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ABSTRACT

A 1987 study, which involved 26 male and 805 female early childhood workers from 85 center-based programs in 20 states, was conducted to develop a social-ecological perspective on professional orientation and job satisfaction and on structural components of early childhood programs. Professional orientation is characterized by a person's emphasis on growth/change, knowledge-based skill, decision-making autonomy, reference-group orientation, goal achievement, and loyalty to clients/professional associates. Central to this social-ecological perspective is the "goodness of fit" between the person's needs and the setting's demands. The sample included 242 classroom assistants, 473 teachers or head teachers, and 116 administrators or supervisors. A five-page questionnaire was developed to measure the structural components of program size, legal structure, and type as well as the professional orientation of the centers and each person. Results confirm that persons are clearly influenced by the professional orientation of their work environment. However, further analysis is needed to understand the interaction effects of different combinations of the structural components if the results would be similar when controlling for the persons' role. (TJH)

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**PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION AND STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS
OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS: A SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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Introduction

Improving the status of teaching as a profession has been a reoccurring theme in school reform proposals during the twentieth century. The latest wave of recommendations is no exception. Considerable attention has focused on defining the characteristics of a profession and developing a blueprint for transforming the nature of teaching into full-fledged professional status (Banner, 1985; Carnegie Forum, 1986; National Commission on Excellence, 1983; Ornstein, 1979). Early childhood educators, as well, have combed the sociological literature in an effort to clarify the nuances in the occupational descriptors associated with the professions and semi-professions. Out of these efforts have come a number of noteworthy recommendations for improving the status of workers in early childhood settings (Ade, 1982; Austin, 1981; Becker, 1975; Caldwell, 1983; Ferguson & Anglin, 1985; Hostetler & Klugman, 1982; Jalongo, 1986; Katz, 1984; Lindsay & Lindsay, 1987; NAEYC, 1984).

Few proposals, however, have wrestled with the thorny issue of how to measure the attitudes and behaviors associated with professionalism. Over twenty years ago Corwin (1965) proposed an approach that might be worth resurrecting. He used the term "professional orientation" as a role perception variable to describe the behavior of individuals in different settings. According to Corwin, a professional orientation is characterized by an individual's emphasis on growth and change, skill based primarily on knowledge, autonomy in decision-making, a reference-group orientation, the achievement of goals, and loyalty to clients and professional associations.

If we acknowledge, however, that behavior is influenced by both the personal background of the individual and the context in which that person works, perhaps a broader interpretation of professional orientation is needed -- one that looks at both the professional orientation of the individual and the professional orientation of the organization. Extending the construct to describe both an attribute of the individual and an attribute of the organization begs the question: In what activities does the individual (or the organization) engage that promote professionalism?

For those seeking to better understand the complex relationship between worker and workplace in the early childhood setting, this approach invites a host of other related questions that also merit attention. For example, what background characteristics are associated with different levels of professional orientation in child care workers? Likewise, what structural components (size, legal structure, program type) are related to the professional orientation of the center? And what constitutes a match or mismatch in the relationship between the professional orientation of the worker and that of the workplace? This paper will address these issues.

A Social-Ecological Perspective

The proposition that behavior evolves as a function of the interplay between person and environment is not new. This assertion was expressed symbolically in Kurt Lewin's (1931) classic equation, $B = f(P,E)$. Lewin stressed the need to view behavior (B) as an outcome of the relationship between the person (P) and his/her environment (E). Yet studies growing out of this psychological tradition have not always given equal emphasis

to both sides of the equation by investigating the person and the environment as well as the dynamic interaction between the two.

It was this lack of attention to the interplay between person and environment that led Rudolf Moos (1976) to formulate his theory of social ecology. A social-ecological perspective examines not only the person and the context of behavior, but also the dynamic reciprocal relationship between the two. A social ecological perspective is essentially a person-environment interactionist model seeking to understand why individual behavior often differs substantially in different settings or milieus. Indeed, as Moos asserts, behavior may be more easily predicted by knowing where a person is than by knowing who the individual is. A social-ecological perspective has been used to describe the social climate of a number of different environments (Moos, 1976, 1979). The framework has also served as a heuristic to help explain teacher job satisfaction in early childhood education (Jorde-Bloom, 1986).

Central to a social-ecological conceptualization is the notion of the "goodness of fit" between the needs of the person and the demands of the setting. Congruity between the needs of the worker and the demands of the work environment leads to a state of harmony and satisfaction; disparity leads to tension and dissatisfaction (French, 1982; Ivancevich & Matteson, 1984; Stern, 1970). Holland (1973) argues that people are not passive about this fit; they actively search for work environments that will let them exercise their skills and abilities, attitudes, and values.

Structural Components of Early Childhood Programs

In the organizational management literature, the structural components of organizations are defined in a number of different ways. Moos (1976), for example, refers to the size (number of employees) and shape (number of levels of authority) of an organization as being key structural components. Katz and Kahn (1978), on the other hand, use slightly different terminology (centralization, configuration, specialization, standardization, formalization, and interdependence) when referring to organizational structure. Regardless of the idiosyncratic terminology used, all these organizational theorists agree that the behaviors and attitudes of people can be strongly influenced by the type of organizational structure in which they work.

Three components of organizational structure that appear to have particular relevance to early childhood settings are: center size, legal structure, and program type.

Size

Research on the relationship between organizational size and various outcome variables has been both extensive and inconclusive. Moos (1976) concludes that organizational size per se does not have an immediate impact on behavior. He stresses that organizational variables such as size are not psychological variables which bear directly on individuals. They are only important because of their effect on the attitudes and values which do bear directly on individuals. Large size, for example, may affect the collegiality which may have an adverse impact on perceptions about organizational practices. Talacchi's research (1960)

helps us understand why this might be the case. He found that increased size increases the division of labor and status differentiation in organizations. He concludes that the size of the organization directly affects the individual by changing both the nature of the job and the nature of interpersonal relations on the job.

Studies in early childhood education exploring the impact of size on program outcomes have used a variety of different indicators for center size including the total square footage of the facility, total student enrollment, and licensed capacity. Most of the studies in this area have looked at the issue of density and its effect on the social interaction between children (Hutt & Vaizey, 1966; Loo, 1972; Phyfe-Perkins, 1980; Prescott, Jones, & Kirtchevsky, 1967).

In their 1967 study, Prescott and her associates for example, found that the size of a center stood out as a dependable predictor of program quality when viewed in terms of child outcomes. They found, however, that large centers did have better trained teachers. Reddy (1980) found that higher quality was positively correlated with larger size. Roupp, Travers, Glantz, & Coelen (1979) found that group size showed a stronger association with quality than total program size.

Given the mixed results of research in this area, it is not surprising that there is little consensus about what constitutes the optimum center size. Reddy and Lankford (1982) found the educators they surveyed expressed a preference for the home-like atmosphere of small centers for the children but acknowledge that larger centers can be more cost effective administratively. Evans, Shub, and Weinstein (1971) conclude the optimal center size is 45 to 60 children; this size allows

teachers to feel close to one another while still being large enough to facilitate the allow for sharing of materials, cooperative program development, and covering work schedules in case of teacher absence. Roupp et al., (1979) conclude that units of 75 are best, both for the children and the caregivers.

While no research has been conducted specifically on the relationship between program size and professional orientation, two studies focusing on the attitudes and behaviors of the teaching and administrative staff shed some light on the possible association between these variables.

In his study of child care centers in New England, Neugebauer (1975) found that in the large programs he observed decision-making was more authoritarian and clarity of program objectives was much lower. He also found that there was little correlation between center size and degree of organizational planning. In a more recent study investigating staff perceptions of ten dimensions of organizational climate in the early childhood setting, Jorde-Bloom (1988) found only the dimension of collegiality showed a significant relationship to center size. The larger the center, the lower workers rated team spirit, cooperation, and group cohesiveness. Low to moderate negative relationships were also observed between employee turnover and five dimensions of organizational climate (collegiality, goal consensus, physical setting, decision making, and reward system).

Legal Structure

The legal structure of a center describes its governing framework. The definitive difference between nonprofit and for-profit centers is

that nonprofit programs exist for reasons other than to make money. But this distinction needs clarification. The key feature of nonprofit programs is that whatever money they receive in excess expenses may not be distributed to shareholders or other individuals. It must be turned back into the business to enhance the nonprofit purpose. Differences in legal structure extend into areas of liability, control and management, continuity of existence, taxation, terminating the business, and limitations on political activities (Murray, 1987).

Nonprofit corporations are also eligible for tax-exempt status in most states. Nonprofit centers may be public (receiving over 50% of their operating funds from state or federal sources) or private (affiliated with a church, local social service organization, or independent). Most nonprofit programs rely on a variety of sources for income including parent fees, donations of space and materials, foundation grants, Child Care Food Program reimbursements, and government subsidies. Acceptance of government funds, however, typically entails considerable paperwork and fiscal review by auditors. These monitoring expenses can increase operating costs (Murray, 1987).

For-profit centers rely primarily on parent fees for their existence. The most common for-profit legal structure is the sole proprietorship (also called private proprietary). In this legal structure the owner/operator has complete control over the finances and management of the business and is subject to very few legal requirements. Another for-profit variation is the general or limited partnership. These are often husband and wife teams. The fastest growing segment of the for-profit sector, however, is by far the for-profit corporations that provide child care services (Neugebauer, 1988). These are usually chains (e.g., Kinder-Care, Children's World) operated under a single corporate management, but also include some day care franchises.

In the early 1970's when big businesses rushed to establish for-profit centers, educators from the nonprofit sector were often vocal in their criticism of these programs. Even writers in the popular press questioned the trend, fearing we were at risk of rearing a generation of "Kentucky Fried Children." The National Council of Jewish Women (Keyserling, 1972) fueled the fire when it reported the results of its study investigating several indices of program quality. It rated almost 50% of all the proprietary for-profit centers it studied as "poor" compared to 11% of the nonprofit centers. Although the methodology of this study was less than rigorous, it still got enormous press and helped shape many stereotypes about for-profit programs.

Despite these dire predictions, for-profit day care has prospered, As Neugebauer (1988) notes, the for-profit sector has not only thrived, but it has gained respectability. Child care educators are no longer quick to dismiss the possibility that for-profit chains can offer good quality care. They now acknowledge that it is not per se the best nor the worst, but represents one part of a smorgasbord of choices.

Neugebauer (1988) emphasizes the quality of a child care center is not primarily a direct result of corporate size or profit orientation. Indeed, he refers to the debate as "polarizing rhetoric," emphasizing that all early childhood programs whether operated on a nonprofit or for-profit basis, are similarly engaged in providing a service to the public. Kagan and Glennon (1982), as well, claim that proprietary owners have been subjected to unfair criticism. They reiterate that the profit motive and a concern for child welfare need not be incompatible goals.

Even though there is a recognition that public nonprofit, private nonprofit, and for-profit programs all represent a spectrum of quality, a

growing body of evidence suggests that there may be significant differences in the organizational indicators associated with professional orientation.

Just how programs allocate funds for staff salaries, fringe benefits, and staff training provides a good example. Since personnel costs typically are the largest part of a program's budget, how it decides to allocate limited resources in this category clearly reflects organizational priorities. Kagan and Glennon (1982) report for-profits consistently spend 10% less of their budget on wages compared to nonprofits. Whitebook Howe, Darrah, and Friedman (1982) also found staff in proprietary centers earned significantly less and had fewer benefits than workers in other private or public centers.

But the relationship between legal structure, indices of professional orientation and job satisfaction are mixed. Whitebook et al., (1982) report that workers in for-profit centers experienced less satisfaction and had higher turnover rates. They go on to say that staff in proprietary centers were least likely to claim they were learning and acquiring new personal skills on the job. Kontos and Stremmel (1988), on the other hand, found that job satisfaction was the same for staff working at for-profit versus nonprofit centers. Nor did they find that wages or turnover differ significantly between the two types. The differences between for-profit and nonprofit centers they did find tended to be in the area of fringe benefits with nonprofit programs receiving more. Jorde-Bloom (1987) found that although for-profits paid their employees somewhat less, this difference did not translate into differential levels of job satisfaction. In other words employees in nonprofit centers were just as likely to be frustrated about the level of pay, fringe benefits, and opportunities for promotion as those working for for-profit centers.

Structural differences in overall program quality has also been investigated in several studies. Kagan and Newton (1987) report that the government-funded nonprofit centers included in their study consistently scored higher in positive adult behaviors, and other indicators of quality than private nonprofit centers or for-profit programs. The differences within the nonprofit sector did not achieve statistical significance, however. Kontos and Stremmel (1988) also report significant differences in quality between for-profit and nonprofit centers. Although Olenick (1986) did not find significant differences in quality between the public and private programs in his study, he did find a relationship between quality and personnel costs. Programs at the lower end of quality spent about half of their income on staff while programs with high quality ratings spent nearly two thirds of their budget in this area. He concluded that as quality level increased, staff received more overall benefits and ongoing training.

Program Type

Program type is the kind of service provided with respect to the length of day of the children's program. It is also an indirect measure of the amount of contact time staff have with children. Programs vary considerably in this regard from providing single half-day programs of 2 - 2 1/2 hours in length to those programs that provide full-day and half-day combinations.

The myriad of different schedules has made the task of conducting research comparing different program types difficult. Because of this, it is not surprising that the effects of program type on different outcome variables is mixed. In summarizing the research in this area, Howes

(1986) reports that some studies show that moderate hours of separation predicts lower distress at separation for the child. Infants in full-time care also display more avoidant behavior during reunion than their part-time counterparts. On the other hand, mothers of infants in full-time care tend to display more positive emotional behavior. Researchers have observed more teacher-guided task behavior and positive peer behavior among full-day children yet teachers report that the full-day children are more aggressive and have difficulties with peers. Finally, Howes reports that caregivers with fewer children and who worked shorter hours engaged in more facilitative social stimulation and were more responsive and less restrictive toward the children in their care.

Research investigating the effect of program type on indicators of professional orientation is quite limited. Zinsser (1986) found that half-day nursery school programs were characterized by higher hourly wage rates, more experienced and more highly educated staff, and lower turnover rates than day care centers. Whitebook et al., (1982), as well, found turnover rates were lowest for staff in part-time programs. Lindsay and Lindsay (1987) found differences in educational background between workers in full-day centers and part-day centers with a far higher percentage of teachers and assistants at full day centers having completed four or more years of college. They did not, however, find meaningful differences between the two groups in their professional attitudes.

Methodology

This research focused on several aspects of the social-ecological puzzle. The objectives of the study were:

1. To develop a profile of the professional orientation of early childhood workers by their role in the organization (assistant, teacher, director);

2. To assess the relationship between workers' level of professional orientation, their job satisfaction, level of commitment to the center and several background variables including age, educational level, years of experience in early childhood education, and years of experience at their current center;

3. To note differences in the professional orientation of centers based on various aspects of program structure (size, legal structure, and program type);

4. To note differences in the professional orientation of workers, their job satisfaction, and commitment based on center structure; and

5. To explore the concept of the "person-environment fit" by testing the hypothesis that individuals who have a high professional orientation and who also work for centers with a high professional orientation will convey a stronger commitment to the center than workers who do not experience this match.

Sample

The sample for this study included 831 early childhood workers representing 85 for-profit and nonprofit center-based programs in 20 states. The sample included 26 males and 805 females. All individuals worked a minimum of 35 hours per week at their respective centers. Of the sample, 242 were classroom assistants (sometimes referred to as aides), 473 were teachers or head teachers, and 116 held administrative or supervisory positions. These early childhood workers ranged in age from 16 to 77 with a mean age of 32. They averaged 6 years in the field

of early childhood (with a range of 2 months to 31 years) and had worked at their present center for an average of 3.5 years. It was interesting to note that while 7% of the subjects indicated that they had been in the field of early childhood for less than one year, 14% had been at their current center for less than one year.

The 85 centers included in this study ranged in size from 20 to 336 students with a mean total enrollment size of 92 students. Programs represented a broad geographic as well as urban and rural distribution. Twenty-one of the centers were public, nonprofit programs receiving more than 50% of their income from state or federal sources. Forty-three of the centers were private, nonprofit. Several of the programs in this category were affiliated with churches or local nonprofit social welfare organizations; the other programs in this category were independent nonprofits. The remaining 21 programs included in the study represented the private proprietary and corporate for-profit sector. Twenty-nine of the centers provided half-day programs for children. There were two variations to this category; those that had two half-day programs during the day (typically a morning 2 - 2 1/2 hour program and a similar afternoon program) and those that provided one 4 - 5 hour program with the remaining staff time used for planning, preparation, and home visits). The other 56 centers in the study provided full day care (these centers were open a minimum of 8 hours).

Instrumentation

A five-page questionnaire was developed to measure the variables under investigation. In addition to eliciting information on the background characteristics of each respondent, the survey included questions to ascertain the following independent and dependent variables:

Structural components. For purposes of this study, three indices of organizational structure were used. They included size, legal structure, and program type.

Size. There are several ways to measure program size: total student enrollment, total licensed capacity, total operating budget, and number of staff employed. Previous research has shown that a moderate to strong correlation exists between these different indices of center size (Jorde, 1984). In this study it was decided to use total student enrollment as a measure of size. This index conveys more information about the number of families served (and probably more information about the complexity of the program) than does a single figure of licensed capacity. The alternative of using total staff employed as an indicator of size can also be misleading, particular when a program employs a number of part-time personnel. Finally, because of regional differences in operating costs for programs and the nuances of different accounting systems (e.g. some programs do not account for in-kind donations of housing and utilities), it was decided that total student enrollment would probably be a more stable index of center size than a center's total operating budget.

Neugebauer (1988) reports that approximately 66% of the programs in this country enroll under 60 children, another 18% enroll 60 - 99 children, and the remaining 16% of the centers enroll over 100 children. This study used these three size categories to distinguish small, medium and large programs.

Legal structure. In this study, subjects were asked to indicate one of three legal structures that best defined their program: public nonprofit, private nonprofit, and for-profit. This final category included sole proprietorship, partnership, corporate chain and franchise.

Program type. Program type measures of the kind of service provided with respect to the length of day of the children's program. It is also an indirect measure of the amount of contact time teachers have with children. To control for the effects of full-time versus part-time employment, only individuals were included in this study that were employed a minimum of 35 hours per week. Thus, short half-day programs employing only part-time teachers were not included. Subjects were grouped into one of four categories: half-day, two 2 1/2 sessions; half-day, one 4 - 5 hour session; full-day only; and full-day with half-day options included within it. The half-day programs did not exceed 5 hours of contact time with children. All full-day programs provided child care services a minimum of 8 hours per day.

Professional orientation - Center. In assessing this variable, the individual center was the unit of analysis. This subscale measured the policies, practices, and regular activities of the organization that support professional growth, teacher involvement in decision-making, and role clarity.

Research has shown that when professionalism is promoted in a school teachers engage in frequent, continuous, and precise talk about teaching practice. They plan, design, research, prepare, and evaluate teaching materials together. But most important, they have built in organizational mechanisms that allow them to regularly reflect on their performance, evaluate feedback, and examine new and alternative practices (Little, 1982; McLaughlin, Pfeifer Swanson-Owens, & Yee, 1986).

Needless to say, there are obvious limitations to assessing professional orientation by means of a self-report questionnaire. Isolating organizational practices that allow one to confidently infer

that professionalism is being promoted is difficult enough; validating the veracity of those reports is even more difficult. One of the methodological flaws characterizing in some of the research on organizations is that only the administrator is polled regarding organization-wide issues. We know, however, that teachers and administrators often have different perceptions of what is going on in a center (Jorde-Bloom, 1988). Therefore, in this study all employees were asked to complete the questions about the organizational practices that related to the center's professional orientation. When there was at least 80% agreement by employees that the center engaged in the particular activity described, it was assumed that this item accurately reflected organizational practices.

Respondents were also asked for the degree of influence staff had in the following areas of decision making: ordering materials and supplies, interviewing and hiring new staff, determining program objectives, training new teachers, and planning and scheduling activities. The range of scores possible on this portion of the professional orientation subscale was 0 - 5. The mean score for all employee responses was used.

An obvious yardstick of how an organization supports professionalism is what it pays its employees. It was decided, however, not to incorporate wage and salary information in this subscale. This was done because programs compute employee salaries in a variety of ways and getting accurate salary data on a common metric so as to be comparable is difficult. Moreover, there are regional as well as urban/rural salary variations that complicate the standardization of salary data. Finally, previous research on the topic (Jorde-Bloom, 1987) indicates that as an occupational group, child care worker salaries are depressed; the little variation that does exist that might be attributed to program structure

is not statistically significant. It was decided, however, to include questions regarding fringe benefits. Like salaries, the type and amount of fringe benefits a program gives reflects organizational priorities regarding professionalism. Unlike salary data, however, fringe benefit information is more reliable and easier to analyze. Ten employee benefits were noted on the questionnaire, each worth 1/2 point. The mean score for all employee responses was used in the data analysis.

In all there were 25 possible points for this subscale measuring the professional orientation of the center. An analysis of the internal consistency of the subscale items (Cronbach's Alpha) yielded a coefficient of .68.

Professional orientation - Individual. Drawing on previous research on the topic (Corwin, 1965; Etzioni, 1969; Houle, 1981; Jorde, 1984; Lieberman, 1956), this subscale included questions regarding the individuals' perception of their work ("Do you consider your work just a job or career?"), their involvement in pursuing advanced studies; and degree of affiliation with professional organizations. Clearly, one of the most important indicators of a professional orientation is one's commitment to the client. But previous research has shown that asking questions directly about commitment typically produces socially-desirable responses. To circumvent this problem, client commitment was inferred from the subject's responses to questions that targeted specific behaviors indicative of commitment. For example, subjects were asked if they engaged in any advocacy activities related to children's issues.

In all there were a total of 20 possible points for this subscale. An analysis of the internal consistency of the subscale items (Cronbach's

Alpha) yielded a coefficient of .70. The correlation between the professional orientation (indiv) subscale and the professional orientation (center) subscale was .01, $p < .85$ indicating that the items comprising each of the subscales were relatively independent.

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is operationalized as one's evaluative reaction to the different facets of one's job (co-worker relations, supervisor support, nature of the work itself, pay and promotion opportunities, and working conditions). It is a kind of "psychological contract" between the worker and the demands of the workplace that is influenced by personal needs, values, and expectations (James & Jones, 1979; Locke, 1969; Mumford, 1972; Porter, 1962). The "fit," or degree of congruence is the perceived discrepancy between real conditions and ideal conditions. Thus, job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one's job and what one perceives it offers.

The subscale measuring job satisfaction in this study is the short form of the Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey (Jorde-Bloom, 1987). That survey measures job satisfaction using five job facets. Background on the construction of the instrument as well as tests of reliability and validity are reported elsewhere (Jorde-Bloom, 1987). The portion of the ECJSS that was used for this study was the congruence with ideal subscale. Although not quite as robust as the full ECJSS in measuring satisfaction in the five job facets, this subscale does show a moderate to high correlation ($r = .60$, $p < .001$) with the composite job satisfaction score of the longer version. The subscale questions asked individuals how each facet of their present position corresponded to their ideal. The possible range of scores was 0 - 10.

Organizational commitment. Organizational commitment measures the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) as well as Dworkin (1987) emphasize that commitment is characterized by at least three related factors: (1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; (2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization.

Drawing on previous research on the topic as it relates to the context of early childhood education (Berk, 1985; Jorde-Bloom, 1987; Kreuger, Lauer, Graham & Powell, 1986), individuals were asked 10 questions relating to their commitment to the center. Five questions were worded positively, five negatively. Scores ranged from 0 - 10 indicating low to high commitment to the center.

Data Collection Procedures

The data for this study were collected and analyzed in 1987. Questionnaires were mailed to each participating center with directions for the director to distribute a survey and return envelope to each employee. Anonymity of individual responses was emphasized. The average response rate within centers was 90% of the total number of employees.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the background characteristics of the subjects and the organizations in which they worked. Analysis of variance procedures were employed to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the professional orientation of programs that might be attributed to their size, legal structure, and program type.

Results

Table 1 provides a summary of means and standard deviations of the background characteristics of the 831 individuals included in this study according to their role in the organization. The mean age of the assistants was 29 years, the classroom teachers 33 years, and the directors 37 years. Only 14% of the assistants held a baccalaureate degree whereas 51% of the teachers and 74% of the directors had achieved this level of education. The subjects also varied by role in their years of experience in early childhood education and their years of service at their respective centers. An analysis of variance on each of these background characteristics indicated that there were strong statistically significant differences ($p < .001$) differences between workers at each level of the organizational.

Insert Table 1 about here

Table 2 provides a summary of the professional orientation, job satisfaction, and commitment to the center of subjects by role. Analysis of variance procedures were employed to discern if there were statistically significant differences between assistants, teachers, and directors in their professional orientation, level of job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. In both professional orientation and organizational commitment the differences were quite strong (professional orientation, $F = 118.95$, $p < .00001$; organizational commitment, $F = 7.40$, $p < .0007$). As noted on this table the differences corresponded directly to their hierarchical role in the center. Directors had a far stronger professional orientation and commitment to the organization than did teachers or assistants. Surprisingly, however, it was the classroom assistants that scored highest on the job satisfaction subscale, surpassing both teachers and directors ($F = 3.29$, $p < .04$).

Insert Table 2 about here

Table 3 is a correlational matrix showing the relationship between the background variables and the professional orientation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment of the subjects in this study. Because of the sample size, several of the correlations achieve statistical significance even though the coefficients are moderate at best. Of particular interest, however, is the low to negative relationship between job satisfaction and professional orientation ($r = -.08$). Even the correlation between organizational commitment and professional orientation was quite low, it too achieved statistical significance ($r = -.11, p < .02$). This analysis confirms the ANOVA findings reported earlier indicating that role in the organization is strongly related to one's professional orientation ($r = .52, p < .0001$).

Insert Table 3 about here

Table 4 provides a closer look at just how aides, teachers, and directors differ in their professional orientation. It summarizes the frequency and percentage of individuals responding affirmatively to specific questions on the professional orientation subscale. Only 59% of the aides, for example, versus 87% of the directors perceive their work as a career. Less than a third of the aides and less than two-thirds of the directors spend more than five hours per week over and above what they are paid for engaged in activities such as planning, reading, and attending professional conferences.

But this analysis is most interesting (and perhaps most disappointing) for what it reveals about the things these early childhood workers do not do. For example, not even a third of the teachers belong to one professional organization or subscribe to a single professional journal or magazine. And only slightly more than a third of the directors had attended two or more workshops or conferences during the previous year. Not even 10% of the aides, 12% of the teachers, and less than one-half of the directors had written a single advocacy letter during the previous year.

Insert Table 4 about here

Table 5 notes the means and standard deviations for the professional orientation of centers according to their program structure (size, legal structure, and type of service). As indicated on this table, the overall mean professional orientation of programs was 14.53 (s.d. 3.1) with a range of 7 to 22 points out of a possible 25.

Insert Table 5 about here

With respect to size we note that those programs with under 60 students had a slightly higher professional orientation than did programs with larger enrollments. A further analysis of the data using analysis of variance procedures showed that these differences were not statistically significant, however.

The results of the data analysis were quite noteworthy with respect to the legal structure of centers. Since the mean differences within

the nonprofit sector between private and public nonprofits was so small, these two subcategories were combined for the analysis of variance procedures. The results of the ANOVA show that there are strong statistically significant differences in the professional orientation of programs based on legal structure ($F = 33.81, p < .0001$). The mean professional orientation of the 64 nonprofit programs was 15.49 (s.d. 2.61); the mean professional orientation of the 21 for-profit centers was 11.60 (s.d. 2.82). The range of scores for the nonprofit centers on this subscale was 11 - 22 out of a possible 25. For the for-profit programs, the range was 7 - 20. It was interesting to note, however, that a 95% confidence interval of the distributions of the two means did not overlap.

The data analysis examining the professional orientation of half-day versus full-day programs also revealed some interesting differences. Here again the subcategories within the two major types were combined for the analysis of variance procedures. The mean professional orientation score for the 29 half-day programs was 15.81 (s.d. 2.87); the mean professional orientation score for the 56 full-day programs was 13.87 (s.d. 3.09). These differences were statistically significant ($F = 7.87, p < .001$). A closer look at the data warrants interpreting these differences with caution, however. Even though the difference between means was statistically significant, the means of the two distributions overlap somewhat and the actual difference between means was not quite two points.

Just how do centers differ in their professional orientation? Table 6 details the results of the item analysis on this subscale. As noted on this table, a full 61% of the programs indicated that they provided on-

site staff developmen . Interestingly, while two thirds of the programs provided released time to attend conferences, only a little more than a third provided released time to visit other programs. It was particularly encouraging to note that almost half of the centers provided at least some kind of tuition reimbursement to attend college classes. Very few of the programs (11%) indicated that they provided counsel and support for professional advancement and fewer than one-half of the programs had a library of professional books or provided written contracts for their employees. While virtually all the programs had a staff meeting at least once a month, only about a third of the programs held more than one meeting per month.

Insert Table 6 about here

The mean score measuring the degree of decision making influence of the staff in five areas was 3.17 (s.d. .73) out of 5 possible points. The mean fringe benefits score was 2.20 (s.d. .79) out of possible 5 points.

Another objective of this study was to note differences in the professional orientation of individuals, their job satisfaction, and their commitment to the center that might be related to center size, legal structure, or program type. Once again, size did not appear to be related to the professional orientation of individuals, job satisfaction, or program type. While individuals working in smaller programs typically had higher mean scores on each of these subscales, the differences were not statistically significant.

Based on the legal structure of the program, significant differences were found in the professional orientation of individuals ($F = 15.32$, $p < .0001$) and their commitment to the center ($F = 5.11$, $p < .02$). Individuals working for nonprofit centers scored higher on each of these subscales. But the job satisfaction of individuals did not follow this same pattern. Here there were no significant differences between individuals working for nonprofit versus for-profit centers, but there were differences within the nonprofit sector. Individuals working for public nonprofit programs had higher job satisfaction scores ($M = 6.28$, $s.d. = 2.04$) than did individuals working for private non-profit programs ($M = 5.80$, $s.d. = 2.2$). These differences were not as strong as those noted earlier, however ($F = 4.97$, $p < .03$).

Program type, as well, proved to have a strong effect on the professional orientation of individuals, their job satisfaction, and their commitment to the center. In all three areas, significant differences were noted between half-day and full-day programs (professional orientation, $F = 5.25$, $p < .02$; job satisfaction, $F = 46.81$, $p < .00001$; commitment, $F = 9.08$, $p = .0003$). Individuals working for half-day programs consistently scored higher on each subscale.

The final objective of this study was to explore the concept of the "person-environment fit" by testing the hypothesis that individuals who have a high professional orientation and who work in centers with a high professional orientation report greater commitment to the organization. This analysis was conducted in a series of steps. First, individuals were divided into two groups (high and low) on the basis of their professional orientation scores. (Only cases with complete data on all measures were used). The 85 centers, as well, were classified high

and low on the basis of their professional orientation scores. Then a two way analysis of variance on commitment was conducted in which the population was divided into four groups: individuals with a high professional orientation who worked in centers with a high professional orientation (N = 167); individuals with a low professional orientation who work in centers with a low professional orientation (N = 137); individuals with a high professional orientation who worked in centers with a low professional orientation (N = 169); and individuals with a low professional orientation who worked in programs with a high professional orientation (N = 125) for a total sample of 598 workers.

The results of the data analysis confirm the original hypothesis. Those individuals who exhibit a high professional orientation and work in programs that have a high professional orientation do indeed convey the strongest commitment to their centers (see Table 7). While these results were statistically significant ($F = 14.83, p < .0001$), if one looks closely at the mean scores of commitment between the four groups, it is evident that the actual differences in means is less than one point on the total commitment scale. A further analysis of these data using the LSD (Least Significant Difference) method of comparing the differences between individual means showed that the high/high group was significantly different from the Low/Low group but not so from the groups that had unmatched combinations.

Insert Table 7 about here

Discussion

The Professional Orientation of Individuals -- A Profile

Many of the studies dealing with the issue of professionalism in early childhood education treat child care workers as a collective identity, referring to them as though they were a homogeneous occupational group. But research that relies on measures of central tendency to report background characteristics and outcome variables of the group as a whole mask the enormous variation that exists among workers in this field. The results of the present study underscore the importance of not referring to early childhood educators as a single reference group. Indeed, the occupation may be more stratified than previously assumed. Among the 831 subjects in this study, significant differences were found in background characteristics, professional orientation, job satisfaction, and commitment to the center. For the most part, these differences corresponded to the hierarchical nature of individual's role in the organization. Directors of programs had more formal education, more years of experience, and exhibited a stronger professional orientation and greater commitment to the center than teachers. Teachers in turn scored higher on these measures than assistants.

Interestingly, this pattern did not hold with respect to job satisfaction. Here a higher percentage of the assistants stated they were more satisfied with their jobs (indicating higher congruence with their ideal) than did the teachers or directors. Apparently, having a higher professional orientation did not necessarily mean that one would be more satisfied with one's job. In fact, quite the opposite appeared to be true. There is some evidence that this pattern is not unique to

the participants in this study. In a study of Head Start personnel in Massachusetts, Goodman, Brady, and Desch (1987) also found classroom aides and assistants to be more satisfied with their jobs than the teachers in the programs they surveyed.

But why? The answer may have to do with the worker's level of education. In most professions, as level of education (and professional orientation) increases, one moves into positions with greater control, status, and financial remuneration (Quinn & de Manilovitch, 1977). In early childhood education, on the other hand, as the level of education increases there is often greater disparity between perceived expectations of job rewards and actual rewards. Thus job satisfaction may actually decrease. More educated workers may also perceive they have more options elsewhere and feel they are making a greater sacrifice to remain in child care.

Pettygrove and Greenman (1984) believe early childhood workers often hold quite different assumptions and attitudes about the nature and value of their work. They believe there is not a clear shared definition of the meaning of professionalism for work in early childhood education. Lacking well-articulated professional standards, child care staff typically define professionalism in terms of the perceived importance and responsibility associated with their work rather than in terms of possessing a particular body of knowledge and skills. A role perception related to the perceived importance of one's work is something that all child care workers can share regardless of externally defined qualifications.

Considerable research supports this "noble cause" self perception of professionalism. Several studies have found that early childhood educators perceive themselves as professionals, take their work seriously, and are committed to careers in child care. In a summary of two studies, Pettygrove, Whitebook, and Weir (1984) state that most of the early childhood workers they interviewed referred to child care as their profession and viewed themselves as career women. Berk (1985) states that two-thirds of the respondents in her sample were committed to careers in child care. Jorde-Bloom (1987) found that a full 86% of the respondents in a nationwide study of 135 child care workers said they would choose a career in early childhood education again despite expressing strong feelings of frustration with specific facets of their work. And in a survey of 303 early childhood teachers, Lindsay and Lindsay (1987) found 55% of the assistants, 87% of teachers, and 96% of the directors perceived their job as a profession. In the present study, 59% of the assistants, 85% of the teachers, and 87% of the directors perceived their work as a career as opposed to "a job."

Virtually all of the studies cited give early childhood educators high marks for their dedication and commitment to the field. They characterize workers as having achieved the attitudes of professionalism without the status of professionalization. But most of previous research on the topic embraces a narrow definition of professionalism, one that rests on self-perception as a sole criteria. Professionalism is thus equated with the the extent to which child care workers exhibit the attitudes of professionalism -- belief in the importance of their work, long-term commitment, and a sense of autonomy in performing it (Lindsay & Lindsay, 1987).

But is self-perception enough? If one takes a broader view of professionalism, defining it instead as one's professional orientation (having both an attitudinal and behavioral component), than early childhood educators may come out with a different sort of report card. The results of the data analysis in this study suggest that early childhood educators have a long way to go before their behaviors match their perceptions of themselves as professionals. The extent of their involvement in professional activities was disappointing, to say the least. Not even a third of the teachers belonged to one professional organization or subscribed to a single professional journal or magazine. Only a third of the assistants were working toward a degree. And barely a fifth of the assistants and teachers had attended two workshops or conferences during the previous year.

There is clearly a discrepancy between self perceptions and reported behaviors in the area of child advocacy, as well. In a 1982 study of early childhood educators, Hostetler and Klugman report that nearly half of their respondents viewed themselves as child advocates. When the subjects in the present study were asked, however, if they had written even one advocacy letter during the previous year, only 9% of the assistants, 12% of the teachers, and 45% of the directors had done so. Ferguson and Anglin (1985) underscore the importance of increasing involvement in advocacy issues and public policy. They stress that responsible advocacy is an important function for a professional and will be essential as we move into a period of greater public accountability.

Even though the overall level of involvement in professional activities was disappointing, it is clear that one's role in the organization impacts self-perception of professionalism. It is possible that as individuals increase their level of education and expand their

repertoire of experiences, they go through a kind of perceptual shift, moving from a "noble cause" role perception of what constitutes professionalism to one that is defined more by their outward actions and behaviors. As individuals move up the career ladder they engage in more activities that are characteristic of professionals. They subscribe to more education journals, they attend more workshops and conferences, they commit more time over and above what they are paid for in planning and preparation, they write more advocacy letters, and they assume a greater leadership role in the profession by giving workshops and publishing articles. While this study supports the proposition that professional behaviors reflect one's role in the organizational hierarchy, additional research is needed to see how the professional orientation of individuals holding different roles corresponds to the developmental stages of early childhood educators proposed by Katz (1972).

Jones (1984) so aptly notes that the strong push within the field for professionalization comes out of concern for status, salaries, and the quality of programs in day care. Quality care of young children, it is argued, requires skills and knowledge. Thus early childhood educators are quick to reject the popular notion that anyone can take care of young children. The results of the present study suggest that if we are to move beyond the "babysitting image," we might begin by making our actions consistent with our self-perceptions of professionalism. We must earn the right to be called professional. An important step in that direction would be to codify standards for a career ladder that reflect different levels of knowledge, skills, and competence. And central to that framework should be expectations for professional orientation for those who assume different roles.

The Professional Orientation of Centers -- A Profile

Overall, the early childhood programs participating in this study engaged in a number of activities that promoted professionalism. Two-thirds or more of the programs provided released time to attend conferences, encouraged staff to share resources regularly, had formal job evaluation procedures, conducted staff meetings at least once a month, had a staff manual and written job descriptions, provided parents with a handbook detailing policies, and distributed a monthly newsletter.

In an earlier study of center practices relating to professionalism, Hostetler and Klugman (1982) state that only 41% of the programs they surveyed had regular in-service education and only 28% provided tuition reimbursement for courses. While it is difficult to know how similar the sample in that study was to the programs included in the present study, it is encouraging to see that the percentage of programs responding affirmatively to these two categories improved; 61% of the programs surveyed in this study provided on-site staff development and 41% provided tuition reimbursement to employees taking college courses.

Even if programs have strengthened their professional orientation over the past few years, it was still disappointing to see that less than half of the programs in this study provided their employees with written contracts or had a library of professional books for staff to use. And only nine programs in the total sample provided counsel for professional advancement.

In this study 80% agreement by employees that the center engaged in the particular activity described was needed to conclude that the item accurately reflected organizational practices. Follow-up studies are now needed to test both the reliability and validity of this professional orientation subscale.

Structural Differences in Programs

Despite the inherent limitations in assessing organizational practices by means of a survey instrument, the results of this study allow one to confidently conclude that programs do vary in their self-reported level of professional orientation by size, legal structure, and program type.

Size. Given the uniform agreement in the literature that increased center size increases the collective financial and human resources of the center, there was certainly sufficient basis to argue that increased size might have had a beneficial impact on a program's professional orientation. In the administration of early childhood centers, in particular, where budgetary constraints often limit implementing professional growth opportunities for staff, it would seem reasonable that larger centers might have an advantage over smaller programs. At least for the programs included in this study, this is apparently not the case. Indeed, just the opposite pattern emerged. The smaller centers rated highest in professional orientation, although these differences were not statistically significant.

One can only hypothesize why this is the case. Perhaps it has to do with the issue of collegiality raised by Talacchi (1960) and Moos (1976). It is possible that close, positive, and trusting collegial relationships are so central to an achieving a strong professional orientation, that when these relationships are strained (as they might well be in a large center), professionalism cannot be nurtured.

Legal Structure. It was disquieting to see the results of the data analysis with respect to differences in the professional orientation of programs based on legal structure. Early childhood educators have worked hard over the past decade to reduce the polarizing rhetoric between the for-profit and nonprofit sectors claiming that indicators of quality within each sector cover the spectrum of poor to excellent. This generalization may be true, but the results of this study show that not only were there significant differences in the level of professional orientation between nonprofit and for-profit centers, but a 95% confidence interval of the distribution of the means did not even overlap. Nonprofit programs consistently rated higher in professional orientation.

Proprietary operators are often vocal in their insistence that by exercising efficient managerial skills, they can make their programs profitable without any reduction in the quality of care provided. Perhaps we need to look closer at how the for-profit sector interprets "efficient management." Many of the indicators of a center's professional orientation involve decisions that directly relate to fiscal priorities. Such activities as providing on-site staff development; reimbursing teachers for tuition for college courses, equipping the center with a well-stocked professional library may be viewed as "nonessential" frills that cut into an already tight profit margin.

It should be emphasized, however, that many of the indicators of a strong professional orientation do not have direct consequences on a program's budget. Even with limited resources, there are many creative ways that programs can support the professional growth of employees. What is essential, though, is a commitment to professionalism that makes weaving these activities into the daily life of a program an uncompromised priority.

Based on the legal structure of programs, significant differences were also found in the professional orientation of individuals and their commitment to their center. Individuals working for nonprofit centers scored higher on each of these subscales. One conclusion that could be drawn from these results is that a program's professional orientation serves as a kind of model for the individual's professional orientation by setting professional expectations. Thus nonprofit programs that support professional growth opportunities set expectations that are internalized in the individual workers own level of professional orientation.

It was curious to note, however, that job satisfaction did not follow this same pattern with respect to the for-profit, non-profit dichotomy. Could it be that the intrinsic sources of satisfaction so central to workers in early childhood (Jorde-Bloom, 1987) are not as dependent on the context of that employment? There were, however, significant differences between individuals working within the nonprofit sector. Individuals working for public nonprofit programs had higher job satisfaction scores than did individuals working for private non-profit programs. These differences were not as strong ($p. < .03$) as the differences noted above, but are, nevertheless, worth noting. Additional research is needed to understand why these differences in reported levels of job satisfaction might exist.

Program Type. The results of this study also indicate that there are significant differences in the professional orientation of programs that can be attributed to program type. Overall, half-day programs had a higher professional orientation than full-day programs. These differences, however, were not nearly as strong as those noted for legal structure. In fact, the actual mean differences was less than two points on a 25 point scale.

The distribution of scores within the program types was perhaps more revealing. Interestingly, the lowest professional orientation was noted for those full-day programs that also had a variety of half-day schedules incorporated into their full-day schedule. Clearly, the demands of coordinating arrival and departures schedules, and serving several groups of parents during one day influences a programs ability to engage in activities that promote a professional orientation. Equally noteworthy is the finding that the highest professional orientation was for those centers that had only one 4 - 5 hour program for the children each day. The remainder of the staff's work day schedule in these programs was devoted to planning and preparation, diagnostic evaluation of individual children, conferencing, and home visits. A number of the centers in this category were Head Start programs.

Differences between half-day and full-day programs were also reflected in the professional orientation, job satisfaction, and commitment of the individuals working at these centers. Those in half-day programs consistently scored higher on these measures than those in full-day programs. When we look at the results of this study with respect to program type, it is clear that the professional orientation of a program as well as the professional orientation of the individuals is closely related to time. The demands of working with children eight or more hours a day leaves precious little time or energy to focus on professional growth activities. Even coordinating schedules in full-day programs to allow for regular staff meetings is often a problem for directors. The Head Start model of incorporating sufficient time for planning, preparation, and parent conferences recognizes the professional role of the staff and treats them accordingly. Although costly, this model may serve as a useful prototype for improving the professional orientation of programs.

The Fit

The final part of this research focused on the question of the person-environment fit. The original hypothesis put forward was confirmed: Individuals who have a high professional orientation and work in centers that also exhibit a high professional orientation experience a stronger commitment to the center than those individuals working in centers where the match is not as good.

It has been stated that it is the conditions of work rather than the nature of the work itself which contributes to burnout in early childhood education (Jorde, 1982; Maslach & Pines, 1977; Whitebook, et al., 1982). If commitment to the center is one important measure of the likelihood of burnout, than striving to create conditions that maximize a good fit between the professional orientation of the program and that of the individual might be one small way to help reduce the incidence of burnout and job turnover in this field.

Joyce and McKibbin (1982) note that enormous differences exist in the extent to which teachers pull growth-producing experiences from their environment. They have developed a clever nomenclature for categorizing the professional orientation of individuals. Omnivores are those individuals most likely to seek out and actively engage in professional development opportunities. They are in a word stimulated by energizing environments. Joyce and McKibbin underscore the importance of the environment in which teachers work as a facilitating or depriving influence on the growth states of teachers.

An Agenda for Future Research

This study confirms that individuals are clearly influenced by the professional orientation of their work environment. Moreover, they may even seek out environments that maximize a "good fit." Further analysis is needed to understand the interaction effects of different combinations of the structural components, however, and if the results would be similar when controlling for role of the individual.

It would also be useful to do an item analysis on the professional orientation (indiv) subscale. While the overall internal consistency of this subscale was acceptable ($r = .70$), an item analysis of the scale might help make it more sensitive to the clustering of responses at the low end. The scale had an acceptable overall range of scores (0 - 19) and was able to differentiate low from very high scores, but a large percentage of individuals in this sample achieved a total score of 5 or less. A revision of this scale might include changing the weight of individual items or simply including additional questions that help differentiate scores at the low end of the scale. This revision might produce a clearer differentiation between high and low groups in a goodness of fit test.

The questionnaire might also be modified to include a wider range of professional activities (Radonski, 1986) or some examples of ethical dilemmas (Feeney & Kipnis, 1985; Katz & Ward, 1978). Eventually, it would be hoped that a survey measuring the professional orientation of early childhood educators would also tap a core of generic skills specific to child care and a selected codified body of knowledge representative of the field.

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Table 1

Summary of Background Characteristics of Subjects by Role

Background Variable	Assistants (N=242)		Teachers (N=473)		Directors (N=116)		All (N=831)	
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	M	S.D.
Age	29.25	11.24	32.79	9.65	36.74	9.27	32.35	10.34
Education level*	2.15	1.09	3.44	1.41	4.53	1.76	3.24	1.58
Years in ece	3.95	4.22	6.19	4.96	9.67	6.20	6.03	5.26
Years at center	2.55	3.27	3.62	3.77	7.91	4.87	3.49	3.88

* level 1 = high school diploma; 2 = some college; 3 = Associate of Arts (AA) degree;
 4 = Baccalaureate degree; 5 = some graduate work; 6 = Master's degree;
 7 = Post master's work; 8 = Doctorate (Ed.D/Ph.D)

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Range of Scores for Professional Orientation (Indiv), Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment

Variable	M	S.D.	Possible Range	Actual Range
Assistants (N=242)				
Prof Orientation	3.11	2.28	0 - 20	0 - 10
Job Satisfaction	6.17	2.18	0 - 10	0 - 10
Org Commitment	6.79	1.68	0 - 10	1 - 10
Teachers (N=473)				
Prof Orientation	4.86	2.72	0 - 20	0 - 14
Job Satisfaction	5.74	2.16	0 - 10	0 - 10
Org Commitment	6.82	1.68	0 - 10	1 - 10
Directors (N=116)				
Prof Orientation	8.34	4.13	0 - 20	0 - 19
Job Satisfaction	5.75	2.09	0 - 10	0 - 10
Org Commitment	7.49	1.42	0 - 10	2 - 10
All (N=831)				
Prof Orientation	4.90	3.31	0 - 20	0 - 19
Job Satisfaction	5.86	2.16	0 - 10	0 - 10
Org Commitment	6.91	1.56	0 - 10	1 - 10

Table 3

Intercorrelations of Selected Background Characteristics, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Professional Orientation (Indiv) (N=831)

	Educ	Yrs/ECE	Yrs/Cntr	Role	Job Sat	Commit	Prof
Age	.21***	.62***	.50***	.18***	.18***	.13*	.04
Educ		.24***	.06	.50***	-.08	.01	.39***
Yrs/ece			.61***	.32***	.06	.10*	.25***
Yrs/center				.20***	.06	.11*	.15**
Role					-.13*	.11*	.52***
Job Sat						.40***	-.08
Commitment							.11*

* p < .01

** p < .001

*** p < .0001

Table 4
Item Analysis of Professional Orientation (Indiv) Subscale by Role

Item	Assistants (N=242)		Teachers (N=473)		Directors (N=116)	
	f*	%	f	%	f	%
Enrolled in a college course for credit during previous year	71	29	162	34	38	33
Currently working toward degree	83	34	122	26	34	29
Perceive work as a career	143	59	401	85	101	87
Spend more than 5 hrs/wk in unpaid professional activities	72	30	253	53	73	63
Belong to one or more professional organizations	19	8	128	27	75	65
Subscribe to one or more professional journals or magazines	22	9	146	31	73	63
Read five or more professional books during previous year	67	28	211	45	58	50
Wrote at least one advocacy letter during previous year	22	9	58	12	52	45
Attended at least two workshops or conferences during previous year	49	20	103	22	42	36
Gave one or more workshops during previous year	8	3	49	10	49	42
Published any books or articles on early childhood education	3	1	5	1	10	9

* indicates the number of individuals responding yes to this item

Table 5

Summary of Professional Orientation (Center) by Program Structure (N=85)

Structural Component	N	Prof Orient	
		M	S.D.
Size			
Small (20 - 59 students)	28	15.36	3.71
Medium (60 - 99 students)	28	14.30	3.12
Large (100 - 336 students)	29	14.14	2.54
Legal Structure			
Nonprofit - public	21	15.47	2.83
Nonprofit - private	43	15.50	2.54
For-profit	21	11.60	2.82
Program Type			
Half day - one 4-5 hr session	16	15.93	2.84
Half day - two sessions	13	15.65	3.17
Full day	26	14.31	2.68
Full/half day combination	30	13.49	3.66
All	85	14.53	3.14

Table 6

Item Analysis of Professional Orientation (Center) Subscale (N = 85)

Item	f*	%
Provide on-site staff development	52	61
Encourage staff to share resources regularly	78	92
Provide released time to attend conferences	56	66
Provide released time to visit other schools	33	39
Provide tuition reimbursement	41	48
Provide counsel for professional advancement	9	11
Have library of professional books for staff	35	41
Have formal job evaluation procedures	58	68
Conduct staff meetings at least once a month	83	98
Conduct staff meetings more than twice a month	30	35
Have parents' handbook detailing policies	75	88
Have staff manual outlining staff policies	69	81
Provide written contracts for employees	35	41
Have written job descriptions	62	73
Distribute monthly newsletter to parents	62	73

* indicates an affirmative response to this item by at least 80% of the aides, teachers, and directors responding from each center

Note: Sections of the subscale measuring fringe benefits and staff influence in decision making are not included in the above list of activities. The mean score for fringe benefits portion was 2.20 (s.d. .79) out of 5 possible points. The mean score for decision-making influence section was 3.17 (s.d. .73) out of 5 possible points.

Table 7

Distribution of Commitment to the Center by
Professional Orientation (Indiv) and Professional Orientation (Org) (N=598)*

		Professional Orientation (Individual)	
		Low	High
Professional Orientation (Center)	Low	(N = 137) 6.37	(N = 125) 6.89
	High	(N = 169) 7.17	(N = 167) 7.34

* only cases with complete data on all measures were used