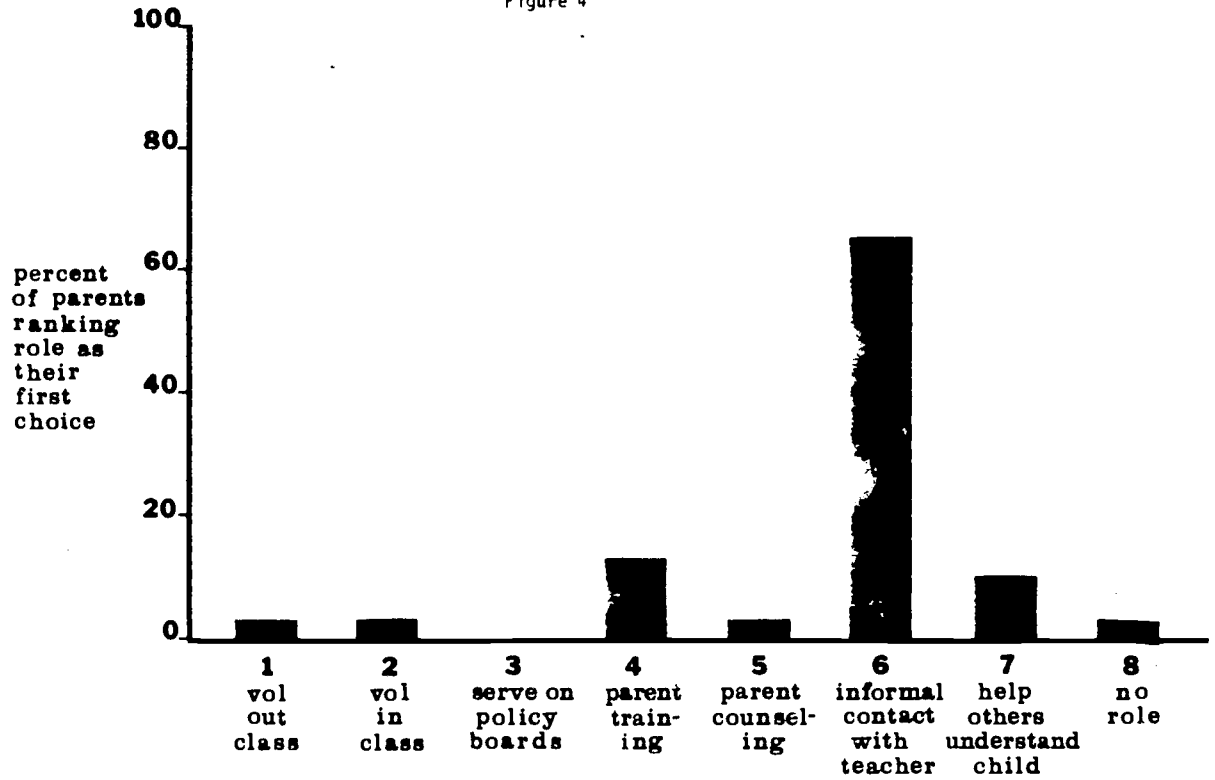


Parent Involvement Roles Mainstreamed & Specialized Placements



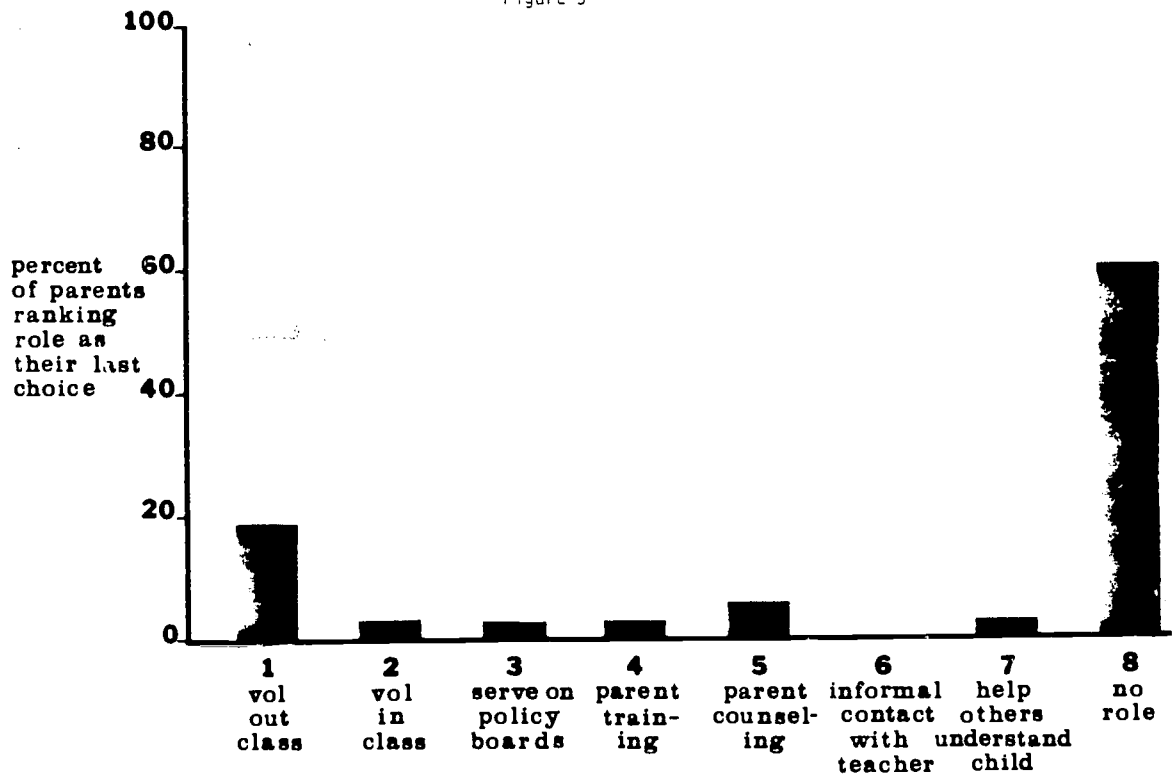
Parent Ratings of Roles

Figure 4



Parent Rankings of Roles

Figure 5



Parent Rankings of Roles

Table 2

Categories Based on Phase One Interviews

IV. Parent Needs Prior to Placement

- A. Parent involvement
 - 1. Parent is experiencing personal problems (emotional upset, guilt, nerves)
 - 2. Parent needs parent training (help in understanding, teaching, and disciplining and coping with child)
 - 3. Parent would like opportunity to share experiences with other parents
- B. Parent needs professional involvement so parent can relax and have time for self
- C. Parent concerns in regard to child's peer group
 - 1. Handicapped peers (parent expresses concern about the stigma for self of child associating with handicapped children)
 - 2. Nonhandicapped peers (expresses hurt she would feel to see her child rejected)
- D. Logistical needs
 - 1. Cost of program (free lunches, sliding scales)
 - 2. Convenience (proximity to home, is transportation available, will parent need to coordinate special services)
 - 3. Need for day care (are the school hours flexible, are summer programs included)

Table 3

Categories Based on Phase One Interviews

V. Benefits for Parents at Current Placement

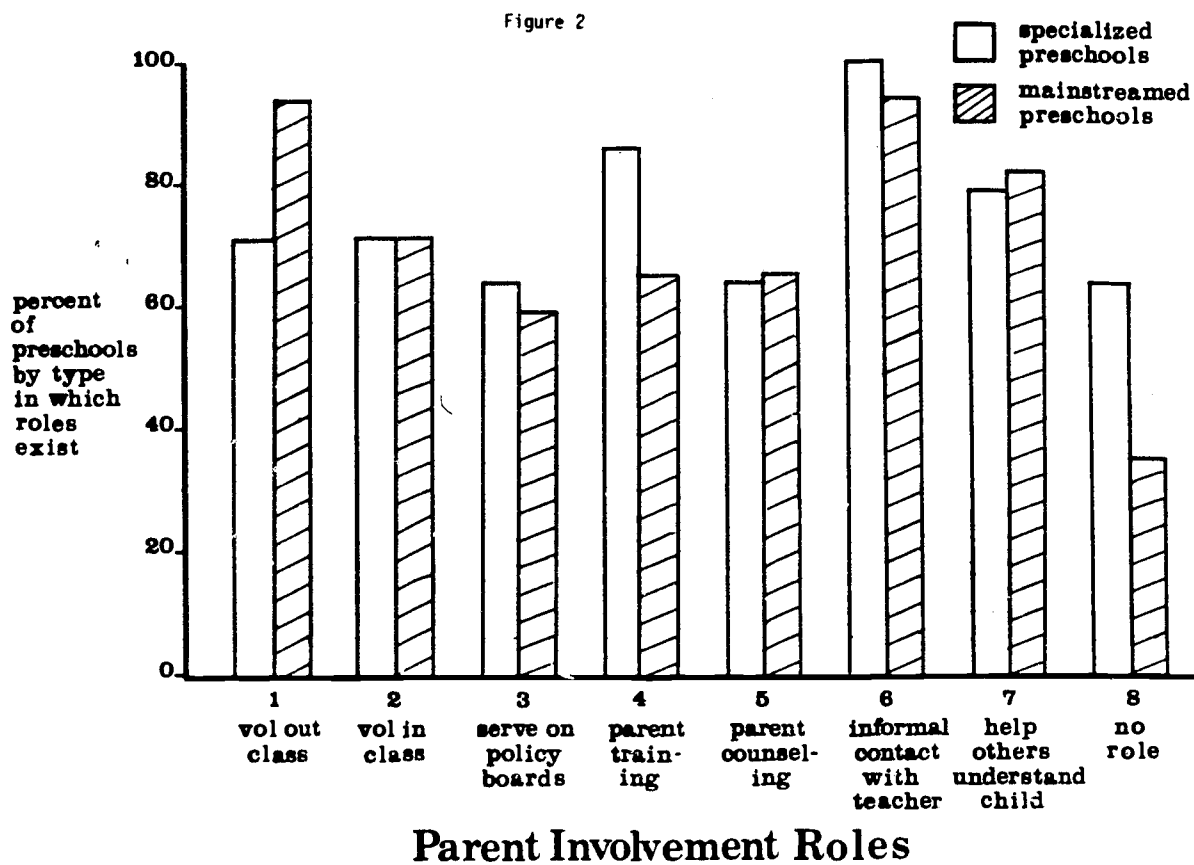
- A. Parent-professional relationship-good communication between parent and staff (parents are kept informed, staff is open to parents' suggestions)
- B. Parent involvement
 - 1. Staff offers counseling and emotional support to parent (e.g., help in making future placement decisions)
 - 2. Parent training and skill development (help in understanding, teaching and coping with child)
 - 3. Parent support groups and relationships with other parents (opportunity to meet different folks)
- C. Parent can relax and have time for self
- D. Positive effect of peer group
 - 1. Handicapped peers (parent can better accept child's handicap after exposure to group to handicapped children)
 - 2. Nonhandicapped peers (parent has broadened perspective and more understanding of other parents after exposure to non-handicapped children)
- E. Logistical benefits
 - 1. Cost of program (free lunches, sliding scales)
 - 2. Convenience (proximity to home, is transportation available, will parent need to coordinate special services)
 - 3. Day care provided (are school hours flexible, are summer programs included)

VI. Drawbacks for parents at Current Placement

- A. Parent-professional relationship-poor communication between parent and staff
- B. Parent involvement
 - 1. Inadequate opportunities for parent to develop skills in working with child
 - 2. Absence of parent support groups
- C. Negative effect of peer group
 - 1. handicapped peers
 - 2. nonhandicapped peers
- D. Logistical problems
 - 1. cost of program
 - 2. inconvenience (transportation is inadequate or not available, parent must coordinate services, program is not close to home)
 - 3. Absence of day care (no afterschool or summer programs)

specialized preschools offer parents the opportu

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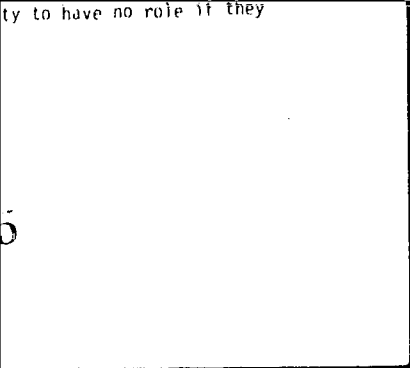


Figure 4

100
80
60
percent
of parents
ranking