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ABSTRACT

To inform long-term planning for early care and education and school readiness within Illinois, this study examined early care and education programs' emphases on school readiness as perceived by early child care and kindergarten teachers. Of particular interest were successful strategies at the early childhood level to prepare children for school, assessments to determine children's school readiness, and early childhood and kindergarten teachers' views of school readiness. Participating were 144 early childhood teachers from Illinois Child Care Subsidy programs, Head Start programs, or Illinois state prekindergarten programs, and 74 kindergarten teachers. A combination of random selection and random assignment were used to eliminate sampling bias. The two surveys incorporated the Illinois Early Learning Standards and other skills and practices identified by teachers through the study's pilot phase. Findings indicated that both early childhood and kindergarten teachers rely on a variety of assessment strategies, with kindergarten teachers relying on their observations more than twice as much as early childhood teachers. Teachers in both groups were very consistent in their preference for particular classroom materials. Both groups endorsed communication of information and encouraging children to work independently as transition practices. There was significant agreement on various instructional strategies, with some disparity among the two groups on teaching letters of the alphabet and teaching children to spell their name. Agreement was high regarding best practices in mathematics, science, creative arts, social and emotional development, and physical development and health. Data analyses suggested a need for dialog regarding the issue of rewarding children for good work, transitioning to different activities, the importance of running outside, and settings for dramatic play. (Copies of the surveys for early childhood and kindergarten teachers are appended.) (KB)

Illinois Department of Human Services
Head Start State Collaboration Office

School Readiness Study

December 2002

Educational Specialties, Inc. (www.educationalspecialties.com) completed this study and report for the IDHS Head Start State Collaboration Office. It was funded by federal grant no. 05-CD-0013 from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

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School Readiness Study

Executive Summary

Educational Specialties, Incorporated (ESI) was selected by the Illinois Department of Human Services, Head Start State Collaboration Office to compile information on early care and education program's emphases on school readiness as perceived by early child care teachers and kindergarten teachers. The information derived from this study will be useful for long-term unified planning for early care and education and school readiness. This study recognizes that there are many measures being used to determine school readiness, many successful strategies used to develop skills needed for school and many exemplary practices used to transition children from early care and education to kindergarten.

The major premise constituting a need for this study is that, across early care and education programs, no clear information exists about how young children are prepared for school, what early childhood and kindergarten teachers consider as measures of readiness, and how they assess children's readiness. The early care and education programs referenced in this study are Illinois Child Care Subsidy programs (center and family child care home), Head Start programs and State pre-kindergarten programs. The education systems referenced in this study are kindergarten programs within State school districts.

ESI developed the protocol for data collection and two separate surveys, each of which incorporates the Illinois Early Learning Standards and other skills and practices identified by teachers through the survey pilot phase of this study. Information gathered in the pilot phase of this study allowed ESI to codify many open-ended responses so that they encompassed items viewed by both early childhood and kindergarten teachers as most effective in preparing children for school. The final versions yielded two separate data collection instruments, the Early Child care Readiness Survey and the Kindergarten Readiness Survey.

The primary focus of the study was to determine what are the successful strategies at the early childhood level that get children ready for school. Another critical element of the survey protocol was to assure that the results are able to establish what types of formal and informal assessments early childhood and kindergarten teachers use to determine children's readiness for school. The study examined practices used to transition children from early care and education programs to kindergarten and looked at the correlation between responses of early childhood teachers and kindergarten teachers. The goal was to determine if there are differences between how each group views children's readiness for school.

Methodology

Once ESI and the IDHS Head Start Collaboration office agreed on the survey instrument, we carried out the pilot phase of the study. During the pilot phase of the study, we conducted face-to-face interviews with thirty-four early childhood and kindergarten teachers. Four other respondents were asked to complete the survey on-line so that we could be assured that this method of data collection was feasible. Essentially, the objective of the pilot phase was to refine the survey instruments as well as analyze the administration of the surveys.

A key purpose of the survey was to ask respondents to identify the best practices, strategies, activities programs, etc. used to help children achieve skills in specific areas. The survey probed for specific language development, mathematics, science, and creative arts, social and emotional development as well as physical development and health activities, strategies and practices. The quantitative part of the survey asked respondents to rate the importance of specific activities and skills toward preparing children for school. The qualitative part of the study, using open-ended responses, asked teachers to identify the top two strategies, activities or practices deemed most effective in preparing children for school. Qualitative responses were evaluated using a content analysis approach.

Sample Design

The survey design incorporated stratified random sampling with proportional allocations. This sampling design, although stratified by program type with allocations representative of early childhood populations countywide, would not allow all programs to have the same probability of being selected. This is due to the fact that some Head Start programs are grantees and others are delegate agencies of grantees. A grantee may represent one program whereas another grantee might represent dozens of delegate agencies or sites, as in the case of the Chicago Department of Human Services, which serves approximately 50% of the Head Start children in Illinois. In addition, if the State pre-kindergarten and kindergarten samples were identified only by school district then District 299, which constitutes approximately 30% of the State's pre-kindergarten population, may or may not get selected as part of the sample. District 299 would have only one chance of being selected even though there are hundreds of State pre-kindergarten program sites within District 299. In contrast to District 299, there are several districts in Illinois that only have one State pre-kindergarten program within their district. School districts in Illinois must be analyzed both in terms of the number of children served and the number of programs in the district itself. Therefore, a slightly more complex sampling design was implemented.

In order to eliminate the possibility of sampling bias, we opted to incorporate a combination of random selection and random assignment. Center-based child care programs were first grouped by county and then selected randomly with the use of a random numbers table. Family child care homes were also selected at random. State pre-kindergarten programs with more than 2% of the population were first grouped by

country and specific proportions of the sample were assigned to each county. Respondents from each county were then selected by use of a random numbers table. All other counties with less than 2% of the early care and education population were grouped as one large sample pool and randomly selected using a table of random numbers. The Head-Start population was selected in the same manner as the State pre-kindergarten sample.

Finally, districts or multiple programs within a district were assigned as part of the kindergarten sample. The kindergarten sample was taken from the sample of school districts with State pre-kindergarten programs. This procedure assured that the samples were taken from similar populations. In other words, school districts selected for the State pre-kindergarten sample were automatically selected for the kindergarten sample. The accuracy of subsequent correlations was increased by controlling for possible intervening variables such as the sample of pre-kindergarten teachers and kindergarten teachers being drawn from radically different school districts.

Collection of Data

The primary method of data collection was through the Internet. ESI established a dedicated, secure server for this purpose. Completed surveys were sent directly from the respondents to ESI. Surveys were mailed to those individuals who could not respond via the Internet. Both the on-line respondents and mail survey respondents were allowed thirty days to complete the survey. During the thirty-day data collection time, ESI established a help desk at our office for respondents who encountered difficulty with any aspect of the survey process.

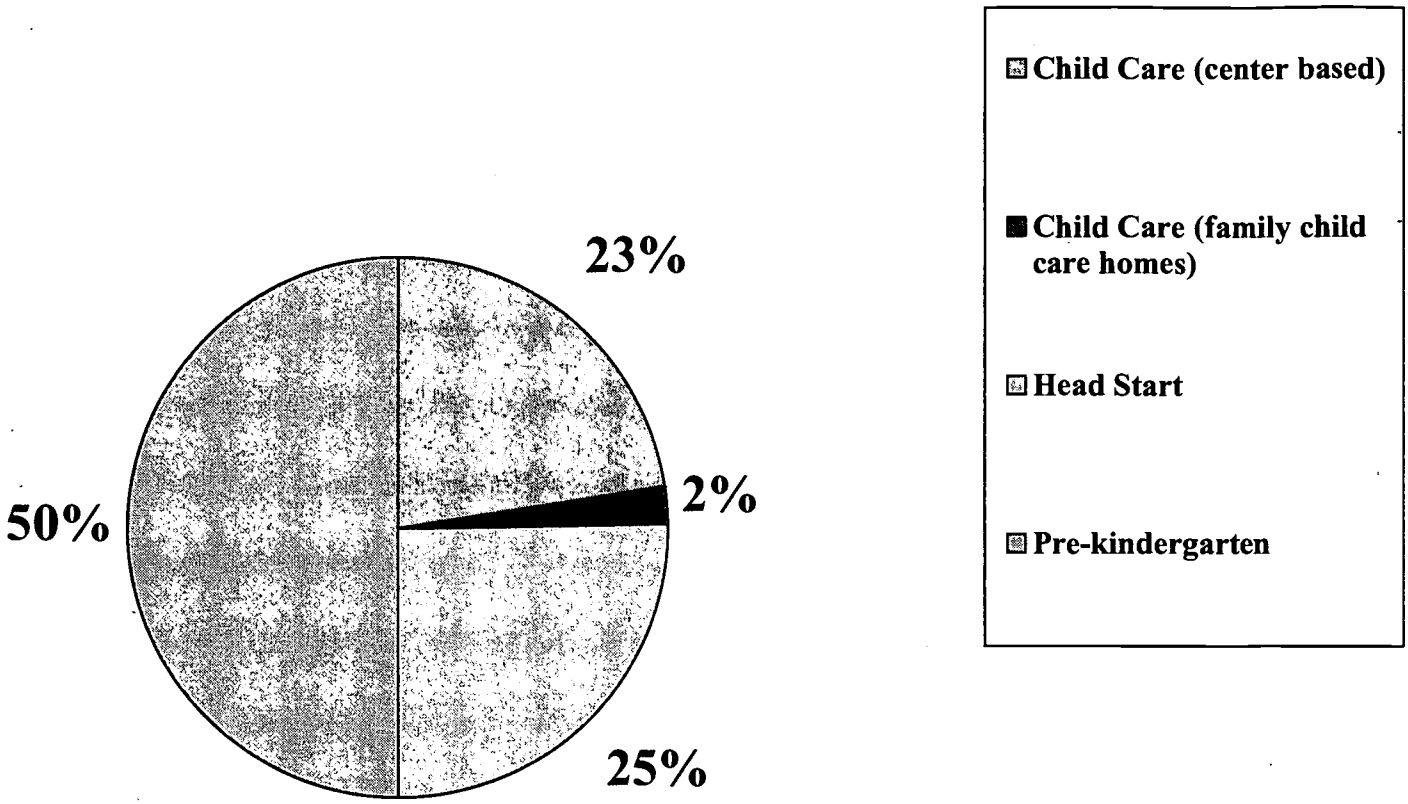
Once logged on, respondents were given access to the appropriate survey. Respondents were encouraged to set aside 45 minutes to complete the survey. However, if for any reason the respondent started filling out the survey and could not complete it in one sitting, they simply exited. The system automatically recognized the particular respondent's incomplete survey because of their IP address and placed them at the exact question where they left off. Surveys could not be submitted in an incomplete form. Respondents were looped back to the items that had been skipped.

Sample Size and Distribution

Respondents included one hundred forty-four early childhood and seventy-four kindergarten teachers. The determination of the sample size was based on the criteria that were delineated in the sample design as well as our interest in capturing a sample large enough to reasonably and reliably extrapolated to the wider population of early childhood and kindergarten teachers. Descriptions of the sample are reported in the following charts.

Chart # 1

Type of Early Care and Education Program

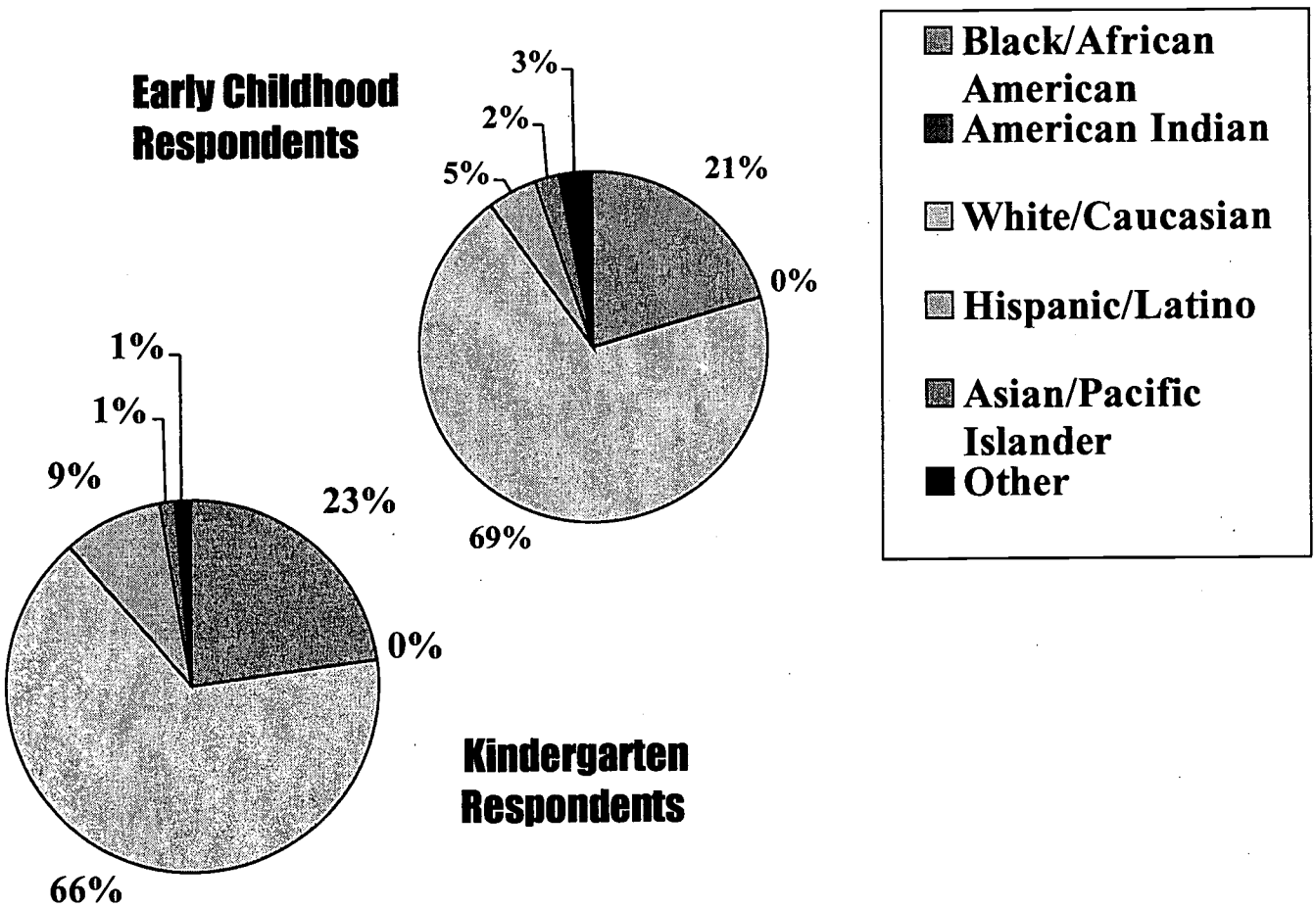


One hundred forty-four early childhood teachers completed the survey. Head Start teachers comprised 25% of the respondents and State pre-kindergarten teachers comprised 50% of the respondents. Child care (center based and family child care homes) comprised 23% and 2%, of the respondents, respectively, for a combined total of 25% from child care providers.

Seventy-four kindergarten teachers completed the survey.

Chart # 2

Race/Ethnicity and Gender

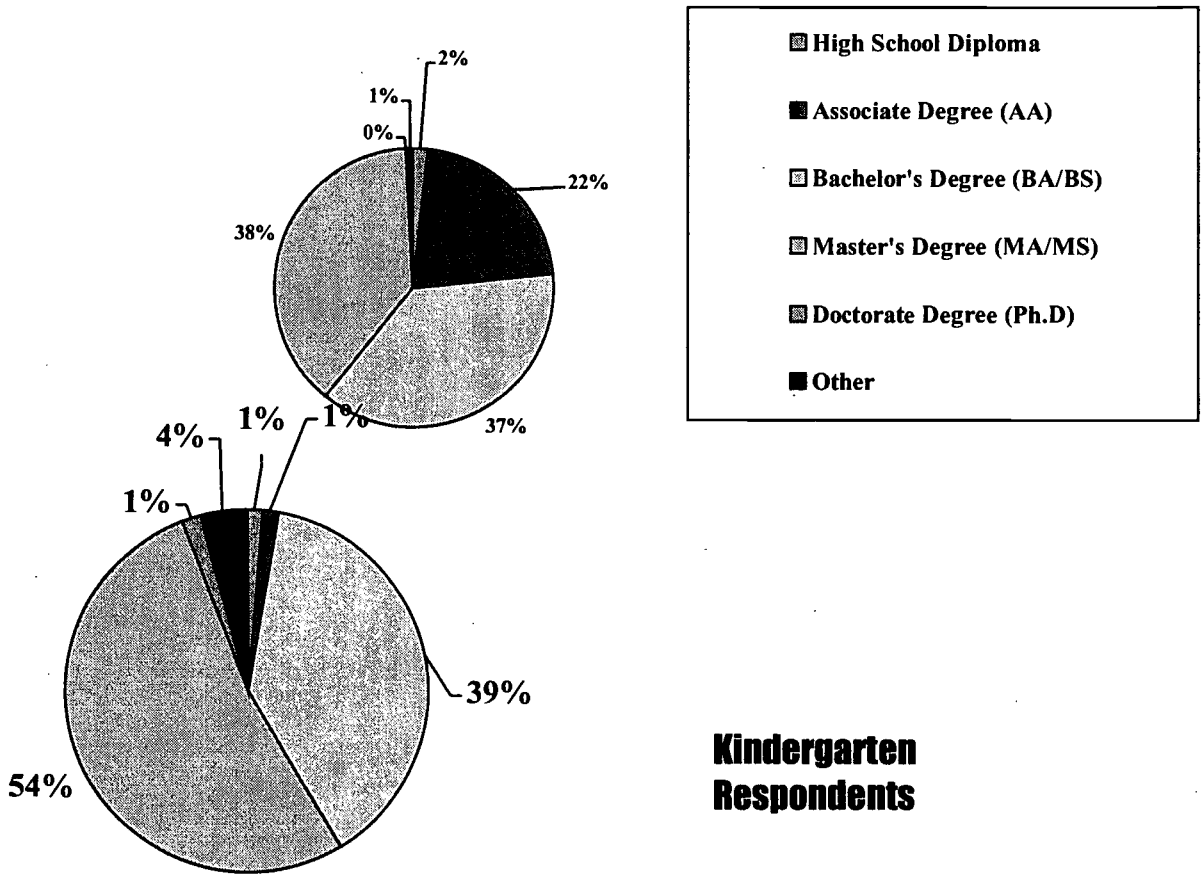


Respondents were asked to identify the category that best describes their race/ethnicity. Chart # 2 indicates that 21% of the early childhood and 23% of the kindergarten respondents were African American; none of the early childhood or kindergarten respondents were American Indian; 69% of the early childhood and 66% of the kindergarten respondents were White/Caucasian; 5% of the early childhood and 9% of the kindergarten respondents were Hispanic/Latino; and, 2% of the early childhood and 1% of the kindergarten respondents were Asian/Pacific Islander. 3% of the early childhood 1% of the kindergarten respondents identified themselves as "Other."

Ninety-nine percent of the early childhood teachers were female and 100% of the kindergarten teachers were female.

Chart # 3
Highest Level of Education Completed

Early Childhood Respondents



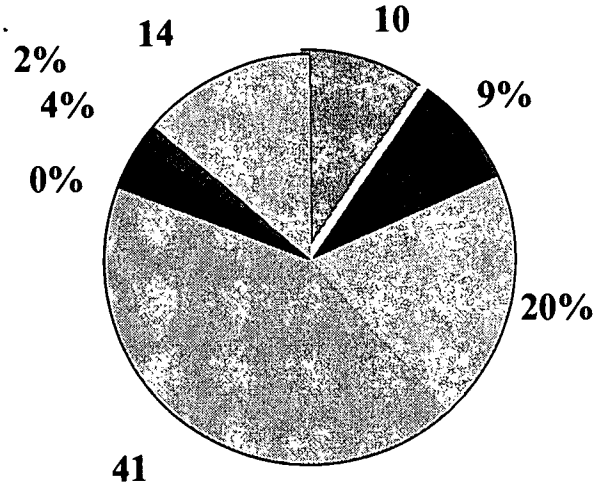
Kindergarten Respondents

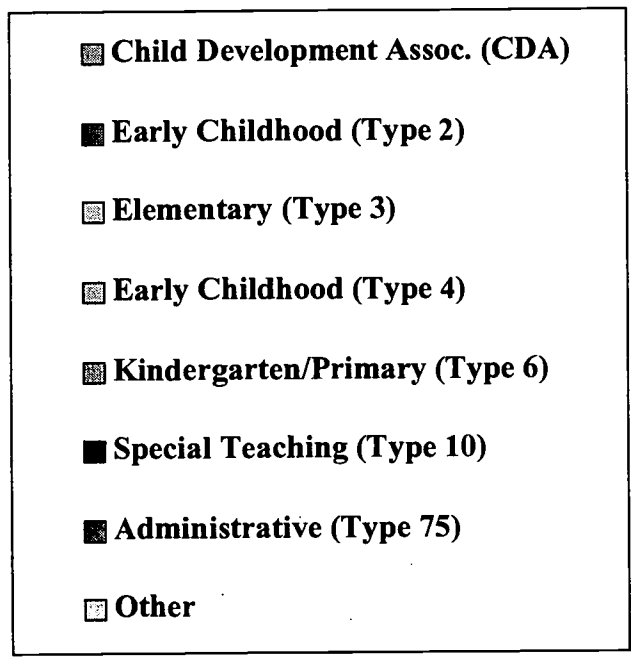
The survey asked respondents to identify the highest level of education completed. Chart #3 indicates that 1% of the early childhood respondents and 1% of the kindergarten teachers indicated a diploma or G.E.D. as their highest level of education; 22% of the early childhood and 1% of the kindergarten respondents held an AA degree; 37% of the early childhood and 39% of the kindergarten respondents held a BA/BS degree; 38% of the early childhood and 54% of the kindergarten respondents held an MA/MS degree; none of the respondents an Ed.D; and, none of the early childhood and 1% of the kindergarten respondents held a Ph.D. 4% of the early childhood and 0% of the kindergarten respondents identified other types of diplomas or degrees.

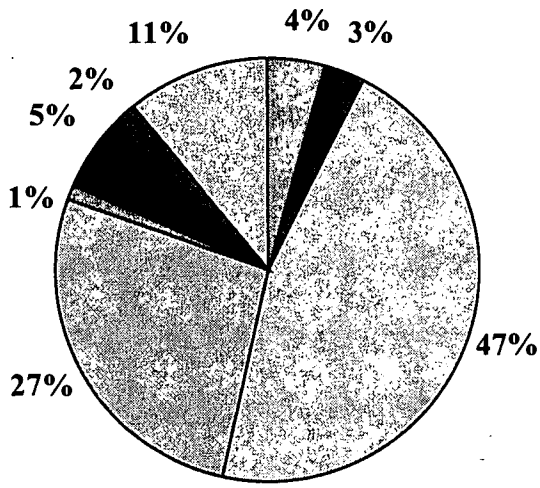
Chart # 4

Type(s) of Certification

Early Childhood Respondents



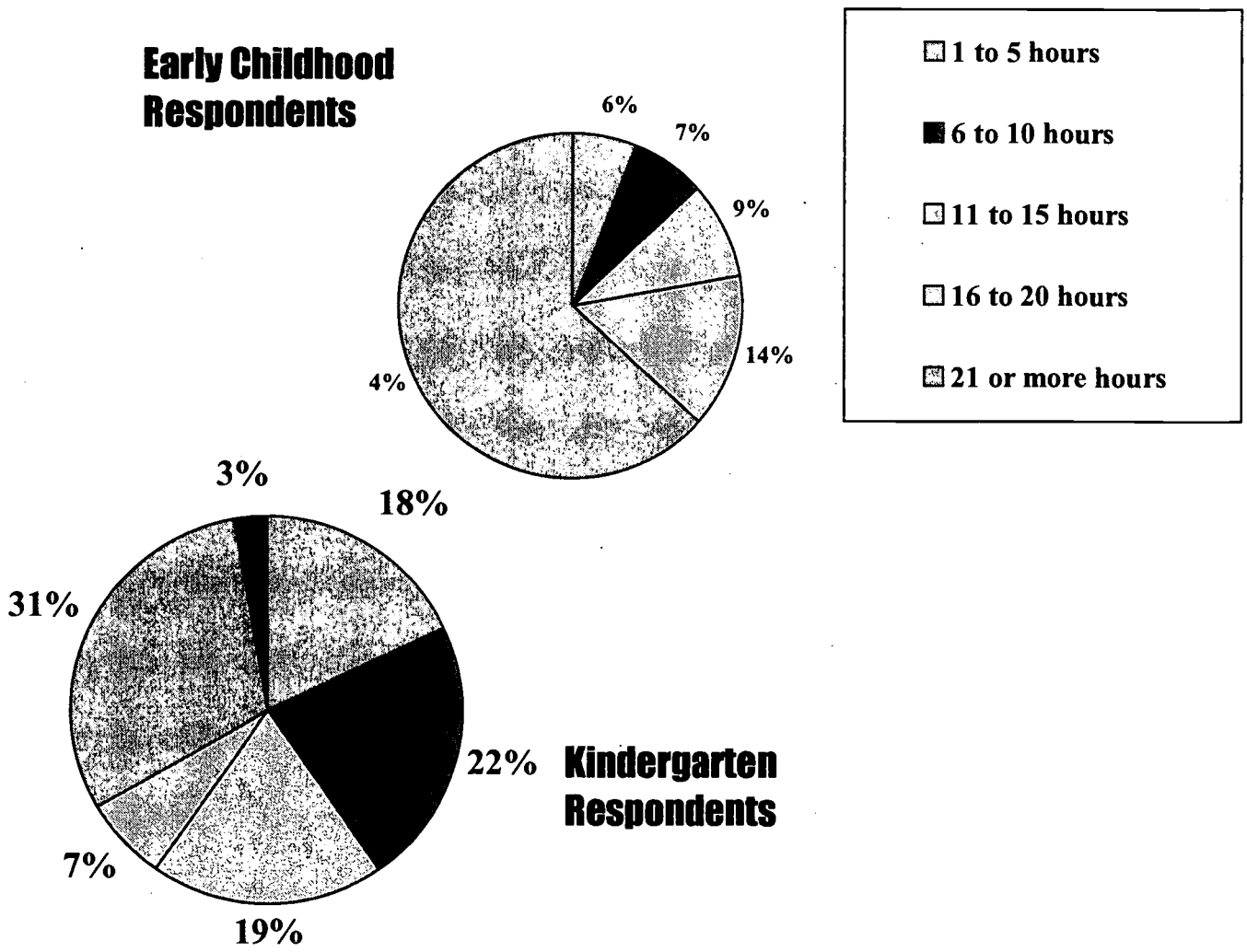




Kindergarten Respondents

Respondents to both the early childhood and kindergarten surveys were asked to identify all areas of ISBE certification, licensure or specialization. Respondents often held certification in more than one area. There are 120 early childhood teachers indicating 177 areas of certification. There are 73 kindergarten teachers indicating 93 areas of certification. This study did not attempt to make any determinations related to teachers' multiple certifications. Chart # 4 indicates the areas in which early childhood and kindergarten teachers held certification.

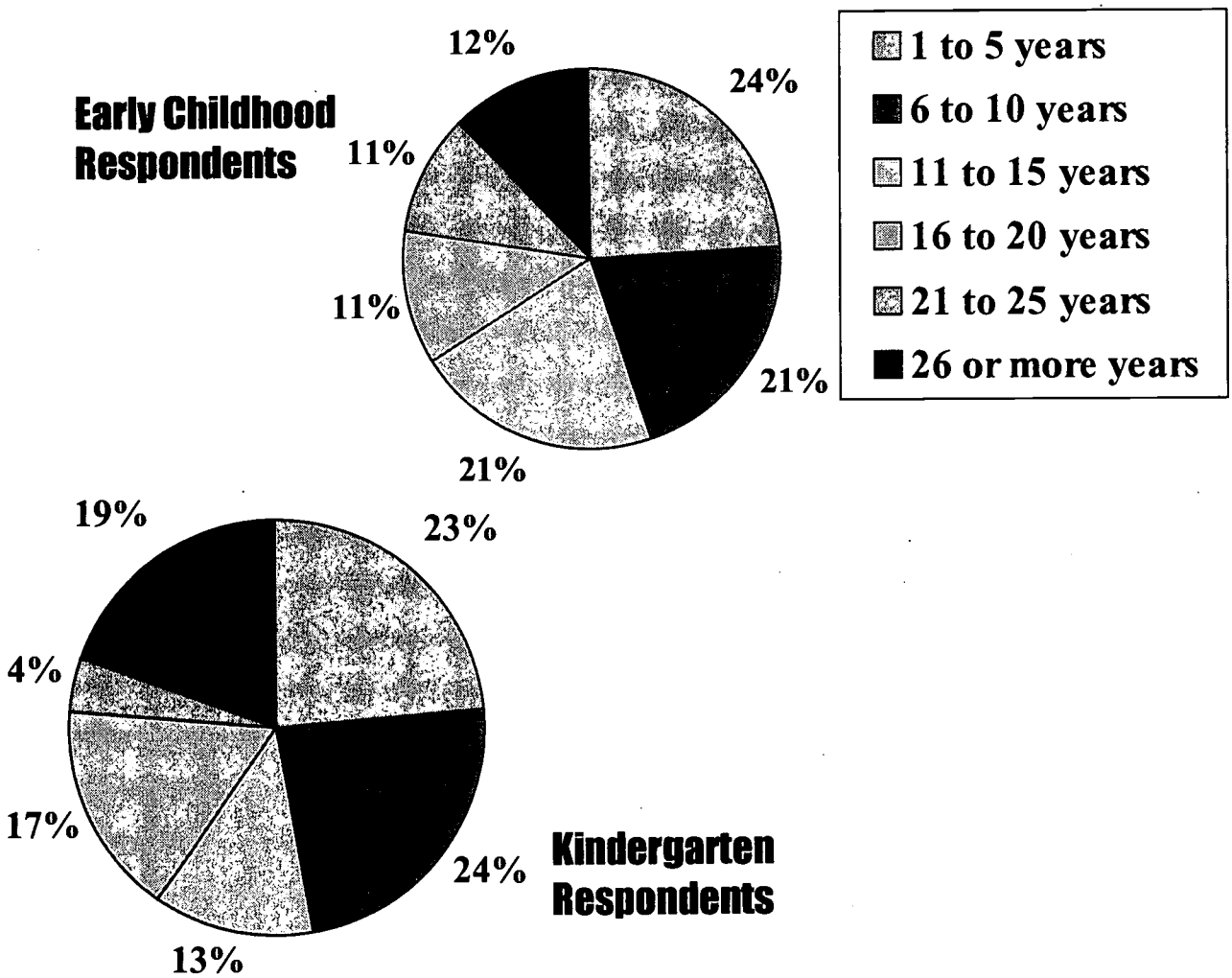
Chart # 5
Hours of Continuing Education



Respondents were asked how many clock hours of early childhood education/training they had received over the past three years. Chart # 5 indicates that 6% of the early childhood and 18% of the kindergarten respondents had taken 1 to 5 hours of training; 7% of the early childhood and 22% of the kindergarten respondents had taken from 6 to 10 hours of training; 9% of the early childhood and 19% of the kindergarten respondents had taken 11 to 15 hours of training; 14% of the early child care and 7% of the kindergarten respondents had taken 16 to 20 hours of training; and, 64% of the early child care and 31% of the kindergarten respondents had taken over 21 hours of training. 0% of the early childhood and 3% of the kindergarten respondents indicated no continuing education/training over the past three years.

Chart # 6

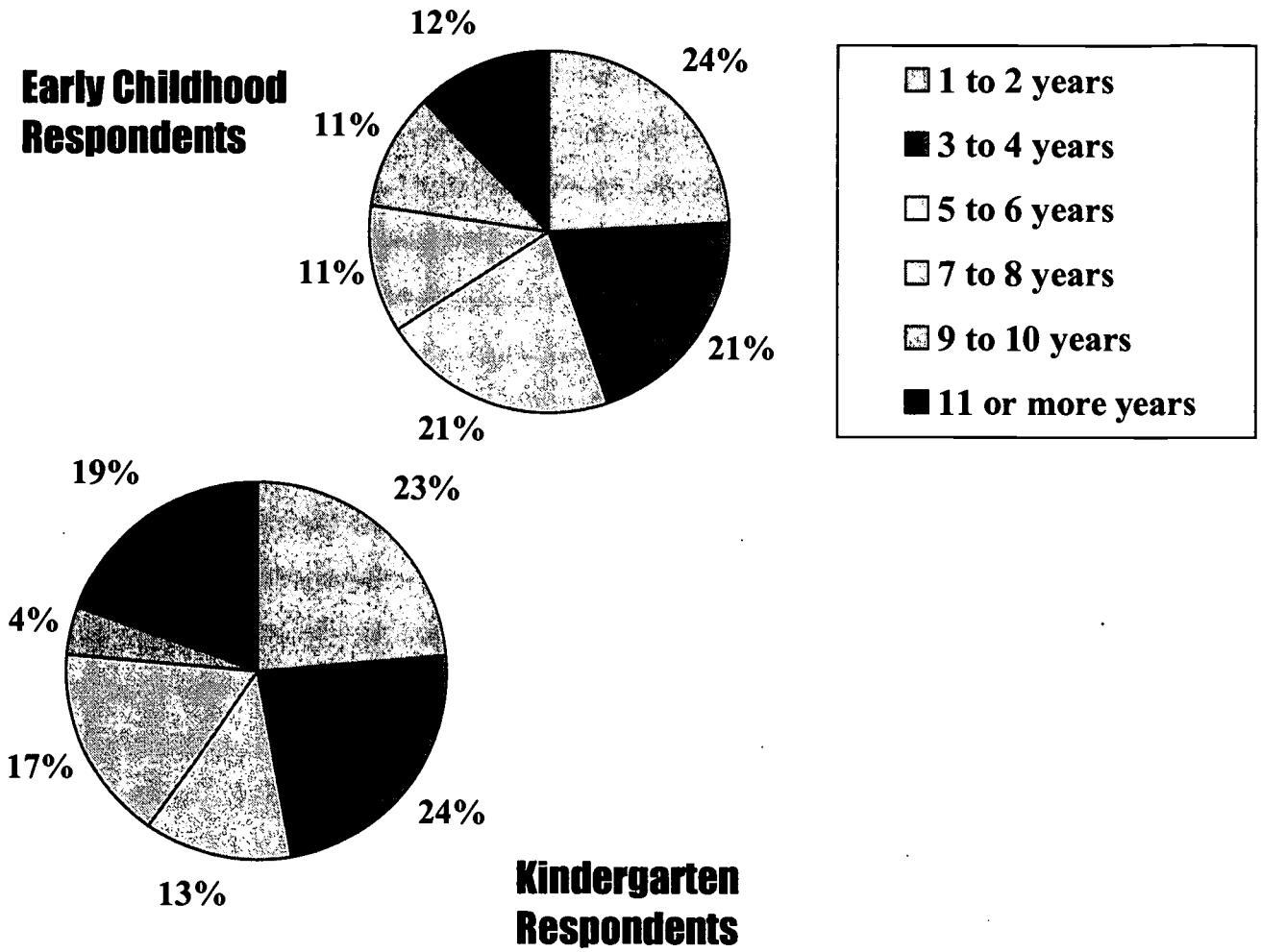
Years of Teaching Experience



Respondents were asked to indicate their total years teaching experience. Chart #6 indicates that 24% of the early childhood and 23% of the kindergarten respondents had 1 to 5 years teaching experience; 21% of the early childhood and 24% of the kindergarten respondents had 6 to 10 years teaching experience; 21% of the early childhood and 13% of the kindergarten respondents had 11 to 15 years teaching experience; 11% of the early childhood and 17% of the kindergarten respondents had 16 to 20 years teaching experience; 11% of the early childhood and 4% of the kindergarten respondents had 21 to 25 years teaching experience; and, 12% of the early childhood 19% of the kindergarten respondents indicated 26 or more years teaching experience.

Chart #7

Years in Current Teaching Position



Respondents were asked how many years they had worked in their current teaching position. Chart #7 indicates that 24% of the early childhood and 23% of the kindergarten respondents had worked in their current position for 1 to 2 years; 21% of the early childhood and 24% of the kindergarten respondents had worked in their current position for 3 to 4 years; 21% of the early childhood and 13% of the kindergarten respondents had worked in their current position for 5 to 6 years; 11% of the early childhood and 17% of the kindergarten respondents had worked in their current position for 7 to 8 years; 11% of the early childhood and 4% of the kindergarten respondents had worked in their current position for 9 to 10 years; and, 12% of the early childhood respondents and 19% of the kindergarten respondents had worked in their current positions for 11 or more years.

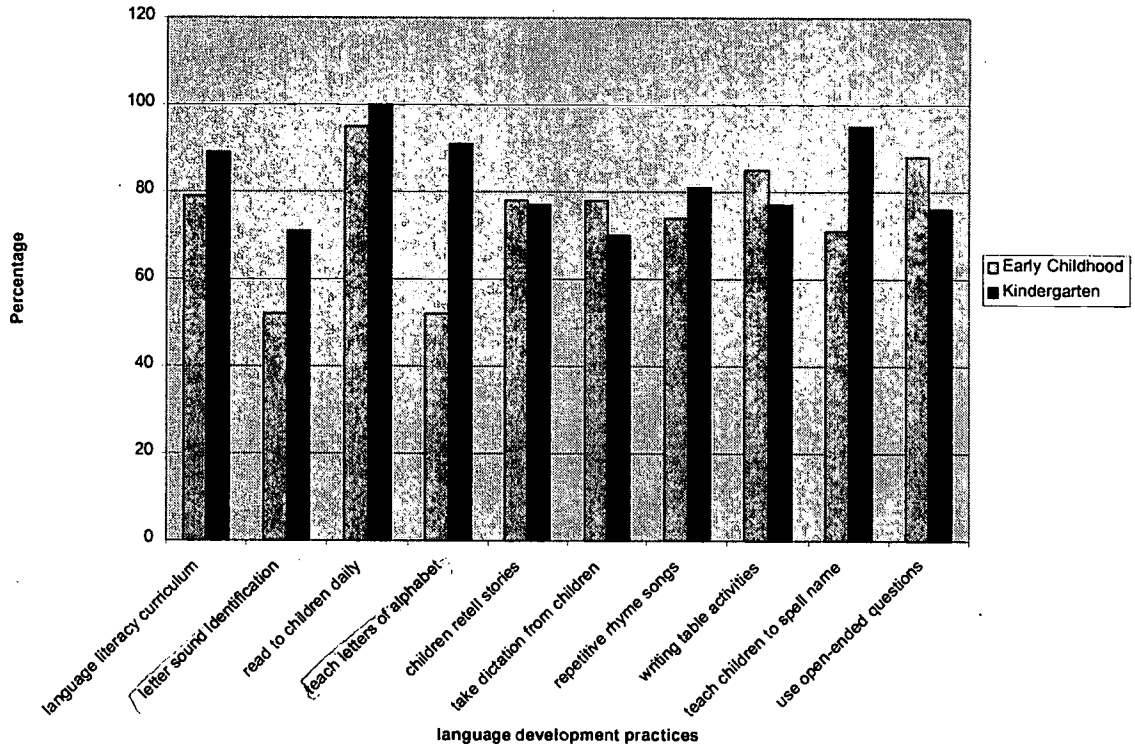
Best Practices

A "best practice," as defined in this school readiness study, is an instructional strategy, organizational structure, practice or common method of doing things that significantly and measurably improves the probability of success in preparing children for school. Once agreed on, best practices, if improved and implemented, should produce superior outcomes. Successfully identifying and applying best practices supports and contributes to a classroom climate conducive to optimum development of school readiness skills. Implementing best practices further enables teachers and administrators to think about strategies, etc., which can help optimize the effectiveness of various aspects of their classroom program. By using best practices as a strategic framework, teachers can apply critical success strategies that in turn serve as guiding principles for the day-to-day organization of their curriculum and classroom management. Underlining the development of this study was the knowledge that there was no clear information compiled on school readiness in Illinois and that by identifying best practices and strategies, teachers might recognize new areas of development that would foster a common understanding of at least the perceptions of the skills most important in preparing children for school.

The survey asked teachers to probe for specific language development, mathematics, science, creative arts, social/emotional and physical development, and health activities, skills, instructional practices they use to best prepare children for school. Of particular interest to this study was whether early childhood teachers identified the same readiness skills as kindergarten teachers. Using separate surveys for each group, we compared the responses of the two groups of teachers. In addition to comparison of responses of early childhood and kindergarten teachers, this study also compared responses between child care, Head Start and state pre-kindergarten programs.

To specifically delineate what early childhood and kindergarten teachers define as best practices, respondents also were asked through open-ended questions to identify two practices they believed to be the best for preparing students for school. Respondents were asked to provide this information for each of the skill areas identified in the survey. Once this information was gathered, we applied a benchmark of fifty percent, i.e., any item that fifty percent or more of the respondents within both groups identified as extremely important was included on the best practices list. The data also reports some practices that were indicated as extremely important by more than fifty percent of the respondents in one group but were not considered extremely important by more than 50% of other group. Items indicated as extremely important by less than fifty percent of the respondents in both groups were not included in this report. The following charts describe early childhood and kindergarten teachers' best practices and other practices considered extremely important by each group of teachers.

Chart # 8
Best Practices in Language Development
Comparison of Responses by Early Childhood and Kindergarten Programs



The single practice that garnered the highest percentages of early childhood and kindergarten teachers, 95% and 100%, respectively, was **reading to children on a daily basis. Use of a language literacy curriculum** was extremely important to 79% of the early childhood and 89% of the kindergarten teachers. **Using open-ended questions** was extremely important to 88% of the early childhood and 76% of the kindergarten teachers. **Songs with repetitive rhymes** ranked highly with 74% of the early childhood and 81% of the kindergarten teachers. Having **children retell stories** was extremely important to 77% of the kindergarten teachers and 78% of the early childhood teachers. **Writing table activities** were ranked highly by 85% of early childhood and 77% of kindergarten teachers. **Teacher takes dictation from children's comments** was extremely important to 78% of early childhood and 70% of kindergarten teachers.

Several best practices ranked considerably higher with one group of teachers than the other. Ninety-one percent of the kindergarten teachers rated **teaching children letters of the alphabet** as extremely important, whereas only 51% of the early childhood teachers rated this skill as extremely important. Ninety-five percent of the kindergarten teachers compared to 71% of the early childhood teachers rated **teach children to spell name** as extremely important.

Items which 74% - 50% of either the early childhood or kindergarten teachers rated as extremely important are: **children act out stories, use of letter sound identification games,** and **write with sensory touch materials.**

Chart #8.a.

Best Practices in Language Development
Comparison of Responses by Early Care and Education Programs

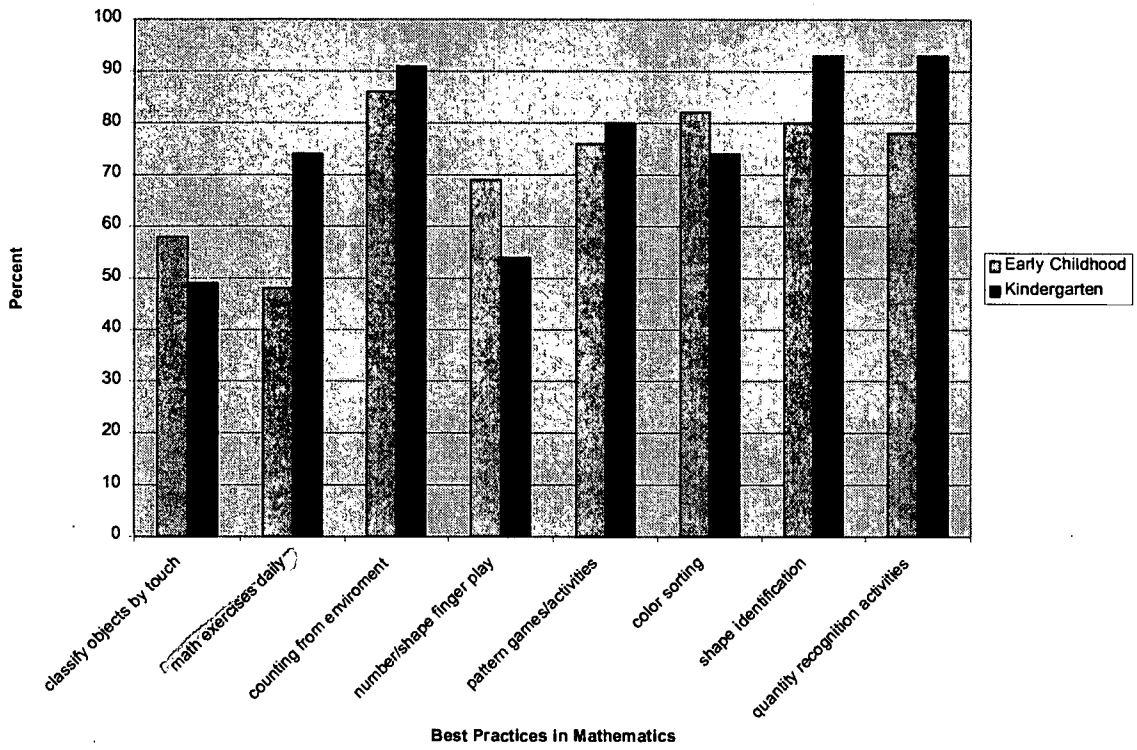
Best Practice	Child Care *	Head Start	State Pre-Kindergarten
Read to children daily	90%	94%	99%
Use of a language literacy curriculum	73%	81%	80%
Teach children to spell name	80%	73%	65%
Use of open-ended questions	83%	89%	90%
Use writing table activities	77%	89%	88%
Songs that focus on repetitive rhymes	55%	76%	84%
Let children retell stories	63%	78%	84%
Teacher takes dictation from children's comments	57%	89%	83%
Teach children letters of the alphabet	76%	57%	40%
Letter/sound identification games	77%	47%	42%
Write with sensory touch materials	60%	58%	50%

*** Includes centers and family child care homes**

The data show a significant degree of agreement among early childhood teachers on most instructional strategies and methods of doing things. As indicated in Charts #8 & 8.a., despite the overall agreement between early childhood and kindergarten teachers on the best practices listed above there are differences among the ratings of child care, Head Start and state pre-kindergarten teachers on several best practices. **Teaching letters of the alphabet** was rated extremely important by 76% of child care teachers and only 40% of state pre-kindergarten teachers, with 57% of Head Start teachers rating this practice as extremely important. There was also a fifteen percent disparity between the ratings of child care teachers and state pre-kindergarten teachers on the practice of **teaching children to spell their name. Use of letter/sound identification games** was rated extremely important by 77% of child care teachers and only 47% and 42% of Head Start and state pre-kindergarten teachers, respectively. Head Start teachers (89%) and state pre-kindergarten teachers (83%) rated **teacher takes dictation from children's comments** as extremely important, compared to 57% of child care teachers. The use of **songs that focus on repetitive rhymes** was rated considerably higher by both Head Start (76%) and state pre-kindergarten teachers (84%) than by child care teachers (54%). **Letting children retell stories** was also rated higher by state pre-kindergarten (84%) and Head Start (78%) than by child care teachers (63%).

Chart # 9

Best Practices in Mathematics
Comparison of Responses by Early Childhood and Kindergarten Programs



In terms of the best practices in mathematics, there was a great deal of agreement between the early childhood and kindergarten teachers. 91% of the kindergarten and 86% of the early childhood teachers rated **counting people and things in the environment** as extremely important. Use of **pattern games and activities** was extremely important to 80% of kindergarten and 76% of early childhood teachers. **Color sorting** was rated as extremely important by 87% of early childhood teachers and 74% of kindergarten teachers. **Shape identification** was rated extremely important by 93% and 80% of the kindergarten and early childhood teachers, respectively. **Counting and quantity recognition activities** were rated extremely important by 93% and 78% of the kindergarten and early childhood teachers, respectively. **Classifying objects by touch** was extremely important to 58% of early childhood and 49% of kindergarten teachers.

There are no other items that 74% - 50% of the early childhood and kindergarten teachers rated as extremely important, however, **cooking activities** was identified as extremely important by 63% of early childhood teachers and only 30% of kindergarten teachers. 74% of the kindergarten teachers considered **daily math exercises** as extremely important, compared to 48% of early childhood teachers.

Chart #9.a.

Best Practices in Mathematics
Comparison of Responses by Early Care and Education Programs

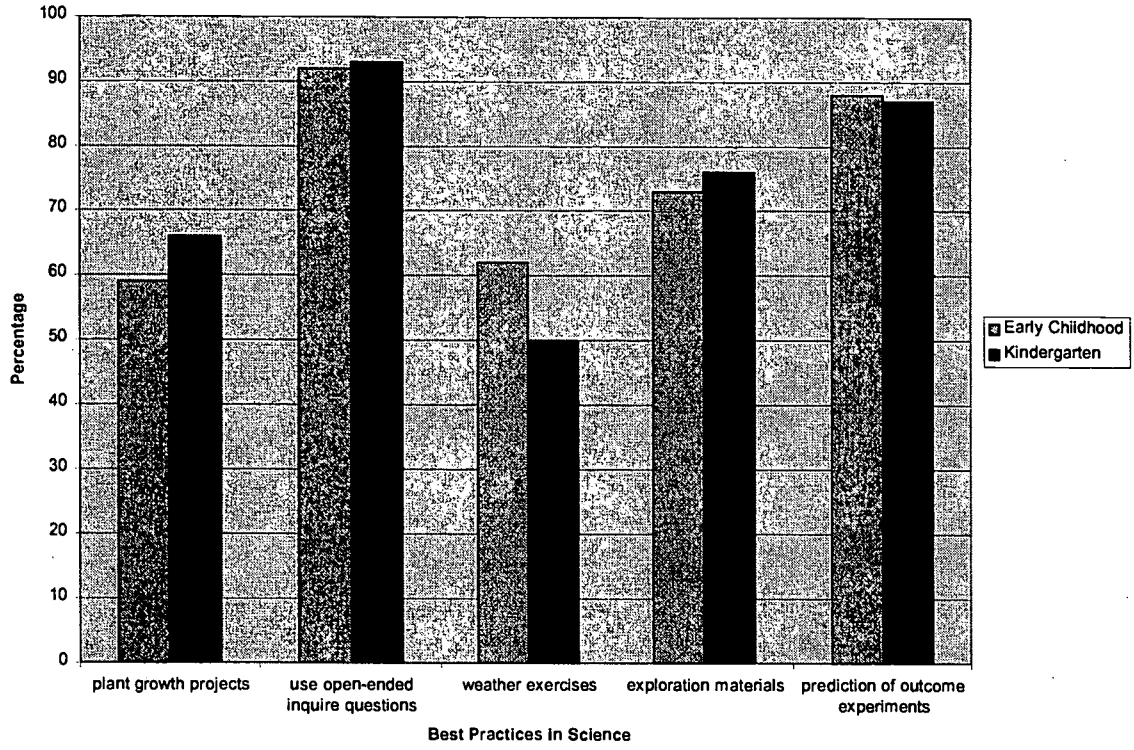
Best Practice	Child Care *	Head Start	State Pre-Kindergarten
Ongoing basic counting of people and things in the environment	71%	94%	88%
Shape identification	82%	82%	78%
Counting and quantity recognition activities	70%	80%	80%
Color sorting	71%	91%	81%
Pattern games and activities	71%	77%	79%
Daily math exercises	36%	51%	55%
Classify objects by touch	39%	63%	62%

* **Includes centers and family child care homes**

Comparisons of the ratings of early care and education teachers indicate considerable agreement in practices deemed extremely important. Ninety-four percent of Head Start teachers and 88% of state pre-kindergarten teachers rated **ongoing basic counting of people and things in the environment** as extremely important, compared to 71% of child care teachers. **Color sorting** was rated extremely important by 91% of Head Start teachers compared to 81% of state pre-kindergarten teachers and 71% of child care teachers. Chart # 9 indicates that significantly more kindergarten teachers than early childhood teachers feel that **daily math exercises** are extremely important. This disparity between the responses of early childhood and kindergarten teachers also exists among early care & education programs. State pre-kindergarten (55%) and Head Start (51%) teachers rated daily math exercises as extremely important, compared to 36% of child care teachers. When rating **classify objects by touch**, many more state pre-kindergarten (62%) and Head Start teachers (63%) than child care teachers (39%) rated this practice as extremely important.

Chart # 10

Best Practices in Science
Comparison of Responses by Early Childhood and Kindergarten Programs



There was a great deal of agreement between early childhood and kindergarten teachers on the **use of open-ended inquiry questions.** 92% of both early childhood and kindergarten teachers rated this practice as an extremely important skill. **Experiments that allow for prediction of outcomes** were extremely important to 87% of the early childhood and 88% of the kindergarten teachers. **Exploration materials, e.g., light box and magnets** ranked highly with 73% of the early childhood and 76% of the kindergarten teachers.

Other items that 74% - 50% of either the early childhood or kindergarten teachers rated as extremely important were: **garden and plant growth projects** and **weather exercises e.g., monitoring weather patterns.**

Chart #10.a.

Best Practices in Science
Comparison of Responses by Early Care and Education Programs

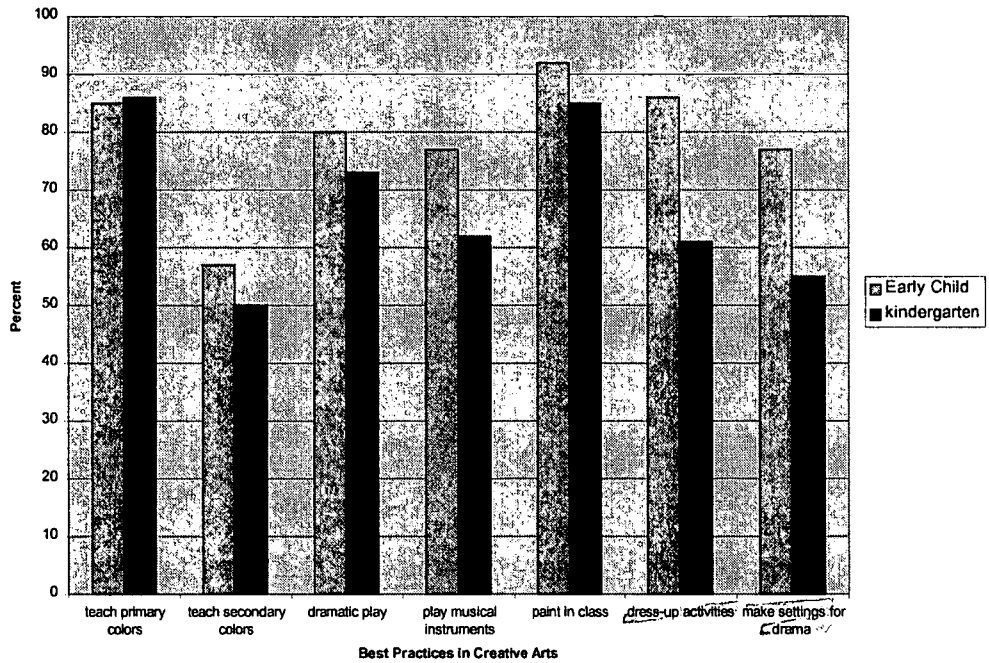
Best Practice	Child Care *	Head Start	State Pre-Kindergarten
Use of open-ended questions	87%	94%	97%
Experiments which allow for prediction of outcomes	83%	94%	86%
Exploration materials, e.g., light box and magnets	73%	86%	73%
Gardens and other plant growth projects	50%	81%	65%
Weather exercises, e.g., monitoring weather patterns	50%	50%	51%

*** Includes centers and family child care homes**

Agreement among early childhood teachers was high in the science area. The only practice where there appears to be considerable disparity is the use of **gardens and other plant growth projects.** Eighty-one percent of Head Start teachers, 65% of state pre-kindergarten teachers and 50% of child care teachers rated this practice as extremely important.

Chart # 11

Best Practices in Creative Arts
Comparison of Responses by Early Childhood and Kindergarten Programs



When asked to identify practices used to develop creativity in children, early childhood and kindergarten teachers agreed on just a few activities. **Painting in class** was considered extremely important to 93% and 85% of the teachers, respectively. Both early childhood and kindergarten teachers agreed that **children should be taught primary colors,** rating this activity as extremely important at 85% and 86%, respectively. **Dramatic play,** e.g., Bear Hunt was rated extremely important by 80% of early childhood and 73% of kindergarten teachers. Seventy-seven percent of early childhood and 62% of kindergarten teachers ranked **children playing with musical instruments** as extremely important.

In the creative arts area, there were two best practices that rated considerably higher by one group of teachers than the other. Eighty-six percent of early childhood teachers rated **dress-up activities** as extremely important while only 61% of kindergarten teachers considered this activity extremely important. **Making settings for dramatic play** was extremely important to 77% of early childhood teachers and only to 55% of kindergarten teachers.

Another item that 74% - 50% of either the early childhood or kindergarten teachers rated as extremely important was **children are taught secondary colors.**

Chart #11.a.

Best Practices in Creative Arts
Comparison of Responses by Early Care and Education Programs

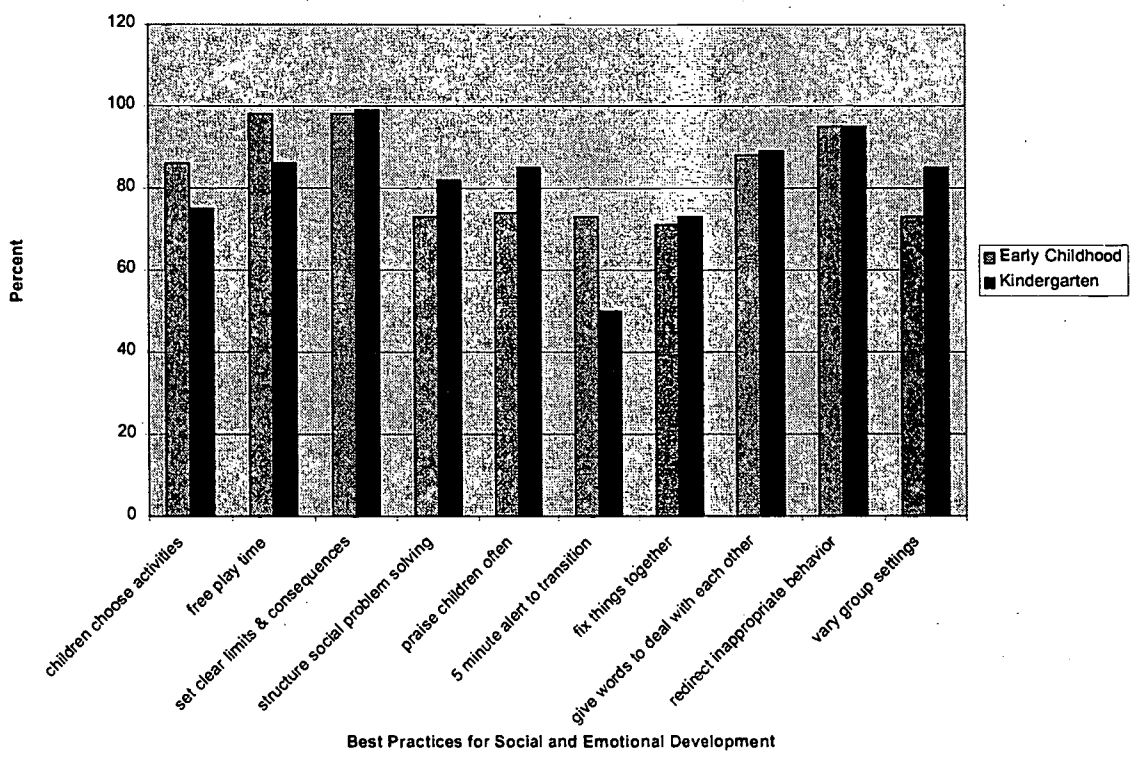
Best Practice	Child Care *	Head Start	State Pre-Kindergarten
Paint in class	87%	97%	94%
Teach primary colors	83%	86%	86%
Dramatic play, e.g., Bear Hunt activity	73%	72%	87%
Dress-up activities	87%	89%	86%
Play with musical instruments	77%	81%	75%
Make settings for dramatic play	73%	83%	77%
Teach secondary colors	67%	53%	54%

* Includes centers and family child care homes

Child care, Head Start and state pre-kindergarten teachers' ratings across identified practices in the creative arts averaged more than 80%. There is no substantial disagreement among early childhood teachers on these practices. **Teaching secondary colors** was considered extremely important, but by smaller percentages of teachers in all three types of early care and education programs.

Chart # 12

Best Practices in Social and Emotional Development
Comparison of Responses by Early Childhood and Kindergarten Programs



The consistency in ratings between early childhood and kindergarten teachers was higher in social and emotional development than in all of the other skill domains. As indicated in the chart above, more than 75% of both early childhood and kindergarten teachers rated the following skills as extremely important: **children choose their own activities, free play time, set clear limits and consequences, structure social problem solving activities, praise children often, give five-minute alert for transition to another activity, give children words to use to deal with each other, vary group settings, redirect inappropriate behavior, and children fix things together.**

There were no other items that 74% - 50% of either the early childhood or kindergarten teachers rated as extremely important. However, it should be noted that 62% of the kindergarten teachers and only 46% of early childhood teachers indicated that **rewarding children for good work** is extremely important.

Chart #12.a.

Best Practices in Social and Emotional Development
Comparison of Responses by Early Care and Education Programs

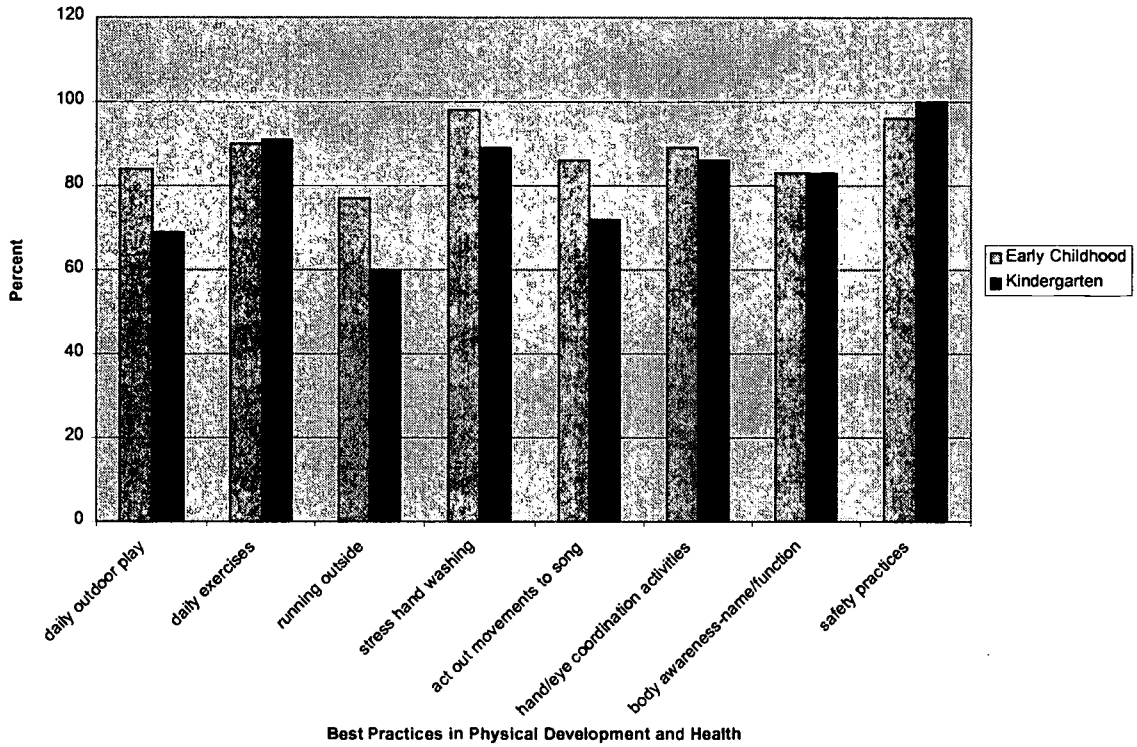
Best Practice	Child Care *	Head Start	State Pre-Kindergarten
Set clear limits and consequences	97%	100%	99%
Redirect inappropriate behavior	97%	94%	96%
Free play time	100%	97%	99%
Give children words to deal with each other	86%	94%	87%
Let children choose their own activities	77%	89%	90%
Vary group settings	76%	74%	71%
Structure social problem solving activities	73%	80%	70%
Fix things together	70%	69%	72%
Give five-minute alert to transition to another activity	67%	80%	72%
Reward children for good work	67%	34%	45%

*** Includes centers and family child care homes**

Child care, Head Start and state pre-kindergarten teachers indicated more agreement in the area of social and emotional development than in any other area. The only identified best practice with substantial disparity among early childhood teachers' ratings was **reward students for good work.** Sixty-seven percent of child care teachers, compared to 45% of state pre-kindergarten and 34% of Head Start teachers, rated this practice as extremely important. Analysis of this data suggests a need to open dialog between early childhood teachers and kindergarten teachers, as well discussion among teachers of the various early care and education programs. Future discussions might center on the identification of various appropriate types of rewards and the circumstances under which rewards are most and least appropriate.

Chart # 13

Best Practices in Physical Development and Health
Comparison of Responses by Early Childhood and Kindergarten Programs



Instruction in **safety practices – playground, fire, street, etc.,** garnered the highest percentages of extremely important ratings from early childhood and kindergarten teachers at 96% and 100%, respectively. **Stressing the importance of hand washing** was rated extremely important by 98% of early childhood and 89% of kindergarten teachers. The following items were rated as extremely important best practices by more than 75% of early childhood and kindergarten teachers: **outdoor play area with gym equipment, daily exercises, hand-eye coordination activities, daily outdoor play,** and **body awareness-name and function.**

Several best practices ranked considerably higher with one group of teachers than the other. Seventy-one percent of the early childhood teachers rated **running outside** as extremely important, whereas only 60% of the kindergarten teachers rated this activity as extremely important. Seventy-two percent of the kindergarten teachers compared to 86% of the early childhood teachers rated **act out movements with song** as extremely important.

Chart #13.a.

Best Practices in Physical Development and Health
Comparison of Responses by Early Care and Education Programs

Best Practice	Child Care *	Head Start	State Pre-Kindergarten
Safety practices – playground, fire, street, etc.	100%	100%	93%
Stress importance of hand washing	97%	100%	99%
Daily exercises	93%	92%	88%
Hand/eye coordination activities	90%	91%	90%
Body awareness – name and function	93%	81%	80%
Outdoor play with gym equipment	83%	97%	84%
Act out movement to song	70%	89%	91%
Run outside	90%	86%	66%

* **Includes centers and family child care homes**

Analysis showed 80% or more agreement among child care, Head Start and state pre-kindergarten teachers on seven out of eight of the identified physical development and health best practices The best practice that early care and education teachers' ratings differed by more than twenty-four percent on was **running outside**. Ninety percent of child care teachers rated this practice as extremely important, 86% of Head Start teachers rated this practice as extremely important and 66% of state pre-kindergarten teachers rated running outside as extremely important.

Summary of Research

Assessment of Readiness Skills

This study sought to determine what assessment strategies, if any, are used to determine children's readiness for school. Early childhood teachers were asked to answer this question from the perspective of assessing children's readiness skills upon leaving their program. Kindergarten teachers were asked to answer this question from the perspective of assessing children's readiness skills upon entering their program. Upon leaving their program, 52% of early childhood teachers administer some type of published or formal assessment to determine children's readiness for kindergarten. Only 39% kindergarten teachers indicated that they routinely test children with some type of published or formal assessment upon entering their class. The table below indicates the published tests or formal instruments used most often by early childhood and kindergarten teachers.

Table #1

Published and Formal Assessments
Comparison of Responses by Early Childhood and Kindergarten Programs

Published test or formal instrument *	% of Early Childhood	% of Kindergarten
Gesell Development	0%	3%
Brigance	17%	17%
ESI P or R	24%	24%
High Scope Score	11%	0%
District Developed	1%	0%
School Developed	8%	17%
Teacher Developed	5%	17%
Other	33%	55%

* **Respondents could check more than one response in this area**

The ESI P or R followed by the Brigance tests are the published tests used most often by both early childhood and kindergarten teachers. Both early childhood (33%) and kindergarten (55%) teachers indicated the use of "Other" published tests or formal assessment instruments.

Other assessments identified by early childhood teachers and kindergarten teachers, in order of preference, were the **Dial 3 assessment**, the **Child Assessment Profile (CAP)**, the **Creative Curriculum Checklist**, the **Work Sampling System** and the **Individual Development Educational Assessment (I.D.E.A.)**.

When asked if informal assessments were used to determine readiness for kindergarten, both early childhood and kindergarten teachers indicated that they use various informal assessments more often than published tests or formal instruments. Eighty-nine percent of early childhood teachers and 83% of kindergarten teachers rely on various types of informal assessments. The table below indicates the types of informal assessments used most often by early child hood and kindergarten teachers.

Table # 2

Informal Assessments
Comparison of Responses by Early Childhood and Kindergarten Programs

Informal Assessment *	% of Early Childhood	% of Kindergarten
Parent interview	3%	41%
Teacher observation	41%	98%
Work sampling	22%	76%
Activity records	5%	20%
Teacher developed checklist	6%	30%
Anecdotal notes	24%	41%

* **Respondents could check more than one response in this area**

This data indicates that both early childhood and kindergarten teachers rely on a variety of assessment strategies, with preferences of both groups toward informal assessment strategies. Published tests and formal instruments are used to a lesser extent than, or in combination with, various informal assessments. Of particular note is the fact that both groups rely most heavily upon **teacher observations**, with kindergarten teachers relying on observations more than twice as much as early childhood teachers. Similarly, kindergarten teachers rely on work sampling more than three times as much as early childhood teachers. Kindergarten teachers also indicated more use of parent interviews than early childhood teachers, who seldom indicate this as a preferred strategy.

Classroom/Program Environment

This study also asked teachers to rate and comment upon the items they felt it essential to have in their classrooms. The following lists classroom materials and other items that early childhood and kindergarten teachers identified as extremely important in preparing children for school success.

Table # 3

Summary of Classroom Material Preferences
By Early Care and Education and Kindergarten Programs

Essential Classroom Materials	Child Care	Head Start	State Pre-kg	Kinder-garten
Child-sized furniture	100%	97%	97%	91%
Block play area	93%	99%	97%	91%
Writing area	87%	94%	94%	93%
Environment arranged to optimize child selection	93%	93%	97%	89%
Environment exploration area	87%	96%	94%	88%
Listening/quiet center	90%	87%	89%	93%
Outdoor play area with gym equipment	83%	84%	97%	83%
Sand and water table	87%	86%	89%	44%
Family living area	77%	75%	71%	60%
Playhouse, store or restaurant area	70%	73%	74%	62%
Reading area with chair for teacher	67%	69%	64%	86%
Reading area for children only	67%	81%	64%	79%

Early childhood and kindergarten teachers were very consistent in their preference for eleven of the twelve items listed above. The only item that early childhood teachers differed substantially in their preference for any materials was the **sand and water table.** An average of 87% of early childhood teachers rated the use of this item as extremely important, compared to 44% of kindergarten teachers who rated this item as extremely important.

Also worth noting are materials that 30% or more of early childhood and/or kindergarten teachers considered somewhat unimportant or extremely unimportant; i.e., **cots, balance beams and obstacle courses**.

Transition to Kindergarten

Some of the transition practices identified below are those initiated by early childhood teachers and others initiated by kindergarten teachers. However, the presupposition governing this aspect of the study is that teachers' perceptions of effective transition practices should facilitate implementation of transition practices that could operate throughout the school year as well as facilitate site-to-site and community-wide planning for transition from early childhood to kindergarten programs.

Table #4

Summary of Transition to Kindergarten Practices
By Early Care and Education and Kindergarten Programs

Transition Practices	Child Care	Head Start	State Pre-kg	Kinder-garten
Hold orientation session for incoming parents	97%	83%	96%	95%
Encourage children to work independently	97%	72%	87%	88%
Transfer of children's records	70%	75%	91%	89%
Communicate with kindergarten teachers regarding their program requirements	77%	78%	81%	86%
Provide parent orientation package including after school care and bus routes	81%	78%	74%	80%
Discuss kindergarten activities, schedules, bus routes, etc. with children	81%	64%	56%	78%
Take children to visit a kindergarten classroom	52%	75%	76%	68%
Hold back-to-school night in august for new students, parents and teachers	61%	56%	69%	73%
Encourage parents to volunteer in kindergarten classroom prior to the start of school	48%	58%	57%	50%

Listed above, in order of preference, are transition practices which early childhood and kindergarten teachers consider extremely important. Two of the top three practices refer to communication of information: **hold orientation session for incoming parents and transfer children's records to receiving school**. **Encouraging children to work independently** is extremely important to 85% of early childhood teachers and 88% of kindergarten teachers.

More than 30% of early childhood and kindergarten teachers considered **planning a field trip that includes both pre-school and kindergarten children and inviting kindergarten children to visit the preschool** as somewhat unimportant or extremely unimportant.

Best Practices

Table # 5

Summary of Best Practices in Language Development

Best Practice	% agreement
Read to children on a daily basis	97.5%
Use of a language literacy curriculum	84.0%
Teach children to spell name	83.0%
Use of open-ended questions	82.0%
Use writing table activities	81.0%
Songs that focus on repetitive rhymes	77.5%
Let children retell stories	77.5%
Teacher takes dictation from children's comments	74.0%
Teach children letters of the alphabet	71.0%
Use letter/sound identification games	61.5%
Write with sensory touch materials	52.5%

The data show a significant degree of agreement among early childhood and kindergarten teachers on various instructional strategies and methods of doing things. As indicated in Chart #8, despite the overall agreement between early childhood and kindergarten teachers on the best practices listed above, there were dramatic differences in the ratings of early childhood and kindergarten teachers on two key items. **Teaching letters of the alphabet** and **teaching children to spell their name** were rated quite differently by both groups of teachers. 91% of kindergarten and only 51% early childhood teachers rated the "letters" item as extremely important. The differential for spelling names was 95% and 71% between kindergarten and early childhood teachers, respectively. The disparity between the ratings given these two skills suggests a need for further discussion between early childhood and kindergarten teachers. Together they should determine when, how and in what quantity these skills should be introduced into the curriculum. Further analysis of these skills would no doubt generate more specificity in the instructional practices and activities used at classroom **writing tables.**

Table # 6

Summary of Best Practices in Mathematics

Best Practice	% agreement
Ongoing basic counting of people and things in environment	88.5%
Shape identification	86.5%
Counting and quantity recognition activities	85.5%
Color sorting	80.5%
Pattern games and activities	78.0%
Daily math exercises	61.0%
Classify objects by touch	53.5%

Early childhood and kindergarten teachers tended to select practices that rely upon the use of manipulatives and also take advantage of observations of math from their environment. Many of the examples from the comments section of the survey suggested that color sorting, shape identification, and pattern activities are done from manipulatives as well as observations from the environment. Chart #9 indicates that significantly more kindergarten teachers than early childhood teachers feel that daily math exercises are extremely important. Disparity between the responses of both groups of teachers would suggest a need to determine the extent to which daily math exercises should be implemented to best prepare children for school.

Table # 7

Summary of Best Practices in Science

Best Practice	% agreement
Use of open-ended questions	92.0%
Experiments which allow for prediction of outcomes	87.5%
Exploration materials, e.g., light box and magnets	74.5%
Gardens and other plant growth projects	62.5%
Weather exercises, e.g., monitoring weather patterns	56.0%

Agreement between early childhood and kindergarten teachers was also high in the science area. However, consensus centered on only five best practices. What stands out as particularly important is the **use of open-ended questions.** This item was also cited as a best practice in the language development section. This would seem to indicate that both early childhood and kindergarten teachers could benefit from training on the use of higher order thinking skills, e.g., analysis, comparison, inference, and evaluation questions. Bringing more effective questioning into the classroom would also strengthen teachers' skills in another identified best practice, i.e., **experiments that allow for prediction of outcomes.**

Table # 8

Summary of Best Practices in Creative Arts

Best Practice	% agreement
Paint in class	89.0%
Teach primary colors	85.5%
Dramatic play, e.g., Bear Hunt activity	76.5%
Dress-up activities	73.5%
Play with musical instruments	69.5%
Make settings for dramatic play	66.0%
Teach secondary colors	53.5%

Both early childhood and kindergarten teachers agreed on many activities that support creativity in children. Despite the overall agreement on these activities, there are two best practices in which early childhood and kindergarten teachers' ratings differed by more that twenty percent – **dress up activities** and **making settings for dramatic play**. Since teachers agree on the overall importance of these two items, both groups of teachers would benefit from discussion of the goals and objectives to be accomplished through these activities and how to make each optimally effective in preparing children for school.

Table # 9

Summary of Best Practices in Social and Emotional Development

Best Practice	% agreement
Set clear limits and consequences	98.5%
Redirect inappropriate behavior	95.5%
Free play time	92.0%
Give children words to deal with each other	88.5%
Let children choose their own activities	80.5%
Vary group settings	79.0%
Structure social problem solving activities	77.5%
Fix things together	72.0%
Give five-minute alert to transition to another activity	61.5%
Reward children for good work	54.0%

The most dramatic results are the combined averages of early childhood and kindergarten teachers in the area of social and emotional development. Overall, there is 80% or more agreement on five different best practices, as seen in the above Table. Analysis of this data suggests a need to open dialog between early childhood and kindergarten teachers on the issue of **rewarding children for good work.** Comments from teachers indicated a wide array of rewards from praise to hugs to tokens and edible treats. Teachers should also discuss their views on the best ways to **transition children to different activities**. Teachers' views in this area could very well be tempered by procedures and expectation levels set down within the classroom, as well as the activity. Many subtle differences in operational procedures could arise from opening dialog in this area.

Table # 10

Summary of Best Practices in Physical Development and Health

Best Practice	% agreement
Safety practices – playground, fire, street, etc.	98.0%
Stress importance of hand washing	93.5%
Daily exercises	90.5%
Hand/eye coordination activities	87.5%
Body awareness – name and function	83.0%
Outdoor play with gym equipment	83.0%
Act out movement to song	79.0%
Run outside	65.5%

Analysis showed 80% or more agreement on six out of eight of the identified best practices. Not surprisingly, safety and health concerns are at the top of the list for both early childhood and kindergarten teachers. The best practice in which the ratings of early childhood and kindergarten teachers differed by more than twenty percent was **running outside**. Here again, teachers would no doubt benefit from dialog centered on the goals and objectives of this activity in preparing children for school. It could be that many teachers consider running to be a good activity, but the overriding goal may not be preparing children for school.

Finally, kindergarten teachers were asked to select the early care and education program that they believe best prepares children for their kindergarten program, or to indicate that they believe children can't generally be distinguished by participation in different types of early care and education programs or lack of attendance in any early care and education program. Seventy-five percent of the kindergarten teacher respondents indicated they believe pre-kindergarten programs best prepare children for kindergarten. Eleven percent indicated they believe Head Start programs best prepare children for kindergarten. Four percent indicated they believe child care programs best prepare children for kindergarten. And ten percent indicated they believe children can't generally be distinguished by participation in different types of early care and education programs.

It must be noted here especially that these findings are based on teachers' perceptions only via the survey instrument and that only 39% of kindergarten teachers reported using any type of formal assessment upon kindergarten entry. So, at least in this sampling, most determination of school readiness related to the early childhood settings children come from is done by teacher perception via teacher observation, at least initially, with children's work sampling adding to it later, since these were the highest rated informal assessment measures indicated by this group of teachers.

Next Steps

This study clearly identifies many teaching and curriculum strategies, practices, materials and methods of doing things that early childhood and kindergarten teachers agree are extremely important. However, this study also reveals several areas in which early childhood and kindergarten teachers find less agreement. Similarly, the study identifies areas of agreement and disparity among the early care and education programs, i.e., child care, Head Start and state pre-kindergarten teachers. Future discussions centered on identified points of agreement and disparity will no doubt provide more clear information relative to teachers views on best practices needed to ensure children's school success.

The potential exists for state and federal funding agencies, policy makers, and early childhood and kindergarten teachers to align themselves more closely to maximize children's learning opportunities and outcomes at all levels, especially as we gather more and more data on what school readiness actually is and what practices contribute to it in meaningful ways. Ideally, this would be a respectful collaboration among educators, administrators and policy makers, with children as the focus, at federal, state and local levels.

The data contained in this report can certainly be used by these entities in a number of ways, such as the following.

- To guide the design of opportunities that enhance the areas of agreement about best practices in school readiness, both from the preparation as well as the receiving ends. This report is intended to bring clarity to what school readiness perceptions and practices currently exist in Illinois, since the state lacks a commonly used definition and set of best practices. Two concurrent centers of attention exist: the varied early childhood educational settings where children are prepared, purposefully or not, for life and school and the kindergarten classrooms that receive the children.
- To foster planning to alleviate, compensate for, or at least come to a better understanding of the areas of disparity.
- To improve collaboration among early care and education providers and between early childhood and schools, particularly kindergartens, to enhance continuity of care, horizontal and vertical transitions.

Specific next step opportunities that might be indicated by this study include:

- Discussions and planning between local early childhood and kindergarten administrators and teachers about how they determine and define school readiness, their expectations, and goals/rationale for best practices or areas of importance on how to help children achieve school and life success. These discussions can include specific points of difference raised in this study as well as those identified as specific to each local area, such as: how and in what quantity children should be taught letters of the alphabet in early childhood settings, as well as how to spell their names; the extent to which daily math exercises should

be implemented and used at each level; appropriate rewards and uses of rewards for children's work; objectives and outcomes of dramatic play activities and settings and cooking activities; critical transition activities; and, activities that extend children's higher level thinking skills, to name a few. These discussions should be grounded in research-based best practice and should be an opportunity for increased understanding between early childhood and school districts, resulting in improved educational services to young children. Of particular note for a discussion focal point is the area of assessment and school readiness. Since 52% of all early childhood programs use some type of formal assessment instrument to look at children's skill levels, the sharing of aggregate information with school districts related to children's outcomes and school readiness could help close the gap in understanding children's readiness. This would provide kindergarten teachers not using such assessments with a more objective look at their incoming children than teacher observation. Federal law mandates all Head Start programs to assess children and evaluate child outcomes. These methods could be shared in discussions suggested in the next bullet point, among early childhood providers.

- Discussions and planning among local early childhood administrators and teachers to share best practices and strategies for quality improvement of the whole field and all children's outcomes. All areas of curriculum domains, child assessment and transition, and classroom practices and set-up can be included in these discussions.
- Collaboration and planning among regional, state and federal level administrators for training opportunities and to ensure policies, such as in the area of assessment, don't become obstacles to successful vertical and horizontal transitions for young children and families.

APPENDIX:

Early Childhood Teacher Survey

Kindergarten Teacher Survey

1. Readiness Tests and Assessment Practices

Listed below are questions related to tests and assessment instruments that you may or may not use in your program to determine children's readiness for kindergarten. Please answer all that apply.

1. Which of the following Early Childhood programs describes your classroom. (Check only one response)

- a) Child-Care (site based)
- b) Child-Care (home based)
- c) Head Start
- d) Pre-Kindergarten

2. How many children attend the program at this site location?

a) 10 or less b) 11 - 25 c) 26 - 50 d) 51 - 75 e) 76 - 100 f) 101 - 150 g) 151 or more

3. Are children routinely given any published test or instrument to determine their readiness for kindergarten?

- a) Yes
- b) No (If no, skip to Question #5)

4. If yes, specify the published tests or instruments used to determine children's readiness for kindergarten. (Check all that apply)

- a) Gesell Development
- b) Brigance
- c) ESI-P or R
- d) High Scope Core
- e) district developed (please attach copy)
- f) school developed (please attach copy)
- g) teacher developed (please attach copy)
- h) Other (please specify) _____

5. Are children routinely given any informal assessments or tests to determine their readiness for kindergarten?

- a) Yes
- b) No (If no, skip to question #7)

6. If yes, specify the informal assessments or tests used to determine children's readiness for kindergarten? (Check all that apply)

- a) parent interview
- b) teacher observation
- c) work sampling
- d) activity records
- e) teacher developed checklist (please attach copy)
- f) anecdotal notes

Next >>

2. Testing of Learning Skill Areas

Listed below you will find Illinois Early Learning Standards that may or may not be included in your kindergarten readiness assessment(s). For each of the following six learning areas, check whether the skill is assessed through a published test, informal assessment or is not tested as part your kindergarten readiness assessment strategy. If you use more than one assessment for a particular skill, check the one used most often.

7. Language Development

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) follows multiple step directions			
b) answers questions appropriately			
c) speaks in sentences and is understood			
d) recognizes sounds of letters			
e) demonstrates ability to retell stories from books			
f) recognizes a word as a unit of print and that letters are grouped to form words			
g) knows most of the letters of the alphabet			
h) recognizes that reading moves from top to bottom and from left to right			
i) uses scribbles, shapes or pictures to represent ideas			
j) writes own name			

8. Mathematics

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) connects number words with quantities			
b) recognizes numbers 1 to 10			
c) counts to 10 or more			
d) makes comparisons of quantities with understanding of terms such as more, less, big and little			
e) sorts and classifies quantities by attributes e.g., size, color and shape			
f) demonstrates understanding of directionality, order and position such as up, down, inside, outside, top and bottom			
g) sorts objects according to two or more attributes			
h) recognizes square, circle, triangle and rectangle shapes			

9. Science

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) uses senses to gather information and investigate relationships			
b) observes, discusses and makes comparisons among objects			
c) describes, makes predictions and gives explanations and/or generalizations			
d) discusses and categorizes things in surroundings and environment			

10. Creative Arts

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) participates in music activities, e.g., listening, singing, finger play, and games			
b) identifies primary colors			
c) demonstrates movement and dance to different patterns of beat and rhythm			
d) participates in dramatic play using various materials and assuming different roles in play situations			

11. Social and Emotional Development

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) describes self by characteristics, abilities and preferences			
b) follows rules and routines using materials purposefully, safely and respectfully			
c) takes turns and shares			
d) shows good problem solving skills in working, playing and resolving conflicts with peers			
e) engages in cooperative group play			
f) shows sensitivity to other children's feelings			
g) recognizes similarities and differences in people, e.g., gender, race, special needs, culture, language and family structure			

12. Physical Development and Health

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) increases strength, dexterity and control needed to use tools e.g., scissors, crayons, pencils, markers and paint brushes			
b) demonstrates good hand-eye coordination in fine motor activities e.g., putting together puzzles and stringing beads			
c) shows control when doing gross motor activities, e.g., walking, climbing, jumping, hopping, skipping and marching			
d) Shows independence in hygiene, and personal care when eating, dressing, washing hands, brushing teeth and toileting			

Next >>

3. Instructional Practices

The following section describes many early childhood instructional practices, environmental settings and and materials. For each item listed below, indicate how important you consider the item to be in preparing children for kindergarten. Rate each item on its importance, whether or not you presently use or have it in your program.

13. Language Development

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) use of language literacy curriculum	○	○	○	○	○
b) focus on language arts skill sets	○	○	○	○	○
c) use of letter sound identification games	○	○	○	○	○
d) children are read to on a daily basis	○	○	○	○	○
e) children are taught letters of alphabet	○	○	○	○	○
f) children act out stories	○	○	○	○	○
g) children retell stories	○	○	○	○	○
h) teacher takes dictation from children's comments	○	○	○	○	○
i) children sing phonics-based songs	○	○	○	○	○
k) songs focus on repetitive rhymes	○	○	○	○	○
l) use of books on tape	○	○	○	○	○
m) writing table activities	○	○	○	○	○
n) learn to spell name	○	○	○	○	○
o) use open-ended questions	○	○	○	○	○

p) write with sensory touch materials					

14. Identify two best practices, activities or programs used to develop language skills in children. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

15. Mathematics

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) children classify objects by touch					
b) children have daily mathematics exercises					
c) ongoing basic counting of people and things in environment					
d) number and shape finger play					
e) pattern games and activities					
f) color/shape bingo					
g) cooking activities					
h) number beanbag activities					
i) color sorting					
j) number recognition through 30					
k) shape identification					
l) string beads					
m) counting and quantity recognition activities					

16. Identify two best practices, activities or programs used to develop mathematics skills in children. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

17. Science

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) food experiences with emphasis on measurement and change					
b) gardens and other plant growth projects					
c) simple insect growth projects					
d) use of open-ended or inquiry questions					
e) class pet					
f) weather exercises e.g., monitoring weather patterns					
g) exploration materials, e.g., light box and magnets					
h) experiments that allow for prediction of outcomes					

18. Identify two best practices, activities or programs used to develop science skills in children. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

19. Creative Arts

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) children are taught primary colors					
b) children are taught secondary colors					
c) dramatic play,e.g., "Bear Hunt" activity					
d) children play with musical instruments					
e) children paint in class					
f) children have dress-up activities					
h) make settings for dramatic play					
i) make murals of current events, parades					

20. Identify two best practices, activities or programs used to develop creativity in children. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

21. Social and Emotional Development

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) children choose their own activities					
b) children adhere to time schedule for activities					
c) children are encouraged to sit still during quiet time					
d) children are rewarded for good work					
e) afternoon rest/nap					
f) free play time					
g) set clear limits and consequences					
h) structure social problem solving activities					
i) praise children often					
j) five-minute alert for transition to another activity					
k) fix things together					
l) give children words to use to deal with each other					
m) redirect inappropriate behavior					
n) vary group settings					

22. Identify two best practices, activities or programs used to help children's social and emotional development. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

23. Physical Development and Health

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) daily outdoor play	○	○	○	○	○
b) parachute play	○	○	○	○	○
c) balancing games	○	○	○	○	○
d) rolling large ball play	○	○	○	○	○
e) daily exercise	○	○	○	○	○
f) running outside	○	○	○	○	○
g) obstacle course	○	○	○	○	○
h) modeling how to walk up stairs	○	○	○	○	○
i) stress importance of hand washing	○	○	○	○	○
j) relay races	○	○	○	○	○
k) act out movements with songs	○	○	○	○	○
l) morning health check	○	○	○	○	○
m) hand eye coordination activities e.g., throw and catch	○	○	○	○	○
n) body awareness - name and function	○	○	○	○	○
o) safety practices - playground, fire, street, etc.	○	○	○	○	○

24. Identify two best physical development and health practices, activities and programs. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

25. Classroom/program environment

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) Outdoor play area with gym equipment					
b) Sand and water table					
c) Family living area					
d) Listening/quiet center					
e) Reading area with chair for teacher					
f) Reading area for children only					
g) Cots					
h) Balance beam					
i) Playhouse, store or restaurant					
j) Obstacle course to direct movement					
k) Writing area					
l) Block play area					
m) Child-size furniture					
n) enviroment exploration activities					
o) enviroment arranged to optimize child selection					

Next >>

Early Childhood Teacher Survey

1. Readiness Tests and Assessment Practices

Listed below are questions related to tests and assessment instruments that you may or may not use in your program to determine children's readiness for kindergarten. Please answer all that apply.

1. Which of the following Early Childhood programs describes your classroom. (Check only one response)

- a) Child-Care (site based)
- b) Child-Care (home based)
- c) Head Start
- d) Pre-Kindergarten

2. How many children attend the program at this site location?

a) 10 or less | b) 11 - 25 | c) 26 - 50 | d) 51 - 75 | e) 76 - 100 | f) 101 - 150 | g) 151 or more

3. Are children routinely given any published test or instrument to determine their readiness for kindergarten?

- a) Yes
- b) No (If no, skip to Question #5)

4. If yes, specify the published tests or instruments used to determine children's readiness for kindergarten. (Check all that apply)

- a) Gesell Development
- b) Brigance
- c) ESI-P or R
- d) High Scope Core
- e) district developed (please attach copy)
- f) school developed (please attach copy)
- g) teacher developed (please attach copy)
- h) Other (please specify) _____

5. Are children routinely given any informal assessments or tests to determine their readiness for kindergarten?

- a) Yes
- b) No (If no, skip to question #7)

6. If yes, specify the informal assessments or tests used to determine children's readiness for kindergarten? (Check all that apply)

- a) parent interview
- b) teacher observation
- c) work sampling
- d) activity records
- e) teacher developed checklist (please attach copy)
- f) anecdotal notes

Next >>

2. Testing of Learning Skill Areas

Listed below you will find Illinois Early Learning Standards that may or may not be included in your kindergarten readiness assessment(s). For each of the following six learning areas, check whether the skill is assessed through a published test, informal assessment or is not tested as part your kindergarten readiness assessment strategy. If you use more than one assessment for a particular skill, check the one used most often.

7. Language Development

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) follows multiple step directions	○	○	○
b) answers questions appropriately	○	○	○
c) speaks in sentences and is understood	○	○	○
d) recognizes sounds of letters	○	○	○
e) demonstrates ability to retell stories from books	○	○	○
f) recognizes a word as a unit of print and that letters are grouped to form words	○	○	○
g) knows most of the letters of the alphabet	○	○	○
h) recognizes that reading moves from top to bottom and from left to right	○	○	○
i) uses scribbles, shapes or pictures to represent ideas	○	○	○
j) writes own name	○	○	○

8. Mathematics

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) connects number words with quantities	○	○	○
b) recognizes numbers 1 to 10	○	○	○
c) counts to 10 or more	○	○	○
d) makes comparisons of quantities with understanding of terms such as more, less, big and little	○	○	○
e) sorts and classifies quantities by attributes e.g., size, color and shape	○	○	○
f) demonstrates understanding of directionality, order and position such as up, down, inside, outside, top and bottom	○	○	○
g) sorts objects according to two or more attributes	○	○	○
h) recognizes square, circle, triangle and rectangle shapes	○	○	○

9. Science

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) uses senses to gather information and investigate relationships			
b) observes, discusses and makes comparisons among objects			
c) describes, makes predictions and gives explanations and/or generalizations			
d) discusses and categorizes things in surroundings and environment			

10. Creative Arts

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) participates in music activities, e.g., listening, singing, finger play, and games			
b) identifies primary colors			
c) demonstrates movement and dance to different patterns of beat and rhythm			
d) participates in dramatic play using various materials and assuming different roles in play situations			

11. Social and Emotional Development

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) describes self by characteristics, abilities and preferences			
b) follows rules and routines using materials purposefully, safely and respectfully			
c) takes turns and shares			
d) shows good problem solving skills in working, playing and resolving conflicts with peers			
e) engages in cooperative group play			
f) shows sensitivity to other children's feelings			
g) recognizes similarities and differences in people, e.g., gender, race, special needs, culture, language and family structure			

12. Physical Development and Health

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) increases strength, dexterity and control needed to use tools e.g., scissors, crayons, pencils, markers and paint brushes			
b) demonstrates good hand-eye coordination in fine motor activities e.g., putting together puzzles and stringing beads			
c) shows control when doing gross motor activities, e.g., walking, climbing, jumping, hopping, skipping and marching			
d) Shows independence in hygiene, and personal care when eating, dressing, washing hands, brushing teeth and toileting			

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3. Instructional Practices

The following section describes many early childhood instructional practices, environmental settings and and materials. For each item listed below, indicate how important you consider the item to be in preparing children for kindergarten. Rate each item on its importance, whether or not you presently use or have it in your program.

13. Language Development

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) use of language literacy curriculum					
b) focus on language arts skill sets					
c) use of letter sound identification games					
d) children are read to on a daily basis					
e) children are taught letters of alphabet					
f) children act out stories					
g) children retell stories					
h) teacher takes dictation from children's comments					
i) children sing phonics-based songs					
k) songs focus on repetitive rhymes					
l) use of books on tape					
m) writing table activities					
n) learn to spell name					
o) use open-ended questions					

p) write with sensory touch materials					

14. Identify two best practices, activities or programs used to develop language skills in children. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

15. Mathematics

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) children classify objects by touch					
b) children have daily mathematics exercises					
c) ongoing basic counting of people and things in environment					
d) number and shape finger play					
e) pattern games and activities					
f) color/shape bingo					
g) cooking activities					
h) number beanbag activities					
i) color sorting					
j) number recognition through 30					
k) shape identification					
l) string beads					
m) counting and quantity recognition activities					

16. Identify two best practices, activities or programs used to develop mathematics skills in children. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

17. Science

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) food experiences with emphasis on measurement and change					
b) gardens and other plant growth projects					
c) simple insect growth projects					
d) use of open-ended or inquiry questions					
e) class pet					
f) weather exercises e.g., monitoring weather patterns					
g) exploration materials, e.g., light box and magnets					
h) experiments that allow for prediction of outcomes					

18. Identify two best practices, activities or programs used to develop science skills in children. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

19. Creative Arts

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) children are taught primary colors					
b) children are taught secondary colors					
c) dramatic play,e.g., "Bear Hunt" activity					
d) children play with musical instruments					
e) children paint in class					
f) children have dress-up activities					
h) make settings for dramatic play					
i) make murals of current events, parades					

20. Identify two best practices, activities or programs used to develop creativity in children. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

21. Social and Emotional Development

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) children choose their own activities					
b) children adhere to time schedule for activities					
c) children are encouraged to sit still during quiet time					
d) children are rewarded for good work					
e) afternoon rest/nap					
f) free play time					
g) set clear limits and consequences					
h) structure social problem solving activities					
i) praise children often					
j) five-minute alert for transition to another activity					
k) fix things together					
l) give children words to use to deal with each other					
m) redirect inappropriate behavior					
n) vary group settings					

22. Identify two best practices, activities or programs used to help children's social and emotional development. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

23. Physical Development and Health

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) daily outdoor play					
b) parachute play					
c) balancing games					
d) rolling large ball play					
e) daily exercise					
f) running outside					
g) obstacle course					
h) modeling how to walk up stairs					
i) stress importance of hand washing					
j) relay races					
k) act out movements with songs					
l) morning health check					
m) hand eye coordination activities e.g., throw and catch					
n) body awareness - name and function					
o) safety practices - playground, fire, street, etc.					

24. Identify two best physical development and health practices, activities and programs. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

25. Classroom/program environment

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) Outdoor play area with gym equipment					
b) Sand and water table					
c) Family living area					
d) Listening/quiet center					
e) Reading area with chair for teacher					
f) Reading area for children only					
g) Cots					
h) Balance beam					
i) Playhouse, store or restaurant					
j) Obstacle course to direct movement					
k) Writing area					
l) Block play area					
m) Child-size furniture					
n) enviroment exploration activities					
o) enviroment arranged to optimize child selection					

Next >>

4. Transition to Kindergarten

The following section describes many early childhood activities used to transition children into a kindergarten program. For each item listed below, indicate how important you consider the item to be in preparing children to transition into kindergarten. Rate each item on its importance whether or not you presently use or have it in your program.

26. Communication between Early Childhood and Kindergarten Staff

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) take children to visit a kindergarten classroom					
b) visit from kindergarten teacher to your classroom					
c) communicate with kindergarten teachers regarding their program requirements					
d) transfer of children's records					
e) transfer of children's work samples					
f) plan a field trip that includes both pre-school and kindergarten children					
g) encourage children to work independently					
h) provide parent orientation package including after school care, bussing, etc.					
i) discuss new kindergarten activities, schedules and bus routes with children					
j) invite kindergarten child to visit preschool					
k) make calendar of important events leading					

to transition into kindergarten class					
l) send personal letter from kindergarten teacher to all new students					
k) hold back to school night in August to meet new students, parents and teacher					

27. Communication Between Early Childhood/Kindergarten Staff and Parents

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) provide information packet about the school to parents prior to start of school					
b) hold orientation sessions for incoming parents					
c) discuss child care options with parents					
d) arrange a visit for the parent and child to new school prior to the start of school					
e) arrange to introduce new parents to other parents of children already in kindergarten					
f) encourage parents to volunteer in kindergarten classroom prior to the start of school					
g) establish a buddy system between "old" and "new" parents					
h) make telephone calls to new					

parents prior to the start of school

i) make follow-up visits to new students' homes prior to the start of school

Next >>

5. Teacher Demographics

The following questions collect information about you as the early childhood teacher. This information will only be used as categorical data and no attempt will be made to specifically identify you or your program.

28. What is your gender?

female male

29. Check the category that best describes your race/ethnicity. (Check only one response)

- a) Black/African American
- b) Native American/Indian
- c) White/Caucasian
- d) Hispanic/Latino
- e) Asian/Pacific Islander
- Other (please specify) _____

30. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Check only one response)

- a) Some high school (no diploma)
- b) High School Diploma or GED
- c) AA (Associates Degree)
- d) BA/BS (Bachelor's Degree)
- e) MA/MS (Master's Degree)
- f) Ed.D (Doctorate Degree)
- g) Ph.D. (Doctorate Degree)
- Other (please specify) _____

31. In the last three years, how many clock hours of early childhood education training have you received? (Check only one response)

a) 1 to 5 hours b) 6 to 10 hours c) 11 to 15 hours d) 16 to 20 hours e) 21 hours or more f) none

32. Check the area(s) of Illinois State Board of Education certification, licensure or other specialization you hold? (Check all that apply)

- a) CDA (Child Development Associate)
- b) Type 02 - Early Childhood Teaching, excluding kindergarten
- c) Type 03 - Elementary Teaching, Kg to grade 9
- e) Type 04 - Early Childhood Teaching, Age 0 to grade 3
- f) Type 05 - Provisional Early Childhood Teaching, Age 0 to grade 3

g) Type 06 - Kindergarten/Primary Teaching, Kg to grade 3

h) Type 10 - Special Teaching, Kg to 12, field endorsed

i) Type 27 - Provisional Alternative Special Teaching, Kg to grade 12, field endorsed

j) Type 75 - Administrative - Kg to 12

Other (please specify)

33. Counting this school year, how many years have you taught? (Check only one response)

a) 1 to 5 b) 6 to 10 c) 11 to 15 d) 16 to 20 e) 21 to 25 f) 26 or more

34. Counting this year, how long have you worked in a teaching position in this center? (Check only one response)

a) 1 to 2 b) 3 to 4 c) 5 to 6 d) 7 to 8 e) 9 to 10 f) 11 or more

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Kindergarten Teacher Survey

1. Readiness Tests and Assessment Practices

Listed below are questions related to tests and assessment instruments that you may or may not use in your program to determine if students are prepared for kindergarten when they come to your class. Please answer all that apply.

1. Based on your experience, select the early childhood program that you believe best prepares children for your kindergarten program. Select (f) if you believe children can't generally be distinguished by participation in different types of early childhood programs or lack of attendance in an early childhood program.

- a) Child-Care (site based)
- b) Child-Care (home based)
- c) Head Start
- d) Pre-Kindergarten
- e) No prior schooling
- f) Can not distinguish children by sending program

2. How many children attend kindergarten at this site location?

a) 10 or less b) 11 - 25 c) 26 - 50 d) 51 - 75 e) 76 - 100 f) 101 - 150 g) 151 or more

3. Upon entering your class, are children routinely given any published test or instrument to determine their readiness for kindergarten?

- a) Yes
- b) No (If no, skip to Question #5)

4. If yes, specify the informal assessments or tests used to determine a child's readiness for kindergarten. (Check all that apply)

- a) Gesell Development
- b) Brigance
- c) ESI-P or R
- d) High Scope Core
- e) district developed (please attach copy)
- f) school developed (please attach copy)
- g) teacher developed (please attach copy)
- h) Other (please specify)

5. Upon entering your class, are children routinely given informal assessments or tests to determine their readiness for kindergarten?

- a) Yes

b) No (If no, skip to question #7)

6. If yes, specify the informal assessments or tests used to determine a child's readiness for kindergarten. (Check all that apply)

a) parent interviews

b) teacher observation

c) work sampling

d) activity records

e) teacher developed checklists (please attach copy)

f) anecdotal notes

Next >>

2. Testing of Learning Skill Areas

Listed below are Illinois Early Learning Standards that may or may not be included in your kindergarten readiness assessment(s). For each of the following six learning areas, check whether each skill is assessed through a published test, an informal assessment or is not tested as part your kindergarten readiness assessment strategy. If you use more than one assessment for a particular skill, check the one used most often.

7. Language Development

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) follows multiple step directions			
b) answers questions appropriately			
c) speaks in sentences and is understood			
d) recognizes sounds of letters			
e) demonstrates ability to retell stories from books			
f) recognizes a word as a unit of print and that letters are grouped to form words			
g) knows most of the letters of the alphabet			
h) recognizes that reading moves from top to bottom and from left to right			
i) uses scribbles, shapes or pictures to represent ideas			
j) writes own name			

8. Mathematics

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) connects number words with quantities			
b) recognizes numbers 1 to 10			
c) counts to 10 or more			
d) makes comparisons of quantities with understanding of terms such as more, less, big and little			
e) sorts and classifies quantities by attributes e.g., size, color and shape			
f) demonstrates understanding of directionality, order and position such as up, down, inside, outside, top and bottom			
g) sorts objects according to two or more attributes			
h) recognizes square, circle, triangle and rectangle shapes			

9. Science

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) uses senses to gather information and investigate relationships			

b) observes, discusses and makes comparisons among objects			
c) describes, makes predictions and gives explanations and/or generalizations			
d) discusses and categorizes things in surroundings and environment			

10. Creative Arts

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) participates in music activities, e.g., listening, singing, finger play, and games			
b) identifies primary colors			
c) demonstrates movement and dance to different patterns of beat and rhythm			
d) participates in dramatic play using various materials and assuming different roles in play situations			

11. Social and Emotional Development

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) describes self by characteristics, abilities and preferences			
b) follows rules and routines using materials purposefully, safely and respectfully			
c) takes turns and shares			
d) shows good problem solving skills in working, playing and resolving conflicts with peers			
e) engages in cooperative group play			
f) shows sensitivity to other children's feelings			
g) recognizes similarities and differences in people, e.g., gender, race, special needs, culture, language and family structure			

12. Physical Development and Health

	Included in a published test	Included in an informal assessment	Not tested
a) increases strength, dexterity and control needed to use tools e.g., scissors, crayons, pencils, markers and paint brushes			
b) demonstrates good hand-eye coordination in fine motor activities e.g., putting together puzzles and stringing beads			
c) shows control when doing gross motor activities, e.g., walking, climbing, jumping, hopping, skipping and marching			
d) Shows independence in hygiene, and personal care when eating, dressing, washing hands, brushing teeth and toileting			

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3. Instructional Practices

The following section describes many kindergarten instructional practices, environmental settings and materials. For each item listed below, indicate how important you consider the item to be in preparing children for kindergarten. Rate each item on its importance, whether or not you presently use or have it in your program.

13. Language Development

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) use of language literacy curriculum					
b) focus on language arts skill sets					
c) use of letter sound identification games					
d) children are read to on a daily basis					
e) children are taught letters of alphabet					
f) children act out stories					
g) children retell stories					
h) teacher takes dictation from children's comments					
i) children sing phonics-based songs					
k) songs focus on repetitive rhymes					
l) use of books on tape					
m) writing table activities					
n) learn to spell name					
o) use open-ended questions					

p) write with sensory touch materials					

14. Identify two best practices, activities, or programs you use to develop language skills in children. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

15. Mathematics

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) children classify objects by touch					
b) children have daily mathematics exercises					
c) ongoing basic counting of people and things in environment					
d) number and shape finger play					
e) pattern games and activities					
f) color/shape bingo					
g) cooking activities					
h) number beanbag activities					
i) color sorting					
j) number recognition through 30					
k) shape identification					
l) string beads					
m) counting and quantity recognition activities					

16. Identify two best practices, activities, or programs you use to develop math skills in children. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

17. Science

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) food experiences with emphasis on measurement and change					
b) gardens and other plant growth projects					
c) simple insect growth projects					
d) use of open-ended or inquiry questions					
e) class pet					
f) weather exercises e.g., monitoring weather patterns					
g) exploration materials, e.g., light box and magnets					
h) experiments that allow for prediction of outcomes					

18. Identify two best practices, activities, or programs you use to develop science skills in children. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

19. Creative Arts

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) children are taught primary colors					
b) children are taught secondary colors					
c) dramatic play,e.g., "Bear Hunt" activity					
d) children play with musical instruments					
e) children paint in class					
f) children have dress-up activities					
h) make settings for dramatic play					
i) make murals of current events, parades					

20. Identify two best practices, activities or programs used to develop creativity in children. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

21. Social and Emotional Development

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant

a) children choose their own activities					
b) children adhere to time schedule for activities					
c) children are encouraged to sit still during quiet time					
d) children are rewarded for good work					
e) afternoon rest/nap					
f) free play time					
g) set clear limits and consequences					
h) structure social problem solving activities					
i) praise children often					
j) five-minute warning					
k) fix things together					
l) give children words to use to deal with each other					
m) redirect inappropriate behavior					
n) vary group settings					

22. Identify two best practices, activities, or programs you use to help children's social and emotional development. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

23. Physical Development and Health

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) daily outdoor play					
b) parachute					

play					
c) balancing games					
d) rolling large ball play					
e) daily exercise					
f) running outside					
g) obstacle course					
h) modeling how to walk up stairs					
i) stress importance of hand washing					
j) relay races					
k) act out movements with songs					
l) morning health check					
m) hand eye coordination activities e.g., throw and catch					
n) body awareness - name and function					
o) safety practices - playground, fire, street, etc.					

24. Identify two best physical development and health practices, activities or programs. You may select the letters of practices listed above or you may write your own.

25. Classroom/program environment

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) Outdoor play area with gym equipment					

b) Sand and water table					
c) Family living area					
d) Listening/quiet center					
e) Reading area with chair for teacher					
f) Reading area for children only					
g) Cots					
h) Balance beam					
i) Playhouse, store or restaurant					
j) Obstacle course to direct movement					
k) Writing area					
l) Block play area					
m) Child-size furniture					
n) enviroment exploration activities					
o) enviroment arranged to optimize child selection					

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4. Transition to Kindergarten

The following section describes activities used to transition children into your classroom. For each item listed below, indicate how important you consider the item to be in preparing children to transition into kindergarten. Rate each item on its importance whether or not you presently use or have it in your classroom.

26. Communication between Early Childhood and Kindergarten Staff

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) take children to visit a kindergarten classroom					
b) visit from kindergarten teacher to your classroom					
c) communicate with kindergarten teachers regarding their program requirements					
d) transfer of children's records					
e) transfer of children's work samples					
f) plan a field trip that includes both pre-school and kindergarten children					
g) encourage children to work independently					
h) provide parent orientation package including after school care, bussing, etc.					
i) discuss new kindergarten activities, schedules and bus routes with children					
j) invite kindergarten child to visit preschool					
k) make calendar of important events leading					

to transition into kindergarten class					
l) send personal letter from kindergarten teacher to all new students					
k) hold back to school night in August to meet new students, parents and teacher					

27. Communication between Kindergarten Staff and Parents

	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
a) provide information packet about the school to parents prior to start of school					
b) hold orientation sessions for incoming parents					
c) discuss child care options with parents					
d) arrange a visit for the parent and child to new school prior to the start of school					
e) arrange to introduce new parents to other parents of children already in kindergarten					
f) encourage parents to volunteer in kindergarten classroom prior to the start of school					
g) establish a buddy system between "old" and "new" parents					
h) make telephone calls to new					

parents prior to the start of school

i) make follow-up visits to new students' homes prior to the start of school

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5. Teacher Demographics

The following questions collect information about you as the kindergarten teacher. This information will only be used as categorical data and no attempt will be made to specifically identify you or your program.

28. What is your gender?

female male

29. Check the category that best describes your race/ethnicity. (Check only one response)

- a) Black/African American
- b) Native American/Indian
- c) White/Caucasian
- d) Hispanic/Latino
- e) Asian/Pacific Islander
- Other (please specify) _____

30. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Check only one response)

- a) Some high school (no diploma)
- b) High School Diploma or GED
- c) AA (Associates Degree)
- d) BA/BS (Bachelor's Degree)
- e) MA/MS (Master's Degree)
- f) Ed.D (Doctorate Degree)
- g) Ph.D. (Doctorate Degree)
- Other (please specify) _____

31. In the last three years, how many clock hours of early childhood education training have you received? (Check only one response)

a) 1 to 5 hours b) 6 to 10 hours c) 11 to 15 hours d) 16 to 20 hours e) 21 hours or more f) none

32. Check the area(s) of Illinois State Board of Education certification, licensure or other specialization you hold. (Check all that apply)

- a) CDA (Child Development Associate)
- b) Type 02 - Early Childhood Teaching, excluding kindergarten
- c) Type 03 - Elementary Teaching, Kg to grade 9
- e) Type 04 - Early Childhood Teaching, Age 0 to grade 3
- f) Type 05 - Provisional Early Childhood Teaching, Age 0 to grade 3

g) Type 06 - Kindergarten/Primary Teaching, Kg to grade 3

h) Type 10 - Special Teaching, Kg to 12, field endorsed

i) Type 27 - Provisional Alternative Special Teaching, Kg to grade 12, field endorsed

j) Type 75 - Administrative - Kg to 12

Other (please specify)

33. Counting this school year, how many years have you taught? (Check only one response)

a) 1 to 5	b) 6 to 10	c) 11 to 15	d) 16 to 20	e) 21 to 25	f) 26 or more
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

34. Counting this year, how long have you worked in a teaching position in this center? (Check only one response)

a) 1 to 2	b) 3 to 4	c) 5 to 6	d) 7 to 8	e) 9 to 10	f) 11 or more
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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